

## Podcast with Chief Constable Matt Baggott

10 November 2009

Today we are speaking to the Chief Constable Matt Baggott to find out more about his recent announcement on the continued phase out of the Full Time Reserve.

Chief Constable, you have decided to proceed with the Patten recommendation to phase out the Full Time Reserve, and this process is to be completed by March 2011. Can you explain the impact that this may have on frontline service delivery?

Well, may I say first of all that this isn't a new decision. There's been a lot said in the last few days about the decision to continue the phase out. In fact what I did when I arrived as Chief Constable was implement a security review to make sure that our needs and security are well served looking into the future. And that showed that with hundreds of police officers currently involved in desk jobs that's no criticism of what they're doing because it's what they have been asked to do. But actually we've got a lot of experience there which actually should be operationally deployed to the frontline. So I came to the conclusion with the unanimous support of my Top Team that actually ending the phase out wasn't justified and we're moving ahead now with redeploying hundreds of police officers back into operational duties.

Has the decision to phase out full time reserve been influenced by budget concerns?

Well, part of my responsibilities is to work within a budget and to make sure that the PSNI is as efficient and effective as it can be and report to the policing Board. So I'm satisfied actually that we will increase our level of frontline resource within that budget and again I come back to that point that doing that doesn't justify retaining the full time reserve. So it's not about budgetary restraint, it's about the best way that we can deliver policing services and meet the security needs into the future.

You have mentioned that you believe the proposed budget for the devolution of police and justice is sufficient?

I do. There are some issues, historical hearing loss cases, issues of pensions, which that package actually provides for us and it also gives me access to a security fund both next year and into the future. So I will be satisfied at this moment in time that we can meet the needs of delivering personal policing, the day to day of protection of people and also the severe security situation within that package predicated against the devolution of policing and justice.

Do you believe these measures will allow you to continue to police the security threat?

I do. We've got some nettles to grasp about the way in which the PSNI is structured. No longer being tied to a rigid establishment is part of that. Having some flexibility in the ways in which we manage and ask people to work is another part of that. So yes, I do believe that with all the freedom we've got now we can make the PSNI really fit for purpose in meeting the needs of the future. And I wouldn't say unless it was otherwise and I am operationally responsible for that decision and I'm not being swayed by any political voices but this is a sound decision looking forward and I am satisfied that we can do this.