



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2009-01703

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW OF POLICING - 1996

### Request and Answer:

#### Question

I am looking for a copy of the 1996 Chief Constable's report titled a "Fundamental Review of Policing".

#### Answer

Please find attached PDF 2288.

The Summary and Key Findings was the only report formally released.

This is referred to in Hansard as being part of the appendices of a report by the Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee at Westminster, which may also be of interest. Please see link that refers:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmniaf/337/33702.htm>

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [FOI@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@psni.pnn.police.uk)

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.



**A**  
**FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW**  
**OF**  
**POLICING**

**Summary**  
**and**  
**Key Findings**

## PREFACE

Policing in Northern Ireland down through the years has required rather special men and women (whether serving officers or civilian colleagues) upon whom extraordinary demands have been made as a matter of daily routine. The stability of the Province and the well-being of its citizens has depended crucially on the work of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in seeking to serve without fear or favour, the entire community. For many years the conduct of a most vicious terrorist campaign forced us to operate from fortified stations; forced our officers to travel in armoured vehicles; forced them to patrol wearing flak-jackets, bearing arms and often accompanied by military colleagues. This inevitably caused barriers between us and the people we seek to serve. We long for the day when such barriers will be totally unnecessary.

The period between August 1994 and February 1996 gave but a f6retaste of how things could and should be. All right-thinking people of course prefer to see police patrolling and operating in the way that this period began to make possible.

No-one feels more keenly the desire to engage in normal policing than the police themselves. We want most earnestly to work to enhance the depth and breadth of partnerships with the community and to embrace the importance of the community's own role. There are, of course some who seem to fear the enhancement of that partnership and even in the period between August 1994 and February 1996 intimidation of those involved in community relations continued and brutal attacks upon people did not abate. The 'Marching Season' in particular and public order generally posed us further difficulties in 1996.

Nonetheless the period did offer an opportunity to conduct a fundamental review of policing to determine, through detailed research and consultation, the nature, level and style of policing service which would be appropriate in an environment free from the threat of terrorism and sectarian strife.

The review went to the very core of policing. It examined all aspects of the service both externally in terms of local communities and other agencies and internally in terms of structure, organisation, management and support functions. It concentrated on first principles of policing, recognising that what really matters is the quality of service which is delivered and how that matches community needs and expectations. Only when this has been determined can appropriate conclusions be drawn about how the organisation should be best structured to meet this end. Of course the RUC can only do so much and move so far by itself. Political, social and economic factors are all involved in achieving progress.

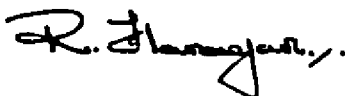
Whilst the environment in which we currently operate has greatly deteriorated in security terms, from that which existed when the research was conducted, this does not mean that the work of the review has been wasted.

Many of the recommendations in terms of, for example, setting service standards, training and information technology remain vital to enhancing our service in whatever environment we operate. Others of course in terms of, for example, major changes in staffing levels will be almost entirely security dependent.

Despite the current deteriorating security situation I have decided that it is appropriate for the public to know the key findings of the review and to know in broad terms what remains appropriate for implementation and what it is not in present circumstances possible to contemplate.

Whatever the differences which divide respective traditions in Northern Ireland, there is surely a need for all law-abiding people to accept that those differences can be resolved democratically, that violence will not be tolerated in their communities and that the police will be given wholehearted support in bringing to justice those who break the law. The RUC will continue to do all in its power to win confidence and support. This report sets out some of the building blocks that will help in that evolving process, the foundation of which must be the theme of "Policing in Partnership".

We remain absolutely committed to the highest professional policing standards in our work with the community to achieve that enduring freedom from terrorist threat and sectarian strife which we all deserve. I know that by working together we can face the future with confidence as we move towards the new millennium.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Flanagan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

R FLANAGAN  
Chief Constable

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 For over 25 years the RUC has had to operate in a context of extreme violence, in an environment which was difficult, dangerous and complex. On the one hand it called for absolute firmness of purpose in the face of terrorism and on the other it required the utmost sensitivity and understanding in providing an effective and caring policing service to the people of Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The announcement of the PIRA ceasefire in August 1994, followed in October by the Loyalist ceasefire, provided an opportunity for the RUC to consider the service it provided to the community and to assess what changes it might make to enhance the delivery of that service. It was against this background that it was decided that "a fundamental review of policing" should be carried out.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

2.1 The terms of reference for the review were:

- i) To establish (through detailed research) what, in the current and assessed future environment, constitutes a high quality policing service and how that service should be delivered to the whole community in Northern Ireland.
- ii) Having determined what constitutes a high quality police service and how it should be delivered, to examine the type of structure, systems and resources needed to give optimum support to that service.
- iii) To take account of other developments deemed relevant to the review, for example,
  - (a) the Police Authority's community consultation exercises;
  - (b) best practice elsewhere in the UK police service;
  - (c) comparative analysis (in terms of service and support) of police services elsewhere in the UK against the specific requirement of the RUC;

- (d) relevant experience from police services elsewhere;
  - (e) relevant experience from other organisations;
  - (f) Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Reports;
  - (g) current work on the Tripartite Structure; and
  - (h) the Review of Police Core and Ancillary Tasks.
- iv) To review the RUC Building Strategy, ie the nature, location and level of protection of police buildings, including the interface with the army.
  - v) To consider the impact which any transfer of support services and/or financial control to the Chief Constable would have on the policing service.
  - vi) To provide costings for the future policing service.

2.2 In addition to the formal Terms of Reference provided for the review a set of guiding principles were agreed against which all research work would be carried out:

- Stressing quality of service rather than mere efficiency, though not forgetting value for money;
- Wide consultation with and participation of all police officers, civilian staff and external agencies should be the focus;
- Spans of control should be manageable;
- Management costs should be kept to a minimum;
- Every tier in the rank structure should add value to the policing service delivered;
- There should be adequate operational and management support through information technology (IT).
- Authority, responsibility and lines of communication should be clear;

- Systems should be streamlined by eliminating the duplication of tasks and delegating responsibility to the lowest competent level; and
- The role of Headquarters in relation to operational command and across functional areas should be clearly defined.

### **3. REVIEW METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The fundamental review was led by the then Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Ronnie Flanagan, with the support of a review team comprising RUC officers, a management consultant and officials from the Police Authority and the Northern Ireland Office. The practicality of all the findings was assessed by an operational inspectorate of experienced police officers. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) was also regularly consulted and recommendations from his previous reports reconsidered. Close consultation with the Police Research Group in the Home Office helped to provide a more objective and strategic overview of police reorganisation across the UK.
- 3.2 The review took account of existing research as well as relying heavily on the support and participation of all members of the RUC including civilian staff. A number of questionnaires were designed to explore views about the nature and shape of the RUC and how it should develop over the following five years. The questionnaires were followed up with structured interviews and discussion groups throughout the service. Issues were openly discussed, not only with commanders and heads of units but with a wide range of police officers, and civilian staff including local representatives of the Staff Associations.
- 3.3 In examining community attitudes, the review took full account of the community consultation exercise carried out by the Police Authority and published in the Authority's consultation document "Everyone's Police: A Partnership for Change". In addition to the Authority's consultation process the RUC commissioned an independent survey of the adult population, consulted with Community Police Liaison Committees through Sub Divisional Commanders and received submissions from community representatives and groups at various levels.
- 3.4 Research into best practice in the UK, the Garda Siochana and other police forces was conducted with particular emphasis on those which had recently restructured. The experience of private and other public sector organisations were also explored.
- 3.5 The review was conducted throughout taking account of the most up to date security assessment. Three broad security scenarios were identified against which implementation of the review recommendations would be considered:

### Scenario 1

A high level of terrorist activity, bombings, shootings, intimidation, punishment beatings, racketeering and public disorder. A high level of policing, supported by military.

### Scenario 2

A greatly reduced level of terrorism, although terrorist organisations remain fully armed and trained, intimidation, punishment beatings, racketeering and public disorder continuing. A high level of policing, military available but much less publicly evident.

### Scenario 3

Terrorist organisations dismantled, ordinary criminal activity ongoing and improving community relations leading to a lower potential for public disorder. A high quality, effective police service through the efficient use of resources.

## 4. VISION OF POLICING

4.1 In its work, the review accepted that the purpose of the police service is:

- to uphold the law fairly and firmly;
- to prevent crime;
- to pursue and bring to justice those who break the law;
- to keep the peace;
- to protect, help and reassure the community; and
- to be seen to do this with integrity, common sense and sound judgment.

In the Northern Ireland context, the terrorist campaign has added an extra dimension reflected in the RUC's own statement of common purpose requiring the RUC to play a full part in the eradication of terrorism.



4.2 The review concluded that the achievement of those objectives required the police service to be responsive to the needs of the community at a local level. That responsiveness involved:

- a partnership to be forged between the public and its police service based upon a common understanding of the priorities and needs of the community;
- close co-operation between the police service and other agencies of Government, local government, business and voluntary sectors to address common problems;
- policing which is community based, able to recognise the individual issues facing specific communities; and
- a police service working with the respective communities to tackle those issues.

These four concepts recognise that policing is not a matter for the police service alone. The community has also an important role to play.

4.3 The review also concluded that a police service must set and meet the highest standards of behaviour, and reflect the quality of service ideal in all its actions. To achieve that the police service must:

- operate without prejudice or partiality;
- be accessible to the community;
- be sensitive to its needs and aspirations; and
- be flexible enough to meet changing needs.

4.4 This analysis informed the 189 detailed and specific recommendations of the review and the report forms a handbook for implementation by the RUC subject, where appropriate, to the restrictions of the security environment.

## **5. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW**

5.1 The review examined in detail the role of the individual officer responsible for the delivery of the policing service to the community, and from that starting point addressed the key organisational issues for the service as a whole. These key issues were identified as being the structure required to deliver a more responsive service, the resource requirements of the police, both human and financial, systems, support services and organisational style. These are each dealt with individually below.

### **SERVICE - Policing in Partnership with the Community**

5.2 In developing a partnership approach which enhanced the role of the community the report identified a need for:

- the further development of Community Police Liaison Committees (CPLCs) in consultation with the Police Authority;
- greater use of customer attitude surveys to identify areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the police service;
- increased partnership with other agencies, bodies and community groups;
- the promotion and redefinition of the role of neighbourhood police units;
- improving the appearance and access of police stations to the public; and
- the introduction of the concept of service delivery standards.

### **STRUCTURE - Supporting a Community Based Police Service**

5.3 The need to work in partnership with the community and to be responsive to local communities has implications for the structure of the RUC. The command structure of the RUC currently consists of 3 regions, 12 divisions and 38 sub-divisions. The review recommends that the police structure should become more aligned with local communities, and continue to take as

its basis, council boundaries. The objective is to produce a service which is based within the community. The local police commander will be responsible for developing local partnerships and will have the power to react to the local community's policing priorities. Decision-taking will be devolved to the local commander in line with best practice, and there will be a clearer definition of responsibility between the area, region and headquarters. The main findings were:

- sub-divisions should become area commands. The officer in charge should be responsible for all day-to-day operations, including liaison with the local community. It is this officer who should have ultimate responsibility for the personnel and the budget for the area;
- the boundaries of the areas should be aligned with council boundaries and that the overall number of areas should be reduced;
- that the divisional command tier should be removed in line with current best practice and the recommendation of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary;
- that the regions should have responsibility for disseminating force policy, allocating resources for major policing events and monitoring performance and policing standards;
- headquarters should be responsible for setting force policy and standards. It should provide expertise and support and set the strategic direction for the force as a whole;
- a new department should be developed responsible for oversight of the police service's links to the community; and
- when the security situation permits, the crime and special branch departments should be amalgamated.

## **ESTABLISHMENT - Resourcing the Police Service**

5.4 The RUC currently has an establishment of 8,489 full-time regular officers, 3202 Full-time Reserve Officers, and 1,750 Part-time Reserve Officers. It is supported by a civilian support staff of 2,700. The Review examined the numbers of police officers and support staff required to deliver its policing service against the different security situations envisaged. It concluded that:

- no significant changes should be made while the terrorist threat remained;
- but that reductions in the overall size of the service would be possible over time in the event of a true and lasting peace;
- that reduction would be possible because of the large number of officers involved in anti-terrorist and security duties and the lower requirement for services and supplies; and
- that any move to reduce the size of the police service should be handled sensitively and in close consultation with the staff associations.

## **SYSTEMS - Supporting the Delivery of the Service**

5.5 The programme of change will require an enhancement of the management and systems of the police service. Greater decision-taking at local level would inevitably lead to the requirement for appropriate support in managerial and information technology terms. That led to the following findings:

- increased importance of good management systems;
- the introduction of phased budgetary delegation to area level with appropriate training and computer systems; and
- a pilot study to look at improving communication between the RUC and those served by limited opening stations .

## **SUPPORT SERVICES - Equipping the Police Service**

5.6 The review also examined the delivery of support services to the police. It concentrated on the finance, personnel, transport, buildings, information technology and supplies areas. In view of the Government White Paper "Foundations for Policing" which proposed the transfer of responsibility for support services and day to day management of finance from the Police Authority to the Chief Constable, the review examined how those proposals could be given effect. It concluded:

- that the new RUC headquarters structure would be augmented by three directorates dealing with personnel, finance and technical services; and
- that the existing separate RUC and PANI branches in these areas should all be amalgamated.

## **PERSONNEL ISSUES - Recruiting and Developing People**

5.7 It has long been a source of concern within the force, and of criticism by some outside it, that the proportion of Roman Catholics within the RUC is lower than the working population as a whole. It is widely accepted that intimidation is a major factor, and the increase in applicants perceived to be of Catholic background during the ceasefire was welcome. Nonetheless the figures remain too low. Another source of concern is the lower proportion of women than is the case in other police forces and of the working population.

5.8 The review acknowledged that to achieve high standards of performance in delivering a policing service through organisational change, requires highly trained people. Therefore the development of police and civilian support staff, in a range of relevant skills and abilities, will be an important aim of training, both now and in the future.

The review concluded that:

- an initial target for Roman Catholic applicants to the RUC should be set;

- an initial target for female applicants to the RUC should be set;
- selection should continue to be based on the principle of merit; and
- the impact on individuals of organisational change should be examined and appropriate personnel strategies developed.

The review noted that the pace of redressing religious and gender imbalances within the RUC would be inhibited by any reduction in the overall size of the Force.

### **ORGANISATIONAL STYLE - Meeting the needs of others**

5.9 The passing of responsibility for day-to-day operations to area commands links naturally with the historic discretion of the constable to decide what constitutes a breach of the law. It is another theme of the review that greater responsibility be passed to the constables and sergeants who have daily contact with the public. The values of the Force set out in the RUC Charter are widely acknowledged. The review suggests they could be reinforced by:

- the further development of community awareness training in all training programmes;
- the promotion of a neutral working environment; and
- the development of consultative, open, innovative working practices within the force to promote a culture of continuous improvement.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

6.1 Throughout the review, the implications of the security situation were very apparent. The research for the review was almost entirely conducted during the ceasefires. It was important to plan ahead for the possibility of a true and lasting peace, whilst always recognising the possibility of a return to violence. Regrettably the ending of the PIRA ceasefire in February 1996 and the public order difficulties of the summer made it necessary for the RUC to conduct further work on the review's recommendations to examine which elements:

- i) could be implemented irrespective of the security situation;
- ii) could not be implemented without significant movement towards a true and lasting peace; and

iii) those needing further work to be done, in view of the changed circumstances.

6.2 That examination concluded that most of the recommendations in the areas of service delivery, systems, support services and organisational style could proceed. Implementation will evolve over a number of years and will be phased to ensure minimal disruption to the public. It will place the RUC in a better position to provide an effective and efficient service to the community.

