

MARCH '92

POLICE AUTHORITY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (PANI)

The Police Authority was set up in 1970 to "secure the maintenance of an adequate and efficient police force in Northern Ireland". The Authority is appointed for 3 year terms by the Secretary of State, and consists of a Chairman, a Vice Chairman and between 14 and 20 members who are intended to be representative of the whole community in Northern Ireland. As on the mainland the operational independence of the Chief Constable is protected. The Authority is financed by an annual Grant-in-Aid from the Northern Ireland Office (currently £522.74m) and is responsible for supporting the police with a range of executive services, the most important being transport and communications. The Authority has a staff of some 3,073 civilians, most of whom work in administrative support of the RUC in police establishments.

The members of PANI were publicly threatened by PIRA and in 1986 one was forced to resign and two others received bullets and letter bombs through the post. The current membership is 19 including the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Neither the trade unions nor the SDLP currently submit nominations. Mr Tom Rainey (previously managing director of Rothmans in NI) was appointed Chairman in January 1987 and he has brought a new energy and dynamism to the post. The present authority was appointed for a 3 year period, from 30 June 1991-29 June 1994.

FINANCE

Financial provision to meet the costs of policing in Northern Ireland comes from the N.I. Block and is given in the form of a grant to the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, which is the body statutorily responsible for securing the maintenance of an adequate and efficient police force in Northern Ireland.

Expenditure has risen consistently over the years and the Police Authority has found it necessary to seek additional in-year funding above estimated provision mainly because of high expenditure on areas largely outside the Authority's control, such as police pay.

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For example, the original estimate for 1987/88 was £333.6m; but this was increased to £361m after transfers from within the NI Block and a bid of £11m contingency on the Reserve.

Additional controls were subsequently put in place to ensure that early warning was given of pressures on the grant and to assist PANI to stay within its cash provision. Regular monitoring meetings are held between Authority and NIO officials to scrutinise the level of spend and highlight any pressures which may arise. In addition the Police Authority now sets aside a contingency of some £3m to £4m, mainly from capital expenditure, to ensure that there is some compensatory cushion to enable it to contain pressures. Use of the contingency reserve, closer scrutiny by NIO and tighter control by PANI have improved financial control and monitoring of the grant. Nevertheless despite the safeguards and monitoring procedures the Police Authority Grant had to be increased by an additional £3m in 1988/89, £5.75m in 1989/90 and £11.3m in 1990/91.

A total of £564.65m has been allocated to the Police Authority in 1992/93; planned expenditure on policing for next year has therefore been increased by 8% (or almost £42m) over planned expenditure for this year (£522.74m).

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NORTHERN IRELAND WORKS ORGANISATION (NIWO)

NIWO was established in 1987 in the wake of the Provisional IRA's dual campaign of direct attacks on police stations and the intimidation of building contractors and their workforces appointed to carry out the necessary rebuilding and repair work. The Organisation has successfully carried through an extensive programme of security work contracts spending some £4.1m in 1987/88, £8m in 1988/89, £9m in 1989/90 and £13.8m in 1990/91 and includes major projects at Kinawley, Carrickmore, Newtownstewart and Pomeroy. The Organisation is currently involved in a major project at Strabane comprising the construction of 4 large hardened structures together with associated security works costing in the region of £9m. It is hoped that the work will be completed towards the end of the year. Other major projects where work has started on site are the new Sub-Divisional Headquarters at Newry, and the Maydown site near Londonderry. Work on the new station at Lisnagelvin will be completed by the end of the month

NIWO is presently using around 20 main and subcontractors some of whom are also now working directly for the Police Authority. This, together with improvements in the administration of PANI's Buildings Division has greatly increased efficiency and effectiveness and significant progress has been made on the police building programme; nevertheless the Authority still has a very extensive and costly programme of projects to face. While the immediate overt threat of intimidation has slightly diminished, attacks on police stations are a regular occurrence most recently last February when an attack on Coalisland RUC Station resulted in the subsequent death of 4 terrorists. There remains a high threat to contractors and their workforces as was seen with the incident at Teebane in January when 8 construction workers were killed by a terrorist bomb.

It has always been recognised that NIWO should not become a permanent feature. However with the Authority's increased ability of utilising the funds allocated to building works the main issue will be the future use of the resources presently allocated to

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NIWO. Treasury officials have made it clear that they expect the Authority will press very hard for it to continue in the light of the extensive future building programme as there are a number of major projects which would have a consideration impact on the current level of funding - most notably the proposed new training centre, if approved. The initial lifespan of NIWO was 3 years which, subject to a review of its operations, could be extended by a further two years up to 31 March 1992. Following a review, the NIWO Steering Committee, comprising representatives from PANI, NIO, DOE, RUC and NIWO, agreed that there was a need to retain the Organisation for at least three more years up to 31 March 1992 with a option of two more years subject to another review before the end of 1992/93. This was agreed by the Secretary of State in June 1990. A further review on the future of NIWO is due to take place toward the end of this year.

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PROTECTION OF CONTRACTORS

Special administrative arrangements are in place (within PANI, NIWO and DOE) to safeguard the comprehensive documentation associated with contract tendering and to protect the anonymity of contractors who submit tenders for work on the Police Authority's construction programme.

Special operational arrangements are also in place (within PANI/NIWO) to encourage new contractors to tender for and carry out this work and to sustain the commitment of the small number of contractors who already are prepared to do so.

In addition the RUC has a long standing and comprehensive range of operational procedures in place, aimed at protecting contractors, work forces and at safeguarding the supply of building materials used in the construction programme. These include clearing routes used by suppliers/contractors' vehicles; escorting employees to and from security force bases via approved routes and at designated times; and establishing and maintaining close operational links between contractors/suppliers and local Divisional Commanders.

Furthermore, under the NIO's VIP Protection Scheme, operated and controlled by Police Division, an extensive range of security equipment has been installed at the private homes of a small number of building contractors (and one supplier) who are considered by the RUC to be under a specific and serious threat; and exceptionally the business premises of three contractors have also been heavily protected. In addition, the concrete supply lorries of two contractors are being armour protected; body armour has been supplied to contractors' employees; and the radio communication system used by one of our major contractors is being upgraded and developed.

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Police Division, the RUC/s Security Branch and Operations Branch, together with the Police Authority (which is responsible for and manages the police buildings construction programme) are very much aware of the problems involved, and of the need to maintain, develop and keep under review all the measures necessary to counteract PIRA's intimidation and to support and sustain the commitment of contractors/suppliers. Indeed, as an indication of what can be done quickly and quietly, the Police Authority implemented alternative arrangements to maintain essential supplies of milk and to acquire vehicles, within 24 hours of receiving notification of the recent threats against their usual suppliers.

Intimidation

The RUC are naturally very much aware of the problems of intimidation and are stepping up their efforts to find those responsible and to encourage local businessmen to maintain the wide range of services they supply to the security forces.

The RUC Crime Branch is presently collating, on computer, all threats of intimidation so as to target more effectively the areas in which intimidation occurs; the Heads of CID are co-ordinating, within their Regional Divisions, all the RUC's investigations into intimidation; and Crime Prevention Officers in each Division are available to offer immediate support and advice to anyone who has received a threatening letter or telephone call. The local police should be fully aware of these measures and should be able to respond effectively to any threats brought to their attention.

On a wider front, the RUC's Security Branch are actively pursuing a programme which, through seminars and on an individual basis, is aimed at offering advice to businessmen on a wide range of security matters including intimidation. They would be more than willing to provide this service to any group of businessmen.

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However local businessmen sometimes react to threats without first consulting the police. This obviously causes problems and the RUC would wish to encourage businessmen to report any threatening calls or letters immediately to the local CID/Crime Prevention Officer or to Security Branch at RUC Headquarters. The police could then respond promptly to the threats and offer timely advice to those concerned about their personal security.

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