



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Historical Investigations:
Office of the Police Ombudsman Briefing

18 April 2013

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Justice

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Paul Givan (Chairperson)
Mr Raymond McCartney (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Stewart Dickson
Mr Tom Elliott
Mr Seán Lynch
Mr Alban Maginness
Ms Rosaleen McCorley
Mr Patsy McGlone

Witnesses:

Mr Paul Holmes	Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
Dr Michael Maguire	Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
Mr Adrian McAllister	Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

The Chairperson: I formally welcome Dr Michael Maguire, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. I also welcome Adrian McAllister, chief executive, and Paul Holmes, director of historic investigations, neither of whom I have met before. Welcome to the Justice Committee. Dr Maguire is an old hand at this; he will be able to control us and take all our questions without any difficulty, I am sure. You are very welcome to this meeting.

Dr Michael Maguire (Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland): Thank you, Chair. I am not sure whether the characterisation of an old hand is necessarily helpful at this stage, as we embark on a new journey, but, at this point, I will take it as a compliment.

The Chairperson: It was related to experience; nothing else.

Dr Maguire: Thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon. Hopefully, it will be an important closure of business, and we will begin to close down some of the points that I have spoken to the Committee about before, particularly the changes that we have made to the office.

Before I begin, I thank Brendan, the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJINI) and the staff of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for the work that they did. I felt that progress had been made on independent assessment, but I wanted their independent view, and that resulted in the decision to recommence historical investigations.

In April 2011, when the previous ombudsman asked me to undertake a review into the office, I had no idea where that process would end up. I certainly had no idea that I would be speaking to you this afternoon as the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, but here we are. I am here as a willing

participant, because I firmly believe in the importance of the office, in oversight and accountability, particularly in relation to contemporary policing, but also in respect of work that we are doing on history. That is why I wanted to take on the job. So, I am here as a willing participant.

The CJI report identified a number of specific concerns around the investigation work into history cases. With my new senior management team, I have driven the implementation of a new approach to history cases, with a particular focus on the quality of work that is to be undertaken and with an associated demand for greater professionalism in how we interact with those who engage with us. Taken together, I believe that those changes have addressed the concerns around the flawed nature of the investigative process, which led to the suspension of history cases back in 2011.

I will highlight a number of points. I know that Brendan has covered them, but there are a number of things to bring to your attention. The history directorate is operating with a new operating model, for want of a better term. The directorate is fully resourced. It comprises two investigation teams, which are staffed by skilled and experienced people who have undertaken significant work in the area. A separate review team looks across the work of the directorate and provides further checks and balances on the quality of the work. There is a separate communications team, whose job it is to engage with those who bring their complaints to us, in that controlled and measured way that was identified earlier.

Part of that, and part of my agenda, has been to look at the checks and balances around quality assurance. One thing that I have considered is how investigation teams have access to sensitive material in support of their investigations. The changes that we have made include improved audit trails for request; additional resources; investigation teams working closely with the confidential unit; and investigators having access to material that they need to support their investigations. In addition, there is a much greater operational link between the working of the confidential unit and the investigation teams in the history directorate. That is set within the context of the twin objectives: the need to support investigations while protecting the organisation in how it handles sensitive material. We have responsibilities for the handling of sensitive material, which we take extremely seriously.

Another issue relates to policy change to facilitate performance improvement. As Brendan mentioned, we have developed the prioritisation policy. All the cases that were in existence at that time have been subject to that process. I and senior colleagues went through that prioritisation matrix. Letters have been sent out to families, so they all know where their cases sit at this point in time in relation to the prioritisation process. Paul can say a bit more about that. As Brendan said, we have also taken advice on the implementation of article 2, and those changes have been made.

It is clear that relationships and actions at the very top of the organisation had an influence on how matters unfolded. As the office emerges into a new era, it is an obvious, although legitimate, observation to make that, as we speak now in 2013, there is a new Police Ombudsman and a new chief executive. Indeed, we have made an additional senior appointment as director of legal services.

In addition, we have suppressed the post of senior director of investigations and redefined the role of chief executive to have overall responsibility for the running of the office. These steps create a single line of accountability to the Police Ombudsman, unlike the previous model, which created clear tensions between the roles and functions of the chief executive and the senior director of investigations. Therefore, some of the issues that were raised in the McCusker report concerning governance have been addressed, because we now have clear lines of accountability from me, the chief executive, to the senior management team. Those changes were implemented in that regard.

One of my objectives has been to build a new and unified senior management structure, and I have been working closely with the chief executive and directors, and I believe that we are all committed to making the organisation work. We have also developed a new memorandum of understanding with the Department of Justice, which I believe copper-fastens the independence of decision making in the office and provides greater structure and transparency to the communication and contact between the two organisations. The memorandum of understanding has been published on our website, so you can see clearly the financial framework in which all non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) need to operate in Northern Ireland. You can also see that the memorandum of understanding that sits behind that says, for the avoidance of doubt, what our role is and what the Department's role is in relation to decision making on individual cases. That is publicly available.

I do not see the changes that we are making as a simple continuation of where the office left off. Rather, I believe that it is the implementation of a new approach to undertaking history work, with a particular focus on the quality of work and greater professionalism in how we interact with those who

engage with us. I am pleased that Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary provided external validation of the changes that we are undertaking.

I have taken it as a given that the work that we undertake, current and history cases, requires qualified and committed staff with a consistent and quality-assurance investigation process and the necessary checks and balances in the organisation for how material is handled. Indeed, it requires professional and sensitive engagement with those who have contact with the office and who trust us with their complaints.

People can expect, and should receive, from the office the results of a robust, quality investigation, undertaken by people who know what they are doing and who have exhausted all proportionate attempts to get answers. They can expect, and should receive, an investigation that is independent and free from interference from outside influences. In the CJI report, I used the term "buffeting" to describe the process in which reports are produced. Independence means that this issue will have to be addressed head on. People may not like all the results of our investigations, but that is an integral part of having an independent organisation. Thirdly, they can expect, and should receive, a professional service in how the office deals with their complaints and communicates with them as its work unfolds. I believe that those changes have been put in place. We will deliver on those commitments and provide greater confidence in the work of the office.

The Chairperson: I will cover some of the points that I put to the CJINI team. I will expect you to answer in the affirmative in respect of quality and independence, but were you surprised that its view is that, until it sees your report, it is only a "potential" quality and that the assessment of independence will need to be predicated on what is in your report?

Dr Maguire: No. It makes sense to me, because that is the approach if you want absolute confirmation that the process is working. When I was in Brendan's job, the view always was that you needed to see product, and the only way you see product is when reports are produced. It makes entire sense to me that CJINI would withhold that extra degree of reassurance until that process has been completed. I can answer in the affirmative and that the process will be as robust as it possibly can be. Independent of history, we have produced two significant reports in the public domain already. One is on the investigation into the murder of Seamus Fox, specifically on whether the police saw the murder of Seamus Fox outside Woodbourne police station. The second is on the investigation into the death of James Fenton, the poor man who was found outside the Ulster Hospital several weeks after he had absconded from it.

Those are a couple of examples of where the reports have been through a robust process internally, how we have engaged with families and then put the reports into the public domain. The process that we use for the development of history reports will be not dissimilar and, indeed, will have extra checks and balances built in because of the nature of work that we are undertaking. To return to your question, I have no problem with Brendan making that comment because it would make sense to me until he saw product. However, I am confident that he will see that product.

The Chairperson: The confidential unit was a serious area of contention. It was brought in for a reason, and the police had issues around information being shared within a broader remit of the office, primarily because of leaking and compromising that information and the security of its personnel. What assurances can you give the Committee that the balance between civilian oversight and the protection of sensitive material has been struck?

Dr Maguire: To give you an overview, I will ask Adrian to come in because I know that he has been working on that area. The office has two clear objectives in handling sensitive material. The first is to ensure that those who undertake investigations have access to material that will inform their investigation and conclusions. Therefore, from the point of view of civilian oversight, it is extremely important to me that the mechanisms for getting access to that material are clear and robust and that there are checks and balances in place to make sure that it is used appropriately. Our second objective is as follows. I have responsibilities under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and other legislation to make sure that the information is dealt with appropriately; we are no in way laissez-faire with regard to who gets access to information; and that mechanisms, physical and otherwise, are in place to make sure that it is stored correctly.

Those twin objectives have guided our approach. I would say this to the police: it is not simply a case that we open the books. I accept the responsibilities. At the same time, we are not the police; we are

a civilian oversight organisation, and our requirements are different. That means that our approach to some areas may differ from the police's. Managing those twin objectives is an important issue.

Mr Adrian McAllister (Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland): We are acutely aware of our responsibilities with regard to maintaining the confidentiality of the information that comes into the organisation, and we understand how to handle it. If it is to be disseminated to various people in the organisation, which inevitably it will be, including investigating officers, we are very clear as to when and why that will happen. Who sees that information is documented and recorded, and also where, physically, they see it and when they return it, or when the hardcopy with any information is returned. For example, when Michael and I read secret information, we sign a document as to what information we have seen. That document sits on the front of the information. We sign for where we read it physically; for example, we sat in our office and read it. Moreover, we sign for it when it goes back into the safe and the confidential unit. Those are the processes that are in place in the office, and they will get tighter. We are reviewing our operating procedures in the organisation. That is absolutely the right thing to do for me, coming into the organisation, to bring a fresh pair of eyes. We are reviewing all that we do in the context of a developing memorandum of understanding and our discussions with the police. There is work to do on that. However, we are in a very strong position anyway. The ethos that I bring to it is exactly as Michael described. It is sensitive material and it is handled accordingly.

The Chairperson: My last question will bring in other members. You have referred to people who you have now met as the new ombudsman. You have met the police and retired police officers. It is fair to say that the relationship between the retired police officers, particularly the association that represents them, and the ombudsman's office has been fraught from its inception. That, I think, is a fair comment. What way are you seeking to build relationships with retired officers who have a particular interest in the historical work of the office?

Dr Maguire: I am doing a number of things. First, I have met retired officers. I was intrigued by a recent statement from the Police Federation suggesting that retired officers should co-operate with the work of the office. I am keen to engage with retired officers. There has been correspondence between Adrian and the head of the retired officers' association. Adrian will perhaps say more about that work.

Mr A McAllister: I take exactly the same approach. My door is open, in that sense, and I would like to engage in a physical dialogue with retired police officers. There has been an exchange of correspondence in which they have asked me to supply certain information about our plans for historical investigations.

I have resisted providing that information, and you will understand, for operational reasons, why I did that. In that context, however, I await a further reply from the Retired Police Officers Association, and I am more than willing to sit down with them to discuss how we can take the relationship forward with the ultimate aim of making the investigations as thorough as they can possibly be and the conclusions that we draw being as fair and as balanced as possible.

Inevitably, without speaking to them, there is, unfortunately, a missing piece of the jigsaw. Part of my role is to try to bring that relationship to meaningful fruition rather than having an exchange of letters.

Dr Maguire: I know that the association is concerned about how the office approaches retired officers and their families. There was a piece of unfinished business around a protocol for that, and I am keen to see whether we can complete that work. We may not be able to do so, because their requirements may be totally different from mine and we may not be able to agree. However, I am happy to have the conversation and see where it goes.

The Chairperson: Do you recognise that there is work to do in order to build up that relationship and trust between the office and retired officers?

Dr Maguire: I make no comment on the past, Chairperson; my view is about what I want to do moving forward. I want investigations that have the widest possible access to information. It is in the interests of retired officers to speak to us. As Adrian said, there is information that only they can supply.

However, as I said yesterday, the fact that they do not supply it in and of itself does not mean that I cannot come to a conclusion, because we will have other information. It is in their interests as well as ours that they engage with us. Why would I not want to have that conversation?

Mr McCartney: Thank you for your presentation. I wish you all the best for the future.

Dr Maguire: You said that with a smile, Raymond.

Mr McCartney: I hope that the cameras did not get it. *[Laughter.]* This may be an unfair question, and if it is, you should tell me, but you are in a unique position. You were a part of the process that led to the exploration of the gaps in the office and now you find yourself in a position to plug those gaps. What has been your experience of that, if that is a fair question?

Dr Maguire: My overall experience has been very positive. I have been impressed with the willingness of staff in the organisation to engage in the work of the office. We have committed staff who understand what independent oversight is about and who want to engage in it. I have not had to cajole people, for want of a better word, to go in a new direction.

It has been a major weakness but also a strength for the organisation that there were three senior people in the organisation who are not here. We have a new senior management team and a commitment to move the organisation forward. That is a simple statement of fact.

I have been in post since July, and my experience has been that there is an openness and a willingness to accept a new way of doing things. I am keen not only to reposition how we do our investigations but to reshape and rebalance the nature of our relationship with the police. We have reshaped and rebalanced our relationship with the Department and, likewise, with those who trust us with their complaints and others who have been stakeholders of the office.

There is a broad range of things that need to be done. I have had no difficulty with staff in the organisation signing up to the direction of travel in which we want to go.

Mr McCartney: I am not sure whether it was from an actual report or a commentary, but the office was described as being dysfunctional. That is, perhaps, a cover-all word.

Dr Maguire: I used the term myself.

Mr McCartney: In fairness, you have said that reports will come out on which people will have different or opposing views. Part of what you have said today is about the process that will take us forward, which is about robust and quality investigations that are free from interference. You have said that professional changes are now in place that will deliver on that commitment. That very bold statement of intent is to be welcomed. The willingness of your staff is also a clear signal, because you could spend all your time poring over what went wrong, and it is inevitable that you will look at that. I speak also on behalf of Seán and Rosie when I say that that is the commitment that we want to see as you take this forward. Therefore, whatever happens and whatever the outcome of the report, when it is analysed, we do not see outcomes similar to those in the past, where there was interference or it could be said that an evidential trail was not forensically followed. We just want that broad commitment.

Dr Maguire: That can mean what the Chairperson referred to as the subtle, but important, change whereby, when we get to the stage of having a report that we want to give to police for a factual accuracy check, that report will go directly from me to either the Deputy Chief Constable or the Chief Constable, and come back directly from them to me, and there will be no changes to any report unless I sign off on them. There will be a clear understanding in the organisation that that is the case. There will also be an explanation as to why changes have or have not been made. Will I make changes when reports come back to me? Possibly, indeed probably, because that is the nature of the business; it was certainly my experience in CJI. However, there will be a clear understanding as to why they are being made, and that is why that dialogue, that direct conduit between the two leaders of the organisation, is important: it serves as an indication of how some of the things have changed.

Mr A Maginness: Thank you very much for your submission. When you inherited the office, it was clear to everybody that it suffered from institutional dysfunctionality; it was certainly made clear in the McCusker and other reports. Are you satisfied that that institutional dysfunctionality has been cleared up and that the organisation is fit for purpose?

Dr Maguire: Yes is the short answer, and there are several layers to why I say that. The first is that the nature of the governance arrangements has changed. In my previous role, I saw one of the difficulties as being the tensions that existed between the chief executive and the senior director of investigations and their relevant positions in the organisations. That tension has now been removed. There is now clear accountability to me and to Adrian as chief executive in the senior management team, which required a structural change.

Secondly, and this comes back to how investigations progress, there is a clear process in the history directorate where they have separate investigative teams, and Paul may talk about that. We then have the review process. Therefore there is the work that takes place within the history directorate. You then come up a level, and you have what we have called gold group meetings, which I chair, where the investigations will come to me, to Adrian and to the senior director of legal services. We will provide ongoing oversight of investigations, lines of enquiry and things that are happening. The way in which investigations are progressed has changed. You then get to the stage where we have an investigation report, and a process has been put in place where that has been dealt with to provide the extra checks and balances required to move that forward. There are several layers to your question, Alban. I do not want to sound too managerialist, but I have tried to address all of them in context, and I think that some of the changes have, of necessity, focused on that.

It must also be clearly recognised that all of this has not happened since I joined in July. Paul was working very hard prior to my arrival, so considerable progress had been made. On arrival, I added that extra emphasis, clarity and focus to bring it all together. With the appointment of Adrian, we started to see the pieces of the new way to do business come together.

Mr A Maginness: Thank you. You used the phrase "a single line of accountability". What does that actually mean?

Dr Maguire: In the past, the chief executive and senior director of investigations reported to the Police Ombudsman. We now have the Police Ombudsman and the chief executive, so it is very clear: Adrian runs the organisation; he has operational control of all sides of the business, whether corporate services on the business support side or the investigation side. That was not the case under the previous structure. When I talk to Adrian about investigations, I can talk to him not only about the corporate agenda but also, because of his background, the professional side in terms of the nature of the history and other cases. That is what I meant by single lines of accountability.

Below Adrian, there are clear responsibilities with Paul on the history side, Pete O'Sullivan on current, and Olwen on corporate. There is clarity in who is responsible for what.

Mr Elliott: Thank you very much for that. With regard to an improved relationship with key stakeholders, there is a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Justice but not with any of the other organisations. It appears that you have a better relationship, or improved relationship, as it is termed. How do you see that improving what went on before?

Dr Maguire: Again, Tom, that is a complex question and requires a number of responses. If we think about the range of stakeholders that the office has, there have been different types of engagement and different views on the work of the office and what it has done. Let us take the Police Federation, which is acutely interested in the current work, and the nature of our investigations into contemporary policing.

I had meetings with the head of the Police Federation and his board. They said that they recommended using retired officers as an indication of a new way of doing business. I am keen that we establish further relationships with retired officers and that they participate in the investigation process. That would be an indication of things moving further.

In relation to other stakeholders, I made a presentation at the Committee on the Administration of Justice annual conference in November, setting out my stall in relation to how I see the office moving forward. I am not necessarily that interested in what happened in the past. What I am interested in, and what I need to do, is engage with stakeholders to move the work of the office forward. Ultimately, it will be for them to decide whether they want to do that.

When I have spoken to people, the message has been the same because I have, as my director of communications tells me, a single transferable speech. It used to be said that an easy exam question

was one that you knew the answer to. It was also said that a good ombudsman's report was one that you agreed with. We have to move away from that.

My responsibilities are to produce an independent and objective report. I can commit to the changes that we are talking about; however, I cannot guarantee that people will like the end results. That is what I said to all the stakeholders whom I met. That is all that I can do.

I have tried to be open and engage with people in a different way. Whether the entire range of stakeholders wants to participate further or not is entirely up to them. Ultimately, as I said to some families that I met, it may come down to their judgement as to what the individual products are. That is all I can say at this stage.

Mr Elliott: I accept that, Michael, although with the last report we heard was that changes were made to reports in relation to pressure or interference from stakeholders, as I took it. You may say that you are not too bothered about what went on before and you are just dealing with what you have now, and I accept that to some degree. However, if positive change and differences are to be made, you have to recognise if something wrong was happening or something that others believe was not right.

I am trying to establish that if reports were being changed due to pressure from stakeholders, how have those new and improved relationships changed to that extent?

Dr Maguire: In a sense, we are talking about two separate areas. The first is how we undertake our business and the confidence that we have in the work that we are doing. That is why, without being too managerialist about it, the changes in process — the different levels of oversight and the fact that Adrian and I are involved in different ways in quality assurance — give us greater confidence in the work that we do. As I did with CJINI, a report will go to the police for factual accuracy checking; that is the nature of the business, and that is what will happen. We will get a response, and we will make a judgement based on it. It is at that stage that we will begin to engage, with families in particular, on how we put the report into the public domain.

There are two dimensions to this: the first concerns us having confidence in our work, and the second concerns the opportunities that are being created, or otherwise, for others to influence the nature of investigations. When putting a report into the public domain, I will expect that whatever dialogue needs to take place does take place, and then I will be confident in the work that we are doing.

Mr A McAllister: I will add to that as regards where I, like Michael, see the office going. I make no comment on the past — I was not around then. I have no other interest for the office other than in getting to, and understanding, the truth; I have no personal or professional interest in anything but that. I have no interest other than absolute personal and professional integrity in what I do and in what the office does. Integrity is at the heart of what we do. Ultimately, I have no interest other than professional and personal pride in what I do and in what the office does on our behalf. There is no other interest. For me, it is about getting to the truth, whatever it may be. If we can get to the truth, based on the evidence that we uncover, and make rational observations as a consequence of that evidence, that will be a major way to prevent buffeting. If you get caught out because the evidence is flawed or has been missed, or if the conclusions are not rational and based on the evidence, you will be open to buffeting. There is no professional or personal interest for any of us to do anything but search for the truth and come to logical conclusions as a consequence.

Dr Maguire: For the Committee's benefit, I should say again that Adrian's background involves 21 years as a senior police officer, rising to the rank of Deputy Chief Constable. For the past five years, he has been the chief executive of an NDPB across the water. He has the corporate services and professional experience to provide me with the kind of assistance that we need to move the organisation forward. That is the business that we are in.

As Raymond said, I am in a unique position, and a great deal of my personal integrity is riding on the work that we do. Our decisions are in the interests of doing the best that we possibly can to get answers; we have no other interest. It is inevitable that I will say things that the Committee will not like; that is the nature of the business that we are in. I hope that you do like what we say, but that is a separate issue.

Mr Dickson: Thank you for coming today. I appreciate what you have been doing and that you have set out your stall for us today as regards where you are taking this office. There is a sentence in your report:

"People may not like all the results of the investigations we undertake but that is an integral part of having an independent organisation."

I was going to ask you to give us that assurance and reassurance, and we have heard it today in relation to performing that independent role in your organisation. I have to say for the record that both Mr Maguire and Adrian have, in the last few sentences, put it very clearly for me. I have to congratulate you in particular, Mr McAllister, for stating the way in which you see and feel for the role that you have been given. It certainly filled me with a great deal of confidence. Thank you for that statement; it was a very important statement, and I am glad that you made it.

Dr Maguire referred to the management changes in the organisation, and I recognise the absolute importance of those in an organisation that has to produce scrupulously independent reports. Underneath all that, you are dealing with human beings, families and retired police officers and with many people who have been hurt terribly as result of the matters that you are investigating. It is about how you manage the independence that is at the heart of this and doing so with humanity.

Dr Maguire: I agree. I have met a wide range of families since I joined the organisation. I cannot but be struck by their experiences and their desire to get answers. It is extremely important that people trust us with their complaints, because those complaints are very important to them as individuals. As Adrian said, we will do our best and do as robust an investigation as we can. I have also said to the families, "You may not like what the outcome is, but I will give you the commitment that we will do our best to get the answers."

On the operational engagement with the families, which is done by Paul's team and the communications team, I have been very impressed with the staff and the sensitive way in which they engage with families. I have said to families, "If it is not working like that, let me know." You always get a smile, because I get a sense that they will let me know if it is not working like that. That is the nature of the business.

We are dealing with people and with very sensitive issues. We need to respect that and understand that we are not just dealing with bits of paper: these are very important issues in people's lives.

Mr Dickson: A key test of what your doing would be where people who have a very cherished view or a very particular view of something that has carried them through 20 or 30 years of incredible pain has to accept that they were wrong, that their view was not right or that what happened was completely different from their story. In those circumstances, the only thing that they can rely on after that is that, no matter how they felt about the case over a very long period, you have given them the truth and that that truth comes from an absolute belief in your independence and the robustness of your investigation.

Mr A McAllister: The only thing to add, going back to the managerial bit, is that we have had some very long conversations about how we monitor and assess how well we are doing with families, because our work is so important and sensitive. We are just working up some ways of trying to get some feedback. That is extraordinarily difficult, and I can see you cringing there thinking, "How do you do that?"

Mr Dickson: It is about how you do it without doing it in a very crass way.

Mr A McAllister: Yes, we would not do a questionnaire or that type of thing. We are thinking of ways in which to do that, because it is important to get feedback, tweak things where we need to and learn as we go, because inevitably there will be learning along the way. Paul is at the heart of getting that feedback on behalf of the office.

Mr McGlone: Thank you for being with us today. There is refreshing stuff coming from you about your independence and your integrity. That independence and integrity was instilled in the office by its first incumbent, Mrs O'Loan.

The office's role is universally accepted, despite some misgivings owing to some preconceived opinions about it at the start. It is universally accepted across the community, as your own polling demonstrates. How do you find the co-operation from the police to be?

Dr Maguire: In the day-to-day operational work that we do, our legislative framework is very clear about the nature of the engagement and the ongoing connectivity with the police. I am not aware of any particular problems. It seems to be working reasonably well.

There is still some unfinished business with the memorandum of understanding. I was talking to the Chief Constable about that this morning, so I am expecting progress to be made in those areas. I have said very clearly to the police and the Chief Constable that this is a new ombudsman and a new way of doing business. There may well be changes in how things are done. I am not aware of any problems.

Mr McGlone: There is no reason for me asking that other than to find out whether your office finds the police to be amenable, approachable and co-operative.

Dr Maguire: Yes, they are.

Mr McGlone: It is good to hear that.

The Chairperson: No one else has indicated that they want to speak, so I thank you very much, gentlemen, for coming along. It has been much appreciated.