
Policing with the Community? Patten's 'New Beginning' 10 Years On

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WELCOME

MIKE RITCHIE

Director, CAJ

Good morning everyone and welcome to this conference which we hope will be an interesting, exciting and important event.

My name is Mike Richie. I am the Director of the Committee on the Administration of Justice and I am very pleased to be here opening this session of our conference on policing with the community. I think it is very important to reflect on the fact that we are ten years after Patten, really the most deep seated reform programme and probably, I think it is fair to say, the most successful reform programme that there has been in Northern Ireland. We are very pleased at this opening session to have two of the people who are responsible for setting that template with us to reflect on the last ten years.

We wanted to do a conference on policing with the community because we felt that this was an important area of the Patten Commission's report. We **were** told in the Patten Commission that policing with the community should be the core function of every police officer and it is that element of the Patten Commission that we want to explore.

This is a launch of a policing programme with the Committee on the Administration of Justice. The organisation has been around for nearly 30 years -- from 1991 and obviously policing has been a key part of our area of work. It has been a very difficult part of our work over the years as well but in a sense this conference marks the launch of a new element of our policing programme. This conference will provide a template which we will try and bring round Northern Ireland, encouraging more and more people in local areas to reflect on what policing with the community means.

I think it has been our insight that because communities have been policed; rather than cooperated with the police there hasn't historically been much awareness of how policing works. There is a lot of learning to be done on the part of the community but I think also a lot of learning to be done on the part of the police. So it is a work in progress policing with the community and we want to make a contribution to taking this model of engagement between the police and the community and reflecting on what it means operationalising it in practice; an opportunity to reflect on the important work that has taken place and what more needs to be done.

Mick Beyers, as our Policing Programme Officer, will be organising subsequent events in local areas to try and encourage more participation. So we are very interested in what people's thoughts are and you will find in your conference pack an evaluation form and we very, very much look forward to receiving your comments on how this conference has worked.

As a human rights organisation we obviously have a responsibility for working with the most marginalised and most alienated people in the society; those communities who probably have had the most difficult relationship with the police in the past. Those working class communities, loyalist and

republican, have been the ones who knocked our door most often in the past. We also had contact with travellers, with the gay and lesbian communities, with women's rights organisations and I think it is important to acknowledge there has been much improvement now in terms of the relationship, but obviously it has been a difficult relationship in the past. I think what we want to see going forward is ways in which the experience that we have had, but also those communities, the experience that they have had can be transcended and we can have a good working relationship between those communities and the police.

Mick was telling me that in her engagement with police officers she had a conversation with a police officer who said that ten years ago and more, police officers wouldn't have been speaking cordially with workers from the CAJ. We have had a prickly relationship in the past and I think that may continue into the future because our role as a human rights organisation has been to hold the State to account and the police represent the hard edge of the State. So there will be times when we have to comment on difficult aspects. Our role has always been to look at international human rights standards and draw those down to Northern Ireland and measure how the police and other State agencies operate and that has proved difficult but, in our estimation, the Patten report meant that we could move into a new relationship and we look forward to that growing over the next period.

This conference we have created as an opportunity for respectful dialogue between all those who are here and we are very, very pleased to welcome two of the authors of the Patten template to join us a bit later on.

First of all, I want to ask Mick Beyers to introduce the conference. This is her work along with the other members of the CAJ and we are very pleased to ask her to set the tone. She is our policing programme officer and she previously worked with Coiste na nIar-chimi, the republican ex-prisoners organisation. She moved to Ireland from Arizona in 2004 and her background includes work on cultural issues with native American peoples as well as migrant issues on the Arizona-Sonoran borderlands. Mick has a doctorate in social welfare and has written on republican political culture, political prisoners and the victim sector. Mick, you are very welcome to come and open the conference for us.

OPENING REMARKS

MICK BEYERS

Policing Programme Officer, CAJ

Thanks, Mike. Good morning. I would like to add my welcome to Mike's opening welcome. It's fabulous to see so many people here today, very gratifying. I am looking forward to a very productive two days.

As you may be aware, at the moment there are two very different perspectives on the current state of policing. I think the first perspective could be called the official version and it basically suggests that policing is done and dusted and that the Patten Report is a thing of the past because the vast majority of Patten's recommendations have been implemented. The official version also suggests that policing is best approached ahistorically, somewhat of an acontextual analysis that the past 30 years of political conflict have no relevance to new policing arrangements.

However, there is another line of thought and I think of this as the community based perspective. This perspective argues that while this society is transitioning out of conflict it still remains deeply divided and that fact is incredibly relevant to new policing arrangements. It is a perspective which also notes that Patten's critical 44th recommendation - that policing with the community be the core function of the police service as well as every police station, that critical recommendation which lies at the heart of

Patten has yet to be implemented. So, instead of being done and dusted, I think it is fair to say that the PSNI is still an organisation in the midst of massive transition. Certainly massive change has occurred but as of yet the police service has a very limited understanding of Patten's vision of policing with the community.

By extension I think at the moment the culture of our police service as well as our accountability mechanisms are very bureaucratic, they are often perceived as very bureaucratic and performance focused instead of making partnership building and community-based service their first priority.

In light of these perspectives, it is interesting to look at the Patten Report and see if it provides any clarification. I think there are two very basic points. What is clear about the Patten Report is that it is not an ahistorical document. In fact, the report notes that the issue of policing lies at the very heart of many of the disputes that politicians have been unable to resolve. I think you only need to look at the current context of devolution and the ongoing struggles that we have been witnessing over the past few weeks to see the truth of that statement.

I think, secondly, it is important to remember that Patten conceives of police reform as a conflict resolution mechanism with two key objectives. The first is a decentralised police service which does not exercise a monopoly on security provision but rather works in sync with other social agencies and community groups. That is an incredibly radical concept. The second objective is the theme of accountability. It is quite a central theme, specifically direct accountability of policing to the community. I think the operative word there is direct. So, in other words, Patten's vision of policing with the community is not just a model of service delivery and it is not reducible to simply neighbourhood policing units but rather it is a style of policing that requires profound change both on the part of community thinking as well as police thinking.

I started this position in January with no background in policing at all, but what I realised very quickly is that to make this work we are going to have to continue to step outside our comfort zones and navigate the deficit of trust that exists and continue to do things that, for many, are uncomfortable.

Although significant changes have been made - there has been tremendous work done and significant steps have been taken - this is not a new statement, but I think we all have to remember that we are really only at the very beginning of what will be a long journey.

So as we sit here today ten years on from Patten and we face into the devolution of policing and justice powers, this conference is really about revisiting Patten's vision of police reform. My hope is that the conference will be an opportunity, over the course of the next two days, to explore where we are in the work of this reform, to ask ourselves how well we have internalised Patten's vision and to assess what the current challenges and opportunities are as we try to create and embed a radically different style of policing; a style of policing that is unique to this society. Thank you.

MIKE RITCHIE

It gives me pleasure to ask Maurice Hayes to come up, but before he does I just want to remind people of who Maurice is. Obviously he was a member of the Patten Commission. He is a former Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Boundary Commissioner, and was Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services here in Northern Ireland. He also wrote the pivotal report which led to the setting up of the Police Ombudsman. He was a member of the Irish Senate from 1997 to 2007. He is chair of the National Forum on Europe, the Garda Act Implementation Group, and the Garda Siochana Senior Management Review. He is a former chairman of the both the Community Relations Council and the Ireland Funds, a major charitable group which has made significant grants to groups dealing with social and business problems in Ireland. Maurice was also voted European person of the year in 2003.

Maurice, you are very welcome.

OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

DR. MAURICE HAYES

Patten Commissioner

Former Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Boundary Commissioner

If you want a short summary of what I am going to say, you might look at an interview of Sir Hugh Orde in today's London Times -- it is a bit surprising. What I say today will be the exact opposite of what he has said in relation to community policing. The second thing I want to say at the outset is that I don't regard the Patten Report as a holy writ that every syllable or every line has to be protected. What we are trying to do is develop a set of principles which will hold good for a time in the realization that the working out of these principles would require detailed change from time to time as circumstances change. But I suppose ten years on it is as good a time as any to look at progress.

Change in any large organisation, even when it is not prescribed in an uneasy transition out of open conflict, and in the middle of civil unrest and political controversy, is always slower than might have been expected. Ten years was probably the subliminal timescale in which Commissioners envisaged change taking place. Some of the changes had to be effected quickly by way of short, sharp shock if there was to be impact – and were necessary to ensure that the process was given sufficient initial momentum to carry it through to completion. But it was clearly going to take much longer for the changes to work themselves through and become embedded in the culture of the organisation. What was being proposed was a radical shake-up of a large and long-established organisation, with its own traditions and values, a change in the culture and ethos which would take a generation to bed in as new people from diverse backgrounds were recruited and made their way up to command and supervisory positions.

That so much has been achieved in so short a time is a great tribute to all concerned – and I am glad to pay it on behalf of my colleagues on the Commission. What we did was to provide a blueprint, to map a way forward. That was the easy bit. After that the hard work depended on many people. I would pay tribute to the police and to those who led them and maintaining efficiency and morale through a period of unparalleled change while continuing to provide a service at the same time. It was rather like changing a washer on a tap with the water still flowing. That change of that order should have been achieved without turbulence or loss of direction is a tribute to the public spirit of former and serving members of the RUC who accepted as a necessary contribution to the achievement of peace the sacrifice of names, symbols and associations which had meant a great deal to them, and to those who joined the new, unproven, and still contested by some, PSNI, and those who took pioneering roles on the new Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships, in the face of intimidation, attacks on persons and homes, and sometimes threats to life itself.

Anything I say later in this address which may strike a mildly critical note should be taken in this context, and should not be seen as in any way discounting or derogating from the magnitude of what has been achieved in producing a policing service which is broadly acceptable across the whole community and which attracts support, and recruits from both sides of a divided society.

The Patten Commission did not start with a clean sheet, much less import or dream up solutions. The terms of reference, both in the body of the Agreement and in the Annex dealing with policing were clear and specific. We were asked to bring forward proposals for a police service which could enjoy widespread support from, and be seen as an integral part of the community as a whole; delivered in

constructive and inclusive partnership with the community at all levels, and with the maximum delegation of authority and responsibility. We were exhorted to consult widely and to consider means of encouraging widespread community support for the arrangements proposed.

The Agreement itself had located the debate on policing within a new political dispensation which would “recognise the full and equal legitimacy and worth of the identities, senses of allegiance and ethos of all sections of the community in Northern Ireland.” Within that context, the police service should be professional, effective and efficient, fair and impartial, free from partisan political control; accountable both under the law for its actions and to the community it serves, representative of the society it policed and operating within human rights norms, in constructive and inclusive partnership with the community at all levels, and with the maximum delegation of authority and responsibility. In particular the Annex required us to consider composition, recruitment, training, culture, ethos and symbols. The Commission felt entitled to rely on these texts, and to assume that the parties which had made the historic agreement had done so in full knowledge of what they expressed.

It is significant that the Report should have invoked Bishop MacNeice and Sir Robert Peel – the one to underline the importance of a new beginning, a forward looking vision, putting aside the things that divide: “Forget the things that are behind you that you may be better able to put all your strength into the tasks of to-day and tomorrow”; the other to return to the fundamental values of British and Irish policing, protection of the citizen: “The main object is the prevention of crime rather than the detection and punishment of offenders.”

A police service likely to meet the requirements of the Agreement would have to meet the test of effectiveness, impartiality, accountability, a culture of human rights and an organisational structure conducive to consultation, co-operation, delegation and subsidiarity. We also saw policing as a matter not only for the police but as a collective responsibility, a partnership for community safety avoiding the traditional “them” and “us” concept of policing.

To meet the requirement of accountability, the Commission had recommended the involvement of locally elected politicians at every level – on the District Policing Partnerships, on the Policing Board, and ultimately, after the transfer of responsibility for policing, the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Report required that the first statutory duty of the Policing Board should be to hold the Chief Constable and the policing service publicly to account. Operational independence was redefined as operational responsibility within agreed policies and an interlocking series of policing plans and strategic documents worked out in agreement with the Policing Board and ultimately approved by the Minister.

Acceptability was to be achieved, among other things, by a progressive increase in the number of catholic/nationalists from under 8% to something nearer proportionality. To achieve a critical mass, a temporary expedient of 50/50 recruitment was recommended. This was not as radical as it appeared. At school-leaving age (the target age for recruitment) there was near parity between the communities; the method had been used in the Canadian public service, and it had, incidentally been suggested by one senior Unionist spokesman. It had become clear in our discussion with young people that young catholics in the target age-range, particularly in those areas where relations with the police had been most abrasive, would not join a body called the Royal Ulster Constabulary (or indeed Royal anything) or one carrying the badges and symbols associated with it. It was this more than anything that dictated the change of name and symbols. Without their participation, a new body could not be representative, and as such would fail the test of acceptability. Interestingly, too, young people in both communities, especially in working-class areas, and especially young women were found to have had the same experience of policing and similar attitudes to the police – and these were generally negative.

The invocation of the principle of subsidiarity in the terms of reference found expression in the Report in the espousal of community policing and a structure designed to devolve budgets and authority and to empower the local community police officer. A hierarchical organisation was to be turned on its head to recognise the crucial importance of the interface between the individual police officer and the citizen and the local community. Critical to acceptance was the attitude of the RUC members, who, despite the sacrifices they were being asked to make (and indeed had made), accepted Patten as the way forward for policing in a peaceful society, as preserving a unitary force, as providing for accountability while avoiding political interference in operational matters, and as a chance to make a new beginning. In this process, the espousal of the thrust of the Report by the Chief Constable, Sir Ronny Flanagan, was critical. Without his rapport with his officers and their respect for him, and his formidable communication skills, it is highly unlikely that an orderly transition to a new order could have been effected.

As it was, the Bill, when published, fell far short of the ideals of the Report – to the extent that it required some 150 amendments to get it back on the rails. With Unionist parties opposing and Sinn Fein abstaining in the parliamentary debate, it was left to the SDLP to carry the fight for the Report. In this context the efforts of Seamus Mallon and Eddie McGrady should not be underestimated, any more than the courage of many of their party colleagues in later taking up places on the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships in the face of intimidation, abuse, attacks on property, and threats to life and limb.

Most of the public debate centred on the more political issues such as the name, the symbols and the 50/50 recruitment. Of equal importance, and fundamentally destructive of the Report, were the attempts in the Bill to reduce the influence of the Policing Board, to shift the balance of power back towards the Secretary of State, and to emasculate the DPPs. This largely reflected the culture of the NIO and those who had had charge of policing under one label or another over the years. Having looked at policing through one set of lenses, they were not likely to embrace change of this order. There was also a desire to keep policing in “safe hands” and a deep distrust of elected representatives. As the structures bedded in and were seen to work, as young Catholics joined in numbers and as PSNI showed an even-handed competence under the leadership of Hugh Orde, Sinn Fein were ultimately forced by the community and political pressure to come on board. The final proof of acceptability was the ability of the Policing Board to agree unanimously on the selection of a new Chief Constable in succession to Sir Hugh Orde and for Sinn Fein leaders to welcome his appointment.

Incidentally, there were two other recommendations relating to staffing and recruitment which didn't attract the same publicity and which don't appear to have been pursued with the same enthusiasm. These related to the composition of the civilian staff, whether seconded civil servants or directly recruited by the Policing Board. These, too, were intended to be reflective of the broader community. In a period of increasing civilianisation it is important to maintain a balance in this too and, by extension, it might be expected that the same principles should apply to staffing in the government department responsible for policing.

There is still much to be done. Peace has been achieved, but the threat from dissident republicans remains a nagging reality. Community Policing has not been achieved, nor the devolution of budgets. Indeed the rush by the PSNI to abandon the 27 district command structure for one based on six or seven in anticipation of local government reorganisation reflects a rather old-fashioned appetite for centralised control that runs counter to the Patten vision. Much has been achieved. Further progress will depend, as in the past, on the police themselves and their willingness and ability to establish constructive relationships with the communities they serve and with the other social agencies.

The Commissioners believed that ultimately the test of acceptability could be met not by public-relations campaigns, marketing exercises or re-branding initiatives, but by the performance of the police themselves and the judgement of society. “By their deeds ye shall know them” as Michael Staines, first

Commissioner of an Garda Síochána, put it in more troubled times in 1922 in relation to the unarmed police force he was setting up in the middle of a civil war: (the police) ... “will succeed, not by force of arms or numbers, but on their moral authority as servants of the people.” This must remain the ultimate test of acceptability.

Much has been achieved – and don't let anybody forget it. What is gratifying too is the extent to which elements of the Patten proposals, although designed specifically to meet the prescription set out in an Annex to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, are of universal relevance and have been invoked in efforts to modernise policing in other jurisdictions.

Of the things that remain to be done, perhaps the most immediately demanding is the transfer of responsibility for policing and criminal justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Accountability is a dominant theme of Patten. Accountability to the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland sitting in a devolved Assembly at Stormont was seen as a necessary key-stone to the structures of accountability. Not only does it make clear that, in a democratic society, the police, besides being accountable to the law, have a duty to give an account of themselves to the elected representatives of the society they serve. The eternal question, posed by Juvenal as *Quis custodiat ipos custodiet?* Who polices the police? Requires an answer, and this is it.

Furthermore, in the specific context of Northern Ireland, and in the transition out of a bitter conflict of identities and loyalties, a transfer of political responsibility is required by the “new beginning” of the Agreement in order to legitimise the police service and the arrangements for the administration of justice in the eyes of young republicans and nationalists whose support and engagement are a necessary condition for reform. For these reasons, the Commission recommended that devolution take place “as soon as possible,” and it should be done now that all the main parties have expressed their support for the PSNI and serve on the Policing Board.

It would also do much to draw support away from the Dissidents by demonstrating that politics can be made to work.

A related but important recommendation is that the powers of the Policing Board should in no way be diminished when the governmental role in the tri-partite arrangements involving the Secretary of State, Chief Constable, and the Policing Board passes to the Northern Ireland Executive. The structures proposed in the report are carefully designed to secure accountability while protecting day to day policing from political interference. No politician should be able to direct who should be apprehended or prosecuted and who not, what law should be enforced and what ignored; neither should the Chief Constable be able to operate outside the requirement to do so within approved policing plans and budgets, and the requirement to be accountable to politicians for his actions and the performance of the police service.

The Report went out of its way to emphasise that it was about policing, not simply about the police. Policing was defined as a matter for the whole community, not something the community leaves the police to do. If war is too serious a matter to be left to the generals, policing is too serious to be left to the police – nor should they wish it so. It also recognised that there were agencies which provided for or assisted in public safety and the quality of life – education, social services, housing, youth and community groups, voluntary bodies and others in the private sector. The essence of policing was to synchronise their efforts to the benefit of a safe society.

“Policing should be a collective community responsibility, a partnership for community safety. This sort of policing is more difficult than policing the community. It requires an end to the “them” and “us” concept of policing. If it is to work it has to become the core function of a police service, not the work of

a specialist group, not the work of a separate command or a separate cadre of police officers.” This statement expresses the basic philosophy of the report. It is a value which suffuses and informs the main recommendations, and the report should be read through this lens rather than any other.

Most of the discussion on publication concerned what were regarded as the more controversial, political aspects of the report – name, badges, oaths, recruitment. This rather blanked-out discussion on the important managerial aspects of the document, and what lay at the heart of it – community policing. This indeed was to be the new beginning. What the recommendations were directed at was turning a hierarchical organisation on its head, by asking what it was mostly that determined the public perception of policing. It was not the formal statements of senior officers, but the nature of the encounter with the police officer on the ground. The nature of his or her interaction with the public, individually and collectively, was a main determinant of police acceptability and of the degree of public support and co-operation. On this reading, the officer on the beat was not the least representative of the police service, but the most important, and the resources of the whole organisation should be focused in support of him or her.

An analogy might be to see the community police officer as a sort of General Practitioner, advisory and diagnostic rather than surgically interventionist, but able to call in the specialists in crime detection, domestic violence, traffic drugs or whatever. To continue the analogy with preventive health, his or her priority would be, in the words of Rowan and Mayne, first Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, the prevention of crime: “Every member of the force must remember that his duty is to protect and help members of the public, no less than to apprehend guilty persons. Consequently while prompt to prevent crime and arrest criminals, he must look upon himself as the servant and guardian of the general public, and treat all law-abiding citizens, irrespective of social position, with unfailing patience, courtesy and good humour.”

Interestingly in this context, in a recent letter in *The Times* a former Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police exhorted British police forces to remember their roots in the reforms of Sir Robert Peel which charged the police primarily with protecting the public and preventing crime while the apprehension of criminals was the duty of the magistrates. As the Report points out, this all has implications for the structure of the police and the way they go about their business. The structure should become more decentralised, the management style more open and prepared to delegate, and the manner of policing should become more orientated towards active problem-solving rather than the more traditional reactive enforcement: “...the ethos should be one of service to the whole community... it should permeate the whole organisation and should be experienced as such by the whole community.” In this dispensation, community policing is a very way of working with the grain of the community, engaging the community and other agencies in the task. It is more than mere community relations – indeed the report prefers the term ‘community awareness’ – it is not an add-on to traditional policing but a fundamentally different way of approaching the task. This was reinforced by another recommendation that a community police officer should have tenure to enable him/her to get to know the community, and be known by them, and that all officers should spend a period of their service as community police officers.

The RUC under Ronny Flanagan had themselves carried out a Fundamental Review, a thorough and valuable exercise which was paralleled and to a great extent endorsed by many of the recommendations in the Patten Report. It was concerned mainly with securing the transition to the task of policing a more peaceful society after the threat of violence had been removed, and it was fundamental only within the traditions and practices of contemporary British policing. What Patten was seeking was a more radical vision in which the police would take a lead role with the community itself in securing a safer society, in preserving public order, and in the detection and apprehension of criminals.

I do not doubt that the ethos of service to the community is fully embraced by the PSNI as an organisational imperative. I am not so sure that it is expressed at operational level in a form of policing that differs from traditional British policing methods. The purpose of decentralisation was to push authority and the point of decision downwards in the organisation, nearer to the interface with the citizen and the community. This is why there was to be a District Commander and a District Policing Partnership in every one of the twenty-six District Council areas, with a majority of elected councillors on the boards. While it was envisaged that the number of councils might be reduced to twelve to fifteen in a subsequent reorganisation of local government, the rush of the PSNI to anticipate a seven council model as a basis for its command structure sent out quite the wrong signal and indicated an unwillingness to delegate any further, and a desire to mute the strength of democratic scrutiny.

However, they were not the only ones to think this way. The NIO distrust of elected members caused the DPPs to be nobbled by being deprived of resources while the community safety partnerships, which were quite unnecessarily brought in in parallel, were funded. This, I believe was a ploy to emasculate the Patten bodies and another attempt to dilute the effect of the Report. There is no room for two bodies operating to roughly the same agenda in the same narrow field. Apart from causing confusion, the burden on the police in the servicing of both is not negligible. In the same way, the delegation of budgets (which has not been effected) was seen as a means of empowering local commanders and local communities to enable the fine-tuning of broader policing plans to meet specific local needs. In the same vein was the proposal to allow District Councils to raise a modest rate to be spent on the advice of the local commander on minor local initiatives not provided for in the general policing budget. This was not even legislated for.

The part-time reserve (which seems to have been quietly forgotten after having been piloted in the areas in which it was least needed) was intended to provide an additional police presence, and to allow input by public-spirited people who were known and respected in the community and able to bring a leaven of local knowledge to policing. It was the same sort of thinking which led to the proposal that the new police college should be sited near a third level institution so that police trainees could encounter and share courses with other professionals in the social services with whom they would have to co-operate in the course of policing duties. It was also intended to point the way to a more open curriculum on police training courses.

Community policing is at best an imprecise description and I leave it to my fellow Commissioner Kathy O'Toole to discuss how the concept might be worked out in practice, drawing on her wide knowledge of international practice and her experience as a professional police officer. The Report was, I believe rightly, non-prescriptive, but there is no doubt about its belief that policing in and with the community, marshalling the resources of other agencies, and ensuring community support for the police and a willingness to become engaged, is a core value of the report. Neither is this intended to be soft centred policing or a diminution in any way of the capability of the police to investigate crime and apprehend criminals. Quite the reverse. Crimes are solved by information, and people are more likely to provide that information, very often of a low order but vital nevertheless, to an officer on the beat who is known to them, than to an unknown person in a car who appears only after the event.

As I have said already, much has been achieved, but it is now time when a change of gear becomes appropriate to push ahead with community policing in the sense and on the scale envisaged by Patten. The appointment of a new Chief Constable with a track record in this field might well be taken as an indication that the Policing Board is now ready to go down this route. If so, I wish them well.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

Patten Commissioner
Chief Inspectorate, Garda Síochána Inspectorate

In late May of 1998, I received a call from a senior civil servant in the Northern Ireland Office. He asked if I would be willing to serve on the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland. Before accepting the offer, I disclosed to him that I had limited understanding of the history and politics here. I had followed developments by reading the Boston newspapers and watching the evening news, but knew that only those living through the Troubles could truly comprehend the deep human suffering and political complexities.

He reassured me by saying there would be two very capable local representatives on the Commission, Dr. Maurice Hayes and Peter Smith, QC. He said that I would only be expected to bring the practical perspective of a career police officer to the Patten Commission. It is the same perspective I will present here today. I'll speak a bit about policing in Northern Ireland, but in the broader context of policing in any democracy, whether in Boston, Belfast or Dublin.

My first exposure to Northern Ireland actually occurred on the opposite side of the Atlantic four years prior to my Patten experience. It was in Boston, in 1994. I was serving as Secretary of Public Safety in Massachusetts and was invited to chair a workshop at a women's conference at Boston University. The theme was 'Reaching Common Ground.' In attendance were women from the Boston area and women from this island, North and South. The purpose of the conference was to highlight and discuss issues of mutual concern.

The topic for my panel was 'Violence in our Communities.' In the United States, our biggest challenge at the time was gun and gang violence. Young people in our inner city neighbourhoods were murdering each other in record numbers. We had been experimenting with new community policing methods and early results were somewhat encouraging.

The stories from the women in Northern Ireland were very different, but incredibly compelling. They talked of losing husbands, sons, brothers and neighbours to sectarian violence. They represented several republican and loyalist neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland, including the Falls Road and the Shankhill Road here in Belfast.

During the initial discussion, it seemed that we were facing very different issues on opposite sides of the Atlantic (African-American and Latino gang violence in Boston – sectarian paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland). I wondered, 'Where is the common ground in all of this?' But as the dialogue progressed it became apparent that we had much more in common than we first realised. Those living in our respective communities, particularly in working class neighbourhoods, were facing many similar challenges – poverty, joblessness, violence, substance abuse and so on. And sadly, there was another clear common denominator whether in Boston or Belfast, large segments of our communities had no trust or confidence in the police.

The Boston University event was a great success. I know I learned a great deal from it. But more important were the friendships I established – friendships with women representing different communities and different perspectives in Northern Ireland.

As the result of these new friendships, in early 1996, then two years prior to establishment of the Patten Commission, I was invited to Belfast to present talks and attend meetings on the subject of community

policing. It was my first trip to this city. The NIO had extended the invitation and arranged my itinerary. My initial meeting was scheduled at the North Queen Street RUC Station. As a career police officer who has always preferred the beat to the conference room, I was pleased to learn I would have an opportunity to patrol with one of the station's newly-established 'community policing' teams.

The local superintendent greeted me on arrival at the station yard. To me it looked more like a maximum security prison than a neighbourhood police station (blast walls, barbed wire, bomb-proof ramps, security cameras, heavily armed personnel). He introduced me to the supervisors of his community policing team who were ready to commence their patrols. I was naïve to say the least. I expected to venture off on a walking beat to meet with residents and local business people. Instead, I was led to an awaiting landrover. I climbed into the rear compartment of the armoured vehicle where I was surrounded by police officers in full tactical gear – helmets, body armour, machine guns and semi-automatic side-arms.

As we exited the police car park, I glanced through the small windows of the landrover and realised we were not alone. We were travelling in a convoy with military vehicles. Each time we stopped in traffic, an armed soldier emerged from the roof hatch of one of the military vehicles to conduct a 360 degree security assessment. So began my introduction to 'community policing' in Northern Ireland.

On two occasions during our ninety minute tour, the convoy stopped in the heart of a housing estate and those of us in the rear of the landrover exited. I was told this was a new strategy devised by the superintendent, as he recognised the need to get the police out of vehicles, on walking patrols, engaging with the communities in the New Lodge and Tiger's Bay. Given the security situation at the time, this was risky business. The police divided into two groups. The first group walked cautiously down one side of the street while the other did the same on the opposite side. The vehicles stayed in close proximity to those on foot. A military helicopter flew in circles overhead, providing a watchful eye from the air. At the end of the block, the team reunited and quickly filed back into the awaiting landrover.

But for the symbols, it was difficult for me to distinguish between loyalist and republican areas. People we encountered kept their distance. The exception was a gang of young children in a loyalist estate who suddenly appeared from behind parked cars to throw rocks at the passing landrover.

There are similar quotes from George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde about 'two countries separated by the same language.' At that time, the term 'community policing' had very different connotations in North Belfast and Boston.

Two years later, in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the Patten Commission was given its remit to create a 'new beginning' for policing in Northern Ireland. The Commission's work coincided with a dramatic shift in thinking about democratic policing elsewhere in the world, including Boston. As one who began my police career two decades prior to my Patten Commission experience, I was already witnessing a new policing paradigm first hand. I was passionately committed to the emerging model - a more strategic, transparent, accountable and collaborative model of policing built on the strong foundation of community engagement and human rights. It was a model that differed significantly from the policing we practiced when I was a young officer.

When I attended the Boston Police Academy in 1979, I was taught to fight the 'war on crime' in America. We referred to ourselves as members of the 'police force.' It never occurred to us that we were actually a 'police service.' Police leaders dictated the agenda without the consulting the community. We raced from one 911 radio call to the next. Our performance was measured primarily in terms of response times and the number of arrests we made. Enforcement was the priority and our vocabulary did not

include the words prevention, intervention or collaboration. We were not at all transparent and there was very little accountability in our system.

Unfortunately, our 'war on crime' failed. As I mentioned earlier, children were dying in our streets. Violent crime statistics skyrocketed across the United States and the quality of life in many neighbourhoods seriously deteriorated.

Admitting to failure, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the more progressive police leaders began partnering with some insightful academics to develop and test new policing strategies. Some called it the birth of community policing. I like to think it was the rebirth of community policing. In any case, a new model of democratic policing began to emerge. It was collaborative in nature, harnessing not only the resources of the police, but those of the wider community. The police finally realised that it was more important to prevent crime, tragedy, and disorder than to simply respond after the fact. Enforcement was still important, but had to be balanced with prevention and intervention.

This transformation in modern policing has made a considerable difference in many jurisdictions. In Boston, for instance, since strong partnerships emerged between the police, the courts, probation, parole, education, social services, health services, the clergy and other community leaders, serious crime has continued to decline. For example, in 1990, there were 154 murders in Boston. There is now less than half that number. Part-one crime (often referred to as headline crime on this island) has declined consistently each year for over a decade now. Other North American cities and democracies elsewhere in the world have enjoyed similar success when embracing and practicing this new collaborative model of policing and problem-solving. Guns, gangs, drugs and other complicated issues continue to challenge our communities, but it is clear that strong partnerships can lead to much more effective policing.

So far, I have talked about the recent developments in democratic community policing in the context of my own personal experience. But now I would like to address one essential component of successful democratic policing that I believe is being addressed much more substantially and effectively on this side of the Atlantic – accountability.

Police services in the United States have become much more strategic and community focused. Against this backdrop, community expectations and scrutiny of the police are increasing and rightfully so. While exciting new business models for democratic policing are being developed and replicated globally, no universal standards for accountability have emerged. Few jurisdictions, particularly in the United States, have recognised that rigorous oversight standards and supporting structures must be developed and implemented in order for modern police organisations to operate effectively, protect and promote human rights, and develop and maintain community trust.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is an exception and was one of the first police services to be subjected to highly structured oversight as the result of Maurice Hayes' initial recommendation for the establishment of the Police Ombudsman. Subsequently, the Patten Commission recommended additional robust structures around policing in Northern Ireland to ensure maximum transparency and accountability. When I spoke at the Police Ombudsman's conference in Belfast in 2003, I was quoted as referring to the Police Service of Northern Ireland as the 'most accountable police service in the world'. In my personal experience anyway, I stand by that statement. Also, in my opinion, that is a very good thing.

The Patten Report contained 175 recommendations. Very few of them addressed the unique cultural and political issues in Northern Ireland. The vast majority were recommendations that would apply to policing in any democracy. My hope is that other jurisdictions, particularly those in the United States,

will follow the example of Northern Ireland, particularly in terms of the human rights focus and better structures for police accountability.

Serious policing challenges remain in Northern Ireland, most notably in the form of the dissident threat and the senseless tragedies that continue to occur from time to time. At the same time, there is also pressure on the PSNI to continue with the reform agenda, with an expanded commitment to community policing. But, as someone who had her first glimpse of policing in Northern Ireland in different times, it is hugely significant for me that these challenges are being faced in a new policing environment. Policing in Northern Ireland has turned a very significant corner. There is no going back. With the consent and support of the overwhelming majority Northern Ireland has realised its 'new beginning' for policing.

I will never claim to be an expert on the history or recent developments in Northern Ireland. Only someone who has lived through the Troubles can claim that title. But I am certainly a more informed commentator now than I was during my first 'community policing' patrol in North Belfast. I look forward to hearing more today about how policing in Northern Ireland has progressed over the past ten years, particularly from those who are living through the transition. I also look forward to hearing about the remaining and emerging challenges. Solutions inevitably emerge from discussions we have at events such as this today.

Again, thank you to CAJ for inviting me to participate and also for continuing to encourage important and constructive dialogue on the very important issue of policing in Northern Ireland.

PATTEN COMMISSIONERS: QUESTION & ANSWER

MR STEVENSON, Ballymoney District Policing Partnership

Patten is viewed by some to be a political fudge and people, whenever it was implemented - although they were consulted and so on and so forth - there was not democratic consent given to it, certainly among the unionist community. I feel that when we talk about human rights and democracy that was a fatal flaw in it. Now I am not saying Patten is all bad by any means, I'm not saying that at all. I think one of the main things in it, which is the (PSNI) training college in Cookstown, was very good. But what I view as one of the main issues is that it is not democratic and that Belfast is creating its own measure of peace without necessarily looking into all the detail.

One aside to that, as regards the names and the badge, I thought that the original badge was representative of cross community. It had the shamrock on it, it had the crown on it but it was truly cross community. I didn't see why that needed changed. I previously trained in the Royal Victoria Hospital. I know in west Belfast they treat the Royal as their hospital. There is the Royal Mail, there is the British Broadcasting Company, I don't know why the name (Royal Ulster Constabulary) needed to be changed but these are my feelings and I wonder if the panel wish to discuss them.

PAUL McILWAINE

My son David was murdered in Tandragee in February 2000 along with Andrew Robb. I have a question for Kathleen O'Toole. You spoke about the success rate of the security forces in Boston. Recently I watched the congressional hearing in regards to the Raymond McCord Jr. murder and the possibility of state collusion in this country. On that subject, the chairman Mr Delahunt stated he was in charge of an investigation into the collusion between the FBI and criminals in murder cases in Boston some time ago. Would you attribute the success rate to security arrangements or to it being safer in Boston to expose collusion? Where there any criminal convictions for the security force members?

I have every confidence in the police but I have a lot of issues over the investigation into my son's killing. When most of the panel here have been talking about accountability, truth, and transparency – and these are the three main words on the Policing Board's billboard at their offices - I don't seem to be getting any information at all. I have asked questions left, right and centre, and they were refused. They wouldn't give me any answers at all. I only got the answers through freedom of information and by chance, and it is only after I got that initial information that I am now getting explanations. I wouldn't say it is the truth. I am very aggrieved that people linked with terrorist activities are receiving government contracts to work on security force bases, both loyalist and republican. We are now in the region of £30m or so. In particular, the commander of the UVF, who was involved in my son's killing and who was paid, two year's after my son's killing, £483,000. I find that absolutely disgraceful but I don't seem to be getting the answers or the accountability that you are talking about here.

CLARA O'REILLY, Relatives for Justice & The United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets

One of Patten's recommendations was the phasing out of plastic bullets and the introduction of safer weaponry. It is ten years from when that recommendation was made and what has occurred is the introduction of different forms of plastic bullets. So, ten years later, we still have plastic bullets being fired on the streets of Northern Ireland. The legacy of rubber and plastic bullets is 17 dead, nine of them children, hundreds very seriously injured with brain damage, paralysis and so forth. We had a statement from the Chief Constable two years ago acknowledging the innocence of the plastic bullet victims, especially the children and giving a promise that they would never again be used on the streets of Northern Ireland, even in riotous situations. End of story. Then we had the incident in Ardoyne and an incident in Short Strand where plastic bullets were again being used. We know there were riots going on and nobody wants riots, not even the people who live in the area. So the emphasis and the need for

dialogue between community leaders and police on the ground is vitally important. However, we had the Chief Constable making that assessment and giving that promise, and he went back on his word as plastic bullets are still being used. My fear is that if anyone else is killed by another plastic bullet - and it most likely will be a child - this will set policing back within our community for years and years to come.

RESPONSE

MAURICE HAYES

The first question is about the democratic acceptability of the Patten report. We were agnostic as far as the politics of the thing were concerned. We were put in there to do a technical job. But what we started from was, and I alluded to it in my address, terms of reference that were given to us which were very, very specific. Now, all the political parties to the Good Friday Belfast Agreement signed up to that and I think we were entitled to accept that they knew what they were signing up to. If they asked us to look at compensation, at recruitment, at badges and symbols, they were not asking us to endorse the status quo. I do agree with you that the shamrock and the crown are ecumenical in Northern Ireland terms but simply, the young people we talked to would not wear it, because of the association of that badge. I am glad to say that the Policing Board very rapidly got agreement on a badge which incorporated a whole range of symbols and good luck to them.

On the question of the plastic bullets, a lot of people thought we should have recommended the outlawing of baton rounds, of plastic bullets, and the concern I think we had was that you couldn't leave a policeman with no alternative but to use lead bullets. There had to be something that stopped short of lethal force and any form of intervention has the capability of being dangerous. A person can be killed by a baton, they can be killed by a blow of the fist. So it wasn't a question of getting rid of these things altogether but of controlling the use of them and making people accountable for the way they used them. It was also about making the use of plastic bullets as accountable as the use of real bullets. I think there has been real progress in that way, first of all in the remarkable reduction of the numbers. The time when these things were being fired off at a thousand a night was totally ridiculous.

Secondly, the availability now the (Police) Ombudsman, the use of plastic bullets has to be reported to the Ombudsman and by and large Nuala O'Loan - I don't know whether there are any reports on this or not - but in all those cases they say that it was a proportional use of force. But you touched on another thing. When we asked for other methods of controlling, it wasn't only whether it should be a baton round or a taser or whatever, but that people should have the means of developing relationships with how crowds were handled and you hit on it there, that is where it comes down to. I think good community policing is where there are open relationships, where people can discuss these things, and what happens if certain crowd situations appear. So there is an understanding on both sides what it is, and it is that the police are not coming in as an inundating force or even a defending force for some people. I wouldn't exclude some form of control short of lethal force, but I think the importance of control of accountability and particularly of people talking to each other that have roots in the community.

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

First of all I would like to address the first gentleman's point about the democratic process and I speak again from an outsider's perspective. When we attended our first Patten Commission meeting, I vividly recall Chris Patten saying if there had been a political solution to this, Senator George Mitchell and company would have reached that. We need to go out, listen to the ordinary people of Northern Ireland and then benchmark their ideas against policing in democratic societies elsewhere and the developments that have occurred elsewhere in policing. And very early in the process we advertised widely for written submissions. I was one that committed to reading every single submission, little did I know that we would receive thousands of them; very, very thoughtful submissions ranging from a few

pages to several volumes of material that people had accumulated over the course of years. So we carefully considered all those written submissions. Then Chris Patten thought it was important to go out and hold public meetings on policing. Now, some thought that was a mad idea to hold public meetings on the subject of policing in Northern Ireland. They were concerned that it would be more disruptive than helpful. But in retrospect, I think those public meetings were incredibly valuable, especially to me as an outsider because I was able to hear the very compelling stories of so many people that had lived through the tragedies and the violence here. Then in addition to that, we had countless meetings with people who didn't feel comfortable speaking out in the public environment but wanted to share their stories with us privately. So from an outsider's perspective, and again it is all in the eyes of the beholder I guess, but I was actually very pleased with the process and thought that we had made every commitment to speak to as many people in Northern Ireland as possible.

On Paul's comments, first of all I would say that when we were doing the work in Northern Ireland there were some people who said: "Well we should just decentralise entirely and set up dozens of individual police services in Northern Ireland" and I thought oh, my goodness. I had flash backs to the turf battles and the inefficiencies of US policing. In the United States right now we have close to 18,000 police organisations representing federal, state and local government and it is highly decentralised but highly inefficient as well. The case that Paul referenced was a case in Boston that the FBI were involved in and there was a corrupt FBI agent who had colluded with some underworld gang characters and has now gone prison for life. I think he has more than one life sentence. So he will spend the rest of his days in prison, there is no question about that. Probably that activity was going on 15, 20 years ago in Boston. It was an FBI investigation so I followed it with interest in the newspapers but my responsibility was always in local policing on the ground. But I will say this, that whether it is FBI or whether it is local policing, we need to have structures in place to weed out the bad apples. We need to be very, very aggressive as police managers to ensure that we have structures in place to ensure that corrupt police officers, corrupt agents are held accountable and pay the price for their actions.

I think it is very helpful that we have a structure here in Northern Ireland like the Ombudsman Commission in the Republic of Ireland where people can go with their concerns. They can go to an independent body and bring allegations of corruption or allegations of wrongdoing that will be investigated thoroughly by someone outside of the police.

Unfortunately in Boston we don't have an ombudsman and most US cities don't have the accountability that you have here in Northern Ireland. So I think you're ahead of the turf here and I think that is a very good thing. The more we get structures like that in place, the more we will identify and weed out corruption that exists because, believe me, nothing is more devastating to a police organisation or to honest hard working police officers than the corrupt people that commit their acts in law enforcement.

JIM McCABE

My wife was murdered by an RUC man with a plastic bullet 28 years ago. I now have two granddaughters aged five and seven. For the past 28 years I have been living with this lie that the policing service or the RUC or the policing force, call it what you were, were a fair group of people. They have resisted my attempts at gaining justice. My oldest son is 35 years of age. My daughter was twelve weeks old at the time her mother was murdered by an RUC man. From the day and hour she was able to speak she asked me a question: "Why did they kill my mummy?" My grandchildren are asking me the same question: "Why did they kill my granny, granddad?" And I have to give them the same answer: "I don't know because they didn't tell me why. They hid the truth and they are still hiding the truth."

If the present Chief Constable is genuine and the present so-called Policing Service of Northern Ireland is genuine, they will demonstrate that in assisting me, my children and my grandchildren, my wife's

family and my wife's community, in getting the true answer as to why a plastic bullet was fired into the back of her head from less than ten feet in questionable circumstances. They have for 28 years avoided the truth. And on the back of that, how can I ask or seek my children or grandchildren or any member of my community to trust a person, male or female, who calls themselves police? Talking about policing with the community they are not, they are policing the community in the same manner as they did in the past. I don't see any change.

MICHAEL MAGUIRE, Chief Inspector of the Criminal Justice Inspection

We published a report in March 2009 which was explicitly on policing with the community and tried to examine ten years on from Patten the steps that the police have taken and the issues that need to be addressed in moving forward. I am sure these issues will emerge over the next couple of days. One of the things that did strike me in the context of this report which we did it with Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, was the exercise of quite a wide-ranging consultation process with communities both protestant and catholic, loyalist and republican across Northern Ireland. The clear message was - and this is important in the context of ten years on from Patten - it put the tent peg in the ground, communities were saying in the context of this report that they wanted policing with the community. They wanted police that were accessible, that were visible, that would engage in problem solving. We recognised all of the areas that progress had been made and those things that needed to be done, I think ten years on from Patten we need to reflect that this is a different situation that we are in now. The issue, which I hope we will follow over the next couple of days, is what are we going to do to make it happen further? This report says could it move further and the answer to that is yes. I think the critical question is what are we going to do differently to take it to the next stage of its development?

MAEVE FERGUSON, Fermanagh DPP

My question is directly related to confidence in the police and policing with the community. I would like to have the panel's opinion on the length of time that DNA samples are being retained in Northern Ireland and other areas of the British Isles. A member of the public recently asked me to raise this at a DPP meeting and the response was well if they have not done anything wrong they have nothing to worry about. A case was recently brought to the European Court of Human Rights - and I think this is all about policing with the community - which recommended that DNA samples of innocent or acquitted people should not be kept. Surely this is another area in which confidence in the police is reduced in Northern Ireland.

MICHAEL FLEMING, Ballymoney DPP

In his remarks, Maurice Hayes alluded to when justice is devolved that policing boards will still have a role. In that the assembly, through its committee structure and through its plenary sessions, will pay a lot of attention to policing. Does he fear in any way that the role of the Policing Board will be diluted and then down through that to the DPPs? Secondly, the NIO at the moment is running a process to roll the DPP and CSP into one body, as part of the RPA arrangements. Again does he see any dilution of the role of the DPP specifically? Thank you.

MIKE RITCHIE, Director, Committee on the Administration of Justice & Panel Chair

I think both in relation to Jim and in relation to what Paul was saying earlier, there is a frustration about the fact that in relation to past cases, information is not forthcoming. How often the families have to go to the courts to force production of documentation from the past and the resistance by the police. In a way, it is this question of what is the legitimate level of intelligence that has to be kept back and how does that interfere with policing with the community? Perhaps your professional thoughts on that would be useful, Kathleen, and any other remarks as well.

RESPONSE

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

Again, I can't speak to the individual cases I heard about today because I am not familiar with the specific facts in those cases but I was reminiscing about a very similar tragedy that occurred in Boston while I was a Commissioner there and, believe, me from a police manager's perspective, I wish we'd moved to a point where we had different types of devices available to us that are non-lethal. I was on the Patten Commission which said as soon as possible that we need to see these plastic baton rounds go. But we travelled all over the world to look at alternatives to see where new devices had been developed and there were none that were non-lethal. They simply referred to them as less-lethal devices. When I was Police Commissioner in Boston the police department had purchased these devices that shot pepper pellets and they were supposed to disintegrate on contact so as not to cause any penetration or cause any injury to anyone. We thought this was a wonderful thing that we could get away from plastic baton rounds and go in the direction of more modern technology for riot situations. We had a very, very serious riot situation in Boston and, very unfortunately, a 21 year old girl who was a completely innocent bystander was struck in the eye with one of these pepper pellets and it not only penetrated her eye but it penetrated her brain and she died.

Again, I can't speak to the individual cases that I heard about here today, but the first thing I felt compelled to do as the police leader was to go to that family and sit with them within the hours after their daughter's death and actually ask an independent panel to take a look at the situation and I promised that we would go where the truth took us. We tried to be as transparent and as open as possible during the course of that investigation. We can't ever compensate that family for the loss of their daughter, but I think the fact that we took responsibility immediately, not years after the event but the day of the event we stood up and said: "The Boston Police Department takes responsibility for this, and we promised a full, transparent investigation and published the findings as soon as possible." I think at least it helped to build greater community trust. Generally speaking, I would be an advocate for police leaders who stand up, take responsibility and say we will go where the truth takes us as soon as possible.

Some of the lawyers, of course, were not pleased with my position on all of this but I said forget that, it is more important to that family and to our community that we get out there, we tell the truth and we stand up and take responsibility as soon as possible. So hopefully that is the direction that most police agencies are headed at this point, but police agencies around the world for many, many years were insular and tended to close ranks when a horrible incident happened, but I think the trend has changed.

MAURICE HAYES

First of all, Jim, I heard about your wife's case and I have deep, deep sympathy for you and I do hope that you find a way of finding out, to the extent that it can be found out, what happened. I suspect there may not be records given circumstances like that and the way things were done at the time, but nevertheless I think you should be helped to be told what is available and I hope that you succeed in that. I hope, too, that it will conclude at some stage and that there is a new beginning, that you can encourage your grandchildren to be part of policing and of the community.

I agree with your last remark actually that I don't see an awful lot of difference in the style really of policing on the ground and on the police. I mean, one of the things I find disturbing is that my children don't know policemen and will not know a policeman unless they are stopped or something like that. I think that is why they were trying to get back to, or encouraging people to get back to, the essence of community policing.

The question on DNA retention I think is a wider one. I mean I, too, would be uneasy at the idea that somebody is holding records about me. I think there is a balance that a society is just going to have to hold and it arises from the advances in technology and IT, and the number of cameras that are around

the place and all the rest of it. So I think it is not something that you can sort of deal with in two flip answers but it is just a question of balance. My own view is that DNA of innocent people shouldn't be kept, and others be kept for three years and some say it should be six, but there it is.

The other question on what would happen to the DPPs and that when the responsibility for policing was transferred to the Assembly, is key to the report as well; it is an important part of it. But I did allude in my address to the fact that we added a rider to that, that independence and powers of the Policing Board and by analogy the DPPs should be preserved, or not in any way diluted, when the Assembly Minister took over as part of that tripartite arrangement between the Secretary of State and the Chief Constable.

You see, it is important, I think, to insulate policing, day-to-day policing, from politics and the great complaint in the past was that we had political police on a lot of occasions. I don't want to be policed by a unionist police force, I don't want to be policed by a Sinn Féin police force or by a DUP police force or by an SDLP police force, and I think it is hugely important that those Chinese walls are kept. And it will be a difficult relationship as people come in and I can see that an Assembly committee treating this with a lot of enthusiasm, and deciding that they were the Policing Board and not the Policing Board it is going to be, I think, an awkward enough ride for people until things settle down. But it is important that they establish the protocols of what is your set of responsibilities, which is the overall political thing in setting broad objectives and providing the money, and the Policing Board and the Chief Constable. But I think if it ever got to the stage that transfer of authority to the assembly meant more political interference in policing it would be a disaster.

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

Briefly on the DPPs, I would agree with Maurice that if anything I would like to see the DPPs strengthened, not in any way undermined. I think we all envisaged local community DPPs as being one of the most important components of the new police structures.

DANA BRUNO, GMB Trade Union & Ethnic Minorities Officer, Constituency Labour Party of Northern Ireland

Since the implementation of the Patten Report, has there been an increase in ethnic minority officers in the PSNI and can anybody tell me what that percentage would be?

ANDREW IRVINE, City Centre Manager for Belfast & Chairman of the Association of Town Centre Management in Ireland

Just a comment really on behalf of the business community, if I may; we are very happy certainly in the city of Belfast with the partnership arrangements that are now in place and we have very successful schemes such as the city centre police beat scheme. The issue that we would have is the size of the force simply. I noticed that one of the panel members made a comment about his grandchildren being police officers and really the query is over the decision to base the size of the police service here on a particular area of England although the circumstances here are very clearly different. I think we have just the size of force wrong. It is too small.

JIM McVEIGH, Coiste na nIarchimí

I am a republican ex-prisoner and I was struck by Kathleen's introduction. She was talking about her trip around north Belfast and I just would be interested if she was to come on to the Falls ten years after the Patten Report and visit, for example, Woodburn PSNI Station or New Barnsley, I don't think things would have changed at all. We have two huge fortifications in the middle of west Belfast ten years on and it hasn't changed at all in that respect. So it would be interesting to hear what you think about that.

Also, just to comment about some of the remarks that Jim and Claire and others have made about the

legacy. I think that the issues to do with the legacy of bad policing with collusion and torture need to be dealt with. I never thought I would say that there has been considerable progress with policing, but these issues of collusion, in particular torture and other issues related to police in the past, are a huge millstone around the necks of the current policing situation and they need to be dealt with or it is just going to keep coming back to them. We are dealing with about 30 cases presently, former prisoners are preparing applications to the Criminal Case Review Commission, where they believe they have been the victims of a miscarriage of justice. They are four Derry men, for example, who are up in court next Friday in the Court of Appeal who are more than likely going to have their convictions overturned. The PPS have withdrawn any opposition to their appeal and their convictions are more than likely going to be overturned.

There have been dozens of cases where young men and women who were in prison for very long periods of time were tortured, statements were concocted and they were sent to prison for months and in some cases decades. We had a recent case where a young man, well he is not a young man any more, came into our office and he had seen a very senior PSNI officer who had been responsible for torturing him in the 1990s. I am not going to name him, of course. So these issues of collusion, of torture, of bad policing - there has been progress - but these issues do need to be dealt with or else we are just going to come back time and time again to the same issues.

RESPONSE

MAURICE HAYES

First of all to come back to the last issue, yes I think it is very, very difficult and it is a thing that society and very few others have dealt with, how do you deal with the past and how you do deal with these specific issues. I would say that the fact that you are pursuing things through the legal process, what you are doing in getting things over-turned, well fine, but I think you have got to get it off the balance sheet as far as collusion is concerned. I think what we were trying to suggest was a new beginning for police and draw a line and let's get on. It doesn't mean that there is not clutter, that there is not stuff that has to be dealt with and there are not things that have to be investigated, but I think there are means of doing that and I think to pursue them in that way.

The size of the policing force, nobody knows what size of police force you need, to tell you the truth, anywhere, and by most standards Northern Ireland is well policed in terms of numbers comparatively. But I think what is underlying the approach of the community policing is that the police can't do it themselves and what you are trying to do, this approach is trying to mobilise the resources that are within the community and all the agencies in the community with the police playing sort of a key role in that. I have severe doubts actually that you need more police in this place at all.

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

I think the resource allocation issue is one that lots of police organisations are looking at right now. In fact, I just conducted a review of resource allocation in the Garda Siochana and the report will be issued soon. It is not necessarily how many police we have, but what are the ones we have now doing - what are they doing. I recall at community meetings, the public meetings we had here in Northern Ireland, and everyone was calling out for more visible community policing on the beat, bobbies on the beat, I recall that term being used regularly. I hear the same message in the South as well, people want to see visible police officers out there on the beat. We can't lose sight of the most important person in the police organisation and that is the neighbourhood police officer out there day in and day out. I think in the US and in the South we have seen a tendency to specialise. We have created lots of specialised units in response to the challenges the police have faced in recent years and lost sight of the fact that the most important people in the police organisation are those front line uniformed police officers. I think

that as police managers, we need to really take another look at how we are deploying the existing resources before we talk about hiring more, but emphasis has to be visible community policing, people out there in the neighbourhood.

I have also said that community policing shouldn't just be an assignment or a title, it shouldn't be a community police officer or community policing unit, it should be the foundation on which everything is built. Every police officer out there working in the police service should first and foremost be committed to community policing. I suspect that the police officers themselves would like to see the facilities change. Unfortunately in the United States we seem to be moving in the direction of hardening our police facilities rather than making them more customer friendly, especially post 9/11. We always said that the changes that occurred during Patten would have to be calibrated according to the security situation at any given time. I think it is very unfortunate that we still have the dissident threat here. I am sure the police themselves would look forward to a day when a lot of the walls and the barbed wire and all that could be taken down. But, I did attend a conference at Waterfront Hall two years ago that was hosted by the PSNI with the assistance of the police executive research for Washington, DC and for me it was heartening to see representatives from communities all over Northern Ireland, including the working class neighbourhoods here in Belfast, talk about the dramatic change that has occurred in policing. I was a bit suspicious, I said I have to get out of the Waterfront Hall and talk to some people on the ground, so I went over and talked to a cross community group on the Antrim Road and listened to their perspectives, because I knew I could count on them to tell it like it is. I was shocked but also pleased to hear both loyalist and republican ex-prisoners say that a police service was emerging that they felt they had greater confidence in. So, while it is still a work in progress, and I am sure it will be a work in progress for many years to come, I don't think we can lose sight of the developments that have occurred over the last ten years. And, believe me, policing in Boston is a work in progress too. It will always be fluid. We can never claim that we have it right. We can always do it better and again I appreciate hearing from people here today because that is how we do make the situation better over time.

MAURICE HAYES

A lady asked a question about the ethnic make up actually and I am sorry I don't have that information but there will be people in the next panel from the Policing Board and the police and I am sure they will be able to fill you in on that.

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

I would like to say a brief word about that. In order to be effective and credible, a police organisation has to be representative of the community it serves, that doesn't mean just nationalist and unionist, it has to be representative in terms of race and culture and gender, so I think that is something that the police need to be very attentive to. Also, I am delighted to see in terms of gender there seems to be many more women interested in policing now, both north and south. In fact, a recent Garda class that graduated had 42% women, so I am pleased to see it is a career that women are considering in greater numbers but I think it is important to keep a close eye on that.

DANA BRUNO

Is there an ethnic minority or are there ethnic minority officers in the Garda?

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

Yes, there are.

MAURICE HAYES

One.

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE

We have some agents, you know, we have some people, we have more people of colour now, but still it is just a handful and I think that is something that we are very mindful of, especially because the population has changed so dramatically in the last decade. Now I will say this, the composition of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in ten years has changed dramatically with a much greater influx of Catholic applicants. But in the United States it took us 25 years to get to our percentage goal of minority officers. It took us 25 years to get as far as the PSNI has come in less than ten years but I think you are absolutely right, we need to be mindful of the fact that diversity does not only apply to unionism and nationalism, it applies to race.

DANA BRUNO

I keep hearing about 50% catholic and 50% protestant people being representative within the PSNI.

MAURICE HAYES

No, 50% recruitment until you get to somewhere near the balance in the community.

PLENARY - NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD: *Holding the police to account?*

BRIAN REA

Vice-Chairman, NIPB
Plenary Chair

Can I say that it is a pleasure to be here today, a privilege to be here today to speak on the subject that is before us. I was asked to give a little introduction to myself. A couple of the little anecdotes. I grew up in a rural community. My earliest recollection of a policeman, and it was a policeman at that time away in those days, was a big man on a bike coming round the country and he stopped and asked my grandfather would he make sure that he got his bend weeds cut down. Now that was my earliest one. Another one was my brother and I had been misbehaving a bit. We must have been because my loving grandfather said: "If you boys don't behave I will get Smiley the policeman to you." Tom Smiley was a lovely gentleman but as boys in the rural setting, we didn't see them very often and, thankfully, we didn't need them very often. They were able to spend much more time on their own work.

As Aideen has said, I was 35 years in Castlereagh College as a lecturer and retired in 2002 as one of two heads of faculty in the college. I have a little bit more behind me than that. For twelve years I was on a board of visitors of Her Majesty's prison Maghaberry and for eleven years I was a lay panel member and then subsequently a lay magistrate, which I resigned to become a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board in 2006.

I am currently, as of June past, Vice-Chairman. Barry Gilligan, our Chairman, was unable to be here today and I am standing in for him as the Vice-Chairman of the board.

The changes that policing has undergone in Northern Ireland following the publication of the Patten Report have been described as some of the most complex and far reaching in modern policing history. The Patten Report translated the vision of the Good Friday Agreement into comprehensive recommendations to deliver fundamental changes to policing structures, processes and practices. There is no doubt that the Patten Report generated intensive political and public interest in its 175 recommendations. Many people, as has already been mentioned this morning, focussed on the more controversial aspects of the report such as the name change and the emblem or, on the other hand, on the positive discrimination provisions for police recruitment, better known locally as the 50-50. But the fact is that in its totality, the report provided a blueprint for modern policing worldwide. A blueprint that represented professionalism and excellence in policing and police accountability, that put policing with the community at the heart of its work, and that provided for restructuring and review which would allow the service to better meet community needs. Reforms which were designed to ensure that the whole community could have confidence in the delivery of the policing service which had human rights embedded in all aspects of its work were introduced.

In the context of this conference and on reflecting on what has been achieved, it will be important to reflect on the journey that has been travelled. Today we will reflect on three things - the Policing Board and the key Patten recommendations; where we are now, that is in respect of the PSNI and the Board; and the fitness of both bodies for purpose and some future changes looking into the next ten years.

Firstly, the Policing Board. The Commission's proposal for a new structure of accountability was designed to ensure effective and democratically based oversight of policing and the creation of a close partnership between the police and local communities. Central to this was the establishment of the Northern Ireland Policing Board to replace the previous police authority and the new board would have a clear statutory function to hold the Chief Constable and the police service publicly to account and be fundamental to ensuring that policing is grounded in oversight and accountability. To succeed as the

new policing accountability body, it was recognised that the board must command respect and credibility and must have real power and responsibility.

The biggest challenge, I suppose, was to get the Patten Report actually on to the board table. The then Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir Ronnie Flanagan, endorsed the report and, as has been said earlier, Sir Ronnie had been the author of an earlier fundamental review of policing which recognised the need for policing change and many of his recommendations were, I understand, incorporated into the Patten Report.

On 4th November 2001, the RUC became the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Policing Board was created with ten political representatives and nine independent members. Looking at the journey travelled since then, there have been many milestones for policing and in what was something of an uncertain environment, the Board has achieved a great deal. In its early life, its tasks were undertaken during a period of elongated political uncertainty and not without controversy. Many actually thought that the Board would never survive.

Patten recommendation number 9 states that the statutory primary function of the Policing Board is to hold the Chief Constable and the police service publicly to account. Throughout the past ten years, the members of the Board have ensured that the community has had an accountable police service. Since its establishment, the Policing Board has dealt with some fairly difficult and controversial issues. Policing in Northern Ireland continues to be difficult in a society that is not yet totally at ease identifying with the police or with a shared sense of the future. It is a difficult environment, and in this, one thing has emerged very clearly; that contrary many believed what has been said, policing is not political and the police are very accountable.

The previous Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Orde, is on record as saying that the PSNI is one of the most closely scrutinised police services in the world. One of our previous speakers, Kathy O'Toole, as a Patten Commissioner developed an intimate knowledge of policing in Northern Ireland and is also on record as saying that the PSNI is subject to more accountability than any other police agency that she's aware of.

This close scrutiny was not confined to policies and strategies. As part of their accountability role, the Board introduced formal performance appraisal for the Chief Constable. Sir Hugh was the first senior police officer in the United Kingdom to undergo a formal appraisal. The Policing Board introduced the performance and development review and performance related pay systems in 2004/2005 with the willing co-operation of the Chief Constable and in advance of the national agreement of the chief officer bonus scheme, which is UK wide.

The Policing Board itself was equally open to external scrutiny, being the first Policing Board or authority in the UK to invite an independent assessment of its work. An independent review panel, chaired by Sir Keith Povey, was commissioned by the Policing Board to review the performance of the Board over its first four years of operation and to identify key areas of future action. The panel found that the Board was well organised and led and that its members and officers are highly committed to the task of securing the best possible policing arrangements for Northern Ireland.

The Policing Board has delivered the accountability, oversight and transparency mechanisms essential for measuring the programme of change, for building public confidence in policing and for delivering a service which truly meets the needs of the community. The Board has met the challenge of delivering on difficult issues and effecting comprehensive change. At the same time, it has held the Chief Constable to account right across a range of day-to-day policing issues.

The in-depth monitoring of the core police strategies and of police performance against the policing plan carried on quietly and effectively through the routine work of the Board's committees has all lead to greater accountability, and you will hear something of that work on at least two of those committees in just a few moments.

The two critical areas where the Board is effectively holding the police to account are in human rights and policing and my colleague from the board Basil McCrea, MLA, will give some greater detail than what I am going to tell you just at the moment and I will leave a lot of this to him. However, sufficient to say that Chapter 4 of Patten stressed the importance of human rights as the very purpose of policing and recommended a new oath to be taken individually by all new and existing police officers expressing an explicit commitment to upholding human rights. There was a code of ethics introduced. All police officers and police staff were to be trained on the fundamental principles and standards of human rights and the practical implications of those for policing.

I won't say any more on that at the moment because Basil will elaborate on what I have said, talking about the appointment of Kier Starmer, for example, but each year detailed reports with recommendations have been produced to guide the PSNI. In addition, to address specific concerns around parading issues, two special reports were produced on policing of public order. The integrity of the advisors' work was recognised as part of the negotiation during St Andrew's negotiation. Annex E tasked the human rights advisors with the job of human rights proofing the protocols surrounding the transfer of primacy of national security. And the board's human rights advisors have stated that the PSNI has done more than any other police service to achieve human rights compliance and that work, of course, continues, and what has happened in Northern Ireland has been a model of good practice. Without doubt, all aspects of the board's work in human rights oversight has been groundbreaking and has played a key part in confidence building.

The second aspect that is on our agenda today is policing with the community. This is the thrust of it, and Gearoid O'hEara, another colleague is here and he will be speaking on that in place of Alex Maskey who, I understand, is out of the country and Gerry is standing in for him. Gerry is a member of the community outreach committee.

So I really won't say too much about that, save to mention the importance of DPPs. Gerry will elaborate on that. What they are designed for, to give local people a voice, to provide communities at grass roots level, to quote a common term, with a connection with policing at their local level and to establish a meaningful partnership down there at that level. Gerry may mention the Board's omnibus surveys that have shown high levels of satisfaction with the policing of the community in Northern Ireland.

Where are we now? What has yet to be done on the Patten recommendations? We believe we are firmly on course to finalise the ten year programme of change, but there are areas where we need to focus attention. However, the vast majority of these issues are already dealt with. In May 2007 the Policing Board, as part of its governance role, took on responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the majority of the 35 remaining recommendations identified by the oversight commission. The Board commissioned a report in June 2008 which recommended that 13 of these recommendations could be considered to have been completed, and some of the 22 remaining recommendations, such as appearance of police stations and the long awaited new police college will remain a challenge. Can I say there are two challenges there. Police officers at their work have got to be made safe and kept safe and in many respects that deals with what appears on the street when you see a police station still having to be fortified in certain areas.

The new police college is, we hope and trust, on its way. We have had some meetings of recent days, a few weeks ago and the police college is still on course.

Other issues such as community policing as a core function remain a challenge from an organisational and strategic perspective. That is acknowledged.

The Board has just received a further report on PSNI progress and the implementation of the remaining recommendations and of the 22 that remain, a further six are ready for discharge. Into the future policing in Northern Ireland is now subject, I repeat this, to more oversight than any other policing service in the world. In my view, there is nothing that the Board has not delivered on and many aspects of its work the Board did not just drive the agenda, the Board actually set the agenda.

That is not to say there have not been issues that, in hindsight, might have been handled better or that there have been other areas of regret. For example, it is of deep regret that the PSNI and the Board and the justice system has not been able to convict anyone in respect of the Omagh bombing or, indeed, of the Northern Bank robbery. But as we have moved forward, I believe lessons have been learned and in that respect, policing is no different to any other organisation. It must continue to grow, develop and evolve if it is to survive and meet the changing needs of the people of Northern Ireland.

There will be more challenges ahead and they are facing us everyday; the dissident threat, delivering more effective policing with the community, the shrinking public sector budget and its impact on policing, devolution of policing and justice and the fact that organised crime knows no borders and, of course, the issue of policing the past. But whatever the future brings, no other police service in the United Kingdom or in any other country has, in modern times, had to manage and implement such fundamental change while continuing to police a changing and sometimes very challenging society.

Ten years on, it is a testimony to all those involved that so much has been achieved and that should not be forgotten. The Patten Report was a very significant piece of work. Ten years on, that view is shared locally, nationally, and internationally. In the last month, the Board has hosted visitors from Iraq, from Bosnia, from Turkey - people all keen to find out about the change that has happened here. The changes effected in policing have, without doubt, created the conditions to allow the Northern Ireland political and peace process to move forward. During the last ten years, policing moved forward even when the politics did not.

I recall that the Policing Board was once described as the only show in town. I think we would all agree that there have been some extraordinary events in the political and peace process which, to this day, are still evolving. Ten years on, the political and social landscape of Northern Ireland has changed dramatically, however we still have some way to go in building a shared future and there are those who wish, tragically, to drag us back to the dark and dreadful days of the past. Ten years on, the Board has truly delivered against the Patten vision of holding the Chief Constable to account but that has not happened without hard work, drive and determination.

I seem to recall that it was Vidal Sassoon, a gentleman, I think he is, with whom I would have very little affinity, I suppose. It was he who said that the only time success comes before hard work is in the dictionary. The only time that success comes before hard work is in the dictionary. A lot of work, hard work has gone on. A lot of success has been achieved. There is more hard work and there will be more success. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Now in the order that I mentioned them I am going to call upon my colleague Basil McCrea to comment on the aspects in relation to human rights and then when Basil is finished, Gerry O'hEara will make some comments on community engagement mentioning, of course, the recent outreach meetings, not only to different areas of the country but also in different languages. Then the two officers, Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay and Assistant Chief Constable Dave Jones will join in with their part and,

following that, we will have some questions. Thank you very much.

BASIL McCREA

Chair, Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee, NIPB

I am in my first term as an Ulster Unionist MLA representing Lagan Valley. A few years ago, I had a severe blow to the head and decided that politics might be something worth engaging in, so here I am.

Since I got elected, I joined the Policing Board by request actually. I was interested in how police would affect the development of our community. Since being on the Policing Board, I have been burgled once, attempted burgled once, I have one theft from my office and I have had my car stolen.

In terms of interesting issues that come across, Kathy will forgive me, but I am a great aficionado of The Wire and I see what real policing is like in the States. When you come to the issues about what actually happens as Chair of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee, it is, I suppose, the committee for hot potatoes. Almost every issue that makes the press comes across the desk of my committee and we deal with everything from the trends in complaints against the police officers, Brian mentioned that we produced a code of ethics that we have revised again in 2008. We have had issues to deal with policing the past, Operation Ballast, HET and how the oversight has been for that, all of those issues come across. We have had engagement with the protocols for ensuring human rights accountability when we transfer certain functions to the security services, how that was maintained. We also have, in terms of things like professional standards, we have officers downloading pornography. I think we even had one officer involved in a sex shop. We have had all sorts of interesting issues about how we try and ensure that the police service meets the standards that the public expects of it.

In terms of the pure aspects of human rights, which I know that many of you will be aware of, and we can get into some very detailed discussions on this, maybe not here because time does not permit, but we have had the issue to deal with about the introduction of taser and whether that is an appropriate response. I was quite struck about what Kathy had to say when you scour the world and look for alternatives to less lethal devices, can we find things that are better? Actually it is quite difficult. Yet there is a responsibility on us all to find better and more effective ways of interacting in difficult situations. Some of those points that I wanted to mention to you, I suppose I was asked about experience as well. I have had the opportunity to engage with other police services - the Washington Met, the NYPD. I have been to Virginia and looked at the challenges there. I have actually been to Scotland and looked at the level of policing in that and there are certain things that come out. One of the things I was quite struck by was that the NYPD has got 38,000 officers. It's a really big number, isn't it, you know about how you go and manage that, and then you come down to the next ones. I think Chicago is about 9,500, then we are in at 7,500, so it is quite a big force. So you get some interesting comparisons about how we did things and the different environments that people operate in.

I do want to say to you that I am an absolute believer in human rights. If civilisation is about anything, it is about human rights. But it is important to realise that everybody has got human rights. Police officers have got human rights, innocent bystanders have human rights, even the people that you suspect of a crime have got human rights. This is not always easily understood by the public or by people looking on because they tend to look at things from their own perspective. Certainly one of the interesting issues that I have had to deal with as we have gone through a fairly steep learning curve is, for example, the issue to do with taser or it's a similar legal argument about AEPs or plastic bullets. The important thing to understand is that the decision as to whether taser is introduced or not introduced is an operational decision that the Chief Constable is responsible for, and the way in which we hold the Chief Constable to account is what we establish in what I think was a good piece of work, not necessarily agreed by everybody and people will come forward with different views, but I will tell you why I think it

was a good piece of work within the terms of reference that we had set ourselves. First of all, we had to establish if was there a capability gap. Could you have situations where the use of taser produced a better outcome than the use of other forms of enforcement, be that AEPs or live rounds or talking people down or whatever? And there are some situations where the use of taser is, by far, the best solution.

Now there are risks, as Kathy outlined, nothing in this world, not even a glass of water is without risk. You can drown in a puddle of water. So when you use any amount of force, you do have to be cognisant of the possibility of risk. So when you establish if is there a capability gap, the next thing you need to understand is the legal context upon which you use that tool. And in our particular case, you have to decide is it less lethal, is it lethal, what is the legal standard? Whenever we set the standard, it is not the same standard that is used by colleagues in the United States. Our standard is the same standard that you would actually have for whether you would use live ammunition. It is a very serious offence or a very serious situation that you have to consider; either the risk of loss of life or serious jury. The next thing we do as a committee is we go through and say: "Okay, if, having taken the advice of our legal representatives, we establish an appropriate legal context, can we establish policies? Can the PSNI bring us policies that reflect that legal advice?" And we look at that. Then we ask can those policies be translated into training? So we go and watch the training at Steeple or whatever and we see our officers, highly trained officers being put through the scenarios, being put through the tests about human rights, being put through the tests about risks to the people you are looking at. You look at that and you decide if that is an appropriate training that actually brings out the policies.

Finally, when you go through a situation where taser is deployed, not even fired, just deployed, well you have an Ombudsman's investigation to make sure that the officer and the officers concerned, have they actually carried out the most appropriate course of action. Now all of that is what keeps people to account. To my knowledge, and my colleagues will maybe update me, but to my knowledge there were some 18 deployments that were brought before the Ombudsman to have a look at. One in particular has reported, we have had a look, but the others are coming down to have a look at. But the issue will come back, in that the officers, as far as we're aware in the cases going forward, have acted within the guidelines we set them. Were they to not, if it ever arises, then there will be disciplinary action.

The final point I want to say to you in terms of the robustness with which we look at these issues is that when we look at something like the code of ethics, the important differential is that it is not for me to tell officers what to do in any situation, the code of ethics tells them what we as members of the public expect of them. What are the standards of performance? After that, it is down to the individual officers to meet those particular standards and if they fall short, then it is a disciplinary proceeding for either the internal Professional Standards Committee of the PSNI or the Ombudsman. Our role, when we look at complaints, is to look at the general trends.

If I can conclude on the point, one of the most interesting bits over the last ten years is the change in the nature of complaints that have been made against the PSNI. In the early days it was about abuse. Now it is about process. It is about so and so didn't move quickly enough. They didn't turn up in time. They didn't do this right or that right. It is a completely different way of looking at the complaints. On that basis alone, the move forward over the last ten years has been highly significant.

I look forward to answering some difficult questions. But the whole issue about discussion is about knowing the subject, it is not about arguing about rhetoric, it is about dealing in detail, and that is what we do on the Policing Board.

GEAROID O'hEARA

Member, Community Engagement Committee, NIPB

Go raibh maith agat. Fáilte romhat. I come from an Irish republican background and if there was an example of change in the last ten years it is the fact that Alex Maskey and Martina Anderson and people like me are sitting on the Board. I come on to the Board as an Irish speaker as well and I promote the Irish language where I go, and I often go to conferences like this where people criticise the fact that you speak Irish so, *cad é mar atá tú?* That means how are you all doing? And I will teach you the answer at some stage.

I actually come to the Board with a republican view of the world. I come with all of that history and baggage that the republican community has suffered over 40 years in the engagement with the RUC and the PSNI, and I come to that in an unconditional way. I come expecting we have a policing service and will continue to improve the policing service until it is a policing service that is absolutely devoid of political baggage, sectarian baggage, or any of the other baggages that some police forces in other parts of the world also bring. I see that as part of what I do and it is difficult work because you come in there, it is a strange environment for somebody from a background like mine. I have been diametrically opposed to policing for most of my adult life and now I am in support of it and it is quite difficult. It is difficult for some of the people that we deal with in the Board and in the PSNI and I could give points for people who handle it well. And for the most part people do handle it well.

I actually see it as my role to come along with those opinions and that voice because the bottom line is that if the quality of life of those people who live in disaffected communities, and I mean the communities that on a map would be the areas of highest deprivation across the North, if we don't raise the quality of life of the people living in those communities, then all of what we do at this fancy level here is an absolute waste of time and we are not making progress.

I sit on the Community Engagement Committee and I think the role of that Committee is to go and consult with the community, hear their views, apply their views back. Quite a lot people who know that I am on the Policing Board think that I actually run policing. They don't understand the relationship between the Board and the Policing Service. What we do is we hold the policing service to account and we try to advise them in advance of them doing stuff and then if they make a mistake we challenge them on it. On many occasions you come forward with advice which they blindly ignore, and I am not saying this to annoy any of the folks here. So you actually are saying you are making a haimes of this, this is going to go pear-shaped and da, da, da and they go ahead and do it anyway. Then you have the "I told you so" routine which isn't all that good and I actually think there needs to be far more listening between both sides because police services, and it seems to be a feature all over the world, become monolithic forces. You have people at the top who almost end up feeling they don't have to listen to anybody. I look at chief constables and they seem to reach a level of power where they almost ignore everybody else. So maybe it is the uniform and the power and all of those things, but we do need to reach a position where voices like mine are listened to because it is critical that voices like mine are listened to and others, of course.

We are trying to do two bits of work; make the work of the Community Engagement Committee as effective as it can be and then apply the lessons of that across to the PSNI. We get a lot of response and I will go through some of the stuff.

We look through the wider community and say there is a disabled community, there is an ethnic minority community, there's women, there's young people, there's Irish speakers, there's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and we go and engage with those communities. We have a meeting in a hotel in their town or village and there is whole team of people. We actually sit down with ourselves from the Board, people from the police, and communities, and we say: "Right, what is your attitude about the police?" And they usually have a tale. Then we ask for a discussion about how you could improve the

relationships between that particular community and the police. Then we sort of try and set up protocols so that the lesbian and gay community is actually saying to the PSNI: "This is how you should deal with our community or people who are lesbian or gay because you are not doing it right at the moment," and then you try and mainstream that sort of approach.

We are working with what are called 'difficult to reach groups' of which I would have been a part of - republican communities, loyalist communities and, make no mistake, one of my lessons on the Board has been that the Shankill Road is as disaffected with the policing service as is the Creggan Estate where I was born. So it is not just one-sided. So you are trying to go into those communities, meet loyalists, meet republicans and all of this is about, all of the people on the board and the people in the leadership of the PSNI, understanding how other people think, getting an idea of how people think and that is really, really important.

The DPPs are an interesting concept but I actually find it very interesting that they are not well attended. For some reason they are not working as well as they should be working and we need to do some work on that. I was at Limavady last Wednesday where there were two guys sitting at the back who nailed the local commander on the issue of people drinking and getting late licences and stuff in the town centre on Saturday night. They were two guys who weren't -- they were not dressed in suits and they were not the most articulate people in the room, but they didn't miss these two cops who couldn't answer and the guy just kept coming back. It ended up that the second of the two cops got a bit ratty about it all, about getting questioned. But these two boys did what they came to do and they gave that guy a roasting. If they were coming back to the next meeting to roast them on the same kind of stuff, then that guy will have some answers and in many ways that is what DPPs are about. It is about sitting down with the local chief and saying these are the issues in our town, this is what we would like to see prioritised and this is what we would like to see done.

Brian mentioned the Omnibus surveys. One of our jobs is to consult with the community and we do this through a whole range of public meetings and then come back. The omnibus surveys, I actually sit and read them in disbelief and I think they weren't up our street, because they come back saying there's 84% satisfaction in the police service and you are just saying they must have been somewhere else that week because it wasn't in our town.

One of the things we have actually done, and I think one of the very innovative things that we have done, relates to ethnic minorities. There is about 10.8% of the population in the North in the 2001 census who declared they were Irish speakers. The percentage of Irish speakers within the PSNI is not anywhere near that, although, I have to say, that the PSNI has been quite progressive on that issue. Kathleen was talking about the need for a policing service to be representative of the community, 10% of the population is a big percentage. What we have actually done is we have gone out and held Irish language meetings, we have done two so far, where people from the Board, people from the PSNI, and the Irish language community in different parts of the North have actually engaged, had discussions. In many ways that is more symbolic than practical because they are sending a message to the Irish language community which has been difficult to reach and at loggerheads with the RUC and the PSNI. There is a message now that the war is over. We accept that you exist, we accept that you speak the Irish language and we are willing to meet you half way on it. I think that is the kind of stuff that needs to be getting done.

We do meetings and Alex Maskey's initiative as the chair of the committee is we take out a road show. So we did one in Belfast, we did one in Derry. I was at one in Ballymena last week where we have a public meeting and some of the stuff you get at public meetings can be progressive or backward looking, but at least you are taking the whole top officer board of the cops out there and the Board here and you are giving people a chance to get up and have their say and I think that is very important.

The last point I would like to say is that there needs to be a mechanism where we deal with the historic issues. There are grievances. There are grievances that are two years old and grievances that are 20 years old and there needs to be a mechanism where both ourselves and the PSNI say: "There is the process for resolving that issue." You might not resolve it to everybody's satisfaction but there needs to be a process that does that and that we are all satisfied is fair and equitable and then we can draw a line under that. *So that's mise. Go raibh maith agat.*

ALISTAIR FINLAY

Assistant Chief Constable, Urban Region, PSNI

I think our input into this is fairly brief in terms of the accountability, but the accountability does not just stop with the Policing Board, it flows through the organisation as well, so that police officers on the ground are accountable through the district departmental structures and that ultimately comes up to the chief officer's team, of which Dave and I are a part. I look after the urban region which comprises the four districts, which takes us broadly from Newcastle, up round Belfast to Antrim and down to Carrickfergus. Dave covers those that have the border area, and through that, the district commanders are accountable to us for the performance. That includes performance in relation to delivery of the service and tackling crime, but also delivery of best value, value for money, responsibility for the money, for the human resources, the resources that go into the organisation. We influence and seek to influence those other aspects that were spoken about, for example, what the stations look like, how much money is spent on the softening of image of those stations, where we have stations, engaging with the board around the disposal of those stations, which has been a difficult issue for us in the recent past. Through that we have the accountability that stems up to the Policing Board and we have our internal meetings where we translate that across and then into the Policing Board and we are held to account for our performance in relation to a whole range of issues, as has been described.

I think just in terms of background, I think it is interesting that neither Dave nor I are from here. We both had the bulk of our experience elsewhere. My experience started in 1982 in Glasgow and I have been in the Scottish police service in Strathclyde until just over three years ago when I came here. I think when we are talking about changes that a huge amount of change has happened during that time. If I reflect going back to 1982, the muster room, as it was, would be full of predominantly men. If there was a woman on the shift, you were very fortunate to have a policewoman on the shift, but not all shifts would have a policewoman. They were a pretty rare breed. What has happened over a piece of time is that policing has become increasingly more complex. Maybe that is what Sir Hugh was touching on in his piece that was referred to earlier on, where in 1982 there were people sitting with me round that muster room, we didn't have what initially became the female and child unit or those specialist units that would deal with domestic violence, with understanding the complexities of sexual crime. We only had one person in that district who was called the 'collator' who dealt with intelligence. We have gradually become more and more specialised, dealing with sex offenders, dealing with particular types of crime because the complexity of the world has changed and the expectations of what the police service does has changed. The expectation that we protect from harm has always been there but that has become more complex and we were held to account. The governance around legal terms, in terms of monitoring how information is gathered, how information is stored, the obligations to sharing information, there has been a huge change in the context during that time that hasn't just affected this organisation, but it has affected all the police services across the UK.

In terms of the context of here, both Dave and I have had the opportunity for a period of time to try and contribute something to how this organisation deals with the past and that is a very difficult, problematic area. We did seek to do something clearly with the other structures in terms of HET, in terms of the public enquiries, and in terms of some inquests and all the legal structures, and contributed to Eames-

Bradley and their review on that.

So broadly we now are responsible for the delivery of policing in the districts and it is us, I suppose, in terms of the police with the community is where we actually deliver that neighbourhood policing and we seek to develop that. I think we are at an interesting time in terms of our development and I think maybe Dave will touch more on that, on where we are going forward from where we are, because like all organisations, we are in transition and change. Some of that change is more immediate, and we have a new Chief Constable and every time an organisation has a new head coming in, there is a new challenge to refresh the thinking in our approach and some of that is happening.

Just two things finally. There was a whole raft of questions that were raised earlier and maybe we will have the opportunity to seek to answer those. If we don't answer them in session then maybe over lunch if people would want to touch base with us and see if we can answer those questions for you.

Mike, right back at the beginning, said the police represent maybe the harder side of the State and that was quite interesting. People have different perspectives of what the State is. My perspective of policing is we actually represent the community not the State, if those two things are different things and I think that is an interesting debate. The other thing was when we spoke before, we regarded the relationship between CAJ and maybe some other organisations as prickly and I welcome that. It should be prickly because we do need the challenge from different perspectives of people putting us into difficult places in order to benchmark are we honestly doing the best for people? And we welcome that challenge. I think the relationship should be prickly because there is a role, even in the accountability, for those relationships and that accountability, I think, even translates itself to today, to being part of the conference and being part of the discussion.

DAVE JONES

Assistant Chief Constable, Rural Region, PSNI

On the basis that I have just been told to keep it snappy, Alistair and I do a double act in the district, you probably know we do a double act to make sure we get some corporacy about how policing is delivered across the whole of Northern Ireland, and to use the old adage there is a reason why you are given two ears and one mouth. The police service, in order to improve, has to listen and it has to engage in processes like this for us to check out whether or not we are actually truly listening and actually acting on the wishes and needs of the community.

I will just make a couple of points by way of a very brief introduction. My experience was in the north-west of England in the Greater Manchester Police where, for a considerable period of time, I was in the CID, I was the head of CID in Manchester. For the question raised before about whether or not we have got enough police officers, we both come from ex-police services that had a similar number, but probably in the region of three times the amount of crime and demand placed on that policing service. So I think the issue is more about whether we have got people doing the right things at the right time.

One of the things I think, and I would endorse what has been said already, policing is far too important for the police to be responsible for it on their own. I do encourage people if you want to come and see us being held to account, come to the Policing Board. Having experienced going to the Policing Board to explain the disposal of 26 police stations across Northern Ireland, you will see how accountable we are held as to the decisions we make. Often we have to try and meet conflicting demands from different communities. People talk about the community, I am not sure there is such a thing as a homogeneous community. I was at the Ballymena meeting the other night, the DPP meeting with the Board where the Chief spoke. It was interesting to note that I felt like one of the youngest people there. The youth of today, people that we need to engage, with weren't there and as quite rightly said, we need to look at the

way in which we reach out to various communities regardless of their background, gender, et cetera.

One of the things I would stress is that we are determined and actually very passionate about delivering the kind of police service that I think the people who drew up the Patten documentation truly thought we were in a position to deal with. We cannot ignore the current security situation. It does have an impact on our service delivery, but where we can and how we can is to try and work with the communities. Dialogue is far better. We work on the basis of no surprises. We try and work with people to ensure that be they public order events or other events that we actually try and engage as much as we can with the right people. My experience elsewhere is that sometimes the people we engage with talk on behalf of communities but sometimes struggle to deliver on behalf of those communities, so we have to have a reality check sometimes about our ability to deliver the things that people expect us to deliver.

I have got a list here of 17 different areas or bodies that hold the Police Service of Northern Ireland to account ranging from the courts, the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Northern Ireland Office, subsequently devolved administration, CJNI, British Irish Rights Watch, the CAJ and, far more importantly, the public. We are held to account everyday in the court of public opinion and recent events will probably acknowledge that perhaps we have not been doing too well in that regard.

One of the things that we did in April of this year - I was asked to look at a strategic review for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, a purely internal document. This was, for me, very much about doctors and nurses being asked about the kind of national service they wanted to deliver but in a policing context. It was warts and all. It was very uncomfortable. We identified key issues that we still needed to address, including embedding neighbourhood policing and community policing with our communities. Also it identified a signally moving away from actually having our officers on the ground at the right time. I think Kathy mentioned about people at the front end. They need to be able to turn around at two o'clock in the morning and know that the rest of the organisation is there to support them, be they domestic violence officers or major investigation teams. So for us there is a real challenge and that is about our work force modernisation as well, which I have been asked to lead on by the Chief, which is about trying to make sure we have got the right people with the right skills doing the right job. Currently we have far too many police officers who didn't join to sit behind a desk, who didn't join to do administrative functions, they joined to actually keep people safe and that is fundamentally what the police service is there to do.

There isn't a society in the world that doesn't have a police service of some sort. What we need to do is to make sure that the one we are trying to deliver and being held to account to deliver actually serves people's needs. And on the basis that we have about 100,000 crimes a year, we are one of the safest societies in that sense in most of Western Europe and we are in a position where we believe that we have delivered on quite a lot of stuff over the last period of time, which is to the credit of the people who are here who were doing that. Our aim is actually to go to the next level now. Beyond March 2011 is when the Patten issues around 50-50, for example, end. The severance package for officers, which people shouldn't forget, every year we are losing somewhere in the region of 440 officers a year. That has a huge impact. People talk about getting to know their local neighbourhood officers et cetera that is difficult when there is so much movement in the organisation. The other thing - we are up for an honest and open debate about how things need to be taken forward. If we have the answers, we will give the answers. If we haven't got them, we will try and find them. We have the answers about the ethnic minority members of staff. Bizarrely it is 41.6 (the 0.6 obviously is a member part-time I assume). That is about 0.44% of the PSNI establishment and the ethnic minority community in Northern Ireland is 0.79% according to our figures. Again police figures, who knows?

The other issue is that we are hoping by March 2011 to deliver on a key part of the Patten recommendations, which is a 30% representation from the Roman Catholic community. I think that is a

key issue for us because it is having a cadre of people who bring a change of view within the organisation and actually be far more reflective of the kind of policing people want to see.

Just one thing that I want to mention very briefly. I come from the north west of England. Lancashire Police, although I was never a member of Lancashire Police, is a B service for neighbour policing. They seemingly are getting it better and right more than anybody else, but you know what, they were the police service in the 1960s who introduced the panda car. It was one of the biggest mistakes the police service in England in particular ever did because it put us in cars and it took us away from our communities. Do you know what we are doing now? We are getting out of the cars hopefully and starting to walk again. And the other one is we stopped doing school crossing patrols, it is because we were driven by lots of different things, and we forgot we were supposed to be in touch with our communities. Thank you.

PLENARY QUESTION AND RESPONSE

JACK McKEE, Larne Borough Council & DPP Member

I would come to the end and say as one who was opposed to the RUC being disbanded yet I came to work with the PSNI, and I have nothing but praise for the work they have done in our area along with the DPP, the community groups in the area. As you know, Larne had a very bad reputation - bombings, shootings, people being driven from their homes, both catholic and protestant but mainly Roman Catholic people, sectarianism has now dropped off the radar in the Larne area. Crime is going down and down. We are not perfect. We have a lot to achieve yet and if I have any way to be critical, I would say there should be more policemen on the beat. We need more policemen on the beat.

I listened this morning to Mr McIlwaine. My heart went out to him. Certainly, closure in cases like that needs to come about. However, I did listen to those who talked about torture, about allegations of collusion, et cetera, but I would say people are entitled to an end to this. But the point that I would say is that this cuts both ways, those who took part in kangaroo courts, summary execution, those who took part in the disappeared, these people are also entitled to these things to come to an end for them. It is only people who lecture at the end of day have something to ask themselves.

MICHAEL GEORGE, Community worker for the Colin area and an Independent member, DPP

I am one of the guinea pigs that Gerry was referring to, who did a presentation recently to the Policing Board on initiatives within our area and that night in particular I highlighted successes that we had had, specifically around antisocial behaviour and drinking amongst youths in our area, which we have had spectacular successes with. But my point would be that a lot of people would ring me at the weekend with problems to bring on to the police and that is mainly because if you are Joe Bloggs, and I have encountered this myself, if you are Joe Bloggs ringing up call management or the desk sergeant you get the, "Yes, okay, whatever." If I rang, Michael George, I give the problem, they say, "Yes." I say, "I am an independent DPP member", you get an instant response. I would ask the panel to support the fact there needs to be training provided, especially for officers dealing with responses from the community, so the community can see their problems are dealt with as efficiently as anybody else, whether they are DPP members or members of the public.

RESPONSE

DAVE JONES

First of all, I regret if people don't get the kind of service that they are entitled to. I think any service, any public body, needs to try and make sure that we deliver the services that the public want. I think one of the things we have done is we have tried to provide training to our officers. We have certainly had pilots

run, I think it was in B district, which is part of Belfast, working with Marks & Spencers in relation to customer care. One of the things that came out of the review is if I could describe it as a customer journey when somebody interacts with the police all the way through, be it taking a crime report or through going to court. Clearly we, at the moment, seem to be putting people in a bad place rather than in a good place and it is one of the programmes of work that I know the Chief is very keen we actually deliver on. One of the things that hopefully you will see in the not too distant future is a far more sophisticated call back process.

If you come to us asking for a service, at the moment we don't really come back to you and tell you what we have done about it. This is not very good because if we were a business, we would go out of business because you need to know how much we are caring about what your particular issue whether the processes and systems have been put in place to make sure we know who isn't providing you with that service. Alistair and I sit on the discipline panels and we know where that goes.

NATALIE WHELEHAN, Policy Officer, Children's Law Centre

There is currently a High Court case pending and the judgment is pending in relation to the introduction of taser. I just wanted to pick up on Basil's point in relation to taser and to highlight there is a currently a High Court case pending judgment in relation to the introduction of tasers in Northern Ireland.

As one of the organisations who intervened in this case as a third-party intervener, I wanted to ask a question about tasers. While we appreciate the difficulty of developing non-lethal weapons for use by the police service in line with Patten recommendations 69 and 70, and given the independent evidence which exists and which indeed was relied on by the Policing Board's independent human right's advisors, children and young people are one of the groups most likely to be seriously injured or killed by tasers, particularly children and young people with a disability, a heart problem or a mental health problem. To contradict Basil, the test for the use of tasers here is currently not the same as the use of live ammunition. It is a lower threshold test. That is actually one of the issues that we as a children and human rights organisation have serious concern about, given the possibility for the use of tasers to be fatal, particularly when used against vulnerable groups, including children and young people. We would very much want the test being changed to the same threshold as that for live ammunition. I would just like to clarify and ask that question: Is the PSNI planning to change the test for use of tasers to the absolute necessity test as which exists for the use of live ammunition?

RESPONSE

BASIL McCREA

I will take the clarification about the legal test. I suppose I should be clear and say it is slightly below it and that is a fair enough comment that you have made. I will take the point of clarification about it not being exactly the same and it is slightly below. Is that right?

ALISTAIR FINLAY

That's right. Taser has been used very, very rarely. It is only used in very limited circumstances. It is only used by a very limited number of specially trained police officers. So the times of its discharge are strictly controlled and then subject to the same post-incident procedures and review procedures as if live ammunition had been discharged. It will only be discharged when a threat is being posed to such a degree that there is no other alternative.

So, we understand all the issues, all the anxiety about the use of any particular weapon, any use of force. But I think, as we said earlier on, there is a need for the police service to have that graduated response of force which moves from telling people what to do verbally to open hand techniques, to hands on, to the use of baton, CS spray, taser comes into that as does the AEPs that we talked about

earlier on, and then ultimately to the potential of a much more potentially fatal outcome likely with live ammunition. All of those are trained. The officers who deploy them are absolutely conscious of their responsibilities around the discharge and use of these different levels because no one is saying they are not lethal. There is obviously the potential for them to be lethal and always we will be on the look out. When we say we are on the look out, there is the Home Office Police Scientific Development Branch which coordinates research activity across the world in terms of ways of actually being able to deal with people safely with the least possible impact. And while understanding all of that, police officers have to have the ability to protect other members of the community and themselves with using the least amount of force. This is an option which has been introduced in as much as very often there will be no other alternative other than moving to live fire, to specialist firearm officers which are much more likely to cause death than taser is.

ANDREW IRVINE, The Association of Town Centre Management

I think we would all be agreed in the room that policing is about collaboration and we have been doing just that, and not only working with the police but in fact signing cheques and making financial contributions through the private sector to the policing of our neighbourhood here in Belfast city centre. I want to ask a question which is where the Board stand on the police community support officer? Because, indeed from our point of view, paying for senior constables is both very expensive and, in fact, at times we don't need someone as well experienced and qualified as a senior police constable and someone with slightly less experience, maybe less powers, but indeed not quite so expensive from the private sector, might make it an awful lot easier for my colleagues and I to collaborate with the police. Where does the Board stand on PCSOs?

RESPONSE

ALISTAIR FINLAY

I think that PCSOs would be a welcome addition. We would only be able to do certain things in certain places, but that is what PCSOs do and you do get the consistency of them being in the same place at the same time, so you develop that relationship in the way that we have found more challenging around neighbourhood officers because of the organisational term. I think as you know - and I very much welcome the collaboration that goes on in the partnership work in Belfast city centre and that extends into Belfast City Council and the provision of the warden scheme in Belfast which is not seen as PCSOs, - but I think it is a step towards it and I think it is a stepping stone that in the future we may be able to exploit further.

As Dave spoke about earlier on, our challenge at the moment, the first thing is to put our own house in order, which is to get those police officers that are behind desks back out and do some civilianisation. I think the phase after that will be to look at what else we can do in that broader breadth of services which may include PSCOs and also includes things like the parking attendants. So all those visible signs of some degree of authority or some degree of approachability in respect of the civic society and how do they all come together to contribute to safety, to contribute to feeling safe, and being safe in a city centre or beyond.

DAVE JONES

There is also a community warden scheme in Derry as well and we are obviously trying to work with local authorities to provide different styles of policing. It is not just about the formal policing structures that we are part of.

The thing I would say, and I think we are both very, very conscious of, my experience back in England - the reason why police community support officers were introduced was because of the arrogance that was mentioned before about senior police officers who, for years and years, were going to public

meetings and the public were saying, "We want to see a more visible constant policing presence on the streets." The difficulty we have and the complexity of policing means that the people who are investigating the murders or the sexual offences or the child abuse are the same group of people that we have to draw from, so we have a limited number. But we again forgot that the people that we are trying to serve are the public and the public wants to see more visibility on the streets and certainly we are very much committed to trying to get visibility as much as we can. That is not only about getting officers on the ground but a lot of our officers time is spent in the police station dealing with bureaucracy, we which need to reduce. And also, from our point of view, society needs to give us the tools in order for this to become effective as well, and the funding.

PLENARY - DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIPS: *Effective Engagement with the police?*

MARY McKEE

Northern Ireland Policing Board, Independent Member
Plenary Chair

I am originally from west Belfast. I grew up one street from the Andersonstown Police Station and my memories of the Andersonstown Police Station, for anybody that knew west Belfast, was genuinely policemen playing bowls in the front lawn. That wasn't Disney. That was in 1969 when quite literally overnight this playing bowls in the front law went to one of the most fortified police stations in western Europe. I am delighted to say the police station is no longer there in its form. It is the Andersonstown gateway. So it almost seems we have come full circle. The caveat is we have lots of opportunities.

And here I must say that being a female independent member of the Policing Board is like auditioning for a David Attenborough show. We are seriously an endangered species, which says something about the profile of women in policing. But I am glad to say in terms of the DPP infrastructure and architecture women fair much better in DPPs than they certainly do on the Policing Board.

Why did I become a member of Policing Board? Well I am quite political but I have to say with a small 'p'. I am not a politician but it doesn't mean that I am not interested in the fundamentals that shape our lives. Kathleen actually summed it up quite nicely why I became a member of the Policing Board and stayed on it. Sometimes I have to say it feels like a very thankless task. It is a challenge to my political colleagues that we sit all day in the room over very emotive issues like closure of police stations, like taser, like frontline policing, like public order offences, and we just get to that part of consensus and as soon as a camera appears, the toys are out of the pram. So we can get over the line. We can have a mature attitude to life and we are almost there in terms of the work done, so it is apropos my colleagues in the media, maybe you should stay away and maybe we can get more work done.

Kathleen summed it up. I became a member of the Policing Board because I wanted it to become a police service not a police force. I wanted them to get out from behind the boardrooms and on to the beat. I wanted in my background youth to implement the words prevention, collaboration, and partnership. So very idealistic ways to become involved, but I actually think we can achieve it and I actually think policing is still one of the three intractable issues in Northern Ireland. We have housing - we have not really solved that. We have education - we're attempting to solve that. And I think policing, the third part of that tripartite is where we actually have come a long way. We are not there yet and it is not time to be complacent but we have come a long way. Just another comment about policing with the community, we have just appointed the guru of policing across the western world as we are told, so our expectations of the new Chief Constable are high and will remain very high. We want a policing with the community strategy that is not a war on words and rhetoric on a page, we will actually see it get off the page and make a difference.

In my background, and I have been dealing in community development, community engagement in very, very difficult circumstances for a long time. Policing with the community is not rocket science. It is about relationships. So rather than a big war on words, the anagrams which we regularly challenge our colleagues in the police service on, we want to actually see it getting off the page and a bit of life around it.

As for DPPs, well I mentioned earlier on, I think DPPs do an awful lot better than the Policing Board in terms of representation. They actually -- if I have got my statistics somewhere because it is worth mentioning, the budget for the DPPs, not the Policing Board, is £3.9 million. During 2008/2009 DPPs held 174 meetings. The DPP attendance, interestingly enough, and a big challenge, political members

74%, independent members 82% and apropos of my party political broadcast is that 39% of independent members on DPPs are male, 61% are female, mainly in the independent sector. 13% of candidates state they have a disability background. 2% of candidates -- the question came up this morning -- are from ethnic minorities. 2.5% of members describe themselves as from the lesbian, gay or bisexual community. So DPPs are coming a long way to begin to reflect the communities that they come from.

I would like to conclude, you will be relieved to hear, by just making a few comments about the future challenges facing DPPs. A colleague brought it from Ballymena -- I think it is a brilliant question this morning - around the future of DPPs in a new dispensation or allegedly new dispensation and I think that is one of the fundamental questions. The future challenges will be around RPA or again allegedly RPA, if we ever make decisions in this country. What will it look like? We will have 11 DPPs that are amalgamated with community safety partnerships, what they will look like? When and if policing and justice is devolved, what that would look like? What its relationship, that committee's relationship, would be to an Ombudsman, to the Criminal Justice Inspectorate, to the Policing Board, to all the NGOs - and I would sum up by saying sometimes it feels like a very crowded market place or, as Kathleen says, maybe we are the most robustly accountable police force and police service and police family in the world. So they are some of the challenges that I would particularly set out to my panel and without further ado I am going to ask them very quickly to give a number of comments starting with Mark and then we can pick up from yourselves. So the tone of the afternoon is very much an interactive debate and a challenging debate and bear with us while we have executive summaries from the panel.

MARK HAMILTON

District Commander, North & West Belfast
Chief Superintendent, PSNI

North and west Belfast needs no introduction. It has suffered inordinately throughout the last 30 or 40 years throughout the troubles and has a very difficult relationship in many sectors of the community with the police. I was appointed there in March of this year to lead policing in that area and that is really the only job I was given, to lead it. But I have seen my purpose there is to try and move forward the effort of policing with the community to whatever extent I can do to the greater or lesser extent. Success for me will be moving it forward even in the slightest amount that people feel safer in their home and more confident in their community in the type, style, and delivery of policing that they get.

I think just on delivery, the first thing I would say is that the most important word for me in delivery of policing at the moment in Northern Ireland is 'empathy'. The officers who work for me who are in this room will probably all smile wryly because I mention this to them on a very frequent basis. But if empathy is about understanding people in a non-judgmental way, then we have to have mechanisms to try and develop empathy and therefore the question today is: DPPs: Effective engagement with the police?

I would like to hope that the DPPs are part of that mechanism to allow both me and my officers to develop a greater empathy with the public that we have sworn to serve and we have promised to protect, but also to allow the public to have a greater empathy with the police officers who have volunteered to put on a uniform and risk their lives for you. Therefore, the DPP for me should form part of that.

But, is it effective? Well I think it is effective to a point and like any structure, it has its strengths and it has its weaknesses. I think the strength of DPPs or weakness of DPPs are reflected differently as you move around the Province, and my comments are more or less exclusive to the DPPs that I have worked with in mid Ulster and in Belfast.

A question I suppose I would ask is, what is the role? Is it to monitor or is it to hold to account? I could argue that there is a difference between the two. I am not too sure in the DPPs view there is a difference between the two. I think in the future there is a discussion to be had around what is monitoring and what is holding to account and are those appropriate words to use for DPPs, and what is the most comfortable things for DPPs to do or what is it they want to do? Do they want more powers to hold to account or do they want just to monitor me?

The second question I ask is, is it a real partnership? It is described as district policing partnership. Partnership implies an equality. It implies that we work together. It implies, I presume, that maybe we have common aims and I am not sure all the time that we do. I think at times it becomes more about holding to account than partnership and therefore I still ask the question, what exactly are we trying to achieve? Not that we are not achieving a lot, but perhaps the point has come where we have to clarify some of these points.

The next question to ask, is it too formulaic? By that I mean the DPPs meet in public or in private and they are fed by an accountability machine and performance mechanism that has redeveloped over the last ten years, that is reflected across the public service in terms of delivering performance targets but has become a mechanism for meetings. We provide reports to the DPP about burglary rates, crime rates, detection rates and we have green, amber and red traffic lights to show how well we are doing and this forms a debate. The debate can quite often be about the quantity of police as opposed to the quality of policing and it is one that I personally am not terribly comfortable with because I do know that whenever the green lights are green it still doesn't make the community feel any safer. I do know that when we are performing well against our performance targets that doesn't necessarily mean that the omnibus survey that says that 80% of people think the police are doing a good job is actually realistic. So I am more interested in an ongoing debate about the quality of policing and how we can better engage in that.

Do DPPs represent the whole community? It has been articulated to me that sometimes they don't and I do engage with a number of groups throughout my district about policing and it is not exclusively with the DPP.

A couple of final quick points. For myself, the most important aspect of the DPP is the conversations. I think those have to improve. I think they have to become less formulaic and more honest. I think the police are guilty of not being honest in those conversations. I think sometimes we are guilty of hiding behind the structures and the processes of policing and hiding behind performance figures without actually getting down into the weeds around the issues that really affect people and listening to people.

We need to listen. We need to consult. We need to solve crime. We need to bring offenders to justice, but I think that we have a longer way to go in terms of the partnership around that.

The last thing I will say, though, is that I am not aware of any structure anywhere in the world that allows people to engage policing in the same way the DPPs do. We should be positive that the DPPs are there and we should applaud the fact that so many people, members of the community, both political and non-political, have taken the step to engage with police officers and I think we should be looking for mechanisms to try and make it even better. Thank you.

JENNIFER CORNELL

North Belfast Sub-group, Independent member

I have lived and worked in north Belfast for almost 25 years, primarily, but not exclusively, in the greater

Shankill. I have no personal distrust of the police but I am, I suppose, conscious of the potential for error if not abuse by any body in which so much power is concentrated. I should say that I have had unequivocally, unreservedly good working relations with the local police in North Belfast in the community support Board and later with Greater Shankill Alternatives and as the Chair of the Greater Shankill Community Safety Network.

Politically and culturally, not to be cryptic, I would say I am both and neither a member of the two main traditions and in my work on the DPPs I seek to reflect the views of disadvantaged communities. That is the work I have done for the last 25 years.

I was asked to speak about work and style. I can speak only from my experience, personal experience on the North Belfast DPP, and I am conscious that on the panel there is an absence of voices from rural DPPs or indeed any urban centre other than Belfast. That said, I would see that the working practice in the North Belfast DPP has been to work very hard to provide opportunities for ordinary citizens to use the DPPs. We have made a genuine effort, I think, to ensure that meetings are held wherever possible in the natural hearts of the various communities in North Belfast, particularly in those that have been traditionally hard to reach or have expressed resistance to such overtures in the past. I think we can and we will improve. The North Belfast Sub-Group is set to review its consultation practice, to use its resources more effectively; for example by conducting more consultations, I should say even more consultations, but attended perhaps by fewer individuals so those resources are spread out more effectively.

My impression is that residents are comfortable with this process but still dissatisfied. It was a revelation to me, I confess, a few months into the process to realise that what we conducted were meetings in public and not public meetings, which I feel personally reduces citizens to spectators and not participants.

The systems by which the DPPs are assessed - you heard the attendance figures just a moment ago - fails to acknowledge the critical importance of consultation and consultation is of critical importance in the Patten Report. Attendance at private meetings and meetings in public are assessed. It is not assessed in terms of the participation in the consultations. The disproportionate representation, in my experience in North Belfast at consultation events were actually speaking to human beings about what experience of policing has been, there is a disproportionate representation between independent and elected representatives. Presumably the elected representatives, it is on the assumption that their political influence and their exposure to public opinion is the reason why they are numerically predominant on DPPs and yet the attendance, I think as a consequence of this, the public attendance at consultations in the North Belfast Sub-Group area is down significantly from last year. On reconstitution we had large numbers. There were 50 people turned up to the consultation in the Spectrum Centre after the reconstitution in 2008 and that had dropped significantly down to less than ten this year.

I don't think I need to tell any of you that participation in the surveys and questionnaires which were distributed on behalf of the DPPs is embarrassingly low. As far as the DPPs structure, and I should pause here because it has come across, I would second what Mark has said, that the fact of the DPPs I believe is a good thing. I think they can be improved. I would have concrete suggestions but I am conscious of my time, so we can talk about those as a group in a moment.

The last thing I was asked to speak on was the DPPs as a forum for discussion, generally engaging communities on wider concerns. From those who do attend in North Belfast, the same questions and concerns tend to arise time and time again, many of which have already been acknowledged here. Poor front desk or, if you like, first response service, complaints about that - not universally, but that is often what comes to the front. Lack of follow up. The invisibility of police on the streets and the failure to act

on community information, real partnership, real engagement of the kind that the communities expect.

I take Mark's point to heart about the difference between monitoring and holding to account and the finer points of that distinction reflect, I think, a number of misunderstandings and hopefully not perpetual misconceptions between the community, the DPPs, and the police. One thing I would say just in closing is that I think even with the best intentions and genuine effort, working with the community is a challenge for both parties. Our communications styles, our analytical habit, if you like, as well as our social culture are very much at odds. We have been given a mechanism through the DPP which I think, to be honest with you, fails to correct that or bring those differences closer to alignment. It is a well intentioned structure but without work done to bridge those gaps, which make communication difficult and real engagement and partnership working difficult, they will be less effective than they could be.

The final thing I would say that also adds to the limitations of the mechanism is the extent to which some of the queries that come or the concerns that are raised at DPP meetings are things for which neither the DPPs, local DPP or the local police have any power to change. One concrete suggestion I would make just for feedback would be that a member of the Policing Board attend those meetings. I know there are few of them, there are a lot of those meetings, but even on a once a year basis to have a member of the Policing Board available to answer questions which are really about budget, about resourcing, about how to address the concern, again these are things we heard earlier today. That, I think, would prove enlightening and useful in terms of building relations between the police and the community.

JOHN O'DOHERTY

Equality Officer, Rainbow Project
South Belfast Sub-group

I am a member of the South Belfast Sub-Group of the Belfast District Policing Partnership and I just finished my term as Vice-Chair. Before that I was a member of the Magherafelt District Policing Partnership and I have a good idea of the difference between the dynamics of a rural DPP and a more urban DPP. I also just found out that I was appointed on to the custody visitors scheme as well, so congratulations to me.

I work full-time as Equality Officer for the Rainbow Project and my key role is looking at issues of policing and justice matters. I have been doing that for the last year, 14 months. Some people will say why policing and LGBT matters, why specifically? And I just want to add, just so people understand the effect that the legacy has had on different minority groups within Northern Ireland, issues relating to older people, disability, sexism, homophobia, anything like that that have been forgotten or been left behind because what we specifically focus on so often here in the North on is the legacy of our past and sectarianism. I think Ernest Gaines put it best when he said, "Why is it as a society we feel more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands?" I think that speaks to why we do the work that we do.

Earlier this year I finished a piece of research called *Through our Eyes*. It is research into the experiences and perceptions of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Northern Ireland towards policing and homophobic hate crime. We try to interact with the DPPs as much as possible in relation to these recommendations to help work with the local police in relation to the recommendations in this report. To date I have visited three District Policing Partnerships and two other requests out of all the District Policing Partnerships that exist throughout the North. It is worth noting that most of those DPPs, all of those DPPs who have invited me, are present within this room and many of those who haven't aren't and it shows the sort of effectiveness of the DPPs and the interest of many of the DPPs and the members. I will explain a bit more about that in a minute.

I am also Chair now of the Northern Ireland Policing Board LGBT Reference Group and through that body we are able to work in partnership with DPPs where possible on the work we are trying to do and the changes we are trying to see implemented throughout the North.

In my involvement in DPPs, I have seen how they can be effective and representative but I have also seen how they can become very stagnant. The statement that we see in the conference agenda from Patten, the DPPs should be advisory, explanatory, consultative and the Board should represent the consumer, voice the concerns of citizens and monitor police performance in their districts. From my experience with DPPs yes, they carry out their monitoring of performance because it is simple. There is offered support through the staff and I have to say that the staff working with the District Policing Partnerships, any I have been working with are very effective and very committed people. They have got the local policing plans, most of which is developed for them and through public consultation, which again is organised by staff, they get their responses and they set their targets, PSNI presentations at public meetings and it is all very easy.

When Basil McCrea was up earlier getting his photograph taken, the shock of him complaining about getting his photograph taken, I happened to look down at my pen, I don't know where I got it, I don't know where it came from and I don't know who said it, it could be a bible quotation or anything but it says: Seek first to understand then to be understood. I think that is the ethos that DPPs lack and which they need to take on.

To go through the key points that were within Patten - advisory. Yes, the DPPs can be advisory but there is a difficulty there. The ability to plan, to develop new initiatives, is very difficult because there is no resources for DPPs and that was touched on this morning. The resources are mostly within community safety partnerships and Maurice Hayes touched on that this morning and the key problems that are there and that leaves a wee bit of lack of interest for DPP members because the inability to actually implement something that will make a difference other than to carry out the statutory role of monitoring police performance.

Explanatory, yes, they communicate with the public where possible, but most of that is done through DPP news or press releases which are carried out after public meetings. There is very little proactive approach to engage with the communities as far as I have seen. .

Representative. Personally I don't think DPPs are representative. I think this is one of our key problems in relation to DPPs working effectively. I think the public appointment process is wrong and I think it needs to be changed. At the moment, people have to go through a meeting with councillors and representatives of the Board. Following that if they are acceptable, then their name gets passed on to the Policing Board. From that point it is pot luck. There is no score given to members, so someone could be just over the bar of being an acceptable member and someone could be well over and above and be the perfect DPP member, but not be appointed. The problem is that it has to be representative - so many catholics, so many protestants, men, women, et cetera and we heard the statistics earlier. But it is not merit based. Passed either being acceptable or unacceptable, there is no merit base for the appointment of DPP members and I think there is a big shortfall there. Also we heard some statistics there about the representation in DPPs. It is worth noting for the lesbian, gay, bisexual community which make up 6 to 10% of our population, only have to be represented by two people in DPPs. That is for the entire make up of DPPs across Northern Ireland and to me that is not acceptable for the size of that population.

I represent South Belfast and we are very lucky, we have quite a diverse community and we do have quite a diverse DPP membership. We have got one person from an ethnic minority background and

myself from lesbian, gay, bisexual background.

Do the DPPs voice concerns? Yes and no. I think DPPs are very reactive and I have seen this quite a lot in South Belfast. When we had the issue, it was earlier this year where we had a number of rapes happening in South Belfast where there was a big reactive approach by DPP members to ensure that the police were being proactive. There were attempts by some journalists to sensationalise the issue which is an issue that has existed in South Belfast for quite some time but never had that public knowledge of the issue and it hadn't been increased in any way but if you had read the journalist's approach at the time, you would have thought it was this massive issue that had just strangely appeared out of nowhere.

We also see that very recently in relation to sex offenders when there is going to be a new high profile sex offender being moved into South Belfast. Again we are seeing a very reactive approach from a certain DPP member saying we need the police to come forward and tell the public about how many sex offenders live in this area, how are they being monitored, et cetera, et cetera, which is not an effective voicing of concerns for local residents. It is very reactive and sometimes very inflammatory.

The key missing link in relation to DPPs is, as Mark has already stated, the partnership. Partnership is lacking. There are no new initiatives and involvement in active policing and changing policing is missing. Two examples from South Belfast. The warden scheme, which was mentioned this morning. As a DPP member when that was re-established and re-launched, we were not invited to be involved, we were not invited for the planning of how that warden scheme would be developed out. That is a missing link there. DPP members should be involved in that. Another example is we have a representative of the city centre management team, I believe, and the city centre beat which is being developed. Again, as a DPP member, I was not aware of that at the beginning and wasn't invited to be involved in that until such times as I proactively asked to be in. Now I am involved and I hope I am making a positive contribution to that, as other DPP members could if they were invited to be involved in these initiatives.

I will finish just by saying there are key opportunities through the Northern Ireland Office consultation on the future of district policing partnerships and community safety partnerships. What we need to do is ensure there is the ability there to be involved in new initiatives for key partnership work and ensure that the appointment process is corrected. Thank you.

ROSIE McCORLEY

West Belfast DPP, Independent Member

Dia daoibh, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le CAJ as an chuireadh labhairt libh inniu. There were a few concepts already mentioned that struck a chord with me and one was disaffected communities and empathy. If one community could be said to be disaffected in the North it would be the West Belfast community in terms of policing. And if empathy is needed from the police then it is needed in West Belfast because there has been a very particular experience to policing in the past and if account is not taken of that history, then the police will never be able to empathise with the community, so it was very important that I heard that.

The experience has been very negative in West Belfast. I suppose it goes right back to the civil rights images on television of the '60s where you saw the RUC B Specials beating the civil rights demonstrators. That has come to represent what the nationalist community has seen as its experience of policing in terms of the RUC. After that we had difference sorts of experiences, like abuse and brutality, shoot to kill policies, collusion, torture, interrogation centres and daily harassment at the hands of the RUC, all of which has left a hugely painful legacy. It leaves the situation that many people still feel

very suspicious of the police and also just unconvinced that it has changed. But it is not all like that.

The peace process of the last 15 years has been more or less a positive process. It has had its ups and downs, but in 2001, Patten brought about the possibility of a new beginning to policing and while that report was gutted by Peter Mandelson, there still is an opportunity to build a service where the police and the community can work together in partnership. It is a difficult process but I think it is vital that it is properly managed. It is vital that it is effective if we are to achieve the goal of a policing service which is representative of and accountable to the people it serves. We need a policing service which values and promotes the concepts of human rights, transparency, impartiality and genuine engagement with the community and these values need to be central tenets of that organisational approach.

In terms of engagement, Gearoid O'hEara referred to the steps taken to engage the Irish language community and that is very important because West Belfast has a very substantial Irish language community and that is a very positive step from what I can see.

In terms of community safety, there are community safety initiatives within the West Belfast community and there are safer neighbourhood projects. Where there have been instances of people working together with those projects, working with the police there has produced positive outcomes and people have seen the benefits of that. So there is evidence that genuine partnership and engagement works.

In terms of the role of DPP, I am a republican obviously from West Belfast, but I am very happy to be involved in policing because I believe that we need to be engaged. I believe the community does need a policing service and I am happy to play my role in that. So the functions, consulting with the community, voicing the concerns of the community, monitoring police performance, acting as a means of communication and a forum for discussion, all of these are important. Patten saw these as allowing the opportunity for the community to engage with the new policing arrangements and the DPP largely allows that function to happen. So in West Belfast we actively encourage the community to come to us and allow us to be conduits for them in channelling their concerns and their complaints to the police because we want to ensure that the police are held to account and that they are answerable for their actions and for their inactions.

We genuinely want to see real positive change and while we will expose and demand explanations for bad policing, we will also commend examples of good policing. It is in everyone's interest that we do so.

In terms of consultation, this is a very important part of our function and we were determined in the West Belfast DPP that this would be meaningful and we took these out, as other DPPs have done, into the community. So we were not just happy it would be left to the management consultants to do the questionnaire kind of thing and we have engaged. I suppose we could have had better attendance but, having said that, we gave the opportunity in various forums for people to come and present their concerns to feed into the policing plan, to say what their problems were or what they felt should have been there. So it did offer a genuine opportunity for engagement and to feed into the policing plans.

Public meetings have been talked about by other DPP members here today and they are important in terms of allowing the community to feel a part of the structures. Attendance again could be better. Possibly the format needs to be looked at and we have raised this because a large part of the meeting is taken up with the police giving reports. It is very statistical and sometimes it can appear very dry and people who come to the meetings really just want to come to raise their concerns. So it would be hoped that part of it could be looked at.

So while there are challenges, these are not insurmountable. The PSNI needs to gain the confidence of the community. The good news is that the community genuinely wants policing but it wants policing that

is effective and is fit for purpose. There are steps and developments that can happen and can be taken that will assist in this process. One of the main political steps would be the transfer of powers, because while the police have got responsibility for apprehending people who are offenders, the justice systems lets people down and that is a huge cause for concern. So there is dissatisfaction in the sentencing, in how prolific offenders are dealt with, how the turnstile system of allowing people to come in and out, you know, 17 or 18 times and released on bail. So that is something that needs to happen.

Response times and feedback and letting people know what is happening whenever they raise concerns is something that needs improvement. It comes up all the time in consultations that they don't get enough feedback, people need improvements in response times so that is something that can and should happen.

As was mentioned earlier on this morning, there are mind sets and attitudes within the police still which sometimes are more associated with the days of the RUC. That needs to change. Everybody needs to be part of this new beginning and we need to leave the past behind.

Also, to deal with some of the issues that will allow things to move on. It was mentioned about historical cases and people, if they are going to have confidence, they need to see that people will bring forward the truth so that they can be allowed to move on. One other issue that comes up in consultations and in meetings is the need for demilitarisation of the heavily fortified barracks. These are barriers to genuine engagement. People feel they are not user-friendly places. So while there are security concerns, we all believe that a lot more can be done in terms of making these barracks more user-friendly and removing some of the military presence from them.

So, my closing remarks are these, policing with the community is about partnership and it is about genuine engagement. It requires trust and trust is something that needs to be built. If the police want to gain the confidence and the faith of the community in West Belfast and other communities, then they must show that they are serious about policing with the community, they must prove that things really have changed and the old style RUC political policing has been confined to the dustbin of history. But the community have a role to play also. Local people need to come forward in greater numbers to demand the civic policing service to which they are entitled. They need to ask for explanations when they feel they have been failed by the police. They need to assist the police where they can in the investigations in death drivers, the killers, the drug dealers, the burglars, the tiger kidnappers; all those who prey on our society, particularly the people who are most deeply affected by all of those like the elderly and young people. So there are challenges for everyone but working in partnership is the only way we can build safer communities. We all have responsibilities; the police, the DPP, the community and statutory agencies, and we all need to work in partnership to ensure that we build and support community safety structures that make everyone feel safe. Go raibh maith agaibh.

PLENARY QUESTION & ANSWER

IAN STEVENSON, Ballymoney DPP

I am very proud of the reputation of the RUC over the past many years in the service which they gave and the reason why the stations were fortified is because people tried to blow them up. But my questions, you mentioned Andersonstown Police Station, now I used to work in the Royal Victoria Hospital, I know that area well, there used to be protests on it, graffiti on it and so on and so forth, but it is mentioned as an aside you were happy it was closed down. In Ballymoney, we are trying to get a new police station and, in fact, we are getting one. I would have thought people in West Belfast would have been happy with that. So, I was wanting an explanation of that.

The other thing is in regards to independent members. I appreciate what John said about people, there is a Section 75 so on and so forth that people should get appointed on merit. I totally agree with that, that is the same issue which happens with the police, that people are not appointed on merit but on grounds of religion, which I don't believe is right. But my issue is in regards to independent members. Independent members, and I am sure this is true throughout the country, not all independent members are independent and does, particularly Rosie, does she feel that independent members should be independent?

UNA JOHNSTON, Independent Member Antrim DPP

I am from Toome and I would just like to say about the police stations, ours probably would be one of the most geographically remembered through the troubles for everything that happened there and we had a consultation about the closure of the police station. It has been closed for three years but obviously it is going, well hopefully it is going to be dismantled, and other better community projects put there. I would like to say we have had better policing since the police station closed than we ever had in the 30 years of the Troubles and that is due, I believe, to the work of the DPP in our area over the past couple of years.

RESPONSE

MARY McKEE

Before I hand it over to panel I will kindly clarify my comments on Andersonstown Police Station. If you ever seen throughout the 30 years, and working in the Royal Victoria you will know why it is such, an eyesore and blight on the landscape and it would defy anyone to go in there to complain if their cat was lost never mind something else happens. So apropos my colleague from Antrim who has mentioned that policing, and I am going to hand it over to the panel, is more than police stations. We are talking today about getting people out from offices, out into the front line and statistics have clearly shown and the police have said it and I am going to ask Mark to respond after I make my comment, we don't want people to go to police stations, we want the police to go to them. So, Mark, on police stations and independent members.

MARK HAMILTON

I am going to dodge the independent members one. The reason I am going to dodge that is because the constitution of the DPPs structures and formats I think should be decided by the community and by the politicians and those who are engaged in holding the police to account, monitoring performance, whatever that happens to be. So I don't think it is actually for the police to input upon that, Mary.

So, having dodged that one, police stations. It is really interesting the police station debate and from our perspective it differs from one side of the community to the other whether or not you should have more police stations, less police stations, fortified police stations or whatever. We want to try and provide an efficient service. Police stations are hugely expensive places to run - rates bills, electricity bills and so forth. With the budget that we have, we are trying to get an estate mix that meets need but that is not easy. We have perhaps sometimes put the finance questions and so forth in front of actually listening to the community on certain aspects of that.

Equally on the fortification bit of police stations, there still remains, unfortunately, we describe it as dissident terrorist threat, but there still remains an appetite between some small groups in the community to murder and injure police officers and attack them and so forth. We have to provide an appropriate level of protection for those officers because they are your officers, they are your community police officers and we have to provide protection for them. But equally, we have to try and design stations that are accessible and I have to admit there are police stations that I have walked into and got lost trying to find the front enquiry office. So if I have got lost trying to find a front enquiry officer, if you

are a member of the community who has never been to a police station before or maybe even you are a member of the community who has a disability or you are somewhere who is very anxious about going to a police station, how they look to you and I completely accept the point that they are not attractive places to be.

The last point I will make again about stations is finance. Again with contracting public sector finance budgets, the money available and now the Patten funding is really finishing in April 2011, the money available to radically re-alter, change, build, knock down, reconstruct police stations is going to be exceptionally limited, I think, for many, many years to come. But I hope that is not something that is an excuse we continue to hide behind, but I think it is important we understand the fiscal realities of how difficult it is.

MARY McKEE

Could any one member of the panel very briefly respond to the representation of independent members and the comment about it has to be done by Section 75.

ROSIE McCORLEY

The make up of the DPP is between independent and elected members and the elected members are councillors and the independent members are members of the community. I think maybe there was an issue about me as a republican but I represent West Belfast which is a republican community so I am representative of the community.

In terms of police stations and barracks, the community wants to see a new beginning to policing and that is what we expect to see. Unfortunately the appearance of barracks is associated with the RUC, that is how it looks and it doesn't look like a change and change is what we need. We need places that used to look like Andersonstown Barracks, which I can remember as well when it was a garden and all that, and that is the sort of environment that we want to see surrounding police stations and that is what we would be striving for.

MARK HAMILTON

And it is the sort of environment I would like to work in, I would like to play bowls on the lawn.

JOHN O'DOHERTY

I just want to thank my colleague on agreeing with me on the merit of the appointment of DPP members and the need for the implementation of that. I think it is unfair to say that the police officers are not appointed under merit, under 50-50 recruitment, I think that is an unfair comment. I think that any officer who gets appointed to the PSNI, considering the increase of applicants, is very successful and very worthy of the opportunity to serve the people of Northern Ireland.

Just to clarify, there is this misconstrued view about what it means to be an independent member of a DPP. Independent refers to independent from the council or from councillors. It does not mean independent from politics. I don't know about other members, but I couldn't imagine wanting a DPP filled up with independent members who are apolitical because the reality is that we wouldn't have the effective DPP members that we have if every DPP member was apolitical. It is Northern Ireland.

KOULLA YIASOUMA, Include Youth

I work with Include Youth and we do what we say on the tin, we have particular interest in young people and we have talked about lots of other section 75 groups. I am particularly interested in our young people and what you do to reach out to the young people in your communities, because it is fair to say - I don't know what the stats are but a lot of discussions at DPPs having attended a few - are about young people and their behaviours. They are often the subject of discussion but there is never discussion or

rarely discussions with young people. So I would be interested to hear about what processes and what changes you believe need to be made to ensure that the DPP process is -- also the Policing Board, I think the Policing Board need to have a look at this themselves, Mary, what you are doing to reach out to the young people in your community?

AINE McCABE, West Belfast community worker & Independent Member West Belfast DPP

I want to go back to a recurrent theme around the legacy issues, and I had hoped to address this to ACC Finlay but maybe, Mark, yourself. There has been a lot of talk about the fact that unless we address the legacy issues that we are not going to be able to move on and get the confidence of the community. I know certainly from the West Belfast DPP and at public meetings, we have members of the public that have come along to raise such issues and they have not gotten the answers. That is why attendance at such meetings is going to end up diminishing if they are not going to be given the answers.

Mark, you had said in terms of the processes and not hiding behind structure and that, what we need is that people actually do get answers when they raise these questions.

The other thing then in relation to the consultation, we have went out, as Rosie indicated there, to a number of the communities to consult around the policing plan. Now, when we are dealing with the policing plan, what we have been told is that legacy issues are in the past and HET are dealing with that, the policing plan is for the next year. But you are not going to be able to deal with the policing plan, given that some of the aims in that are policing with the community and confidence with the community, unless we deal with that.

So I would ask then do you recognise, Mark, the inability and sometimes the unwillingness to deal with such legacy issues is an impediment to policing with the community? Would you agree that a mechanism is required for resolving legacy issues to create greater community confidence?

LAURENCE McKEOWN, Republican ex-prisoner

First of all if I can say congratulations, Mary, for keeping your introductory comments brief, to the point, and I would say more importantly, critical and to the other members as well. We listened to a session earlier which was very lengthy, in fact, I will repeat it was very lengthy in terms of introductory remarks and was very non-critical of the role of the Policing Board. I think it was Jennifer who said about maybe the Policing Board should come down to some of the District Policing Partnerships and I think that maybe they should because the direction here is much better.

One thing that did stand out this morning, and I bring this out now because it is the opposite, is the two police officers were in uniform, which immediately stands out as the other, the difference to us and the panel is the police. Now, I understand that in society uniforms are used to establish authority or to help authority whatever else. I didn't think there was a need for it here and I would like to hear Mark say what the policy on it is because he is not in uniform. And I think this is important. It may seem trivial but I know I sat at the start when I saw the names up there and I am saying which one is the Chief Superintendent? I was also amazed, and this is where age comes in, because I thought it couldn't be the two of them guys because they are both too young. I think that as republicans moving into a new society, a new structure, we need to see the person behind the uniform the same as the police need to see the person behind the combat jacket, and actually having someone there makes an amazing difference.

I think for republicans, and I congratulate Rosie for being on the District Police Partnership, it is crucial in West Belfast that republicans who have standing in the community are on the Police Partnerships. The comments that you said should be critical and the partnership will be critical where necessary, but also

give praise where it is necessary.

I worked with Coiste na nIarchimí for nine years along with Mike Ritchie, along with Rosie. I'm aware of the work done on the ground by republican ex-prisoners on a lot of interface issues around parading, interface rioting which occurs all the time, antisocial behaviour and all the rest of it. I know the extent to which ex-prisoners have been involved in that work and I would like to hear from Mark particularly in terms of his work on the ground and particularly around parades and such like. What is his experience of working with republicans, particularly people who have been senior IRA people, because often I suppose the image is there that we are still years and years behind where my experience is, the amount of dialogue that goes on, the amount of contact where people are on first name terms is quite amazing and I think that work has to be acknowledged as well.

MICHAEL GEORGE

Just to expand on the young people thing, I think we need to work out a process of the relevancy of DPPs to the greater community. You go to a lot of meetings and, as someone said earlier, I feel a bit sprightly sitting there and it tends to get into a focus of talking about double yellow lines at times and issues which are not relevant to the greater community. So I think I would like to ask the rest of the panel how do we make this outside of the legacy issues and the other issues which are relevant to communities, how do we make it relevant to the public and make people come along and express their opinions in greater ways?

MARY McKEE

Thank you very much. I would call it sometimes when we get questions from the Policing Board allowing me now to have a few anecdotes. The creaking gate in Aughnacloy, if you look down in your questions in the Policing Board, why are we talking about a gate hanging off a police station in Aughnacloy? We are supposed to be strategic, it is apropos of saying the DPPs deal with their things in their area and the Policing Board is supposed to deal with things that are kind of high level. So sometimes I don't think we know the difference.

Jenny, in terms of your perspective to alternatives, because it is easy saying young people don't turn up to meetings, but we are continuing to hold and engage with people in draughty church halls or community centres, eight o'clock on a Monday night in Strabane, which I was at one, you know, if you were 15 never mind 25 or 35 would you come out? So it is along that line, how do we meaningfully engage with young people?

JENNY CORNELL

The problem with scheduling is perpetual, it is not young people, obviously it is parents with children, it is people with care and responsibilities, workers, it is throughout, anyone in the community sector knows that scheduling a meeting that is going to grab the most people is an almost impossible challenge but I take that on board. What I would say in response to Koulla is that very recently, it just happens it was me personally, there was a conference with Nichola Farrell, who works directly with Young Voices Project in North Belfast. She made a number of suggestions which I brought forward to the North Belfast Sub-Group which may be of use to others. One of which was, and she has put this in writing in an Include Youth report about the bias, the flagrant bias in the current questionnaire which assumes that all antisocial behaviour is young person related, how off-putting that is to young people. The generalised assumption that much of the public drinking problem is young person related.

She draws attention to those concerns, those biases in the existing documentation and materials, and she has engaged with her young people to revise that questionnaire. We hate the questionnaire in North Belfast generally. It is off-putting to a whole range of people for a whole range of reasons, young people being the most acute. She also suggested one way to engage with young people is to purchase

in, there are budgets for consultation, purchase in specialist facilitators, for example, staff that include youth. Folks that have existing relationships with whichever group it is you are trying to engage with so that you don't have the double task of building a relationship and then getting something fruitful out of that relationship. That seems to us a very sensible use of the budget which is generally under spent for engaging with the community.

The third thing that I would suggest also, and it is something I have not given enough thought to at this stage, to go back to the idea about the public appointment process, perhaps a parallel process whereby a dedicated seat could be available at the DPP meetings for young people particularly. I am fully aware of the range of other Section 75 groups whose issues need to be addressed as well, but given the relationship and the public consciousness between young people and crime, it seems to me a dedicated seat filled in some way other than the complicated and flawed, deeply flawed system that we have referred to would be enormously helpful. Then we can work around the scheduling after that.

MARY McKEE

Rosie and John, Aine asked about the balance between dealing with the past and actually policing now and policing in the future. Rosie, you quite articulately said about the tensions, about the confidence building. Could both of you comment on that?

JOHN O'DOHERTY

Personally I think it is very difficult and most of the discussion today has been about legacy issues and it is very difficult for people who are not interested in legacy issues, or some people who have not come through some of the very difficult things that other people have, and sometimes they switch off. Sometimes they have only seen the negative aspects of legacy issues coming through and how that can divide our community rather than the positive steps it can have. As one of our speakers spoke about, if we can deal with the legacy then we can move forward. Some people don't engage with that effectively and we have to find ways of engaging with everybody on the issues that actually relate to them.

To quickly touch on what Koulla said, I am 25 and I would like to think of myself as a young person although my hair line would say something different. There are possibilities of ways for the DPP to engage effectively with young people. I think the police are constantly in schools engaging with young people around community safety issues and other issues. Partnership with the police and DPP members to be going in there, consulting with young people, having a two tier approach to: This is what the police are going to tell you about what you should and shouldn't do, but what we are asking you is how you feel about policing? How do you feel about the way the police treat you? How safe do you feel in your community? I have worked with Koulla on a number of things and one of the key things I have tried to see implemented in our DPP is this baton approach to antisocial behaviour. This opportunity for everyone to refer to anything involving young people as antisocial behaviour and it has created this epidemic of antisocial behaviour which does not, in my view, really exist. There's criminal damage, there's lots of different things being referred to as antisocial behaviour which are not antisocial behaviour, and things that aren't even near criminal activity such as young people standing on a street corner is being referred to as antisocial behaviour. As a society, we have created this epidemic and this fear of young people and we need to work in partnership with young people and youth representatives to try and address that.

MARY McKEE

Rosie, let's go to the media one legacy issues...

ROSIE McCORLEY

The reality is that if we gain the confidence of the community, there are people in the community who don't have confidence and we need to look at ways to build the confidence. If the feeling is that they

don't trust the police because of things that have happened in the past and there is no information coming forward and there is a withholding of information. One case that comes up continually is the case of Pearse Jordan who was murdered by the RUC, the inquest is one of those cases that keeps going on and on forever and it is clear that there are people still within the police who have information who are withholding it. That prevents people from feeling confidence. It prevents people from having trust. So there are those very clear reasons why if this is not resolved and those kind of cases are not resolved, then certainly some people won't be able to move forward.

ROSIE McKEE

I think one of the challenges, and I totally understand what you are saying, the same can happen with Mr McIlwaine, the same can happen with Raymond McCourt, do we establish a hierarchy of how you do enquiries, how do you prioritise what particular injustice cases need to be looked at?

ROSIE McCORLEY

I don't approve of hierarchies of any description but whenever you have an inquest within the system that currently operates, there is an inquest system and there's people who are duty bound to bring forward information and they are refusing to do it. There is just a clear cut system that is being abused and that is what prevents people from feeling their voice is being heard.

MARY McKEE

Mark, the whole question from Laurence around confidence building, the very difficult and sensitive work that goes into building relationships along the interfaces, the massive winds we have got around parading, and then a comment about the ACCs turning up in uniform and the kind of tone that sets. I don't mean about the incident, can you comment about those kinds of confidence building measures, relationships with the police, and sometimes they are not that well thought out.

MARK HAMILTON

I think I will speak fairly candidly on this one. I have, I would describe, what feels to me as positive relationships with people who I regard as very senior republicans or very senior loyalists who, many, many years ago it would have been a complete anathema for a district commander anywhere in Northern Ireland or possibly anywhere in the western world to have those types of relationships. And you know something, they are fine and I don't have any great difficulty with them. I suppose they are fine for two reasons. One is that I believe that the vast majority of people who I work with in the community have a genuine interest in their communities and a genuine interest in trying to make life better. I wouldn't say that everyone in the community comes from the same approach, comes from the same political background, comes from the same sense of what precincts should have looked like or whatever, but if I believe that it is part of my role to understand the communities, then I have to try and accept and understand the position they come from. Maybe not accept, I think I have to understand it, I can't always accept everything but understand it and that is the tack that I have asked my team take with the people they work with.

Now, that doesn't mean there are not some really difficult conversations, there are. That doesn't necessarily mean to be empathetic I will always do what people want me to do because I don't, because I will do what I believe to be legally right and morally right. Therefore the conversations are quite difficult sometimes because people construct around what I see as right are not necessarily the same as what they see as right and people are coming from a different perspective. Part of what I have to do as a police officer is inform people about the legal aspects of where we are and also where I see the moral aspects of where we are at times. I also have to have, within all of that, and my officers have to have, the courage to assert their own position when working with the community and that is again part of the whole understanding of each other.

So I would say that, by and large, it is very positive and very welcome. I often say to people there are phone numbers in my telephone for people who people wouldn't imagine a senior police officer would have. Interestingly enough, there are people in this community who have phone numbers for police officers in their telephones and they would never have imagined that they would have those there. I think everybody involved in that process who was there long before me should give themselves, without any degree of patrimony, a really good pat on the back.

I think that the only solutions to the very, very difficult issues around interfaces and everything that goes around all that are in working together. Even on the parading issue, I have very much taken a line that any resolution to any parade or any of those issues is not for the police to determine. It is my job to be held to account for any policing operation that I put in place, it is not for me to decide what is right and what is wrong between communities other than the law and uphold the law. I have been accused of actually not being biased enough by taking that position. Both sides of the community have said to me I am copping out by sitting on the fence but I am actually quite comfortable on the fence around some of those issues. That is for the community to decide.

Uniform. Interestingly enough, I am probably the one breaching policy. In the spirit of visibility that everyone asks for, there is almost a mandate in the organisation that you wear your uniform as often as you can wherever you can because that is what we are asked, we are asked to be visible. So then it is difficult when people say the uniform is a barrier because it is worn for the best intentions. It is worn to say we are police and we are not hiding. We are not trying to be anonymous characters in your community and we are not trying to be anonymous leaders. We are trying to be out there being visible, which is why Alistair and Dave came in uniform today and which is why there is an instruction that officers default to uniform whatever they are doing as much as they can.

I am not in uniform because I choose to come as I am. I choose to drive around quietly. I still think that there are times whenever uniform maybe is not appropriate and I personally don't like having a high profile. So I like to be a bit more discreet. But the policy would be to wear it. But we have also seen this issue as well around, and I am being very candid today about firearms being carried and worn to meetings and so forth and how all that goes down. So my officers, particularly lower level, struggle when they come to meetings wearing their patrol kit, which they are required to wear for their protection and for the protection of the public. The patrol equipment they carry, such as a firearm, causes difficulty for people. Again we try and be sensitive to that, but again part of the sensitivity of that must be in the community understanding that our officers are armed because they are told to arm. They carry out their duties because that is the duties they are told to carry out. You can't blame them for some of these bigger issues.

Just touch on the legacy issue, are legacy issues an impediment to policing the community? West Belfast, yes, absolutely, of course they are. I will tell you why they are, because the community feels they are. So if the community thinks that is an impediment then it is clearly an impediment. And if it is a barrier then it needs to be overcome. I would say on a number of levels we are dealing with some of the legacy issues. Without getting into the specifics of cases, the legacy issues about police relationships are being addressed, I think, through some of the stuff I have just said, through conversations, through constables now meeting with senior members of Sinn Fein, senior loyalists, former prisoners and so forth and being invited to share their stories and share their experience in West Belfast and now hopefully North Belfast, and that hopefully will deal with some of the legacy.

In terms of the bigger stuff and the families of people who are bereaved, I personally don't think that the DPP is a forum for those things. That is the bigger end stuff which I think is actually for the Board. The DPP, it is quite frustrating for the police officers because I don't have any information on these legacy issues in my office or within my district. Many of them pre-date when I joined the police in '94. None of

the officers who work for me, to my knowledge, have any information around any of it and there are legal processes ongoing around most of it. Therefore, it is very difficult not to be seen to be hiding behind those things. If a resolution is to be gained it is not going to be gained, in my view, in addressing those questions to your local police officer because they have no answers for you and no-one is going to give them the answer, quite candidly, to take back to you. So I am looking towards the Board members here and so forth, that I really don't think that those specific legacy issues of specific cases are ever going to be managed adequately at the local level by local police because I will never have answers for you. But the larger legacy issues about relationships, about confidence building, about attitudes and style of policing, about understanding each other's background, about understanding fears and anxieties and trying to move forward, I think can be dealt with locally.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

MIKE RITCHIE

I have been asked to order you all to fill in your evaluation forms. It is very important because we are going to try and replicate these in local districts. We would like to get your thoughts on how the day has gone. It is a new experience for us in the CAJ to have so many police officers running around an event that we organised and it has been a very pleasant change. The one thing I would say is we have been talking about partnership and I suppose there is a spectrum of partnership from cosy through to confrontational. I think we have had examples of two different types of partnerships in the last two panels and there is a question as to whether the relationship can be a positive relationship without it being too cosy and to what extent can we challenge the police as we are supposed to. Perhaps it is because there are so many independent members on this panel that we got more of a sense of a challenging relationship but a positive relationship nonetheless.

The final thing I wanted to say is to remind people about the difference between police and policing. The Policing Board is supposed to be about more than just the police and it reminds me of something another member of the Patten Commission, Clifford Shearing, told me at one stage. The intention was that the budget would be given to the Board and the police would have to come to the Board to justify why they get the budget, but the Policing Board should have the power to say: "We don't want all that budget to go to the police, there are other people who are more deserving of some of the policing budget." I think that distinction shows some of the vision that I think Maurice Hayes was trying to tell us about, that there has to be more consideration around policing with the community and maybe it is not just the police who should be getting the budget. Follow the money - that is how you make sure people are honest in relation to how they deal with policing. Maybe that is a consideration we can take forward into tomorrow.

Policing with the Community? Patten's 'New Beginning' 10 Years On

19 November 2009

OPENING

AIDEEN GILMORE

Deputy Director, CAJ

Good morning everybody. For those of you who were here yesterday, welcome back. For those of you who are here for the first time you are very welcome to our conference.

I am not Mike Richie the Director as it says on the agenda. I am Aideen Gilmore, the Deputy Director and I am going to chair this session this morning.

For those of you who weren't here yesterday, I think we had a very interesting and engaged discussion. Particularly I think the panel session on the DPP served as a good opportunity for some of the independent members to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that those structures present for engaging with the community. But never fear if you missed it because we do intend producing a conference report, hopefully by the end of the year, which will be sent to everybody who attended.

We are being assisted in producing that conference report by the services of our stenographer JoAnne here. I would like to record our thanks to her. Her job is made a lot easier obviously if everything is audible. So we are hoping that the mics and everything will work properly today. In relation to that, if I could ask people to switch their mobile phones off because it can interfere sometimes with the microphones. Then when it comes to the question and answer sessions if people feel comfortable identifying themselves, again we would ask them to do so so that can be recorded in the transcript.

A reminder again about the evaluation forms in your pack. As we mentioned yesterday, this is a sort of headline two day conference, which we intend to replicate at a more local level, so we are very interested in people's feedback on what worked and what didn't work and what kind of issues you would like to see addressed. So I would really encourage you all as the day goes on and by the end of the day to fill in your evaluation form.

So without further ado, I am going to introduce this morning's session, which is looking at the implications for human rights of policing with the community. I think sometimes policing with the community and human rights are seen as two different things when actually they are inextricably linked and it is very important to make those links.

We are delighted to have with us Alyson Kilpatrick to give the keynote address on this issue. Alyson, as many of you will know, is the Human Rights Advisor to the Northern Ireland Policing Board and she was appointed to this post in January. Alyson studied at Queen's University, the Inns of Court School of Law London, and the College of Europe in Bruges. She has practised at the Bar of England and Wales until 2007 when she returned to the Northern Ireland Bar. Alyson is also a Commissioner on the Future of Housing for Northern Ireland and a Director of the Simon Community for Northern Ireland.

So on that note I will hand over to Alyson to make a key note formal address. (Applause)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ALYSON KILPATRICK

Human Rights Advisor, NIPB

As Human Rights Advisor to the Policing Board I report to and advise the Board in an independent capacity as to whether the PSNI are compliant with their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998. Now straightforward enough as a concept I thought, there is a monitoring framework in place. Well I thought wrong. The issues are complex. The environment is changing. We are a society in transition trying to determine what values we hold dear, deciding what we want this place of ours to look and feel like. While it is challenging I consider it a great privilege to be part of that debate. I am heartened by conferences like this and by the people who attend them because what you are all doing is working together, letting organisations like the Board and the PSNI know what is important to you. You are working together to achieve normalisation and to improve the police service.

Human rights, community policing; how do they interact? Well a good place to start is the Human Rights Act 1998. With the coming into force of the Act in 2000, all public authorities are under a duty to act in a way which is compatible with the individual rights and freedoms contained within the European Convention. That duty sits very happily alongside Patten recommendation 1, which requires the police service to focus policing on a human rights approach. What Patten anticipated was a police service that respected human rights, both in a technical and in a behavioural sense.

In many respects PSNI has done more to achieve this than any other police service, but it doesn't mean there isn't a great deal further to go. Credit is due to the police service for the work they have done, but credit is also very much due to the community and it is the community in Northern Ireland which has been responsible for dictating a human rights based approach. The community has driven progress and improved its own police service.

So that brings me to the second broad theme of Patten policing with the community. The Patten Report is underpinned throughout by it; that it should be a core function of the police service and every police station and I would add to that every police officer. Furthermore, the Police Northern Ireland Act requires the police to carry out their functions in cooperation with and with the aim of securing the cooperation and support of the local community.

The concept of policing with the community has been developing over a number of years. It represents a style of policing. It looks to meet local community needs. It is not a specialist form of policing, rather it should be the core philosophy of the police service as a means of delivering the service.

In 2006 the PSNI established a new policing with the community branch. The purpose of it was to give renewed emphasis to policing with the community and to embed it as the dominant style of policing within Northern Ireland. Mick Beyers yesterday in her very reflective opening remarks suggested we were still at the very beginning of the process. I agree respectfully with her. We do have a way to go yet. Dr Maurice Hayes also remarked that culture and ethos takes a generation to bed in.

While policing with the community is a relatively simple concept, it is a big idea and it takes time. Dr Hayes was very clear about this: Policing with the community was the big idea, it was the new beginning that the Commission was are talking about. Respect for and protection of human rights is central to that model of policing. One depends, in my view, upon the other. Human rights jurisprudence reminds us that the protection of human rights must be practical and effective. That means the police service must be scrutinised at all levels. Policy, both in the drafting and implementation stages, training, including appraisal, investigations and operations from planning and implementation right through to decision

making on the ground must be effective in ensuring human rights compliance. But how do we measure that? That is perhaps one of the most difficult questions.

Certainly oversight by the various bodies is an important part of that. But at the heart of that oversight must be the community, the community that is policed by the PSNI, they are the ones who can tell us whether it is working or not. Central to the vision of police reform is meaningful engagement, community consent and police accountability. The community means all members of the community and that is irrespective of identity, racial origin, gender, sexual orientation, background, political conviction. I want also to mention specifically children and young people in this. We hear a lot about children and young people within our community and normally in negative terms. Until recently there was a specific category of offending within the PSNI called youth causing annoyance. Now, my friends and family will tell you I get annoyed on a regular basis very rarely by children and young people, yet there is not a category of offending of adults causing annoyance. What do we mean by annoyance? Some young people I have spoken with believe that they cause annoyance simply by virtue of being young. Well, I am deeply annoyed I am not a young person any more but it is not their fault.

The PSNI recognised that it was unhelpful. They recognised that there was stereotyping involved in that, but it was at the insistence of the community groups representing young people that that category of offending has been removed. The community made itself heard and directly affected police practice and the PSNI should be, and I think they are, grateful for that.

Our community also includes our new arrivals and to ensure that policing with the community really is delivered to all members of it, police officers need to receive training, or at least need to look at their training to ensure that officers understand and can communicate with all members of society. Religious and cultural differences must be respected, but they will only be respected if police officers really understand and are sensitive to those differences. Experience and tradition is important and the police officer has to recognise that.

Importantly, policing must reflect the needs and aspirations of all marginalised and vulnerable groups. We are all entitled to a quality of access to the protection of the police, however equality of outcome is a much more difficult task, but that is the task that the PSNI must strive to achieve. The new approach to policing that we are talking about necessarily involves reform of power structures and relationships and that can be frightening. But policing with the community within a human rights culture requires that monitoring, it requires assessment, it requires adjustment and it will require reinvigoration. It is a core function of the Policing Board and the Board is committed to doing just that.

Over the course of this year I have met with many individuals and groups representing the interests of the community. What I have learned is that the police and the Board can't discharge their functions without real community engagement and support. To that end, the Policing Board's approach to its monitoring function is changing as well. Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee are conducting thematic inquiries and what it seeks to do is really look closely at all of these issues of concern to the community. We will study them in detail. We will report to the Board with recommendations considered appropriate. That is when representatives and members of the community can make their views heard.

The first report published early this year was on domestic abuse. There is one under way in relation to children and young people and it will be followed by an investigation/thematic inquiry into the issues of concern to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

I personally have found that approach to be extremely useful. What it enables the Committee to do is really look closely at PSNI policy and practice, but with a more acute awareness of the needs of the

community and hold the police to account for failure to deliver to the community. What it also enables us to do is highlight good practice, and there is a lot of good practice, and to build upon police successes. Ultimately, it is the community which must inform and drive forward both organisations.

In the context of human rights and policing with the community what the Board seeks to do is move towards more qualitative analysis. Police conduct really does need to be scrutinised. We also need to look at the police service's understanding of social attitudes in diverse communities. I invite all of you to make your views heard through the Board and to continue to hold the organisations to account and continue to improve your own police service.

The one thing I am sure of, perhaps the only thing I am sure of, is that the future of policing in Northern Ireland depends absolutely upon the police service embracing a human rights culture in genuine, practical partnership with the community. What is needed, it seems to me, is a dynamic dialogue. Within that dialogue the community can express its concerns, make its views heard. The police can report back to the community and explain its actions.

Policing with the community requires this paradigm shift. It depends upon an attitude of mind of the police and the community alike. Progress such as we have had can only be maintained and improved upon where the community work in true partnership with the police service. The shared objective must be to ensure compliance with human rights in everything the PSNI does. That is particularly important with issues like the use of force and covert policing, for example. Both policing operations are in stark relief against human rights principles, so it is essential that the boundaries are defined by human rights principles. The protection of human rights is too often seen and regularly reported on in the tabloid press, again this morning, as a mechanism to protect those who try to endanger the community; that, in fact, somehow the community is disadvantaged in terms of safety and community cohesion by a human rights culture.

Now much of that rhetoric, and I know, I do appreciate, it does resonate with many people but, in my view, it is a myth and a false understanding of what human rights are all about. The Human Rights Act does not value the individual at the expense of the community. It provides a model for a functioning community within which certain rights can be limited. Some rights, it is true, are considered absolute such as the right not to be tortured or subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment, the right not to be enslaved, the right not to be punished for something which was not criminal when it was committed. I suspect most people would say its quite right that those are absolute rights.

The rights of the individual are more often balanced against the rights of the community. Importantly, any limit on the exercise of those rights must be lawful, necessary and proportionate. Do we really want that to be any different? For example, a person convicted of a violent offence may have his liberty curtailed, but he or she does not abandon all other rights.

I would like to mention briefly a pilot project in Ballymena which I think really embraces the ethos of community policing. It is called Integrated Offender Management. What it aims to do is pull together all the agencies and the voluntary sector to intervene at an early stage with an offender and really address the reason for the offending and take innovative and bold steps to address and try and prevent re-offending. It tackles issues such as homelessness, mental health issues, addiction, family breakdown, employment issues. Instead of simply catching and convicting an offender, it looks to rehabilitate them for the benefit of the offender but also for the benefit of the community within which he or she resides. There is a dedicated and committed team of officers. They are working very hard to integrate within the community and solve the community's problems. They've adopted a creative and forward thinking approach. It places them at the heart of the community which they serve. The results are already impressive.

I should also like to mention victims because it is often in the context of the treatment of victims that human rights principles and the Human Rights Act in particular, are criticised. It is often said that human rights protect the guilty over the innocent. Well let me try to address that by way of an example. Recently the High Court in Belfast reiterated how the European Convention, the Article 2 right to life required the police to take steps to protect a person under threat and to ensure the accountability of the person responsible for the threat to life. Human rights protect everyone and we need to remember that.

I think when considering the Convention and the Human Rights Act it is important to remember that the rights protected are not new, they are not particularly liberal and they are certainly not some foreign import, as has been argued recently. The right to individual liberty and security, for example, can be traced back to Magna Carta, which is coming up to 800 years old. The universal declaration of human rights and the European Convention were in direct response mainly and most prominently I have to say by UK lawyers and politicians to the horrors of the Second World War. Even back then the aim was to put human rights at the centre of Europe.

History shows us what happens when human rights violations are seen as expedient. If the human rights of some are denigrated I think society is demeaned by it. Nobody benefits in the long term. Also remember the Convention was said to contain basic rights which any civilised society will take for granted. What the Human Rights Act did was to enable us to enforce those rights in our own courts before our own judges. I would challenge anyone to look at the rights contained in the Convention and tell me which of those rights ought not to be protected. Are they not simply basic ethical norms?

I would also suggest that police officers need to re-appraise their role within society. Is the police service's very existence not about the protection of human rights? It is what the service is there for; to protect the rights of all members of the community. The police officer is the first line of defence in the protection of human rights. There is no conflict between human rights and community policing because policing is the protection of human rights. The Human Rights Act has made that abundantly clear. The police have a positive obligation to take proactive steps to secure individual rights.

Human rights and, by extension, community policing are a set of shared principles and values. They define the relationship between the police and the community. The police fight crime, they maintain public order but they do so in association with the community and for the benefit of the community. The Human Rights Act also, incidentally, provides police officers with human rights. It provides a framework within which they operate and if the police stay within the framework they will be seen, quite rightly, as part of the community performing a valuable public function.

Now it would be naive to suggest there is not some tension between policing and human rights. The police have specific power to limit someone's rights. They are charged with exercising judgment when carrying out their day-to-day activities. And as a police officer goes about his or her business within the community, it is the judgment he or she exercises and the decisions that are made which will make all the difference. Application of human rights principles will turn bad policing into good policing, it will turn ineffective policing into effective policing and that was highlighted by Patten and it should never be underestimated. It works.

Back in 1964 Michael Banton said this: The more a policeman is hindered from participating in a community, the less he will understand public sentiment, the less well he will exercise his discretion.

I think this remains as valid today, maybe more so than ever. The leadership of the police service plays a very important role in all of this. The command team of the PSNI has responsibility to deliver on this - through training and mentoring a human rights approach and culture across the police service. The

principles must be understood and owned by all police officers. The importance and relevance of the rights must be emphasised and they must be integrated in -- and this is perhaps the most important aspect of this -- a meaningful and effective way within their policy and practice.

I do believe based on this year's monitoring work that the PSNI structure and senior teams are well placed to carry that forward. However, some further thought, I would suggest, needs to go into training officers so they can fully understand and apply human rights principles in practice. Scenario based training is an essential part of that and it is being delivered at the police college. Further work is under way to ensure the same quality is delivered at district level and throughout the ranks.

In order to protect human rights, a police officer first must understand what they are. There has been identified recently a human rights fatigue within police services generally -- it is not particular to the PSNI -- and that really needs to be addressed. Perhaps one way is by the more practical application of the principles and an approach to teaching that enshrines the concepts of dignity, equality and fairness which we all understand.

When human rights are seen as part and parcel of policing and community policing, in particular, it becomes more real and immediate. I do think, however, we do need to tie it in with the Human Rights Act itself. We need to ensure that it has the authority that it deserves. Police officers have no difficulty accepting and applying the Police and Criminal Evidence Order, for example, why not the Human Rights Act? It is as much a part of our law.

Human rights should not be seen as simply another topic for police trainers or as something which is additional to the "real" policing skills, or as some people have said recently as a luxury which can't be afforded in difficult times. We need to be vigilant that doesn't happen. The policing style in Northern Ireland may have been distorted by the security situation, but the security situation must not be permitted to justify a departure from the policing with the community strategy and it certainly shouldn't be allowed to justify departure from a human rights based approach.

I have seen, and I am sure many of you have experienced some exceptional community police officers and, in fact, in the same year as the Omagh bomb the UK Community Police Officer of the Year Award was won by a local officer and he was rewarded for his efforts in building up a real and consensual presence in the community.

According to the inspection by the Criminal Justice Inspection in Northern Ireland in March this year, the PSNI must have a clear corporate vision of policing with the community and raise and support its status within the organisation. The PSNI has responded to that by revisiting the strategy and is working on an implementation plan. We will see where that goes over the course of the next month.

The PSNI reminds us that resources are limited and that is true and the security threat is real, but community policing is more than just a good idea when resources are available or times are good. It should be, as Patten said, a core function of policing and it should be service wide. There has been a lot of talk, yesterday and leading up to the conference, about getting officers out from behind desks, back on to the beat and I absolutely appreciate the importance of that, but we need to be careful not to make it a numbers game. This is about quality not quantity and some desk work is important. Monitoring of the use of force, for example, or compilation and analysis of stop and search statistics; is this unnecessary bureaucracy? I would suggest not. I would suggest that is transparency and accountability.

Let's not throw away the progress and let's not forget the other important element of Patten, which is oversight. There is often talk of the financial cost of human rights policing and policing the community.

We don't, however, often hear about the financial benefits. Does it not make financial sense to have an effective, efficient police service combating crime? There is the long term cost of crime, not to mention the long term pain and grief that results from crime.

As you know, the new Chief Constable comes with a great deal of experience in this area and we expect it to be high on his agenda. Again, time will tell.

Every aspect of policing from stops and searches, making arrests, conducting interrogations, securing the crime scene, they all include human rights principles. The PSNI has recently recruited an experienced human rights training advisor who is looking at this whole issue and is seeking to skill up the PSNI's human rights trainers, her appointment is very welcome.

The PSNI is demonstrating by such an appointment a real commitment to improving human rights awareness within the police service and it is hoped that that role will be given sufficient resources, prominence and authority to really deliver that. As important in all of this is the police reaction when violations of rights do occur. In Northern Ireland we have institutional safeguards in place, they seek to ensure that violations are identified and dealt with appropriately. Accountability mechanisms, both external and internal aim to secure adherence to those principles. Those processes themselves, it seems to me, need to be transparent and accessible to the community and we need to look at how we deliver that.

I have often been asked why we seek to protect the rights of those who may have conspicuously ignored the rights of others. Well that question does not trouble me in the slightest. The rights protected by the Convention deserve to be protected because they are the basic and fundamental rights which every member of our community deserves simply by virtue of being a human being, whatever they have done or may be accused of doing.

I am hopeful that ethos will form the bedrock of the PSNI strategy on policing with the community. Most officers I have met tell me that it actually gives them increased confidence to do their job and makes them more effective. Let's hope so because without it the PSNI will struggle to maintain legitimacy and to manage our society through difficult times. Any temptation to bend the rules, to use unnecessary force to secure arrest or to exert pressure for a confession, for example, should be seen for what it is. It is an abandonment of decent values and counterproductive to community policing and the rule of law.

The universal declaration itself says this: "If man is not to be compelled to have recourse as a last resort to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, human rights should be protected by the rule of law."

It is abundantly clear - the violation of human rights never contributes to maintenance of public order and security, it only ever exacerbates their deterioration.

The profession of a police officer is an honourable one. It is central to the functioning of a democratic society and the police should be proud that the universal declaration recognises that and has restated it in a number of documents and guidance.

Human rights principles do not, and I repeating myself but I think it bears repetition, they do not impede law enforcement. The Human Rights Act does not undermine the work of a police officer, it seeks to guide the officer in carrying out his or her duties. Respect for human rights by the police actually enhances their effectiveness. It is both a legal imperative and a practical requirement. Without human rights protection and a rights based culture within the police service, community cooperation and confidence will be lost. Policing of the community strategy may as well be abandoned.

If one returns to the Patten recommendations on policing with the community, in its final report it was noted that substantial progress had been made and that there were many positive accomplishments, but also that certain concerns remained. In particular, in respect of community policing and training, the interaction between community beat teams with other units and organisational inertia. The Policing Board is monitoring those recommendations and will continue to do so over the course of this year. Your input is valuable to that.

The PSNI has expressed its commitment to policing the whole of the community. It recognises the effectiveness of the approach, for example, in its policing A Shared Future Strategy, which reads: "Ultimately our performance in promoting diversity, mainstreaming equality, contributing to good relations and delivering policing informed by an understanding of different perspectives of our past will be measured in how it helps to achieve our targets."

That is absolutely right. The community will judge and will repay the police's efforts but only if meaningfully engaged in the pursuit of those targets with the PSNI. While it is easy to understand why the incidence of attacks and threats against police officers may inhibit frontline officers and divert from the model of policing with the community, the service must continue with its strategy not just because it is fundamental to delivering a proper police service, but because it makes the police a more effective service in combating crime. Unless police officers are out and about within the community, they won't know the community itself and they won't know the local conditions.

Police reform around the world has been a long term process. It aims to move from what was a negative relationship between police and community to one where the police protect the community and the community helps the police prevent and solve crime.

Despite the progress made in Northern Ireland, we have heard that there remains a deficit of trust within community police relations. And while we have to recognise the PSNI is facing particular challenges, and doing much to meet those challenges, continuation of human rights protection and policing in partnership with the community is the only way to meet those challenges. Quite simply - it works. Everyone has told us that.

A human rights compliant police service should not be an aspiration, it should be a certainty. We should be able to guarantee it. Thank you very much.

QUESTION & ANSWER

PAUL McILWAINE

I spoke yesterday as well. You mentioned the human rights there and I think it is very important that everybody's human rights are addressed and seen to in the way they are supposed to be, and that includes the perpetrators. In my son's case there was a lot of talk about how could the defence lawyers defend people of that nature who would carry out such crimes, but like it was explained to us in the proper way was we want the best defence possible for the defendants because if you don't do it and give them the human rights they are supposed to have, then you are leaving yourself wide open for a successful appeal or whatever.

But on the other hand, when you are talking about the Article 2 rights which is the right to life and the right to the protection of that life, in my son's case I asked for an inquest. It will be ten years in February and we have no death certificate. We don't have an inquest. We have not had an inquest so there is nothing on official documents to state why or how my son died. When we applied for the inquest we were refused and we took a judicial review under Article 2. Article 2, as you are stating there, it not only

provides for the right to life and the right to protection of life, but it also says that if there is state involvement in the killing that your Article 2 rights are automatically engaged and you are entitled to it, it is compulsorily to have an investigative inquest, a proper inquest, which is almost like a trial within a trial. Now I applied for that through the judicial review, the Coroners' Office. It bounced back and forward between the Coroners and the police and I have no doubt that the NIO had a lot of say in what was happening as well. For three years that court case went on and all along the police legal representatives and the Coroner's legal representatives said that Article 2 was not engaged, that there was no State involvement, yet in the past year or so it has emerged from the Ombudsman's office that Mark Haddock, who was a state agent, there is a cross over of intelligence on twelve occasions in regards to my son's case and he was involved in the lead up which caused the feud before my son's death and the death of Andrew Robb.

Now on the end of the three years the police, on the very last day the police legal representatives stood in court before the proceedings started, conceded after three years and said: Yes, Article 2 was engaged. And we were delighted, that was fine. So the judge ordered an Article 2 inquest with the utmost expedience and we were delighted that we were making progress. So what happened then is the legislation, the powers to be changed the legislation so that six months later they changed the legislation to the effect that any murder prior to October 2000 did not merit an Article 2 inquest. So we are still sitting with no inquest.

When you are talking about human rights now, the tragedy of and, you know, we all have to accept the human rights legislation. I don't agree with a lot of it, I think a lot of it is the cause of a lot of the problems and a lot of the troubles here. But your human rights, you know, what they said was my son's human rights -- my son doesn't have human rights because he is dead. It doesn't provide any, there is no provision for anybody that is deceased in the human rights laws and those that killed him have human rights and that is it is wrong. You have to look down the moral line as well. There is right and there is wrong. So you really need to get down and start thinking about it. It is okay when you are saying about providing the policing and policing partnerships and what not, but if you don't have, you know, you have to lead by example and if the police and the NIO or whoever, and the Assembly and OFM, DFM, if they are not giving us the respect we are due, then how are you expecting us to respect your institutions.

I have a great deal of problems with the security forces in my son's case but I have to say that I am not badgering the police or the security forces. There's a lot of dedicated people who suffered greatly in defending this country and we need to recognise that. There's only a handful of bad apples within it and they need to be taken out before you can have the full confidence of the public.

NEIL JARMAN, The Institute for Conflict Research

A couple more specific questions. One in relation you mentioned in your talk, Alyson, about potential for human rights fatigue within the police and touched on the difficulties of embedding of rights and an understanding of rights, which often, I think, within policing organisations starts at the top, filters down, gradually becomes more defused and then focuses on specific sectors of the police rather than being spread out horizontally, particularly in relation to ongoing training for officers. Could you talk a little bit more about that, about your confidence in that being able to be addressed?

The other issue is in relation to policing with the community or building relationships with the community, and I think you highlighted the case of the officer who was based in the Markets, I think it was, a few years ago. One of the issues that still seems to come up is in terms of building sustainable relationships with individual police officers, that there is a priority around police careers, of being shifted around departments, divisions, jobs, and time and time again you hear issues around relationships being established with police officers which then the officers move with no advance warning, no hand over, no

connection. This is ongoing that I can first date back to the mid '90s and it is still an issue that is there. There doesn't seem to be a lesson learned in terms of emphasising relationships with the community and if you are talking about building trust, it is going to be trust based on relationships with individual officers. So I would like maybe some thoughts on that as well.

NIGEL SPIERS, The Northern Ireland Committee of the British Association of Social Workers.

I would like to agree with the last comment, the thrust of that conversation especially about we all have problems in organisations with staff changing too frequently. But more particularly as a social worker I mean we support generally the human rights legislation, we have to comply with it and we certainly see it as something that has certainly, in spite of what the first speaker was saying, constrained the power of the State and I think that is quite right.

I, on occasion, as a social worker sometimes admitting people in hospital, psychiatric hospital against their wishes I am happy enough to be on that occasion part of the State. On the other hand, I think our profession and I am sure many people working in the health and social care trust would say that they are also experiencing a degree of human rights fatigue, so I don't think it is particularly unique to the police.

But the thrust of my question is: Is human rights legislation very good at constraining the power of the State but less successful in constraining my ability to defend myself against some assault or abuse from my neighbour, a family member or another person in the community? I think that is my question for today. Thank you very much.

RESPONSE

ALYSON KILPATRICK

I will start at the end, if I may, because the final question I think is an over-arching question and a very fundamental principle we are looking at. It is often said that somehow all the burden rests with the State and none with the individual and the debate always turns on rights and responsibilities. People say responsibilities are not emphasised sufficiently, but the Human Rights Act is about public authorities. It is about public authorities being constrained in their action, being prevented from abusing their position and working with a framework of rights. When it comes to individual members of society, we have any number, thousands of laws constraining our behaviour and our activity. The Human Rights Act was not about that. You talk of individual members not being constrained, but we have libraries full of statutes which do constrain individual behaviour. But often what we talk about here when people blame human rights as being the reason why something has not happened or has gone wrong, what is actually behind that is individuals not doing their jobs properly, not human rights themselves. So human rights should not be used as a mask to cover individual inaction and inappropriate action and I think that so long as everyone is doing what they should within the rules, these sorts of tensions shouldn't arise.

In relation to the other question dealing with human rights training, I absolutely agree. It is essential that the training is looked at, very carefully looked at and again this is about quality not quantity. It is not about suggesting more and more training, because I think that only adds to the human rights fatigue. What it is about is looking at the training that is delivered and whether it actually results in police officers who know what they are doing and are doing it properly. It is about instinctive human rights protection. It is about understanding the principles and really understanding why they help the police officer and the community.

We are looking very carefully at this at the minute and, as I mentioned, the human rights training advisor is an extremely welcome appointment. It is very recent. She comes with a wealth of experience in

a variety of capacities and I am extremely hopeful that if she is given the freedom and resources to do her job properly, we are going to see a real turn around in this and it has to be all police officers. When I talk about district training and throughout the ranks, that is what I am talking about. I am talking about making sure that the more senior officers who have been around for a while, and who may have been trained 15, 20, 30 years ago also understand and apply in practice the human rights principles.

The other question about the community police officers and about them not being in position long enough to really establish trust, absolutely. I don't think anyone would disagree with you. It is important, particularly at that very local level, not just that all the police officers do what they are supposed to do and are trained to deal with the community, but that the community recognises those officers and can trust them and the trust is then repaid; the police officer is trusted, the community trusts the police officer. I think most people would accept that it is unhelpful if that officer, just as he or she is starting to really get into the business of community policing, is then moved on somewhere else. That is something that the Board will be looking at and will be engaging in a debate with the PSNI on.

MR STEVENSON, Ballymoney DPP

On the human rights issue, I'm involved with the Dunloy parades issue and for 13 years now we have not had a parade in Dunloy and we feel there has been attempts to intimidate us out of the village. This isn't aided by the fact that we feel we are being discriminated against, including an action by a police officer who refused to allow Orange Men to go into the Orange Hall to have an Orange meeting and we were threatened with arrest for the same. It is just on the issue of equality on that one - how can people persistently have their human rights or what we believe human rights taken away without any equality that, you know, we should at least be allowed one along the way?

The other issue I believe probably is more serious and it is in relation to an event in the town. I will not go into specifics, but a gentleman who was in a bar, who wasn't involved in any crime apart from he found after the thing was over, he wasn't even picked out in a line out as being at the crime when it happened and the police said that they could link the accused to the crime and he wasn't there. They even took away a band uniform for forensics which he wasn't even wearing to try and get him for that. Now my question to that one is basically how much proof police -- you hear on the news, they say the police believe they can link the accused to the crime. He spent 15 months in jail for absolutely nothing and his own solicitor said he thought that was terrible what had happened. But how much burden of proof do the police need to say that they can link the accused to the charge?

REBECCA DUDLEY, Human Rights Training Advisor, PSNI

I am aware, having listened to yesterday's very rich discussion, and this morning as well, that there is a tremendous amount of expertise and opinion and experience in the room that I could benefit from, so I would like to welcome any comments or conversation in the course of the day. So do please come and introduce yourself to me and tell me what you think about human rights in training for the police. Thank you.

MICHAEL FLEMING, Ballymoney

There's a case that's been in the news the last few days about a widow being refused compensation in respect -- obviously not a specific case, but a lady being refused compensation because her late husband was a former terrorist who had served his time and been released from jail but in a completely unrelated incident he was then murdered in a civilian context, just in a brawl or something, but because of his history she and her family were refused compensation. Is there a human rights aspect to that? I appreciate somebody made the point that dead people don't have any human rights but surely their survivors do.

GAVEN BOYLE, The Centre of Policing Studies, University of Ulster

I have just a couple of brief points. First of all, during the talk, which was very informative, you mentioned the community many times. It sounds as if you were projecting it as a homogenous entity, but as we have heard from some of the speakers, there are many communities within the community and I was just wondering what comments you would have for the competing views of the police having to manage those?

Secondly, on the aspect of training, the police service is facing cuts and historically in any organisation, training is the first to fall victim. What suggestions would you be making to balance that out for the challenges for the PSNI ahead?

CLAIRE HACKETT, Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium

I just wondered what you thought about how important it was investigating the human rights abuses of the past during the conflict? How important that was for implicating respect for human rights now and in the future?

RESPONSE

ALYSON KILPATRICK

Well perhaps I can deal with a few of those questions by what may seem like a cop out, but I can't get into specifics of individual cases. What I can say, and the Policing Board will ensure or do its best to ensure that this actually is put into practice, is that there is equality for everybody. Now there are going to be times when some people's interests are preferred over another and that is part of what balancing of rights is, but again a lot of those cases you are talking about, it seems to me that it may be that what is behind that is individuals not doing their jobs properly or the process maybe not being looked at or scrutinised as it should be. So, all of those are things which can be looked at in the specifics. I can't, without any information, deal with those today.

What I would also say is that in relation to individual complaints, obviously you have the very formidable office of the Police Ombudsman who can deal with those complaints and will really look closely and report back to the public what his findings are.

Regarding the comment that we talk about the community as somehow a homogenous mass of people, I absolute agree with you it is not and that sort of -- the crux of human rights and equality is that it is made up of all different sorts of interests and rights and what the PSNI, as with other public authorities, has to do is make sure that all those interests and rights are protected and that they are acknowledged and understood. When I talk about the community as that whole body, I suppose in some ways it is shorthand for the interaction between the police and the community, but absolutely not ignoring the importance and the values of those individual members of it and their different needs. What I said about equality of access really being about equality of outcome, that is where that really comes into its own. We need to look at equality of outcomes and sometimes that can mean that some people are -- you know, equality does not always mean treating people exactly the same. Some people need more help in some areas than others.

The issue of the past. Thankfully bigger and better minds than mine are dealing with that and there's a lot of time being spent considering what we do with it. What is clear is that it is impossible to have a discussion about the current without the past being a part of it. On the one hand, maybe we should draw a line under the past and move on, but then I also appreciate that that line is drawn at different stages for different people and we need to be very conscious of that. You are right that past violations absolutely affect current trust and current relationships and it is only by the PSNI really showing that they are prepared to deal with violations of rights that they are going to get the respect that they want

and, if they do it properly, they deserve.

AIDEEN GILMORE

I would like you all to join me now in thanking Alyson for her presentation and for her robust response to the questions. The issue of policing with the community in terms of not being a homogenous community I think is a very relevant question to the next panel's session, which will look at policing in partnership with different groups of society. So I urge you all to stay on and engage on that panel. So it is time for coffee. If we all come back in about 15 minutes time that would be great. Thank you.

PLENARY - LOCAL POLICING: Policing in Partnership?

MICK BEYERS

Policing Programme Officer, CAJ

Welcome back. We will start off now with our local policing plenary. We are engaging with the theme of Policing in Partnership. The chair of the plenary session for this afternoon will be Jim Auld. Jim has been the Director of Community Restorative Justice Ireland for 12 years since the organisation's inception. Previously he worked with key community organisations on projects which focused on youth at risk of offending and, by extension, coming to the attention of armed groups. As a former prisoner, Jim successfully sued the British government for human rights violations. So Jim, over to you.

JIM AULD

Director, Community Restorative Justice Ireland
Plenary Chair

Thanks, Mick, for that introduction. I have been told to keep things very tight in terms of time, so I will only be 10 minutes or maybe 11, but I will go through it as quickly as I can.

When I was preparing these notes, and that was last month by the way -- and anybody that knows me knows that that is very, very unusual -- I obviously got the date wrong. But at the outset I want to pay tribute to those individual PSNI officers, some of whom had a fairly serious senior rank who my own organisation are working with, and anyone that knows me knows that that is fairly peculiar as well.

I want to thank them for the effort they have made to put into practice the strategy of community policing. Even though I doubt that within this room we could get an agreed definition of community policing, some people view it as consultation, another term is engagement, yet it is unclear about what that means in real terms.

On one hand, you have people who believe that community policing is about the community giving information to the police about criminals and their activities and the police then being able to go in and arrest those people - being the community eyes and ears of the police. On the other hand, some people believe that community policing is about the length of time it takes the police to turn up to arrest somebody when an incident takes place. What I believe is that a section of the PSNI has been given a task to develop relationships with the communities as part of Patten's recommendations and as part of those recommendations it is a task that they have to carry out like any other task within the remit of the police. It could just as easily have been increase the use of ASBOs or catch more drunk drivers. I am mindful that that might sound insulting to the individual officers who are part of the community affairs team and those individual officers who are trying to develop a community safety strategy and it is not meant to be. Certainly, the individuals that I have met have been very professional and have shown a willingness and an enthusiasm to engage with the community.

For most of us, the Patten Report established a potential opportunity for a unique experiment in community policing and for us in my own organisation, the recommendations of the Patten Report offered, on paper at least, many opportunities for the community to be involved in policing. First there was the range of consultative mechanisms from district and neighbourhood level that offered the opportunity for community representation and representatives from councillors of the local people to influence the policing plans and priorities. Secondly, there was the proposition in Patten that all policing should be regarded as community policing and that all the specialist units should be there to back up the front line neighbourhood policing teams. As Maurice Hayes talked about yesterday, policing should be

a collective community responsibility, a partnership for community safety and this sort of policing was much more difficult than policing the community. It required a change in them to the "us" and "them" concept of policing.

However, I believe that it remains to be seen whether the PSNI as an organisation can come up to the mark of community policing. My experience so far has not been very good. Some of the leadership of the PSNI and some of the rank and file of the PSNI are prepared to depart from the common adversarial policing that has been the past way of dealing with things and grasp the vision of Patten.

However, an example. Over the last past six months my life has been threatened six times by dissident republicans, but I don't know whether -- I am saying that because what I am going on to say may sound strange -- I don't know whether anybody saw the UTV Live programme the other night. The reporter talked about over 10,000 times Section 44 has been used to stop and search people and out of that 39 people have been charged with various non-terrorist related offences in the past three months. Those figures, as far as I understand, can be expanded to nine months. That is 30,000 people over the past nine months have been stopped and searched, yet the police are trying to develop a community relations strategy or community engagement strategy. I would like to just briefly take a minute to look at that.

On one hand we are told that dissident republicans -- there is only a few of them and they are all nuts. So why do we need to stop 30,000 people within broadly the nationalist community to try and deal with them? Let me give you an example of one of the consequences of one person in that group being stopped. In west Belfast recently in a school car park where a well-known republican was leaving his 12 year old daughter off to school. In the school carpark the police came in and stopped and Section 44'd him, stopped and searched him, hands in the air, in front of the whole school. His 12 year old daughter in the same position. The whole school, all the other 800 children in the school, saw it taking place and their sympathy went to the father and the child. I would question the wisdom of doing that, especially if it is in terms of trying to catch terrorists. And over 30,000 people. It hasn't been done before. So I think it is safe to say that dissidents are loving it because that type of abuse of power drives a wedge between the community and the police.

One of the officers in that same television interview said that they were able to stop attacks based on these stop and searches, but since the increase in the use of Section 44 the threat level within the whole community has increased exponentially. There have been more shootings and bombings during the last nine months and more sophisticated attacks during that time, and deadly attacks, than ever before. So we need to question why people are doing those things.

In terms of my own organisation, we are progressing the relationship with the police with an openness and an honesty and we have no reason to believe at all that the people that we are dealing with are not doing exactly the same thing. But more importantly is the response of our communities to this opportunity of change and it may be lost over the stupidity of what I have just said or it may be lost over a mixture of bitterness over the past as was talked about yesterday and this morning by Mr McIlwaine. I personally would view that as an awful waste of that opportunity.

Other difficulties will be, and the politicians will know, the topic of funding for the police itself. But for me one of the main points is the lack of community participation in policing. There have been many, many millions of pounds spent preparing the PSNI for policing with the community and can anybody put a figure on what was spent on preparing the community for civilian policing? I don't think there's too many people that can do that.

Another difficulty will be the reluctance in the community, in working class communities to abandon the

scam culture. There is a culture there, whether it is fuel laundering, cigarette smuggling or DVDs, it is all there and as a community, we need to change that.

On one level there is a need to make a democratic reality of the accountability mechanisms that have been established, especially the DPPs and the confusion between the DPPs and CSPs is not helping matters. Members of the partnerships should work to establish networks throughout the community. Councillors will do their own thing in terms of the politics of it, but more importantly is the independent community representatives. They need to be individuals not seen as the worldies within the community but as real community representatives.

At another level, there is a need to build a new relationship between the community and the police at neighbourhood and at state level, because it is fine at senior level having nice cosy relationships and being able to sit around the table and talk about what needs to be done, it is a different matter at a State level whenever you are expecting people to ultimately stand up in court and testify against their neighbours about things that have taken place in. I believe that that relationship is best done by developing personal relationships and it could only be done if those police are based in the area and for a long term and build personal relationships. I think there was talk yesterday about wardens and CPSOs, I don't see that as being the way forward. I think that we need real police officers that are trained to a very high level to accomplish those things.

My own organisation has a good working relationship with the police but we believe that not only are these ideas the only basis on which a shared culture of justice and community safety can be built on, but it can also help unite the community and the agencies of the State. On one hand, restorative justice offers an alternative to the retributive culture that is prevailing in some quarters within the community and, on other hand, it demonstrates to the State the importance of community engagement in dealing with crime and criminals and I will finish there. Thanks.

GORDON DOUGLAS

Community Affairs Manager, Queen's University

As Community Affairs Manager part of my role is managing relationships in the Holyland and the Stranmillis area around the university. Now I won't take any questions about the Holyland or Stranmillis, even though I did that two weeks ago on a Friday morning but I will answer some other questions.

This morning I want to talk about a case study, about the studentification problems and there are two problems around Queen's University. Root causes are overcrowding of students. You have around about six or seven thousand students living in the Holyland, and as well the abuse of alcohol; we are pouring alcohol down young people's throats and that causes a massive problem. I won't go into the historic how it came about because I just don't have time, but what I want to talk about is an inter-agency approach and how we have worked with the other agencies, but especially with the PSNI.

So as I said the root causes were overcrowding and the abuse of alcohol but there came a point where we said we have to try and manage that problem as well and an inter-agency or a oneness approach was seen to be essential to try and manage that programme. The university strategy we came up with, along with the University of Ulster, was one of educating the students as they come to university about all the different problems. The second one was in partnership with all our statutory agencies, like Belfast City Council, Housing Executive and the PSNI, and then the next strategy was one of discipline that we put into practice not only on-campus behavioural disciplinary policies but off-campus as well.

So can I say from the very outset that our relationship with the police has been essential in trying to manage the studentification problem and can I say that the university -- I speak for the university and the

rest of the agencies, we have very good working relationships with the police.

Some of the lessons learned, and this is going to be very practical, would be that, number 1, we have to build professional relationships with each other. We have to be able to have difficult conversations with each other. We have to be able to say: "Look, you don't have enough police officers here." We have to be professional enough to accept that and that is a two way thing where we have an honesty and we can speak to each other and that only happens when you build up a relationship professionally but also personally in that sense.

I think it was Neil Jarman who said earlier on about the continuity of police officers there. Sometimes that can lead to problems where you have a turnover of personnel. Fortunately for the university area, we have not had a massive turnover of personnel but continuity is very important in building those relationships.

Operationally, in another life I worked a bit with the problems with the Apprentice Boys marches. We looked at it and we put it into operation here and one of the things was, before one of the marches we decided that we would get the community and all the media, everybody together to talk about how that certain march was going to be policed. Then for this area and the Holyland, we have done exactly the same.

For instance, just before Halloween, well Freshers Week, for example, when you have got 17,000 students just descending and they are just Queen's alone, but you have Jordanstown and Belfast Met coming into that one area, how do we control that? It was essential that with all the major agencies with the police operationally that we have an input into that and we have an input in to how, operationally, the police police the whole university area with the community safety wardens, with Belfast City Council and with the universities.

The other thing would be St Patrick's Day; lessons learned from the last St Patrick's Day that we hope we will learn for this coming St Patrick's Day and already we are working in partnership on how that would be policed. So one of the things we would say and we have found is that in the university area, which is now called the Laganbank Sector is that the police have listened to what the community have said and what the partners are saying.

So community involvement in operations, for example, community involvement we have seen is essential. You just didn't have the universities and the governmental agencies but you had chairs of residents groups at those meetings as well who had their input as well as student representatives.

The other lesson learned is that you have to have officers on the ground. I am sure you have talked about this yesterday. Police officers on the beat. It is no use putting police officers in cars and telling them to stay in cars. It is no use putting them in white land rovers which are armoured plated and closed up because that is like a red rag to a bull to certain young people with alcohol because throwing a bottle at a police land rover which is shut up will do nobody any harm and that is the attitude. But if you have police officers on the beat who are walking, getting to know the community they are in and serving them and helping them and not just enforcing.

The other thing that we have found, myself and my colleague from the University of Ulster, has just spoken to all the police officers, that would be response police officers and neighbourhood police officers about the university area, it is setting in context that a police officer that is working in the community needs to know the community, they need to be aware of who the community is and how policing can affect that community. We have been able to explain to every police officer in south and east Belfast who is working in that area about the community and explain to them, make them more

aware of the community that they are working in.

Residents groups as well for the past what, four years, police, along with all the different agencies, have been attending all the different residents groups. That would be about five meetings a month throughout the year every month. That has been important. Those residents groups, it is not just a venting time or get at the statutory agencies or an opportunity to get at the police, but it is about actually dealing with it and in the past year we have set up a meeting called Police and Community Together working in that.

The other thing would be -- and I want to finish because I have one minute -- is that one of the ideas is that the community in one sense don't understand the problems that the police have. One thing we did in another area was that we brought the community in and made them the commander for the morning and told them all the different circumstances and said: "You police this area." So basically what that is doing, is putting the community into the police commander's shoes to help them to understand their difficulties. I think that the community as well, there is two way process of the community understanding the problems the police have and also the police understanding the community.

So, just to finish off with some of the problems that we would see would be resources, that there are not enough police resources. I am sure you have touched on that. The continuity problem and that police officers, when they are on the beat and in that community, they understand the context and understand the people they are working with. Thank you.

ROBERT MURDIE

Chief Inspector, Central Neighbourhood Policing Unit (City Centre) 'B' District (South & East Belfast), PSNI

Thank you, Jim. I think it is just natural that I follow on from Gordon because Gordon gave a real impression of the human aspect and the need to build relationships when it comes to partnership and what I am going to discuss for the next few moments is just the strategic element around that partnership formation.

As Jim pointed out, I am the Area Commander for Belfast City Centre. I am also responsible for community safety for south and east Belfast. I am a practitioner and a strong advocate of what I would call problem-orientated policing. Now what on earth is that you are going to say to me, it is more police jargon? Well, essentially, it is quite simple. It is to deal with the root causes of the problem rather than sending police out to continually deal with the symptoms of problems. We see 24 hour police being sent out time and time again to the same street, to the same addresses and often different officers trying to deal with the same problem in different ways. The real solution to those problems comes from local neighbourhood officers giving time to actually deal with and address the root causes and stop this cycle of offences and the different responses by police. This approach is imperative in an area like the city centre, which experiences very, very high levels of crime and disorder and can impact quite significantly on the top line figures of the organisation. If the city sneezes, it is often said that the rest of the organisation catches the cold.

Now, increasingly, a significant part of this problem-orientated approach is developing partnerships in order to find sustainable solutions to community concerns around crime, disorder and the fear of crime. Now, I was leaving here last night and I was thinking about what I was going to say this morning and I noted when I was passing the lovely water feature you have out the front here that that actually in itself is a good example of some partnership work that was ongoing.

You may know this, but it is locally referred to as a swimming pool. If you cast your mind back to the hot summer days of summer, probably around about 2004, you would see large groups of young people in

swimming costumes wearing their inflatable arm bands, rubber rings, carrying rubber ducks, even in snorkeling equipment walking down the Ormeau Road towards the swimming pool. Now this wasn't appreciated by all, as you might have gathered, it is a lovely water feature and some were seeing it as antisocial behaviour, some were concerned about the engagement of young people, because some of the water is actually quite deep, and other ones were pointing to criminal damage that they were alleging that the young people were carrying out.

Now we looked at forming a partnership around this so we sat around the table and we brought the council around the table, ourselves, members of the local community as well as other interested bodies in the Gas Works site and we sat down to discuss what the real issues were. But the significant thing for me was when we sat down at the table we thought the solution is quite simple - fill it in and stop the problem. For the police, a lot of things are like that, a simple solution. But when you work in partnerships, everything is not simple. It is far from simple. And to that table there was sat down a whole gamut and variety of different views and view points about how the problem should be solved. Some, yes, said it could be filled in. Others said no, no, it would disrupt the aesthetics of the area. Others pointed to the endangerment of young people. Others had their own concerns. What is significant around this is that partnership is always about trying to find and understand what those different concerns were. And by the way, you always had that group sitting in the corner still wearing their swimming costumes!

Partnerships require, as I said, careful management, understanding of each other's views but always compromise and negotiation. What is clear with the swimming pool, and indeed many other real issues concerned over recent years in my experience, is the real willingness now of statutory, voluntary, community and private organisations to come together and be prepared to work with the police to try to find real and tangible solutions.

It is also clear that partnership is now becoming overworked by some and is being viewed as a delegation of decision making to the committee. I even recently heard partnership referred to as a group based around the suppression of mutual loathing in search of government funding. There might be some truth in that last one there!

From my experience, real partnership working is about what I would call vertical and horizontal layers. It is creating vertical regulatory, even legislative basis, followed by horizontal ongoing engagement with the communities. This creates sustainability and acceptability and without these, partnerships just wither and die. The Get Home Safe Partnership, focusing on alcohol related violence in Belfast city centre has been going on since 2003. It is enshrined in the Safer Belfast Plan with all the prerequisite data sharing agreements in place, but this partnership has ongoing regular engagement with the main interest groups and communities, such as the business community, the licencees, the retailers, those socialising, victims of crime and even the residents who are affected by the rowdy and nuisance behaviour.

Another good example of this vertical horizontal integration, and what Gordon has already mentioned, is the PACT groups, Partner And Community Together where police, DPP members, members of the community, statutory and other organisations with interests in the area come together on a regular basis to highlight community concerns and agree clear actions and, more importantly, accountability.

I would raise two issues now that really I am just trying to open the floor for some debate and some discussion around partnerships. They have, nonetheless, exposed two key elements, to my mind, in relation to partnership development in Northern Ireland. One is the plethora of organisations and agencies whose remits impinge on public safety. For example, when it comes to public services, separate agencies are responsible for education, social housing, planning, social services, roads,

maintenance, whereas if we look at Great Britain, local authorities have the remit for most of these functions . The other area, and it is linked to this, is I would ask you all in this audience how many of you actually sit on partnerships? You probably want to dive for cover every time another partnership is mentioned. There's a considerable number of partnerships out there and people are complaining now about partnership fatigue. Alyson mentioned human rights fatigue earlier on, but there is a high degree of partnership fatigue.

I want to finish off by getting back to basics and asking really what is the fundamental question about partnerships. In my mind the question is this: What is the service that the community wants to be delivered? What does the actual customer want here? And in terms of police, it can be visible and accountable officers in the area, it can be tangible differences to the environment, it can be just about information and keeping people informed about what is going on. What all of us involved in partnership working must do is not to lose sight and focus of what this fundamental question is and not to get lost in the processes and keep our eye on what the community want that we serve.

Really just getting back now, just to end with maybe closing, you probably want to know what happened about the swimming pool and just to finalise the story on the swimming pool. As you see, the swimming pool is actually still out there and a lot of people who are not really problem orientated would say: "It is just because the summers have been a lot colder and people aren't using it." I would certainly put it down to the partnership working; the fact we engaged with young people, we engaged with the residents and the parents in the area, we let them know what the dangers were in the area. We put in safeguards around the water feature just to make sure it was safe if people did actually fall into it and, in fact, we engaged with some of the partnerships too in fencing the area off just to make it a lot more safer. Thank you.

DEREK HANWAY

Director, An Munia Tober, The Traveller's Support Programme

Thanks, Jim. I have been told to keep it to five minutes now. Anybody who knows me knows that's really a challenge. And apologies this morning, I haven't really been listening to anything that's gone on this morning because I keep on thinking of Thierry Henry in my head for some reason! So maybe today this is going to be a bit of, kind of therapy or something for me or whatever. No, I have been listening seriously!

Travellers and policing in five minutes. I suppose the context is that many travellers are viewed as outsiders in society. I would say many of us here this morning, apart from obviously myself in my day job and what I do for a living obviously brings me into contact with travellers everyday, but the number of people really do that as part of their daily working life or in general, you know, when they are going about their day is probably very limited. I was talking to Neil about this earlier on this morning and some of the surveys that come out about people who have travellers as neighbours or colleagues or even within their family, you know, obviously travellers generally, you know, the society or the structure of travellers is very much based on family groups and marrying other travellers. You generally don't get people marrying outside the traveller community.

So generally the context is one in which travellers are viewed largely as outsiders, but not just outsiders but also kind of like a deviant or a different group who are probably more predisposed to criminality. What do they do for a living? How do they get their western style homes on their sites? How do they drive their fancy cars? How do they afford these big weddings? This kind of attitude around that permeates wide of society is going to seep itself into a police service or any particular service because that's people's day jobs, but we are all members of society, we all read newspapers and listen to radio shows, even if you are stuck with the one, kind of, Radio Ulster at half nine in the morning, that is the

kind of stuff that people rant down the phones on shows. So that is the context of a lot of that.

I kind of view that the shift, if there is and some of the theme, I suppose, is there a profound shift happening within policing and community policing? What I would best describe it in my work and my kind of view is that it is a little bit like if it comes about where we are coming out of recession and politicians or economists tell us that the recession is over, you know, we all should be jumping up and cheering about it, but people don't feel it on the ground. That is what you often get people actually saying. I would say there is a similar context with travellers in that the shift has happened and I certainly feel it and part of my working day has had a lot of contact with the PSNI and the Policing Board and so on, but generally I would say travellers don't feel it on the ground. They wouldn't really know or get a sense of any particular shift that has happened.

But the kind of profound shift I think that's looked at in terms of what has happened is the relationship between my organisation and the PSNI and Policing Board is quite good. We have had, as I said, a lot of engagement. Training of officers at local level. We have organised a district command unit level. I see Mark Peters here this morning in terms of the west. We have had officers like Mark bringing in fellow officers to meet travellers and to spend an hour looking at the cultural awareness of those officers around who are travellers and bringing police officers into contact with the traveller community. That type of approach has been going on.

The PSNI last year for Traveller Focus Week, which is coming up again in two weeks' time, produced a DVD which is excellent. It talks about the law. It talks about the Race Relations Order, the duty that officers have around not just in terms of race discrimination in their own role but actually protection of racial groups and the role that officers have when they come across discrimination. I want to just come back to that in a second where Alyson touched on that in terms of not just officers being aware of their obligations and duties around not infringing on people's human rights but their protection of human rights is obviously important.

So we have had this kind of shift, I think, at an organisational level, at a kind of a level which is nearly above, I suppose, what is happening on the ground. And maybe just it needs time. I don't know. It needs obviously people to keep pushing it but maybe in time it may change.

I suppose to come back to some of the negative stuff or the stuff that maybe travellers would tell me and I have witnessed and seen is typically what travellers will say is that there is over policing; that suspicion and view if there's incidents on a traveller's site or anything happens within the traveller community, you know, the reaction is disproportionate, it is over the top. I think that is generally what my own view would be and particularly in some of the examples over the summer I would have agreed with that.

We also need to look at the role within the structures that have happened in policing. We have ethnic minority liaison officers attached to most DCUs, if not them all. I am questioning that really. I don't know, I think there is a view maybe that it is a kind of trendy thing to do, but I don't know in terms of -- there is also when people talked about earlier on the community not being based on a homogenous group, equally ethnic minorities are not also. I think what we see in terms of some of the racial attacks that have been going on, I think you would need to look at ethnic minority or certainly liaison officers, officers for particular communities who are being targeted for racial attacks, or there's issues that are happening within that group.

So within the west, for instance, my own area, I think yes, it is great to have an ethnic minority liaison officer who liaises with particularly the Filipino community who are working in the Royal and so on and their personal protection, but I would also think what you need to look at, based on some of the examples, particularly in police forces in England and Wales, is actually having traveller liaison officers.

Back to some the points that both Jim has mentioned for wider community and Robert has mentioned also, is around those officers then getting to know that community and getting the trust of that community. How are you supposed to do that if there isn't somebody dedicated who travellers can trust?

I would think that recently, just every now and then what happens is things break that trust. Just over the weekend, for instance, there was some press reports which I have one here from the Sunday World: Rebels pay travellers to nick guns. It is quite a big article. The big concern I got on Sunday night and on Monday was the fact it says within this is: According to PSNI intelligence. This kind of link that is essentially that the view within the PSNI that, you know, this kind of wider traveller community, we have got about 3,000 travellers in the north of Ireland, we are talking about, if the press reports are right, a small group of youths are supposed to be battering old people and stealing guns and so on. I thought this was typical tabloid stuff. I said: "Well that is not going to affect maybe some of the key decision makers and it is going to change the views." I am not suggesting people in the PSNI or the judiciary don't read the Sunday World, but also, which is actually a worse article by a tabloid was surprisingly from Henry McDonald in The Observer who also carried the story. So, this is the type of stuff that what I would like to do is find out who within the PSNI or what is being said about the traveller community within the wider media, because that is the stuff that shapes stereotyping but also shapes a traveller view. What a traveller said to me: "Is that what the police are saying about us?" Is that the type of stuff that is taking -- and that breaks the trust. So as much as over policing breaks the trust, also the kind of stuff that can happen in press reports.

Just a couple of quick things to finish up on. I think the police protection of human rights is really important. I think we have seen good examples of that where travellers have been, for instance, in places of illegal encampment where the police officer, with guidance that has been written and training, what the police officers tended to do is not over react and start to move travellers on where there hasn't been sites available. They have picked up the phone and they have rang me or they have rang colleagues of mine and saying: "We know within human rights that travellers, if they have nowhere to go that there is potentially a situation here where I can't basically force them to." That is good policing and there's some examples of where that has worked well.

I think mediation is key as well. We have been successful to the policing fund in accessing a couple of thousand to start training travellers as mediators. I would think that would be looking at tension monitoring where travellers who are interested and are willing to engage with the police are trained. It is like Jim said earlier on about preparing the community for community policing, we have also got to prepare the traveller community for building a trust in that community to say who can come forward and engage and look at tension monitoring and where conflict does occur, look at mediating within that tension as well. So we have a workshop during Traveller Focus Week on Friday, the 4th and Jim and some others are engaged in that as well.

Lastly, I would say we need to rethink not just how policing occurs within one ethnic minority group, the traveller community, and there's nuances there that are different to other ethnic groups, but I think we need to look at broadening that to how policing is occurring within the ethnic minority communities in general and how we are preparing those communities and building their capacity to engage in policing as well. So thanks.

PATRICIA LYNESS

Belfast & Lisburn's Women's Aid
Vice-Chair, The Women's Reference Group

I suppose when I was looking at policing in partnership, the question is why work with the police at all in partnership work? Well, it is actually crucial in tackling and preventing domestic violence and partnerships can cause problems because really it is two organisations coming together with very different roles and responsibilities, but there is a desire and the commitment to actually work towards a common purpose and I think if we can understand how an effective partnership can operate within those perimeters of having realistic expectations and understanding the constraints and differences that there are within two the organisations. Of course any partnership, like any good partnership, is underpinned by principles of trust, respect and honesty.

So why should we work then with the police because of domestic violence? It accounts for such a significant amount of time and resources for police. It is also a crime that causes serious physical injury and psychological harm. It is a community safety issue. It is a public safety issue. Despite many developments, it actually still remains difficult to talk about. It happens in close intimate relationships and it is predominantly male on female. It involves so many repeat incidents that actually they escalate in severity and persistence and I think the PSNI statistics would bear out how much time and effort and resources have to go into it.

So, we have actually been working in partnership with the police for years, really pre Patten. People have talked about the neighbourhood officers or the community officers and they were real, real good resources. I remember when I worked in the refuge in north Belfast, there were two officers who were the community officers and they knew us, they knew the refuge and they kept an eye to our safety. They gave us information. They checked on women. They checked if there was something that they could do. So that is real good resourcing. I know our team leader in the refuge in north Belfast has identified that the community beat officers, as they are now, are not so available and that is a real, I suppose, missing link for us because it actually does -- not only do they do what they do but they are actually a very good sort of model to build those relationships and partnerships.

We do tend to forget the police were actually the first public statutory agency to look at establishing and implementing domestic violence policies and we have obviously contributed to that throughout the years and we have worked with them in terms of consultation around, for example, public awareness campaigns that give a very clear message about zero tolerance and to encourage women to report domestic violence.

We also deliver a range of training around with the new recruit programme and that actually works quite well because you are talking to those officers before they take up duty. Now we do other training with the longer serving officers but it is more on an ad hoc basis and I think one of the things that we would see is to have that on a more planned strategic approach.

I think Robert talked about the number of partnerships, but the police are key players in domestic violence partnerships and they work with us in a number of domestic violence partnerships and they also provide staff to come to resource our one stop shops. We have one in Belfast and we have one in Downpatrick. Now, at times that is actually quite difficult for the police to do that, but they are very, very good at giving those staff because that enables women to talk to police to get information, to get advice along with a number of other agencies. So that is a real good resource, particularly for our outreach team where we provide that support to women to help them to stay safely in their own home and in their community.

I think one of the most important shifts in police thinking and culture and attitudes was the move away from "it is just a domestic" when we know it is much more than just a domestic. In our experience, when it was regarded as such, that was actually reflected in the response and the service that women got. So we are very happy to see that shift and I do believe we have contributed to that and it has led to a much

more proactive, pro arrest policy, much more professional standards and practice being introduced. I think this has actually given us, as staff working with women, the confidence to say report to the police because they can do this, they can do this, and women themselves then will be able to report in the confidence and knowledge that when they do report it, something will be done and that their safety and protection and justice is paramount. So that has been a very important shift.

Staff that work in our outreach and our refuges report that the police response and practice has significantly improved and that it is professional and supportive with a good level of understanding of the needs of women and children who experience domestic violence. So all of this, you know, when we see that, it enables us to trust the police, we have confidence and we respect what they are doing as well. I think that relationship then is two-way because we have to play our role in the partnership as well. There have been many good examples of good practice but I suppose, like any other area; there is the need to keep that consistently across all of the districts and all of the stations and I think some of the difficulties that we have is around the breaches of non-molestation orders, which is a protection order where we believe that -- I mean it is an arrestable offence, a criminal offence to breach an order so I suppose we would have pockets where there are areas of practice that may not be just quite consistent with the policy. Now I suppose the good thing about partnership is when that happens we can speak with senior officers who are opening to taking the feedback in the spirit that it is intended and do try to make some change around that.

I suppose the changes and opportunities that we see happening are in part formed by really good strong leadership. I suppose talking about creative thinking and Robert talking about perhaps the police, I need to just say this, the police maybe not having that creative thinking, but actually I want to talk very briefly and it is actually important in terms of showing good partnership. We have two posts, two of our staff seconded into District A and District B. Now that came about from an idea of a senior police officer with a bit of creative thinking, how can we tackle this problem together and those posts are showing very, very good outcomes. I know we have talked about funding today, but it is crucial that those posts are actually -- they are part funded by the police and two other statutory agencies and those posts will actually show the potential to make real good in-roads into tackling domestic violence, preventing it and making sure that women get into services, that repeat crime is addressed and there are clearance rates. So there's benefits for anybody.

PLENARY QUESTION & ANSWER

JIM AULD

So if there are any questions, I would ask you to keep them very short and to the point. We have a couple of questions to start us off that I think will set the scene for us anyway. The opening one is ten years on where are we in terms of the profound shift in policing and community thinking regarding partnership, which is partly what Patricia was talking about there. And what extent are relations impacted by the deficit of trust? So if I could ask Gordon to start us off.

GORDON DOUGLAS

I suppose where I would be coming from on that question would be that police are not trusted when, for example, in the wider university area by residents groups when they don't attend the meetings and the groups and the residents and the community think: "What have they got to hide?" I suppose there needs to be better communication to the public on how the police actually operate. The person on the street does not know the difference between a response police officer and a neighbourhood police officer. They don't know how response police officers actually -- what the procedure is when there is a crime committed and when they ask the police to come the police don't arrive. So at residents' groups then, the police will take a battering for that because you are not responding to our calls and you will

always get a person saying to the police: "Well I never see the police in the street." It just happened on Monday night when the police along with myself were at a residents' group and one person said: "We never see the police, they are never there. I haven't seen a police officer in six months." Then another resident said: "Well I see them everyday." So in one sense there is a difference that you can't win but it is that fact of if the police are not on the street and they are not attending groups in the community, then the communication stops. So what I would say, is as far as we are concerned, communication is very good around the south Belfast area at the moment.

ROBERT MURDIE

If I could just maybe start with a personal perspective on it all, and it is really just picking up from some of the thoughts that Kathleen O'Toole had yesterday in terms of her experience of policing and she recounted the example of going out on patrol in west Belfast and it was very much a militaristic patrol, where you had point officers going out accompanied with the military and, unfortunately, that was my experience of policing when I first joined the organisation. What I can say from a personal point of view is that is not why I joined the police to see or to witness. When I joined the police, I wanted to be part of the community, I wanted to be part of problem solving in the community and actually working with the community. When I joined I mean I wanted to be a fully paid up member, if you like, of the community and to be involved with the community and to address the crime issues and concerns of local residents. I mean I was frustrated from my point of view that I couldn't do that.

Now what I can clearly say is there is now the facility for police officers to do that. We now have dedicated neighbourhood teams in every district right across Northern Ireland and those teams are there to address real community concerns and issues. In south and east Belfast, for example, we have 80 officers who are committed to delivering that local service.

And just to differentiate from the response teams. The response teams are there, they are separate from the neighbourhood officers in that they have deliver a 24 hour policing services. They respond to issues, they respond to concerns. As I pointed out in my presentation, it is more about dealing with the real sources of concern with communities and that is what the neighbourhood officers are there to provide and I would certainly like to see the environment and the atmosphere in which those services can be provided right across all communities in Northern Ireland.

DEREK HANWAY

In my bit earlier on, I talked a little bit about in terms of the trust issue in terms of the stuff that breaks down trust, so while we do all this positive work in terms of training, bringing police officers and travellers in particular together and how that can be broken down. I would like to think though that what I didn't focus a bit on but I want to do a little bit now is the kind of role that police officers can have in protecting minorities' rights in terms of actually being proactive in doing that.

A quick example of that would be in the post analysis of the Roma crisis that happened last summer, myself and Robert were at the analysis that happened around September time or so on in Upper Malone House, among all the agencies and we were the ones pushing that, that lots of agencies got that so wrong and one of the key agencies obviously was the police service, but the police service in terms of responding to it, it was the role the police service could have in getting those other agencies to kick in with their responsibilities and to do their jobs. As to travellers or Roma or whatever, I think for those communities to see that the police on the front line is doing something about that; the police saying this is not good enough. We cannot protect this community unless you do something about either emergency accommodation or shifting them from this piece of ground. If they are under a motorway, as we saw on the TV on Monday evening, that is a danger to that family. It is a danger to the children and so on. To have a role that the police service are proactive. You know, it should also be social services, the Housing Executive, other agencies where the police service had actually a role in saying this is what

we have come across, or this is what we are facing with, you know, today or tonight and engaging with the community or engaging the other agencies and then showing that community that this is what we are doing. I think that would build a lot of trust with those communities, rather than fire fighting when the issue has exploded and, you know, there is very little we can do maybe in the analysis of it or when the issue has happened. I think that would do a lot.

PATRICIA LYNESS

I would agree with Derek as well that the police do have a key role in certainly the partnerships in the four that we would work with. In terms of tackling domestic violence, we have now the opportunity, through what is called the multi-agency risk assessment conferencing, to actually bring all of the agencies together to identify women who are at high risk of domestic violence and to actually draw up a very cohesive and effective action plan from all agencies so that we can really begin to make inroads into doing something positive. Yes, I think the police do have that key agency and we would certainly be looking to them in that particular partnership.

JIM AULD

I suppose from my perspective there are a couple of things. My talk this morning I cut short in order to keep things on time and you can see how well I managed that, we are fifteen minutes late! But one of the things that I had intended to say was policing in the future is, at one level, dependent on how we deal with the past. There are many outstanding incidents and no more eloquently put yesterday and this morning by Mr McIlwaine, that are outstanding, that have not been dealt with and certainly have not been dealt with to most people's satisfaction and the ambiguity of the police or their reluctance to engage in discussing those sorts of incidents that everybody is well aware of in an open and fair manner will always hold back and always create a level of distrust with the community, and that is all sides of the community.

But on a more practical level, my experience is that, and people here have talked about the response teams, my difficulty with it is that when neighbourhood cops go out, they go into community settings, they sit in multi-agency groups and they know and learn the language of the community and voluntary needs and statutory sector and they become very proficient with that and they are able to communicate effectively with the community and an incident happens that night and then the response teams come in and they do what they do best and go away as soon as that is resolved. Their resolve of those situations are usually fairly sharp and to the point. They cause the community concern. Because they have no relationship with the community, they are usually fairly brutal in their tactics and the neighbourhood cops then are left the next morning to try and resolve the situation or to try and re-establish relationships and usually it is a battle a day for them because of the mess that the response teams have made up. So there is still the big lack of trust in the community. And Patten had set it out and it is not happening because every police officer, including those in the response teams, were supposed to be community officers and they are clearly not.

So, I am opening it up now to the floor. If anybody has any questions we will take them but I will stress, folks, we have got ten minutes so keep your questions short and to the point.

JOHN TOPPING, The Centre for Policing Studies, University of Ulster

This question is directed mostly to Gordon and I suppose I might sound a little over zealous. I think you talked about anything and everything except the social responsibility of the students to behave within remit of the law and I have no doubt that in other parts of the city identical behaviour would be policed with the full force of the law. Really, what I am asking is how much longer can we keep going on in these endless partnerships and debates without anything seemingly ever having been done, culminating in the scenes we saw at St Patrick's Day recently?

GORDON DOUGLAS

We work very much in partnership. We are talking about the end game about discipline and I am not going to go into a defensive mode of what universities and everything doing it together, but at the moment any student from St Patrick's Day that was arrested has gone through the court process, the judicial process and through the universities' disciplinary processes as well at Queen's and at University of Ulster. In the lead up to Freshers Week the educational programme was being put in place and very stringent disciplinary measures. For example, we have a partnership with the police that if a student is found misbehaving off-campus and they are stopped by the police and reported by the police, they will be reported to us and the universities' disciplinary process will kick into place and, on a parallel level, if they are arrested for disorderly behaviour the court process as well. But the root causes, as I say we can manage, try to manage the problem, but the root causes are overcrowding, a planning problem and the abuse of alcohol. When you can buy ten litres of cider for £20 in Tesco's, I rest my case.

VALERIE ALLEN, Belfast DPP

I have been involved for 25 years in inner city cross community Partnerships and for the last six on the DPP. I would just like to -- it is an observation and then a question.

I want to comment on the number of various groups, PACT, DPP, CSP, CPLC, Neighbourhood Watch, et cetera, et cetera, all of these the police sit on. My question is the communities. First of all, the communities really aren't interested in whether it is a CPLC, a DPP or whatever, they are only interested in what they see as results. They want police on the beat, on the ground and my question is to Robert. Have we enough police to attend all these meetings and walk the pavements? Simple as that.

NIGEL SPIERS, The British Association of Social Workers

My comment is directed maybe particularly to the police officer in relation to the public protection units and how you see those rolled out in terms of partnership. But very briefly to make a preface and an observation.

Everything Patricia has said in relation to domestic violence, including the inconsistencies in relation to breaches of non-molestation orders and police response, I just wanted to propose a much broader view of domestic violence than just partner violence in relation to the violence that people do on their children, that children do on their parents and that people and families do on their most vulnerable members, including financial abuse. So I just wanted, in the context of that, to make a comment. If you could respond in relation to public protection of particularly the most vulnerable people in our society including, of course, women in intimate relationships.

EVE BREMNER, Safer City Manager in the Council

I look after the Community Safety Partnership team and also the District Policing Partnership teams. I would echo some of the statements elsewhere that communities don't really care who does it as long as it is done. I suppose to get us back to the theme of policing in partnership, that is really my question. I mean, how do we actually engage with communities? Because I think there is a focus between organisations but we still have not really tackled that real challenge of how we work in partnership with communities. How do we do that in a way that is meaningful without creating fatigue and given that there is such a proliferation of partnerships out there without creating frankly new ones?

Lastly, we were talking about rights and responsibilities earlier, how do we ensure that we manage the responsibility of engaging with all communities, whatever the definition of that may be, not just who shouts loudest? And how do we support communities to take their responsibilities seriously and support them to do that in a safe way?

ROBERT MURDIE

Can I just group the last one and also Valerie's comment around about the proliferation of meetings and partnerships? Certainly, I touched on this in my presentation, there is a big proliferation of partnerships and community meetings out there and not just police, but the other statutory organisations have to attend and this does have, and I have mentioned this issue of partnership fatigue and it is also applicable very much to police officers. Police officers are expected to attend a proliferation of community meetings, be it CPLC, Neighbourhood Watch meetings, PACT meetings, community surgeries, community forums, name it what you have, but there is this proliferation of meetings out there and I agree with Eve Bremner in many respects, that there needs to be a degree of consolidation around these. We need to find a formal method of community consultation and community engagement that everyone buys into, just not the community but also the statutory organisations. We don't have that out there in Northern Ireland at the minute. There is a vacuum and we need to find something. From a police point of view, we are offering the partners and community groups, the PACT meetings, as a potential forum or vehicle to try to get up a regular method of community engagement, but we are not saying that that is right and we were not saying that that is what we are committed to. What we are saying is because there is a vacuum out there, that is where we are offering it currently.

In terms of the question about PPU's, Public Protection Units, just for other members of the audience who are not aware of just what we mean by that, these are the units that are set up to specifically deal with domestic violence, sex offenders, violent offenders in the community as well as missing persons. I welcome the PPU's within our area because these particular vulnerable groups, it has been identified, need significant and ongoing interaction with police and other multi-agencies to ensure that their behaviour is managed and managed effectively and that the risk that they present is managed effectively. I feel certainly the professionalism of these teams can certainly contribute to that.

PATRICIA LYNESS

Well I mean, yes, Robert, the PP units as I said earlier that is where, you know, two of our staff are currently seconded into and I do think that is one of the ways of actually looking at strengthening the response certainly in terms of domestic violence, because, as I said, those posts are showing is that it is working for the police and it is working for us and it is working for the women who actually go to the police for help. So I would just reinforce that there is a need for much more clearer partnership work but, of course, with that comes the need for funding.

JIM AULD

Okay. I am going to give the last comment, folks, because it is half a minute to one o'clock. It is in response to Eve's question and if my memory serves me right, I was at one of those groupings as Eve was, one of the ones they pulled together in the Cecil Ward building about 18 months ago and again, if my memory serves me right, there was 22 people at the meeting all engaged in community safety and myself and Tom Winston from Alternatives were the only people there who represented community groups and all the other people were all in full-time employment dealing with community safety, but there was nobody talking to the community at all. I think that it is incumbent on those people who are supposed to be professionals to create the conditions where they can here the voices of the community.

So thanks very much, folks.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: *Future Visions for Policing*

MIKE RITCHIE

Director, CAJ

We have got our final session today now with two keynote speakers and this is attempting to look to the future and consider what the vision of policing should be going forward. I should say, by the way, my name is Mike Ritchie, for those who weren't here yesterday. I am the Director of CAJ. I am very pleased to be able to welcome Nigel Grimshaw, a serving PSNI officer and John Topping from the University of Ulster who are going to make opening presentations and then we will get into, hopefully, a summarising question and answer session. If anybody has burning questions that they have not been able to ask now, they can ask it of these two august people and also get into conversation with each other across the conference floor.

One final invitation, does anybody want to move forward? You all want to stay at the back as if we are at church!

Okay, I think Nigel is going to go first and Nigel has a PowerPoint presentation. I am going to introduce him by saying that he is a Chief Superintendent and currently Acting Assistant Chief Constable in the PSNI, with some 25 years experience. He was recently appointed to the post of Deputy Head of Criminal Justice Department. Nigel's present role is concerned with policy development, building sustainable partnerships, researching and identifying best practise with a view to supporting local policing Districts. He has been closely involved in the development of policing policy regarding Community Safety. And it is particularly with that perspective that we have asked him to address his vision for moving forward around policing with the Community.

NIGEL GRIMSHAW

Acting Assistant Chief Constable, Criminal Justice

Thanks very much. Good afternoon everybody. I am pleased to say I know quite a few faces here and hopefully we are still friends after I speak!

Let me first say a couple of apologies. Firstly,, I am not quite as important as I used to be because I am no longer acting up to Assistant Chief Constable but I am quite happy with what I have got, so back to more normal things. Secondly, for the fact that I have a PowerPoint presentation. But let me say from the outset I tend to talk from in here and up here, so allow me to use the PowerPoint, which is only a couple of slides which is simply a reference point for me so I don't meander off in some strange direction and forget where I am. But I am not into putting buzz words up on a screen that people glaze over. So just indulge me a little bit.

As Mike said my background, just to put things into perspective, I am currently within the Criminal Justice Department and the Criminal Justice Department holds responsibility for policing with the community policy. Now, in a sense that is strange because I very much come from the point of view that policing with the community is not defined within any policy document, but it is actually defined in terms of the ongoing interactions that officers have on a day-to-day basis within their districts and hopefully in terms of what I am going to say to you, that is what you will see in terms of what we are genuinely striving towards.

I hasten to add too, unfortunately I have not been at any of the earlier parts of the conference, either today or yesterday. So if I contradict people, well then it is my view. If I am on song with some of my

colleagues, that is all the better. But what you will genuinely get from me is what I genuinely believe in and what I try and bring in terms of influence as we progress with policing with the community.

The other part of my background is, and I will draw heavily on this, I previously was in north and west Belfast for just over four years and I spent, throughout my service, quite lengthy periods of time at various points in that particular area. I value the relationships that I built there very, very heavily and, indeed, many of the relationships I have developed in other parts of my service. But I say that simply because I firmly believe and I think nobody would argue in this room, you know, north and west Belfast is certainly one of the areas that has seen the worst of the impact of what we all term the Troubles and, therefore, that particular area more than any, you know, if we can make from a policing point of view policing with the community a reality, then we can do it absolutely anywhere. And that is a big challenge for us as we move forward. So I will draw on my experience within north and west Belfast as I am talking to you.

I think the other important point is that we have just had a new Chief Constable appointed. It is well documented and everybody will have seen in the media, he has a very strong pedigree in terms of community policing or policing with the community. That has created, in my view, a huge expectation across Northern Ireland and I have to say I genuinely believe that we are moving into a new phase and I will reflect very briefly on what happened up to now in the last ten or so years, but obviously I want to look forward. I genuinely believe we are moving into a new phase and our new Chief Constable has some very strong ideas which I fundamentally agree with and I will come back to that in a little more detail.

So in many respects, I am coming to you acknowledging that over the last 10 to 12 years, we have set out to deliver or create the whole ethos of policing with the community as the core of everything we do. Have we got it right? No, we haven't. Is it a work in progress? Yes, it is. I think there are some great things that have been done but absolutely we have to acknowledge where we have fallen short and those are the areas I think that we need to be very much focussed on as we move forward.

Very quickly, in terms of what we actually mean by policing with the community. It is interesting over the last couple of months at various meetings I have been at in different places, one of the questions that has come out more frequently is what do you actually mean by policing with the community? There is almost that sense that if people are still having to ask that, then we have a serious issue and I suppose to some degree we do have. There are umpteen different definitions. I actually heard Bob Lunney, who is one of the Oversight Commissioners, speak the other day and he described it in three words which I had not heard him use before, but he talked about the head, hand and the heart or the head, heart and the hand, and then he went on to describe those and I will maybe touch back on that, but he actually captured it very well. But for us it is very much about working with communities and partners to make Northern Ireland safer, more confident and peaceful. But you will glaze over as you look at that and may well say what does that actually mean in reality? What does mean on the New Lodge Road or the Shankill Road at two o'clock in the morning over the weekend when things are kicking off and it is all getting very difficult? You are absolutely right to ask that question and that is what I want to get into.

Let me begin to tease that out a little bit for you. In terms of policing with the community as we progress from the Patten Report we were faced with a huge change process as you all know. Patten alone had 170 plus recommendations, you had the Criminal Justice Review closely following on its heels which had an impact on ourselves as well and all the other bits and pieces that were going on. In any change process you have to make sense of it in some shape or form. You have to set yourself a clear vision or as clear as you can possibly make it and try and focus things towards that and that is what we did.

At the core of that vision was service. The original policing with the community policy, for want of a

better term, had five principles - service, delivery, partnership, accountability, empowerment and problem solving. Now what they were about was simply trying to set the base lines in terms of the values, the principles on which we were going to be base everything that we deliver. That was important for us. In terms of where we were at that time was important to start off, mark clear blue water and say: "This is what we are going to build on in the future."

And unapologetically I say to you I am 26 years near enough done in the police. I genuinely joined to do policing with the community. Twenty-five or whatever years ago I wouldn't have necessarily called it that but that is what I did want to do and that is what many police officers did but we recognised and acknowledged that Northern Ireland, given the position we were in, what we were coming out of, we needed to set some firm principles in place on which to build for the future. So everything was focussed around these and there's no rocket science in what they meant and I am not going to rehearse that, but service was at the very heart of it because ultimately the fundamental change, not least in the name which was in many respects moving from a police force to a police service was at the stroke of a pen, but it was hugely significant in terms of trying to create the mindset for our officers to move forward. So service was important and it still is and this is where the new Chief Constable comes into play.

What you will have heard over the media in recent days when he has been interviewed is the term personal policing. In many respects I think he is talking about what I have always believed in but he is couching it in a slightly different term and it will help us to shape the direction for the future. The sorts of things that he talks about within that concept of personal policing are number one, obviously it is personal. By that what I mean is, and I will come on to some of the key areas of work that we need to take forward in this, but how we interact with people at that sort of dead of night, two o'clock in the morning on whatever road it is, is absolutely vital to people's perception of us. It is absolutely vital in terms of how they go on to build any level of confidence or trust in us and how they develop any sense of satisfaction to the way we deal with them. That first interaction is so important.

What I have said as we have tried to develop the policy around this in terms of taking it forward, is I think that what we did in the first ten years or so beyond Patten was we got the structures in place, we got the structures in place around accountability and they will continue to develop. And within the police service as a whole, we focussed on getting our neighbourhood teams and all of that sort of thing into place. We began to get the structures right but where we need to go now is very much based on people, not processes. I believe that that is where we missed the trick, and maybe that is being unfair or, in my view, it is the wrong way to put it. Where we need to focus on is building the skills of people from an interpersonal point of view. That sounds rosy sometimes, not least when I would be standing talking in front of police colleagues, but I genuinely believe it is much, much harder edged than that. How we treat people with dignity, respect and all of that is absolutely vital in terms of building the longer term trust and confidence necessary to effectively deliver policing with the community. So that personal thing is very all encompassing and it is not soft, it is hard stuff. It is very hard to do but that is where we need to focus.

Visibility is key. No matter what community meeting you go to, people want more visible policing and I understand that and there are challenges within that which I am not going to get into here. But the point is, I acknowledge and accept that we must do better around visibility but again to create trust, confidence, reassurance.

We need to be responsive and that actually links back to visibility because visibility for me is not about officers on the street being seen, but it is actually being seen to do something about the problem and not necessarily on our own, but with other partners. But we need to be seen to do something so that people's expectations are met. We need to be reliable and I will come back to that in terms of this idea of promises which again our new Chief talks about. We need to be value for money. Ultimately, we

want to make a difference in our community. Why wouldn't we? Because, at the end of the day, I used to spend so much time in north and west Belfast -- and I know Mike Ellis who is up there now will bear me out -- so many times I spent lengthy periods talking with members of the public, community representatives, political representatives, be they whatever, about incidents which, you know what, if it had been handled just ever so slightly differently at that moment when it happened we would have saved ourselves so much time energy and effort and would have moved things forward so far.

So I come back to my point in terms of this whole idea of personal and focusing on the people skills, their values, their attitudes in terms of officers. This is so important because it makes such a dramatic impact in terms of the wider community's perception of policing.

So what are we actually going to do? The Policing Board through the Community Engagement Committee which is chaired by Alex Maskey had been very focussed on: "What are you going to do?" How are you actually going to make this different from what has gone past? I acknowledge the work from my point of view that has gone in the past over the last ten years, but it is, for me, about the future. What are we going to do? Again I make no apology, this is not rocket science. There's plenty of evidence to show those areas where we are vulnerable in terms of how we deliver that service, where we let people down. So getting our first contact right and making a good first impression is a great management phrase, but what I mean is we need to focus on what ensures that our officers have a value system where they say the way I used to describe it, you know, it is my community, if I am working in this area, my community, my problem, then I need to do something about it. We want them to think about their contact with the member of the public from end to end, because we are an organisation which is extremely fragmented in terms of specialisms, different departments and so on and so forth.

We need people to think and understand from a member of the public's point of view as they come into contact with us. It is not just about dealing with them in that five minutes, ten minutes, half an hour, whatever it is, and then passing them on to somebody else and forgetting about it. What I want from people, and what we used to say in north and west Belfast, we want our people to take ownership, whether it is their function, their geographical area, their particular community and relationships, it is about taking ownership. By that, what I mean is they have a commitment to ensure that that person is dealt with properly from start to finish. That is not that difficult in many senses to write down on paper but it is hugely difficult to make it happen in practice. But nonetheless that is the challenge for us in terms of really making a difference. So these end to end services and stuff, we are genuinely not coming at this from a management buzz word phrase, these are simple things we need to get work with. As I say, the new Chief talks a lot about making and keeping clear promises. What that may look like is something like a Northern Ireland pledge, for want of a better term.

Colleagues across the water have introduced a policing pledge. What it actually is is identifying those simple things that we will set out and promise to deliver on and they are, some of them, simple things. It is about what you can expect when you phone up Antrim Road, Newtownards or wherever, simple standards that we are saying: "We promise we will deliver on this." Now with that goes automatic accountability, because if we set this out, we will create expectations. We are not re-inventing the wheel, we are just trying to focus things. These things have been around for a while but we are trying to focus people's energy on those things where we can really make a difference, getting them right. So we will set out promises that we will set ourselves up effectively to take a real hammering if we don't deliver on. But that is what we need to do because people need to understand what they can and cannot expect. So we are looking at around what those promises would be.

We are also looking at the whole area of contact management or call management. One of the biggest complaints I hear day in day out is the fact that when you phone the police our call management system

is terrible. Do you know what? It is. In many senses it is. It frustrates me. We need to do much better in that. Why is it important? Because actually it is the start in many instances of every contact people have with the police. If we can get it right there, you create a different perception and impression of police which creates an environment when we can actually work much more productively together. So again, I don't make apologies. This is simple stuff but it is still extremely important.

And lying at the root of all of this is building relationships. I expect the officers that work for me to build strong relationships. I have always said, presenting to any group of people, that you do not make relationships with an organisation, so it is entirely wrong of us to expect the community to make a relationship with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, but what we can expect is for the community and for police officers to make relationships on a one on one basis and from that you build and you grow. If you do it right and you handle those relationships right, then there is the opportunity to build those and generate growth with those in terms of the overall perception of the organisation. That is fundamentally what I want people to do if they really going to deliver policing with the community.

One of the things I will hold testament to from my career is people coming back. Regardless of where I move, people will come back and the reason why people will come back is because they have the perception that you genuinely tried to help them. It is that simple for me. That is what I want officers to do; to have that ownership, to have that commitment to think when I am speaking to this member of the public that what I do here makes a lasting difference in terms of how they perceive the police in the future. I can boil it to down to that, take ownership and take personal responsibility for what you do. That is what I expect from officers and that is where we are going in terms of this whole idea of the next phase of policing with the community, the next phase of personal policing. I don't say any of that lightly. It will be a big task for us, but nonetheless we need to do that.

Value for money is important but I say that only in terms of getting the right people in right place in the right numbers at the right time. We have a lot of people, and this has been well publicised, who have been involved in back room functions for very genuine reasons, but we need to increase that visibility through ensuring that those officers are actually brought back out on to the front line. Again, it is something which you think: "Well, it seems pretty much common sense, but it is very challenging." Nonetheless, that is a clear direction of travel for us at the minute.

Partnership. I am just going to say this in terms of partnership. We have loads and loads of partnerships in Northern Ireland at various different levels and there are very different views of how they all operate. Partnership is absolutely critical, particularly for us at the minute in terms of money, like every statutory service or public sector and I know the community representatives here will roll their eyes because they have had this for years, but you know what, the penny is dropping for us too. There is not the money there that there used to be. We need to do things differently. But actually much more importantly than that, if we were going to tackle crime and safety in the community in Northern Ireland as a whole, then we have got to work closer together and we have got to actually ensure that that is fully inclusive and embraces the community fully so that they can play their part in that and that we use our resources to the best effect possible. From my point of view, that has to focus me towards the key people who are causing the problem, the offenders and also I fully subscribe to the need for good early intervention.

Wrap all that up, the bottom line is we have got to make our partnerships produce more and we have got to make them more robust and inclusive and actually tackle the things that matter to people on the ground.

To finish, what does success look like for me? This is all about trust and confidence for me. We need to build that. That is what I am looking for in terms of the next phase of policing with the community and,

as I said in a nut shell for me what is that about? Police officers who build relationships with all aspects of the community, who take ownership for that community and who are prepared to demonstrate the commitment to work with that person from start to finish to ensure that they walk away from their contact with the police satisfied and with an increased sense of confidence in terms of how they have been dealt with. It is ultimately about trying to make Northern Ireland safer and more peaceful. We can't do that on our own.

We have had burglaries over recent days in terms of older people which have been horrendous and rightly so the media has been very much focused on what is going on. But you know what? We always put out an appeal, it is part of our training in terms of dealing with the media, we need the community's help. But do you know what? It is much more than just a mantra. We cannot bring people who commit those sorts of crimes to justice unless we get the help and that is my challenge that I will leave you with.

In terms of delivering policing with the community, there are two sides to this equation. We need the help of the community. We need the community to engage. We need to facilitate that, I fully accept, but we need the community as a whole to play their part because policing is too old a game for anybody to be naively thinking we can do this on our own. We can't. We absolutely need the community to do this with us. So my challenge is in terms of the next ten years how we actually make this partnership much more equal and much more productive. Thanks very much.

MIKE RITCHIE

Thanks very much, Nigel. Our final speaker before the important people get to have their say, i.e. yourselves, is John Topping. He is a lecturer in criminology at the University of Ulster where he is also research coordinator for the newly formed Centre for Policing Studies. His PhD, on the delivery of 'Policing with the Community', has involved extensive research with the PSNI, policing bodies and community organisations in both loyalist and republican areas over the past three years. He also acts as a consultant for the training branch of PSNI in the design and delivery of neighbourhood officer training - which has involved the groundbreaking inclusion of community input as part of this training design. John, the floor is yours.

JOHN TOPPING

Centre for Policing Studies, University of Ulster

Thank you. I suppose, just to start, some of the things I say may be at variance with Nigel, but hopefully we can all be friends afterwards.

I want to open just to say thanks to Mike and Mick at the CAJ for inviting me. I think it has been quite an insightful couple of days here in exploring policing with the community and certainly I am a bit daunted to shore up proceedings here but hopefully I will do my best over the next twenty minutes.

In terms of what I am actually going to talk about over the next while is not designed to be, if you like, an easy critique of, an academic critique of policing with the community per se, but rather it is designed to be, if you like, an as I have seen it, an overview of some of the key issues and difficulties for the delivery of policing with the community in the country as part of my research and consultancy with the PSNI, with the Policing Board, the DPPs and at community level over the past three years or so. In this regard, these issues should be taken as a reference point from which the PSNI and the community can take a step back, assess where we are after ten years of policing with the community under Patten and decide where we need to go and, importantly, how to actually get there in terms of a vision for policing with the community into the future.

I know certainly within some quarters of the PSNI, some of my views might be what ACC Finlay described yesterday as 'prickly,' but I think as part of a fresh look at policing with the community, we

need to be honest about the difficulties and go forward with, I suppose, affirmative action to take us, as a society and a community as a whole on our policing with the community journey.

It was Seamus Mallon of the SDLP who, I suppose in the aftermath of the Patten Report, stated that for the first time in the Northern Irish state that the foundations for an answer to the policing question, if you like, had finally been laid. Indeed with the issue of policing, I suppose, having acted as really method bargaining as to the very nature of the conflict over the years, the important and enormous task given to the Patten Commissioners might be set in context.

But without raking over the coals of history, as Maurice Hayes said much more eloquently yesterday, Patten's broad task was essentially about giving policing back to the people of Northern Ireland, to reconnect, if you like, the police with the entire community and more broadly to resolve an issue which for many people had been at the heart of the conflict. Really Patten was part of a consensus, I suppose, that if policing could somehow be got right, whatever that might look like, all the other pieces of the jigsaw would fall into place. Indeed, we are still considering this issue in terms of the devolution of policing and justice at present.

However, the purpose of this talk is not to provide an analysis of the reforms per se, but rather I want to examine the current state of policing in Northern Ireland and specifically Patten 44 on the policing with the community as a central tenet to those reforms and how we can take that forward. I know Clifford Shearing, one of the Patten Commissioner's own words, that vision of policing more broadly conceived.

I think one of the first places to start in terms of policing with the community is how the PSNI has actually adapted to a more community oriented vision of policing and I suppose at least to contextualise this issue in terms of the PSNI moving towards a community policing model is a fact that I suppose the relative peace in which we now all live has actually constituted a crisis with neither, I suppose, the PSNI nor the community entirely sure as to exactly what is to be expected of a more normal policing landscape.

However, I think for my own view it is safe to say that within the PSNI, there has been a distinct lack of focus and clarity regarding the definition and implementation of Patten's core policing with the community vision. Beyond general policies, aspirations relating to community policing, there is presently a broad consensus within the ranks of PSNI as to the absence of any corporate identity or leadership to guide the service on its community policing mission.

While certainly there are good neighbourhood officers on the ground, as there are, many are well aware of what community policing is and what does more generally throughout the organisation this very thick amorphous ideal of policing with the community under Patten has refracted into, I suppose, a variety of piecemeal policies, practices and initiatives in isolated pockets which have certainly amounted to something short of the core function of the entire service.

On the one hand, I think this begs the question of how much longer can the PSNI claim to be a service underpinned by a community policing ethos, or at least I suppose, as Nigel said, to admit to tell us it has failed but they have made that admission, especially when only a tiny fraction of the officers in the PSNI undertake what might broadly be determined as 'community policing.' Indeed I think hard questions have to be asked in terms of pushing policing with the community beyond this nebulous level towards a firm and tangible product delivered on the front line by more than a few dedicated officers. At least our new Chief Constable has begun to ask those questions in terms of freeing up officers from back office duties, although with one of the highest police population ratios in the western world, I think more fundamental restructuring issues of officers in the PSNI need to be asked as well.

On the other hand, serious efforts also need to be made at an organisational level and within the Policing Board to bridge this gap between what PSNI actually do and what the community understand as community policing at the local level. With policing with the community policy having, I suppose, lain dormant now for almost seven years, there needs to be proper consideration of not only how policy is made but how that can be practically translated into policing on the ground. Indeed, certainly the recent efforts at relaunching the policing with the community policy, originally drawn up by Peter Sheridan, astonishingly omitted the key element of problem solving, a vital aspect under, for example, the national reassurance policing programme under the Home Office, I think, really demonstrating how much of a paper exercise it has been rather than a serious attempt at practically defining policing with the community the latest efforts have been. Also as well from what I -- ignoring the advice of the committee actually set up to relaunch that strategy is never a good premise for going forward.

I think what might be termed then, I suppose, we have alluded to, institutional inertia within the PSNI around policing with the community is down to the fact that nobody has taken serious charge of policing with the community since Patten. In many ways, community policing has become, if you like, a cottage industry within PSNI in terms of we have a policing with the community branch, community safety teams, neighbour policing teams, neighbourhood policing models with the Policing Board and now this idea of personal policing under the new Chief Constable. So is it any wonder that there is little coherence to policing with the community in PSNI or, indeed, an understanding of what that might look like on the ground? So I think clarity and simplicity must be vital elements to our vision of policing with the community for the future to benefit both PSNI and the communities.

I think that another vital element for PSNI in terms of a successful future vision of policing with the community is that of engagement with the community. While much attention, time and effort has been devoted within PSNI and the Policing Board to engaging with communities, whether loyalist, republican, ethnic minority, LGBT, little attention, if any, has actually been paid to how policing with the community should be used as a tool through which to engage with the vibrant civil society energy and structures which exist in Northern Ireland; because no matter how many times the policing with the community policy is rewritten, it will always fail when it simply implanted upon that which already exists in terms of local community structures and organising. As recognised again by Clifford Shearing, one of the Patten Commissioners, for example, and also in the final report of the office of the Oversight Commissioner, the strength of civil society in the country and specifically those groups and bodies concerned with broad policing issues -- I use that in its widest sense -- is not only a unique feature of the post conflict landscape, but a necessary feature of the broader policing landscape which has to be embraced as I see it under policing with the community. Indeed, it has been reiterated many times over the past two days that policing is too important for the police.

Beyond the easy and narrow assumptions of paramilitary violence, paramilitary policing, I mean as I have argued elsewhere, there is a vast array of well intentioned community based groups and organisations who actively contribute to policing in the community and who are ready to jump on board with what could be an exciting experiment in civic inclusion in policing matters, and across a range of areas including first line response, education, intervention, mediation, public order containment, parading, interface violence, restorative justice and environmental issues but to name a few, all of these groups and officers on the ground as well who I have spoken to will tell you that the ability of the PSNI to deal with crime in the community would be significantly attenuated if it were not for such non police contributions. I have to pay particular regard to models such as the Upper Springfield Safer Neighbourhood Forum in west Belfast as a shining example of how that can actually work.

So in this regard, community policing as a potential tool for the police to adapt and engage to the community's needs must be fully open to such influences on the ground, and indeed engaging with communities through their own civic channels and on their terms can only be preferable to the current

police led notion of what community policing is, involving the PSNI telling communities what they will get, but not only that, that they will like it.

Really, until a bit more of a progressive vision, as I see it, can be embraced by the PSNI, they will continue to fail to see the connection between community policing and community based security governance as part of a wider public good in Northern Ireland or what I would have otherwise termed 'community governance policing.' So I think again openness and willingness within PSNI to move out of what I suppose has been a bit of a comfort zone in our post Patten engagement status quo is vital for truly inclusive policing with the community.

So what then about our relative normality to policing in Northern Ireland? Indeed policing with the community has always been about and fundamental to our bigger, I suppose, policing end game. But as the former ACC Peter Sheridan recently stated himself in an interview in the Irish News, it is only now, after ten years of post Patten policing, that we are ready as a police service and in communities as a society to move beyond the physical reforms of Patten and begin our policing with the community journey. So I think it is important at this point to look beyond some of the more superficial issues such as record confidence levels in PSNI, record lows in crime rates and all party support of policing is part of this normal picture, because what we actually find ten years on is a police service struggling beneath the pressure and expectation of a community orientated service which, in the community's eyes, never was. Certainly, there are studies indicating that within large loyalist unionist areas there are now record lows in support for PSNI and within republican nationalist areas there is a consensus that the PSNI have simply failed to live up to that which was expected of them when Sinn Féin signed up in 2007. On the one hand, I think it is actually disingenuous to the people of Northern Ireland for the Policing Board to claim there is record confidence and then refuse to carry out localised DCU satisfaction surveys because of financial constraints, as they would term it.

On the other hand, as I recently raised at an international conference, the rising levels in paramilitarism and, more worryingly, support for paramilitary violence in mainly republican nationalist communities is a result of the PSNI failing to deliver a community oriented service and fill the void which was once the domain of those paramilitaries.

I suppose on a more general level, there also needs to be a fundamental rethink about the way in which PSNI performance is measured and managed as part of our normal landscape. Under the current regime of the Policing Board, any commanders I have spoken no longer feel in charge or control of their areas because of the centralised targets which have eroded the delivery of a policing service which meets the needs of local populations, with officers generally of the opinion that much of their work is reduced to meaningless target chasing. The talk down which has been termed 'bean counting culture,' is strangling certainly the necessary autonomy required to deliver locally tailored policing services. And that is with policing seemingly anything other than community led at the minute as communities will tell you, is it any wonder that the police officers and even DPP members actually laugh in the face of the relevance of Policing Board targets to local community need. In this regard, policing with the community must be about an organisational ethos which is prepared, I think, to throw off this short term managerialist culture which was brought in under Hugh Orde and really look towards the long term benefits of working with the grain of community need, something which the new Chief Constable needs to consider carefully in terms of what or who he wishes his officers to be accountable to.

To conclude on the future vision of policing with the community. It is clear that as part of the changes within PSNI and their efforts at, I suppose, winning the hearts and minds of the community, the PSNI have, and to coin Dennis Bradley at the 'Policing: The Future' conference two years ago, the PSNI have come out of the bunkers and on to the streets. However, institutional inertia around policing with the community has meant that while significant reforms to the PSNI as an organisation have been made,

more clarity and effort is still required to engender genuine policing change in our post Patten era.

Going back to David Bailey of the Oversight Commission, he said that Patten had essentially wrestled 30 years of monopoly on policing from the State and the police and have given it back to the people of Northern Ireland. As I see it, there is little point in giving policing back to the people if policing with the community provides no clear means of shaping the police around the people. As aptly remarked by a member of a mediation network in Northern Ireland, the fundamental core to the philosophy of policing with the community is the police and the community working in genuine partnership. That is still the shock for people in the country. In this regard, policing is still undoubtedly bigger than the police.

Very finally, in terms of the way forward for policing with the community, I think it is time to end this continual reinvention of policy as part of, I suppose, vertical changes within the PSNI as an organisation and focus upon the horizontal changes, if you like, at the community level, which are still needed to locate the PSNI as part of civil society and not just a police service within it.

It was ten years ago in 1999 that Maurice Hayes spoke at the seminal CAJ conference 'The Patten Commission, The Way Forward for Policing in Northern Ireland,' and it was here that he said community policing was something of a holy grail for policing, not just Northern Ireland but for police services all around the world. But I suppose to sum things up, as simply stated to me by a DPP member, community policing is about starting to think about policing more broadly in society. Look at its context as opposed to looking at community policing as just four officers walking up and down the Falls Road. That is not policing, that is only patrolling and that is not community policing. In this regard the holy grail of PSNI working more closely with the community as a whole is only at the beginning of a long journey along which many bridges still have been to be crossed. Thank you.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: QUESTION & ANSWER

MIKE RITCHIE

Thank you very much, John, for that look at community policing. We are now going to, without further ado, throw the mics on the floor and see who picks them up and takes this discussion forward. Anybody want to offer comments, ask questions?

ANDREW IRVINE, Belfast City Centre Manager & Chairman of the Ireland Region of the Association of Town Centre Management

I want to agree with the last speaker in one respect and take issue with him on another. The bean counting experience, I have been in the press recently over the 9,000 traffic offences a week in Castle Junction and I have to say when it comes to trying to deal with that I have met, even though we worked very, very closely with Chief Inspector Murdie and indeed the city centre beat team works out of City Centre Management, so we truly are partnerships with you but I have to say that is one where I have met the frustration of our needs being met purely with the response of: "Well I am sorry but our priorities don't match up and therefore there is no resolution." So I agree with you on that one and how we actually deal with the needs of a neighbourhood compared to police targets is an issue to overcome.

The issue I want to take with you, and this is purely a personal one, is the thought in any way to allude that the PSNI were in some way responsible for the dissident threat was a much unfortunate remark and I take issue with that.

ALAN WARDLE, Independent member, North Belfast DPP

Just first of all I suppose I would like to commend Nigel for his parting comments about the nature of true partnership with policing in the community, there is a joint responsibility of communities to be involved

with policing as much as there is for police to be involved.

I was interested with John's comments which seemed to point out a lot of the problems but not offer too many solutions. One of the things that he said was about the police filling the void of paramilitary groupings and the elephant in the living room is that paramilitary groupings are still the scourge of our society and need to be removed from that society, but until the political will and responsibility is taken to remove those paramilitary groupings, the police cannot practically do their job because of the fear of civil unrest or repercussions from those groupings in a violent form is still very, very evident. And until those issues are addressed, police cannot and do not feel safe in policing communities where those groupings still have control.

MS YIASOUMA

Guess what I want to talk about? I agreed with some of what Nigel said and some of what John said and disagreed equally with others. I think the challenge, and I don't know if it was in what you said, John, but I think the challenge to PSNI is, and you mentioned it, Nigel, is these massive silos that the organisation operates in. Whilst nobody could argue that policing with the community is a relationship between the community and police, the problem remains that I can have a great conversation with you, Chief Superintendent, I can have a brilliant conversation with you about community policing, yet the next day a young person will come in to me and tell me about the horrific experience they had when they actually weren't doing anything. We will not even talk about the kids who are doing stuff. And the problem is the enormous challenge you have. It is not about getting rid of the 700 back office people, it is about making sure and it is huge, and, Alyson, the Policing Board needs to find a way of monitoring this is: how on earth are you going to assure us that everybody who wears that uniform, officially or unofficially, everybody who wears that uniform understands the essence of policing in the community as described by John and actually lives and breathes it when they are doing their business. Because at the moment we can work with one group of neighbourhood policing and get a good experience and then that is all thwarted on a Friday night and you are just doing two steps forward and two steps back and standing still.

MIKE RITCHIE

As referred to earlier on, I think by Jim, in relation to response units and you can build up positive working relationships and then the response unit goes in and breaks a lot of the reactions. So let's take some reactions. I know you wanted to come in first.

JOHN TOPPING

I wanted to come in firstly to that comment, the first one about how I suggested, I think, took totally out of context that the PSNI were somehow responsible for the dissident threat. There is a very distinct difference between the dissident threat and the popularity of paramilitary policing in communities and this is the reality of what is left. The paramilitaries will be there for a long time and they are big P political issues in the way there, but the fact remains for bigger again policing issues. For example, in east Belfast community organisations, former paramilitaries have very clearly said to me that people on the ground do not see policing being delivered. In many cases it was suggested to me very strongly that those paramilitaries who have actually hung up their guns, as was said, are now under more pressure than ever to do something, because nobody is doing anything about the antisocial behaviour which people see as coming to their door. That is in east Belfast.

Also in west Belfast, for example, just to transport across to there, I think it is fair to say that a lot of people are seeing no difference at the top of the Whiterock, Twinbrook, Poleglass, there are a lot of good initiatives going on there but people are not seeing any significant or any change in many cases of how policing is being delivered. And I suppose it is very much the case of the devil you know in terms of getting something done about the hoods or whoever drinking and causing mayhem on people's

doorsteps because nobody again is dealing with that effectively. And that is the point that I was getting at. So hopefully that answers the two gentlemen's questions. I will pass over to Nigel.

MIKE RITCHIE

Nigel, do you want to take any of that? And then the question of targets and bean counting.

NIGEL GRIMSHAW

There's a few things in my mind. First of all I would like to come back to John to say I think it is great, I have not been here for the previous day and a half of this conference, but let me say this I can remember going back 10, 12 years when we wouldn't have been having these conversations, certainly not with us as in the PSNI sitting at the top of the room and engaging in this way, so I think it is fantastically successful that we are having this debate.

I have absolutely no problem with the vast, vast majority of what you are saying with one exception. I think it is important I don't view that we have failed in policing the community. I acknowledge that we have failings and we have absolutely and we need to fix those. But I think it is very different to make broad sweeping statements because there are vast arrays of very good things that are going on and very good partnership arrangements and I just wouldn't want to lose that. But I absolutely do acknowledge that there are failings.

Getting on to the bean counting. I think there is a worldwide acknowledgement, if not worldwide, certainly in terms of UK policing and probably Europe, and the Policing Board are very well aware of this too, you know, the whole debate around bean counting or performance management and what that actually achieves is very much under the spotlight at the minute. To be honest with you, I bring it back to a personal level. What I am interested in is not so much the overall confidence figures that are put out in reports, although I understand why they need to be done and all the reasons why we have got them, but at the end of the day it is the one-off conversations that I have with people when I was in district who were coming into the office or when I was out and talking to different people, that is actually really the gauge that I test how good we are delivering policing with the community.

But the reality is there is a very big debate around this at the minute and I think, certainly from where we are coming from, we acknowledge that in any organisation, take it out of policing, management information per se is a very useful tool and you do need to have it. It helps inform your thinking. It helps to make decisions around resources. But the important point is that it does not become the be all and end all, and I think measuring performance in policing in general, outside and beyond Northern Ireland as well has become very focused on certain targets for very genuine reasons, but I think there is also a genuine will to try and move that forward and really get into the heart of communities.

I stood when the local survey in the New Lodge was launched to be told that 40% of burglaries are not actually reported, which hugely moves away from the sorts of figures we were talking about. So what I would be saying is within policing there is an understanding that there is a huge debate to be had there and we want to get into that debate and I know the Chief Constable was talking to the Policing Board about that.

In terms of changing the values and you are right, Koulla, and that is why I say I make no apology for saying this is all about the personal stuff. It is about the values. That is where we drop the ball. How will that change? For a simple answer, it is leadership. And I acknowledge that in terms of the last ten years, policing with the community has become siloed. It has become sort of disengaged sometimes from other priorities instead of actually driving our approach to dealing with all the other priorities. Fundamentally I believe leadership is critical. I think in terms of district commands, it is absolutely vital and I firmly believe, you know, I am going back to a district in two weeks, I believe for that the constable

who is out on a Friday night or the neighbourhood constable, it does not matter whether they are response or whether they are neighbourhood or whether they are CID, I want them to take ownership. I want them to build relationships. I want them to see that I am going to hold them to account for that because that is the sort of conversations I want to have with them. That is all down to leadership and I think again that is a key tranche of the work that we are trying to take forward in terms of ensuring that we move into the next phase and that there is a consistency. But it is an iceberg. You know, you start chipping away at the top, there is a huge bit underneath the water and we need to be clear on that. This is a big challenge to both the police and to the community in terms of ultimately where we want to go.

MIKERITCHIE

What Maurice Hayes was saying yesterday was that policing should be at the core of every police officer. Indeed Alyson said that this morning. What about the response units? It is a bit about policing with the community is the nice thing to talk about, but there is also, and I mentioned it right at the start of this conference, the fact that the police are the hard edge of the State at certain points in time. So how do you ensure that when people out to do a hard job of work they are still thinking of themselves as community police officers?

NIGEL GRIMSHAW

I think often when we are looking for a response or an answer to that sort of thing, we trot out the word training and that is important.

Training is important, clearly it is, but I go back to my previous point around leadership and it is about the messages that come down from the very top of my organisation and are fed right through and they must be the themes, our core message around policing with the community must be present at every single level of management, every single level of management meeting that we have in the organisation. I would have said to officers in north and west Belfast: "I want you to do two things -- and I mentioned them in my presentation -- I want you to take that ownership and I want you to take that responsibility for the particular area that you are working with. It doesn't matter whether you are a detective, a response officer or neighbourhood." I often told neighbourhood officers if you think you are not going to be putting people in the back of the land rovers then you are sadly mistaken, because that is not policing with the community. Policing with the community is not holding hands, it is dealing with the serious harm and the more low level harm that affect communities. So there has to be a hard edge to it. Therefore, it is about leadership, entrenching the values of policing the community across all officers and that is why I am genuinely enthused with what our Chief is saying. I genuinely believe that he gets this. He want officers to talk in a certain way to him and very much come from a value base which is enshrined in policing with the community.

MIKE RITCHIE

There is just one other thing that Alan said that he didn't hear many answers. I don't know whether you want to address that.

JOHN TOPPING

Hopefully I have pointed out some of the bigger issues of policing, having worked with them in the policing bodies over the three years. You could give very simple answers but they are bound up in very complex organisational, political and social issues about which some of the operational end of policing can't deal with. But I think in terms of actually listening through the DPPs properly, not based on percentages and targets and what the statisticians think people want and actually listening.

Again, other initiatives that the Chief Constable is currently undertaking, pushing more officers to the front end, again as Hugh Orde had said, numbers don't necessarily equal quality. But, you know, as I said, this is a point from which we can look at and say: "What can we do to take this forward now?"

We are now ten years after Patten and again, as I referenced to Peter Sheridan, we are only now ready. These are some of the problems and I don't have all the answers, I doubt the police do and I doubt all the community do, but it is something we all need to work through.

MIKE RITCHIE

There are a few hands came up. Alyson, Sean, Jim. Is there anybody who hasn't spoken before? I am particularly keen to get people who haven't spoken before as well. Alyson.

ALYSON KILPATRICK, Human Rights Advisor, NIPB

I wonder if I could just deal with a couple of points, if I may.

The first was Koulla's very pertinent point which is how do we measure this? How do we measure individual officers who are actually doing what we are actually asking them to do? We are actually looking at this in-depth next week and I would very much be assisted by the people in this room and other members of the organisations suggesting to us what we should do to make that effective.

The second point is in relation to bean counting and the talk of targets. I think the expression laughing in the face of targets was used. Now I understand where that is coming from. However, what is the alternative? If you are going to measure performance and demand a performance you do need to have a target to measure it against. I think it is a little unfair to say that the PSNI are somehow abusing the purpose of the target.

Just finally, John, I am sure you didn't intend necessarily to make an association using the word hoods associating with some hoodies and young people, but we have asked the PSNI and we have been very critical of the PSNI stereotyping young people and I referred to it this morning. And they have gone a long way and taken a much more sophisticated approach and I think all of us in the room owe it to them to be as sophisticated and as careful with our language. I just wanted to reinforce that point. The police are going some way and I think we owe it to them to go on the journey with them. Thank you.

SEAN O'BAOILL, Mediation Northern Ireland

It is really a question to Nigel. A dangerous time of the day to talk about tiredness and fatigue but Alyson earlier on was referring to people suffering from human rights fatigue. Robert Murdie referred to people suffering from partnership fatigue. I think there are some encouraging things from today, youth causing annoyance is no longer in the category of antisocial behaviour, yourself saying that the police recognising now that people don't have a relationship with an organisation they have a relationship with people. But with another redefinition, relaunching of community policing, policing with the community, what stops us is over promises and under delivers again, what stops people having community policing fatigue two or three years down the line?

JIM AULD

I had two questions for John and one for Nigel but Alyson asked the first one about the terminology and hoods. The second one is in terms of you talking about dissident republicans and I am wondering what consideration you have given to dissident republicans shooting and beating people because it gets them the publicity they need rather than the failures of the PSNI to deal with the situation? Nigel, I was wondering you are talking about the community policing, I am wondering or asking in terms of canteen culture, as it is fairly commonly termed, how do you deal with that in terms of creating a culture within the PSNI that includes all the police dealing with people in a community way?

MICK BEYERS

As we know the PSNI has conducted an internal review and CAJ has asked that that review be released in the spirit of transparency and accountability. But I think one of the main concerns in the report was the fact that the report cited another report which described the character of police officers as defensive, blame oriented, reactive and macho and I think the overall catch phrase was 'lacking in emotional intelligence'. And that is a real concern. So my question is what is the vision for the kind of police officer that we are trying to create? What would be the ideal officer who is policing with the community? I suppose that is a question for both of you.

JOHN TOPPING

Well a whole raft of questions there. I suppose going back to Alyson on this issue of measurement, bean counting. I suppose it is a question, I mean any neighbourhood officer you go to anywhere in the PSNI will say community policing can't be measured. How do you measure something that never was in the true spirit of prevention and working with communities? So I think if somebody around the world could come up with a measure for community policing we would have hit Maurice Hayes' holy grail. So that is an issue. Again I think that is bound up in going beyond these average Northern Ireland level figures and coming right down even to the ward level of measurement. Very simple measures. They don't have been complicated. Crime and satisfaction with the policing at the ward level and that as well, that has been argued to create almost a positive competition between different policing areas to try and improve how they deal. So if they knew what was happening, in, for example, the Cregagh ward of east Belfast or the Whiterock ward of west Belfast in much more detail rather than just writing them off as going with the status quo of the country, I think we could probably go a lot further with how we actually understand community policing.

Certainly I agree that officers have to be measured doing something. We can't let them blindly run about. But I think the culture of measuring which we now have in the Policing Board, in PSNI, it is down to, I will be honest I mean it is down to a lot of the people that they let at, if you like, with figures. I mean, there is a whole raft of occupational psychologists and much of the good work of Patten, the good work of Clifford Shearing and David Bailey has all been reduced to tick box measures and that is a simple fact and officers will tell you that, people on the ground will tell you that. So we need to look at different ways of measuring them. Again, if the ward level measurements are coming down, why do we need to measure what individual officers do? So again that is part of the police culture, that is part of Home Office directives, bigger, bigger issues.

Then finally just I would like to apologise, as a slightly younger person possibly to the average in here, the hoods just came out under the pressure of the lights. So those engaged in antisocial activity here, under 18 for the politically correct. Thank you.

NIGEL GRIMSHAW

Well again there was a whole range of things there. I welcome Alyson's comments and totally agree in terms of the things she was flagging up. And, Jim, the point about the dissidents is absolutely right. I think there is a danger, you know, I accept that on part of some in communities there maybe is a move towards looking towards paramilitaries again, but we need to be very careful. Nobody should be under any illusion that the paramilitaries solve any problems in this respect. I don't make that in any political sense or anything else, but we all know shooting kids in the knees and all that did nothing, because I've seen many of them walking back out of a custody suite having been shot the night before and yet going out and stealing a car the next day. So I think we need to be very careful on how we mention things.

I absolutely take the point about fatigue around this initiative and the next initiative and officers tell me all the time they see one strategy coming out after the other and we are very clear, and certainly I am very clear, that we need to join a lot of this up because we dilute so many things with creating so many

different strategies and people lose the sense of where they are actually at, yet if you look at them, they are all pretty much focussed around certain core things. So I am very cautious about a relaunch of community policing. Having said that, you know, they will no doubt will make the final decision on that, but certainly in terms of the work we are doing I think I would say almost too that we are not viewing it in terms of a revamp policing with the community or a revised policing with the community, we are simply looking at it from the fact that we are ten or twelve years down the road here, we need to take stock, we need to work out what we need to do to move this forward and we need to identify the priorities for action around that. So you know, the launch is questionable. We will see how that happens.

The canteen culture is right but I go back to my point about leadership. We have loads and loads of regulation, we have loads and loads of scrutiny to ensure that our officers do what they are supposed to do and live up to the code of ethics as regards their behaviour and discipline and integrity and all of that. But at the end of the day, for me what will make a difference is two things. Number one, we need to seek every opportunity to introduce officers at the earliest point in their service to good community engagement. So we need to get them in front. There are various models across the country. There were various models in north and west Belfast. We need to use those to the maximum so that police officers -- I want police officers to be comfortable sitting in this sort of debate because, as I said to you, I can remember when we absolutely wouldn't have been. I want officers to be there to not be defensive, to say: "Bring it on, to listen to how people actually feel and then try to generate that understanding between us in terms of what actually policing can do."

On that point, I think it is important to realise too that policing with the community is not the be all and end all to solve the problems in Northern Ireland. That is why I made the challenge to the community. We need to decide what we want for the future. I have four kids. I am not under any illusion that policing with the community is going to solve their problems for the future. We all have a part to play in that, but clearly our part is policing with the community.

But I think in terms of what I expect in an officer and I take the point about emotional intelligence, I want people who are confident in what they do so they have necessary skills. I want people who are prepared to engage on the basis of an equal footing in a non-defensive way who can stand up for themselves when they need to stand up for themselves but who can listen to criticism. My only hope is that it is constructive criticism, that it is designed to make things better. The way in which we make that happen again is leadership. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter whether it is policing or any major organisation or corporation around the world, I would venture a guess the ones where, to be honest, the bosses are seen and visible and talking the language and actually implementing the things, that is where it happens. That is where it happens.

I will give you an example. In north and west Belfast I had a meeting with probationer constables one day. They come in at the end of their two years, they have their chat and get signed out and you have done well, now begins your career. One of them made the point, it was around the time of the parading issues and one of them, fair play to him, confidently he raised the issue with me about individuals who were coming in from the community to sit down with myself and the Commander. The bottom line was their perception was that these individuals had a certain background. We all know what I mean by that, in terms of paramilitaries or whatever. His challenge to me was what sort of signal are you sending to us? Because the reality is, and a colleague of mine Gary White used to put this very well, if you ask any recruit or student officer as they are called now at the beginning of their training: "Why did you join the police?" He would say: They would give you the Miss World answer, 'I want to change the world, I want to make things better,' and all of that. The vast, vast majority of them I genuinely believe truly believe that, but they come out, particularly to a place like north and west Belfast and in six weeks they have very often that macho image and it is the defensive image and it is us against the rest of the world and all. Why is that? It is not because we sit and pump them for the first six months that they are in the

district. It is because the reality is out there on a Friday and Saturday night it is tough and particularly if there's only one or two of you in a patrol and you are getting -- things can become very ugly and very violent very quickly because that is the nature of the society we live in in the 21st century. That is the thing that most eats away at police officers, I believe. Now, we can't change that and you put on the uniform and that is the price you pay, things are tough. That is why I say we can only resolve this together. We need to continually have these sorts of conversations at very local level and continue to generate the understanding of what actually policing is about, what it can do and, more importantly from a community point of view and from my point of view, how the community can genuinely help us and that is the way we change values steadily over time.

MIKE RITCHIE

I will take one more round of questions comments. Anybody who hasn't spoken before now. I will take this lady down here.

VALERIE ALLEN, Belfast DPP

I am speaking now as a business person from inner south Belfast. I want to congratulate John on his open and frank observations and reporting. You mentioned east Belfast, you mentioned west Belfast, well I can assure you inner south Belfast is no different, absolutely no confidence in the police. I have worked for six years with the DPP. I have tried to instill confidence, I have encouraged and whatever. Unfortunately there is no change as regards the PSNI coming in and creating that confidence or cleaning up what we regard in the business world as what is destroying our business area and has destroyed it. It is just the same as it was five years ago and ten years ago. But thank you, John, for the discussion and for the remarks that you made here today.

SEAN QUINN, Newtownabbey DPP

A number of people have referred to the fact that the process is predicated on transparency and I suppose good communication skills. Now maybe my communication skills are weak or my filter is poor, but I feel there's been a number of questions asked over the last couple of days that I certainly am unclear of the answers to. I am not going to list them all but a couple I would like to raise. You talked about the closure of police stations. Would it be PSNI policy to consult with the local communities prior to making a decision to close their local police stations or even with their local DPPs? I have tell you in the recent past that hasn't been the case.

Secondly I don't want to bring it up again but this whole issue of legacy I think will torture us for a long, long time. I don't think anyone could have been unmoved at the contributions of Mr McIlwaine and Mr McCabe yesterday. I believe that what they are saying is that they have been blocked in their efforts to get information from the PSNI. I know that Mr McIlwaine is here and I don't want to embarrass him, I am sure quite sure he could do it much more articulately, but if I am right in the assumption that they feel frustrated at their inability to get answers from PSNI, I would like the PSNI to tell me is that the case? Are they blocking this information or are they being blocked from giving that information? Because I know that is only two of a large number of cases and I feel it is like a cancer that will continue to eat at the journey we are trying to embark on. Thank you.

PATRICIA LYNESS, Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid & Vice-Chair, The Women's Reference Group

It is a bit of a different question to Nigel. In terms of community policing and community representation I know the PSNI have made some progress with recruiting females into the service and I suppose just maybe a bit of an update on that. And also, how to retain female officers and help them to become or get into positions of leadership and decision making which I think can have an influence on the PSNI as well.

MS BREMNER

Thank you. Even though if not everybody agrees, I wanted to really applaud the police, I suppose, for putting themselves up there today because, to be blunt, I think they have been open to criticism and I think they been open to suggestions and I think any one of either the statutory organisations or private sector who engages with the community needs to have the same conversation about itself, how do you work with the community. What I would hope is actually that given that so many of the issues that the police deal with do need the engagement of other organisations and the community, that we could actually move forward together and learn together and not create fatigue about how we do things together and with communities.

PAUL McILWAINE

My son David was murdered in Tandragee with Andrew Robb. I will just confirm what the gentleman was saying. I have every respect for the police. One of my closest friends was at my son's scene, he was MSU, he didn't know it was my son, I didn't know he was there. I had a 23 year old cousin who died, he was a member of the RUC, so I wouldn't dream of insulting the security forces in this country. But the reality of it is, for instance, for two years I have been trying to get the information from the forensic people and the hold up on it was that there was a trial coming up. Now the trial has since gone and the police are saying that they have got everybody that was involved in it to court yet I was speaking with my solicitor this morning and it looks like I am going to take a judicial review again, which will take me another couple of years to get that information. Now, if there is nothing untoward, and the problem is there are irregularities and there was evidence destroyed, it is in the hands of the Ombudsman's office, you know, but I am a parent here trying to get answers and I am not getting them. It is all very well, all I see at the moment in every bit of publicity that is coming with the policing Ombudsman, the Policing Board is truth, transparency and accountability and I have not seen any of it, I will be quite honest with you. I am told I have another ten years in court, that is 20 years of my life for something that could have been cleared up and may not -- certainly my son, it wouldn't have stopped his murder but I could have had a life seven years ago and not for the next ten years, you know, having to suffer what we are suffering.

MIKE RITCHIE

Thank you, Paul. So there is a range of issues there. There is Paul's case, but there is also the fact that, as I was talking to Alyson about earlier on, sometimes we think maybe it is individual officers or is it a system that exists which kind of blocks information coming out. I was struck by what Mark Hamilton said yesterday whenever he said simply because of the way in which this system works, we appear as though we are hiding behind things and the image that then gives to the community can be a problem.

PAUL McILWAINE

Sorry, Mike, just one quick thing is just on the human rights issue. I am getting the impression and a lot of other victims are getting the impression that when the police are dealing with the human rights in regards to where a family has requested something, it seems to be that the human rights are engaged only to find out what's the legalities in what they can release, not in what they should be giving to the families.

MIKE RITCHIE

Nigel, I will let you deal with that first and then we will come to yourself.

NIGEL GRIMSHAW

Okay. I mean I have to come to Paul first and I thank you for your honesty. I would love to be able to give you an answer here and now, which you and I both know I can't. But what I can say is talk about -- your reflection is at the most serious end of what is so often the experience of victims right through the whole spectrum in terms of justice, you know, be it something much less serious than the circumstances you face. What I can give you an absolute commitment is at the very heart of anything we need to do

around policing the community, victims need to be there and they need to be there from the personal experience point of view. Personally speaking, I think absolutely you should have the information and it is totally unacceptable that you have to wait that length. I say that from a personal point of view without being privy or bound up in terms of the actual case. So I would love to be able to give you more, but the bottom line is that while I genuinely understand where you are coming from, as I said, if you go through the spectrum even to the more less serious crimes so often victims we let down and don't keep them up to date, we don't do things; that lies very much at the heart of the work we are trying to take forward and it is clearly a point that we should be held to account on and we should be brought up on every time that we let people down in that respect. I would love to be able to tell you more in terms of that but I can't and I understand your frustrations.

In terms of, just quickly, the female. From a gender point of view, the organisation has made significant progress. I can't remember the exact percentage, but it was something in the order of 26%. It is very often a story lost because we tend to fixate on the religious balance, but we have made significant progress and I suppose not least the fact that our current Deputy Chief Constable has been a very welcome addition to that in terms of keeping that agenda moving forward. There is a real challenge for policing not just here, I know colleagues across the water face it too in terms of retaining female officers for all the reasons that I don't need to rehearse. It is tricky and it is a challenge. It is going to be a challenge for us over the next number of years because of the age profile of our officers, but it is one that we're aware of and we are working on.

Station closures is hugely emotive and going to become much more pertinent for me when I go out to a district shortly. I understand that there have been considerable concerns around recent plans for station closures and the mechanisms around consultation and so forth. I suppose what I can say is that I think that has been very much acknowledged by both the Board and PSNI in terms of how they handle that whole thing. It is a reality for the future, in terms of the size of our organisation and the number of buildings that we have. They don't marry up, but we need to get better at working with the community to ensure that what we do end up with provides the best platform to give good policing with the community across all our communities in Northern Ireland.

In terms of no confidence in inner south Belfast, again I welcome those comments in as much as I want to hear those. That is what I would want to hear from, whether it be CPLCs, community forums or whatever when I go out to my district. There is no simple answer to that and, you know, that, I suppose, but it captures exactly why what I said from the platform I genuinely believe in.

I suppose the big plus for me at the minute is, and I am not making any comment on our previous Chief Constable, I think he did a sterling job in many respects and brought the organisation through a very tricky period, but we are moving into a new phase and I am very encouraged by what our new Chief Constable says and I genuinely believe he will lead us down the road that many people want in terms of this next phase.

MIKE RITCHIE

Thank you, Nigel. John.

JOHN TOPPING

Just on the general confidence issue, I don't think north, south, east, west Belfast, all over I think there is the general opinion that confidence levels have gone down. They tend to be concentrated in certain pockets, but I think more to give a positive spin, a lot of that has been down to, as people identified quite rightly, they don't know who their local officers are. But that will stop very soon, I suppose, as a side effect of the whole Patten severance programme. There has been massive churning of officer personnel over the last ten years and that has created a lot of spaces for promotion and quite often

neighbourhood policing has been one of the boxes to tick to get up the promotion ladder. But that will be down, at least from what I get from the training branch, that will be down to literally a handful of officers in the entire organisation very soon in the next few years. So there will be no space for officers to move in and move on to try and get up the ladder. When they go to places, they will have to stay there for a number of years because promotions will be so limited. So that will hopefully help and that is in one hand.

But on the other, as I mentioned in my talk, there is a lot of isolated work but one of the very good pockets of work that is going on - and I am not just saying that because it involves myself - is part of neighbourhood officer training and what certainly I am involved in with two Inspectors up in the training branch is what has been described by the National Police Improvement Agency as the UK's leading neighbourhood policing training. Over the course of the last year we have gone out, we have had to get security assessments, we have had to go to the very toughest edges of communities across Northern Ireland and we have got the views of what they want to see in a neighbourhood officer, and in neighbourhood policing. I suppose this goes back to the issue of profile. And that is now incorporated and that is now being piloted in PSNI. So I think again longer term, how long I don't know, but the small steps are beginning to be made but I think we need to hurry those along quite a bit before people completely lose grasp of what we need to move towards.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

MIKE RITCHIE

Thank you very much to both John and to Nigel for a very stimulating session.

That concludes our conference. I would invite you to fill out your evaluation forms. As I said at the start, this is a template that we want to take around Northern Ireland and do at a local level to try and see what people's views are closer to the street level, I suppose. I think it is quite clear that a large part of community policing is about the quality of engagement that one can have, both horizontally and vertically in terms of wherever the police are, whether they are below or above the community but also amongst the community; because the quality of organisation within particular communities will develop the coherence of any plans there are and any dialogue there will be with the police. So I think it has to be a two-way process.

I would like to thank the police officers who have come along to this conference because it has been good to have an engagement. It has to be a prickly engagement. It has to be an engagement that encourages debate and dialogue and isn't simply a cosy meeting of minds. I think this conference has perhaps provided a bit of a template.

Somebody was saying during the course of the conference that we haven't had many of these over the last number of years so it is good this has happened again.

I would like to thank all people within the CAJ who have worked so hard to get this up. Mick, Aideen, Fiona, Sarah, Gemma and Louise. Thank you to them all for all their hard work and anybody who I have forgotten now. I would like to thank all the speakers who have come along. It has been a very rich engagement. Finally I would like to thank all the participants who have given up of their time. It has been a long couple of days but I think we have learned quite a lot and moved us forward but we do want to keep this dialogue. So thank you very much and safe home.