



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a
Llywodraeth Leol
The Communities, Equality and Local Government
Committee

Dydd Mercher, 5 Hydref 2011
Wednesday, 5 October 2011

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Procedural Motion

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives

Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Kenneth Skates	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Naomi Alleyne	Cyfarwyddwr Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Equalities and Social Justice, Welsh Local Government Association
Ian Arundale	Prif Gwnstabl Heddlu Dyfed Powys, Cymdeithas Prif Swyddogion Heddlu Cymru Chief Constable, Dyfed Powys Police, ACPO Cymru
Gary Bohun	Cadeirydd, Ffederasiwn Heddlu De Cymru Chair, South Wales Police Federation
Gwylan Brinkworth	Heddlu De Cymru South Wales Police
Helena Hunt	Swyddog Diogelwch Cymunedol, Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Officer, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Jamie Marden	Swyddog Trefnu, Undeb y GMB Organising Officer, GMB Union
Russell Roberts	Cadeirydd Awdurdodau Heddlu Cymru Chair, Police Authorities of Wales

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Hannah Johnson	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.30 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.30 a.m.

Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau Introduction and Apologies

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I will just go through the usual housekeeping rules. I remind Members that we can use Welsh or English. The translation is available on channel 1 of the headphones and the floor language is on channel 0. I ask you all to turn off your mobile phones and other electronic equipment, such as pagers or BlackBerrys. They affect the transmission system. We are not expecting a fire alarm this morning, so if the fire alarm should go off, we will wait and take our directions from the ushers. We have had no apologies for the meeting. Does any Member wish to declare an interest before we start? I see that no-one does.

Penderfyniad i Sefydlu Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen i Ystyried y Rhagolygon ar gyfer Dyfodol y Cyfryngau yng Nghymru Resolution to Establish a Task and Finish Group to Consider the Future Outlook for the Media in Wales

[2] **Ann Jones:** We now move on to item 2, which is to formally record the establishment of a task and finish group to consider the outlook for the media in Wales. I invite Members to note that the committee's last meeting was in private. We have established a task and finish group and that group will hold its first meeting on 13 October and will report back to committee by January 2012. So, that is now formally on the record.

9.31 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Ddiogelwch Cymunedol yng Nghymru Inquiry into Community Safety in Wales

[3] **Ann Jones:** We will move on to item 3—they do not all go that fast, I have to say—which is to look at community safety in Wales. We are gathering evidence to look at a piece of work that we want to do on community safety in Wales. I am delighted to welcome to the table, for the first session, Chief Constable Arundale from Dyfed Powys Police. Are you also the lead from the Association of Chief Police Officers on this?

[4] **Mr Arundale:** That is correct.

[5] **Ann Jones:** Also in attendance are Councillor Russell Roberts, who is the chair of the Police Authorities of Wales, and Gary Bohun, who is the chair of the South Wales Police Federation. You are all very welcome to our meeting.

[6] Do you have any opening comments to make? We have received extensive papers from you. Do any of you have any opening comments that you wish to set the scene with?

[7] **Mr Arundale:** Not particularly, Chair; I think that we are ready to take questions.

[8] **Ann Jones:** That is fine. In the preamble I was saying that we have agreed to look at the impact of the public spending cuts on front-line policing and to look at the implications for local communities and community safety policy across Wales. Will you tell the committee what steps the four police forces are taking to prioritise service delivery in the light of the budget reductions? What impact do you expect those budget reductions to have on communities and their confidence in the policing process? I do not know who wants to start.

[9] **Mr Roberts:** I will briefly open on that, if you do not mind, Chair. For obvious

reasons, all police forces and the police authorities in Wales are attempting to minimise the impact on the front line of the very severe cut that we have had in funding, and perhaps we can explore that a little further. If you need the information, it is all in the documents anyway. Each of the four forces is taking strong action within its own area, and through the Police Authorities of Wales and ACPO Cymru collectively, to ensure that the effect on front-line services and visibility will be minimised through various processes. Each of the forces has its own efficiency programme—its own service. It is known as programme reform in south Wales—perhaps Chief Constable Arundale will give you more information on what is happening in the rest of Wales—and it is looking at front-line officers, and how to maintain front-line services and ensure that the severe cuts are in back-office functions and that there are efficiencies. I think that we are doing everything that we possibly can to maintain front-line services and visibility. Having said all that, it is inevitable that there will be an effect on the front line as a result of the severe cuts that are being imposed on us by the comprehensive spending review.

[10] **Mr Arundale:** By way of context, the cuts are one part of the huge number of dilemmas that we are facing at this point in time. We have a range of changes to the terms and conditions of employment for all the staff whom we employ, which have a significant impact upon them and their families, and again significant changes to the governance structures of policing. The stark reality is that the cuts equate to losing one of the three smaller police forces across Wales: about 1,700 police officers and police staff are going to disappear over the period of the CSR. On top of that, most policing divisions are disappearing across Wales, along with the senior managers who currently interface with elected representatives and local authorities across Wales, and a very substantial number of police stations are going to close. So, the impact on communities is potentially significant, but we are doing everything that we can to ensure that the cuts are made in areas that have the least impact on services.

[11] It is not just about the front line, of course, because much of our work is specialist work, such as dealing with specialist crime, public protection and serious and organised crime, and the Welsh Government provides significant support. The best thing that has happened to us in terms of an olive branch has been the investment that has been promised in 500 police and community support officers across Wales. If it was not for that, we would be in even more dire circumstances. I think that this is probably the greatest challenge that Welsh policing has ever faced, with all of these issues coming together, but the response from the four chief constables is extremely robust, supported by their individual police authorities. We have a continuous process of consultation with our communities, but things are going to be fragile in the future. The resilience that we have had in the past, particularly in relation to the administrative support for police officers, is not going to be there. More demands placed on them means that we will have some difficulties in providing the level and range of services that we have provided up until now.

[12] **Mr Bohun:** I think that it is a difficult time for police officers, who see this as having a real impact on the communities that we serve. As has already been said, it is bound to impact on front-line services. I also think that you need to be clear, Chair, as to what is meant by front-line services. I do not think that anyone has a grip on a proper definition that is accepted by the Government and throughout the country as to what is meant by ‘front-line services’. However, as my colleagues have already said, without a doubt, front-line services will be affected.

[13] **Ann Jones:** May I pick up on what you said, chief constable, about the fact that some police stations will close and that some services will be more centralised? How are you going to inform neighbourhoods and the public about that? Often, the first they know of it is when you put the ‘closed’ sign up at a police station and then we have all sorts of scaremongering going on and people not feeling safe in their communities. How are the four police forces planning to take the public with them on that journey, rather than just telling them at the end?

[14] **Mr Arundale:** No-one should find out at the end of the journey: all four forces are following a similar process whereby, where we close a police station, we are seeking to provide an alternative presence in that community. That sometimes means that we will have a surgery or a permanent presence in another public building in that locality. In some areas, for example, we are keeping the police stations and there might be a closure of another front office that public services use. We are always going to guarantee that there will be a presence in communities.

[15] The stark reality is that people these days do not use police stations in many of our communities, particularly the rural ones. Contact is made by telephone and via the internet and most face-to-face interactions are done in people's homes or by prior appointment. They could be done in any form of community facility. What we have done as well, by liaising with our partners in all other public sector organisations across Wales, is try to go away from the previous situation where there was a library, a community station, a fire station and an ambulance station, and have just one centre for public services. Llandrindod Wells is perhaps the most recent example of that and it is almost finished. It will house a court, the fire station and the police station all in one building. So, we are not withdrawing and the police authorities have a very particular role in consulting with communities and telling them in advance. What will be left will be a far cheaper alternative, but it will be an alternative, not a withdrawal of presence in those communities.

[16] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr ydych wedi cyffwrdd ar ddau beth. Mae'ch tystiolaeth yn cyfeirio at wasanaethau rheng flaen a'r bobl sy'n gweithio mewn ystafelloedd cefn yn darparu cefnogaeth. Wrth reswm, yr ydych wedi sôn am geisio gwneud arbedion mewn ffyrdd na fydd yn effeithio ar wasanaethau rheng flaen, ac yn sicr y gwasanaethau sy'n weladwy i bobl. Gwnaethoch gyfeirio at y ffaith bod angen diwygio gwasanaethau a'u moderneiddio o bosibl. Efallai nid yr hyn y mae pobl am ei weld yw'r peth pwysig. Pe baech yn gofyn i bobl beth y maent am ei weld, byddent yn dweud eu bod am weld plismyn yn cerdded drwy eu cymunedau a swyddfeydd heddlu yn eu pentrefi. O bosibl, nid dyna sydd ei angen ar hyn o bryd. A oes her a sialens yn y sefyllfa anodd hon i geisio diwygio a moderneiddio'r gwasanaeth i'w wneud mor effeithiol ag sy'n bosibl?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You have touched on two issues. Your evidence refers to front-line services and those people who work as back-office support staff. Naturally, you have also mentioned trying to make savings in ways that will not affect front-line services, and certainly those services that are visible to the public. You referred to the fact that services need to be reformed and possibly modernised. It may be that it is not what people want to see that is important. If you were to ask people what they wanted to see, they would say that they wanted to see police officers walking through their communities and police stations in their villages. It is possible that that is not what is needed at the moment. Is there a real challenge in this difficult situation to try to reform and modernise the service in order to make it as effective as possible?

9.40 a.m.

[17] Yr oeddech yn sôn am y rheng flaen a'r ystafell gefn, ond un gwasanaeth yw hwn yn y pen draw. Mae'n rhaid i'r gwasanaeth hwnnw fod yn effeithiol. Er nad yw pobl, efallai, yn sylweddoli bod pobl sy'n gweithio yn y cefndir yn colli eu swyddi, bydd yn cael effaith andwyol ar y gwasanaeth gweladwy hefyd.

You mentioned the front line and the back office, but this is, ultimately, one service. That service has to work effectively. Although people might not notice that people working in the back office are losing their jobs, it will also have a detrimental effect on the visible service.

[18] **Mr Arundale:** Yes, we are one service, but we provide a huge array of services within that context. That ranges from investigating murders and child protection through to dealing with the most minor incidents of disorder. What we are doing across all four forces in Wales is slimming down our management costs significantly—generally, by up to 40 per cent in all areas. However, that does bring risks with it, because those managers provide vital services. They head up investigations and they quality-assure much of the work that is done. Out of this crisis, of course, there are coming a range of opportunities for us. We are slimming down and becoming more streamlined, and I am sure that all of us will admit that we have found areas of our business in which we could have achieved some savings previously.

[19] However, it is not just about front-line, visible policing services. Much of the work that we deal with is unseen by our communities. There are significant issues that we deal with relating to serious and organised crime, around surveillance and the use of specialist and technical equipment, all of which deals with front-line criminal issues but is not visible within our communities. This is why the definition of front line can be quite confusing. Many people who are, fortunately, in communities where crime and criminality is very rare want to see a uniformed presence on their streets. We have to maintain that balance with keeping specialists in offices, on squads, dealing with difficult criminals and with crime and criminality.

[20] At the moment, we are really the only 24-hour social service. We are picking up issues to do with cuts across the public sector right across Wales. One example in my area, particularly, is mental health issues. Twice as many people present in crisis with mental health issues within the Dyfed Powys Police area than anywhere else, and my staff are tied up dealing with those cases. Those people are rarely classed as criminals; they are people who need help and assistance, but we sometimes are the only service that can deal with them out of office hours. So there is a huge array of issues. Almost everything that we deal with ranges from all tragedies across people's lives through to criminality, so it is a difficult and complex set of circumstances. However, we have made significant progress. Incidentally, all forces are currently on target to deliver their savings within the timescales.

[21] **Mr Roberts:** I do not want to repeat what has been said, but it is very important, I think, that we are very clear about the definition of what is front line and what is not front line. Front line is not just the visible police that you see on the streets and in their cars patrolling the streets. There is very much more that goes on behind the scenes, as has been explained. That is still classified as front line, because those front-line officers could not operate without the people who are backing them up. Sometimes, these are very specialist people with the specialist skills that are required. They are still front line, although they are not visible. I think that we have to be quite careful how we define that.

[22] **Joyce Watson:** I want to explore again and draw out this idea of front line versus back room. I am looking at your paper, in which you talk about child protection and domestic violence units, forensics and anti-terrorism intelligence. I want to particularly focus on domestic violence. If we look at the incidents of murder and attempted murder in the Dyfed Powys Police Authority area alone, I am fairly confident that I am right in saying that domestic violence accounts for the majority, if not nearly all, of such incidents. I therefore have to be concerned that that could be jeopardised or compromised in any way. We need to think about who we are talking about in terms of the victims. We are talking not just about predominantly women—which we are—but about their children. We have to be absolutely clear about this. Are you saying that, as a consequence of a definition that does not somehow stack up in this false separation, those services could be severely at risk? There are multiple issues behind that. It is about getting people to the right courts very quickly, so that they can be protected by everything that that court case will afford them.

[23] **Mr Arundale:** Chair, like my colleagues, we are redefining and reprofiling what we

do as an organisation. At the very core of that, our absolute priority is responding to emergencies and managing life-at-risk issues. I do not think that this is where the risk is. The risk is on the periphery. It is the future of all those services that we have provided. Clearly, we are not going to withdraw from this. The linkage between domestic violence and murders and serious crimes is not unique to Dyfed Powys; it is a factor for policing up and down both England and Wales and, of course, further afield.

[24] We have all reprofiled the way that we deliver policing services. The life-at-risk issues and managing emergencies are right at the core of it. As things get tighter and tighter, it is those 'nice to have' services that drop off. The unfortunate thing for us is that that is the stuff that the community really values and sees. That is the concern for the future. If we have fewer resources for dealing with minor crime and disorder issues and providing a visible presence, because we have sucked our resources into dealing with life-at-risk issues, that will mean that the communities will have a different view of policing and the level of policing services in their community. I have sort of flipped the question to say that the risk is elsewhere, because quite clearly none of us want to increase the risk to victims of domestic violence and their families.

[25] **Joyce Watson:** Leading on from that, we have seen big announcements in the last few days about keeping the council tax where it is. We are leading into—we all know it—local government elections. How confident are you that, when you ask your respective authorities to raise the precept to cover some of the things that others might not see as necessary, you are going to get the precept that you need to fill what is a huge gap?

[26] **Mr Arundale:** The original government calculations, which indicated that we had to take a 20 per cent real cut in finance over the period of the comprehensive spending review, made an assessment that we would get precept increases of 4.6 per cent per year on average for each force. If we do not get that, you are going to have cuts that are bigger than 20 per cent across the various parts of Wales. That means that, basically, forces need between 4 and 5 per cent increases on precept this year. If we do not get it—for example, if there was a freeze on the council tax precept—we would lose an extra £15 million across Wales. I think that the implications of that are quite obvious. I do not think that any other part of the public sector is facing the cuts that we are. An extra £15 million on top of that for Wales would be a huge issue, with a direct knock-on to the level and quality of policing services across the principality.

[27] In terms of confidence, that will vary from each authority. Authorities are made up of diverse individuals representing the people who voted them into office and independents, so I cannot prejudge what authorities will say or feel, but I am sure that the gentleman to my right will give you a better feeling for that. We are all looking for up to 5 per cent this year just to manage 20 per cent cuts in real terms. So, it is no way near an increase for us, should we get what we are asking for.

[28] **Mr Roberts:** Yes, I suppose that I can, from that point of view, give you a judgment on how I feel that this debate will proceed over the next few months, because we will be setting our precepts by next February. I think that there is a strong commitment, certainly from my own authority, which is South Wales Police Authority. I know from the other three authorities, from discussions that I have had, that there is a strong feeling of support for maintaining the position that we have stated: that we would like to maintain our council tax precept at or around 4 to 5 per cent. We cannot go above 5 per cent, obviously, because that would be capped by the Welsh Government. There is a strong commitment, certainly among councillor members of police authorities. As the chief constable has said, we cannot really answer for the independent members—they are very diverse; councillors are very diverse as well, in terms of political backgrounds. There is a strong commitment there, but no guarantee, obviously. We cannot give a cast-iron guarantee. We are all running up to an election and

people may get cold feet, as we sometimes see during election campaigns.

9.50 a.m.

[29] I am sure that you are all familiar with that, those of you who have to be elected. I am one of those people who have to be elected, but my firm commitment is still as it was this year. I am sure that, if we are running into an election, I will still be saying the same things, and hopefully after the election. Of course, the commissioners will be coming along and may decide to blow that out of the water—who knows what is going to happen there? Certainly, for the police authorities, at the moment, there is a commitment.

[30] **Mr Bohun:** Chair, could I just answer the question on domestic abuse?

[31] **Ann Jones:** Yes, certainly.

[32] **Mr Bohun:** I am in charge of the public protection unit in the Vale of Glamorgan that deals with domestic abuse and child abuse investigation. I think that there is a risk in relation to domestic abuse. As back room staff are whittled down, to some extent there will be an increase in the responsibilities of officers who would be dealing with domestic abuse as the first responders. As those pressures increase, there has to be careful management by managers within the police service so that they spend sufficient time with victims and they properly assess the level of risk that could exist for a victim. Also, as police services reduce the number of supervisors, leaving them with more officers to oversee, are they going to properly supervise the calls where those officers have been to the calls of domestic abuse? I also think that there is a risk with training. There will be a danger that the police forces will not invest as heavily as they have done previously in training, and that will affect the service that front-line officers will give.

[33] **Ann Jones:** Do you see that the police will perhaps play a more important role as local authorities' budgets are squeezed, and that it might be seen as a service that they could hand over to the police to deal with because it is within the criminal justice system, given that there are also cuts to funding of the independent domestic violence advisers? Do you think that the police will shoulder more of the responsibility for doing that support work when it could be somebody else?

[34] **Mr Bohun:** Yes; it already exists in my department because of the pressures that are in place on IDVAs. We have seen more involvement, with domestic abuse officers spending more time at domestic abuse courts and supporting victims in that regard, because of the pressure that the IDVAs are under from workloads that are unmanageable for the number of them that exist.

[35] **Peter Black:** I have a number of questions. If you could bear with me, I will try to be as quick as I can. Just referring back to the comment that you made about the Welsh Government's policy on police community support officers, the money for that is coming into effect not next year, but the year after, so there is no money for it this year or next. Given that you have immediate pressures, to what extent will that money, when it does kick in, go toward replacing PCSOs that you have already had to get rid of, or toward propping up existing PCSOs? Will it actually add 500 more PCSOs to the force?

[36] **Mr Arundale:** My understanding is we cannot use that funding to subsidise our existing neighbourhood policing levels. We have all given a commitment that each one that we are given will be in addition to what we have, so we will not profile to absorb that money in any way, shape or form.

[37] **Peter Black:** At this point?

[38] **Mr Arundale:** No, at any point, because I think—

[39] **Peter Black:** No, are they in addition to those you have at this point or those you have when the money kicks in?

[40] **Mr Arundale:** The ones we have will be circled in red and we are going to enter into an agreement for the period of up to three years. So, we will seek to double what we have. Individual forces will make an assessment of what they can absorb into their organisations. Without that, the situation would have been even direr. My hope was, Chair, that we were going to get those PCSOs much earlier than that and, indeed, I am ready to recruit and appoint. I was hoping to bring my first cohort in before Christmas this year, because we are heavily dependent on the resilience that those people will bring. They will be in addition, not instead of.

[41] **Peter Black:** Effectively, the four forces will maintain their PCSO strength as it is for the next three years, irrespective of these cuts.

[42] **Mr Arundale:** Yes. Part of this is that we must maintain those figures because, if we lose one, then we will lose the corresponding funding from the Welsh Government. The clear contract is that it must double the number that we have. We cannot use them to subsidise what we already have.

[43] **Peter Black:** That is quite helpful in terms of front-line policing, certainly, inasmuch as they are police officers, which they are not. In terms of the figures, we have these tables here in front of us in relation to the estimated reduction in staff numbers. I am interested in how the 20 per cent cut in your funding is actually being applied on the ground, operationally, in terms of the balance between back office and front line and in terms of the efficiencies that you are able to drive through. Assuming that some of the back-office things that we have talked about, such as child protection, are our councils' front line—which I think that they should be—to what extent are you aiming to protect those front-line services?

[44] **Mr Arundale:** The overall objective is to maintain the front-line services as much as possible. All forces are going through a process whereby they are seeking to achieve all possible savings in relation to any administrative support and any collaborative activity that can take place, and the paperwork contains a number of examples of where money can be saved through collaboration, although there are some limits in relation to that. The principle is that once we have achieved every single saving that we can, if there is nowhere left to go, we have to cut the front line but maintain the emergency response at the core of that, because, clearly, there is a balance between life at risk and visible presence in our communities. That varies from force to force and from location to location, but in general, the cuts are up to about 40 per cent in management cuts, and in some areas of business, there is a clear decision to stop providing certain services that we currently provide at this point of time, because the range of services that we provide is so diverse in some areas that it diverts away from our core policing task.

[45] **Peter Black:** The Wales Audit Office—

[46] **Mr Roberts:** Sorry, I would just like to emphasise—and I think that this figure is in the paperwork—that 80 per cent of the cost of policing goes on police staff and police officers. When you have to look at efficiencies, you only have the remaining 20 per cent to make those efficiency savings in terms of back office and all the other things that need to be done with regard to procurement. The savings come from that 20 per cent. When you have done that, you are then really into the 80 per cent, which represents the police officers and police staff. With the level of cuts that we have included in the CSR settlement, it is inevitable

that some of that 80 per cent has to go. That is where the figures for staff and officer drop-out come into play.

[47] **Peter Black:** I understand that. I am just trying to get a distinction between staff and officers. For example, in your authority of south Wales, the centralisation of the call centre in Bridgend, I understand, has released maybe 30 or 40 officers back to the front line. So, there are efficiencies. I was just going to refer to the Wales Audit Office report, which identified significant efficiency savings in the Welsh police forces. How far down the road to delivering those savings are you before these cuts bite, or are they still potentially there for you to do?

[48] **Mr Arundale:** We had to frontload the cuts, Chair. In the first two years, we had to significantly contribute, so we had to move very quickly and we could not get that amount of savings out of our organisations through normal management processes. It does vary across Wales. Generically, the general advice to the UK Government was that we could not save more than 12 per cent of our budgets without impacting on the front line. We are at or about that figure at this point in time. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Chief Inspector of Constabulary made that estimate, so, at the moment, we would say that anything above 12 per cent may have a direct impact on the services that our communities value at this time.

[49] **Ann Jones:** Do you think that it was bad judgment to frontload the cuts?

[50] **Mr Arundale:** One of the things that we fully understand—and are happy to do this—is that we have to do our part in getting the economy back on track. Yes, it would have been nice if that was incremental. Yes, it would have been nice if the cuts were far smaller and our current position had been taken into account. From my point of view, no assessment was made of our ability to pay or the impact that would be felt. We had blanket cuts imposed on us. All we can do now is to use our professional judgment to try to make sure that we cut in the least damaging areas of our business and try to maintain that balance between threat-to-life issues and a visible presence in our communities. It is a very difficult task, and that is why I say that this is probably the greatest challenge that policing has faced in Wales to date.

[51] **Ann Jones:** I have opened a can of worms here, I can see. Ken is first on this issue, and then I will come down the line.

[52] **Kenneth Skates:** With regard to front-line policing and what happened in the summer, during the riots, the evidence that we have been provided with is comprehensive and excellent. I must say, though, that it is quite grim reading in parts, not least the parts about the lack of morale in the police at the moment and the response to the Government's cuts.

10.00 a.m.

[53] With regard to the riots, there are strong suggestions in the evidence that, once the cuts are implemented, Wales would not be able to send police to London or to Manchester were there to be a repeat of those riots. Is that the case? There would be very serious considerations about that.

[54] **Mr Arundale:** Obviously, it will be a far more difficult decision in the future to send that level of resources. Effectively, 16,000 police officers were deployed during the riots. That is exactly the number of police officers it is estimated that we are going to lose in England and Wales. Anybody observing the situation will realise that it will be far more difficult, because they are police officers and you have to provide the core policing services on a daily basis as well as send officers to the seat of riots nationally. That is part of the difficult balance that we have to make, because, quite often, the pressure is on us to lose police officers and police staff. We have to be operationally resilient within the resource base

that we have, and it is a fairly impossible conundrum to work through at the moment.

[55] The contingency plan for UK policing is based on us all doing our part and sending assets and resources to wherever they are needed in the UK, and we could be beneficiaries of that in the future. I would not say that we will not be able to do it, but it will be significantly more difficult and only time will tell us what that will be like. Next year, quite clearly, with the Olympics, my anticipation is that we will get similar challenges. My guess is that it will be far more difficult to manage next year than it was this summer, because the great bulk of officers are leaving between now and the end of the comprehensive spending review.

[56] **Joyce Watson:** You talked about expertise and front-line services—as they are being called—and we all have to look at that. Yet you have a situation at the moment where you can have forcible retirement, where you have to say, ‘You have reached your maximum years and I am afraid we cannot keep you on any more. We are going to release you.’ What sort of impact do you expect that that will have in terms of your expertise and intelligence, which you have invested in all of those people, and what is the consequence of that for front-line policing?

[57] **Mr Arundale:** Individual forces across Wales are in slightly different places. Some have had to use regulation A19 to make police officers redundant and some have not. I am in the position of not having had to use it. All chief constables would want to retain their most experienced officers, without a shadow of a doubt, but, because of the frontloading of the cuts, some chief constables had no option at all but to make police officers with 30 years’ service redundant, effectively. Of course, they are our most skilled, respected and, quite often, most productive police officers. That is one of the dilemmas that we have faced. Some of my colleagues have not had anywhere else to go other than to lose police officers. I was fortunate that I had other alternative options available to me at that time through our planning process. That is not really where we would have wanted to be, but they had to do it to balance the books in the early days of the CSR round. There are, no doubt, significant knock-on effects from that. I think that the legislation was not brought in to save money; the legislation was brought in to manage efficiency. It is a slightly different issue. So we have been in a position where some have used legislation that was brought in for another reason to cut costs, but had no alternative to doing it.

[58] **Ann Jones:** Why is that? You said you have not had to use it, but other police forces have used the A19 and the A20. Why is it that you have managed to plan and others have not?

[59] **Mr Arundale:** All forces start from a completely different position and point in terms of the amount of reserves that they have, the condition of their building stock, the age and service profile of their organisation, and their human resource strategy over a long time. I started this process early and I had a programme of voluntary redundancy and early retirement for police staff, which delivered me the upfront savings that I needed. Other organisations were not in a position to do that and had significant debt repayments, for example, on private finance initiative buildings, and other issues. That meant that their available pot was different. Every single police organisation starts in a different place in relation to this. If they had had more time, then they probably would have had more options. I was just fortunate that, because of good decision making—not just during my tenure, but in previous years—I had some alternative options.

[60] **Mike Hedges:** Just to start, I have two comments. I am very pleased to hear you say that the 500 extra PCSOs are, indeed, 500 extra PCSOs. I think that they will make a big difference to our communities. I also welcome what you said about sharing buildings. I live in Morriston, which, as you know, has a very large police station and a very large fire station, not a rugby kick apart. That is true of many other areas. There are huge opportunities for the sharing of buildings, which can only be to the benefit of communities and the benefit of your

budgets.

[61] I have two specific questions. Police stations have closed. When people are bailed to appear at a police station, instead of being able to attend one in their own community, they have to travel several miles, especially in rural areas, to a police station to meet their bail conditions. If they do not have access to legal transport, are there not problems with that? The other point is that it is easy to remove supervisory staff; people do it in lots of other places. However, if you remove supervisory staff, is there not a danger of not making the best use of your front-line resources?

[62] **Mr Arundale:** On the first point about bail at police stations, the situation that we are in across Wales, with the closure of courts, for example, means that this is exacerbated in other areas. Courts are closing in rural areas, so people have to travel longer distances. We are having more and more difficulty convincing people to give evidence because of the journey they have to undertake to do so. Managing the bail issue is yet another part of the conundrum that we have, but we cannot keep police stations open just to manage bail issues. We have to factor it into this, but there are knock-on consequences for victims and offenders from all the cuts that we are currently making at this time.

[63] On the supervisory staff issue, most of our supervisors carry their own workload. They are not just straight supervisors or managers. If they were, we would have alternative ways of delivering some of that. Quite often, because of their service profile and skills, they deliver far more than supervising.

[64] At all stages in the future we have to be really on top of our game in ensuring that deployment is effective. We are using such things as computer equipment that maps all our vehicles, including the officers' radio sets, so we know at any one time where our cars and radios are. Most of us across Wales are using the concept that the closest, most appropriate unit will be deployed, irrespective of its designation. Supervisors are key to ensuring that that works by releasing officers, and telling them to stop certain duties and go to ensure that members of the public get the service that they deserve when they want it. However, that is a real consequence of this. It is not just the supervisory part, it is the fact they are multi-hatted. Many of our staff undertake a whole range of duties, particularly in rural areas, because of the fairly low numbers of people that we have deployed in those areas.

[65] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ymddiheuraf am fod ychydig bach yn hwyr yn cyrraedd y cyfarfod y bore yma. **Bethan Jenkins:** I apologise that I was a bit late arriving to the meeting this morning.

[66] Yr wyf am ofyn cwestiwn ychydig bach yn fwy heriol. A ydych yn credu eich bod wedi cael eich blaenoriaethau yn gywir o ran y meysydd lle yr ydych yn gwneud toriadau a'r meysydd yr ydych yn eu blaenoriaethu yn y tymor hir? Er enghraifft, yn ne Cymru mae'r ystadegau yn dangos bod y defnydd o stopio ac archwilio yn eithaf uchel, yn enwedig ymhlith pobl ifanc. Mae llawer o arian yn cael ei ddefnyddio ar gyfer monitro protestiadau a grwpiau pwysu. Sylwaf na fydd toriad yn yr arian ar gyfer yr adran gwrthderfysgaeth tan 2013. Yr wyf yn parchu'r ffaith ei bod hi'n gyfnod anodd i'r heddlu yng Nghymru, ond a ydych yn credu eich bod wedi edrych ar bopeth o ran bod yn I want to ask a question that is a bit more of a challenging. Do you believe that you have your priorities right in terms of the areas where you are making cuts and those that you are prioritising in the long term? For example, in south Wales the statistics show that the use of stop and search is quite high, especially among young people. A lot of money is going into monitoring protests and pressure groups. I notice that there will not be a cut in the funding for the anti-terrorism department until 2013. I respect the fact that it is a difficult time for the police in Wales, but do you believe that you have looked at everything in terms of being more proactive in stopping people from becoming part of the

fwy rhagweithiol er mwyn stopio pobl rhag system in the first place, rather than just
 dod yn rhan o'r system yn y lle cyntaf, yn responding to what is happening in society?
 hytrach nag ymateb yn unig i'r hyn sydd yn
 digwydd yn y gymdeithas?

[67] **Mr Arundale:** If I may, I will respond in reverse order. On counter-terrorism issues, the Wales extremism and counter-terrorism unit has a slightly different funding structure. It is not funded directly from the individual forces. The finance comes from elsewhere, so we have no control over that, although we do use and value its assets. Its funding has been decided centrally in Westminster.

[68] In relation to policing priorities and where we have put our focus, it is a matter for the individual chief constables as to what they deal with, when they deal with it and how they deal with it. On stop and search, that is a fundamental, basic tool of policing that is used up and down the country day in and day out. I will, particularly for south Wales, leave it to Mr Vaughan to justify his use of that. We all use it. We all use it very effectively. There is very stringent monitoring around it. There is a specific role for the police authority in relation to overseeing all use of stop and search to make sure it is proportionate and productive. The police authorities have a specific statutory role in relation to education and enforcement. We publish those figures as a matter of course, so we are accountable for those.

10.10 a.m.

[69] In relation to policing protests, it is always an issue of difficult balance. If you call some of the issues that we have dealt with this year protests, I think that that is stretching the word 'protest' too far because we have had people who have been killed during what some would term protests this summer. Obviously, policing peaceful demonstrations and lawful demonstrations is a slightly different issue, and that clearly is an area where we have to be careful that we do not unnecessarily deploy policing assets that could be used elsewhere.

[70] **Gwyn R. Price:** As there are to be so many reductions in staffing, what procedures are you following to achieve those reductions? You said that, at the moment, you are going through a voluntary process. Do you see it as inevitable that there will be compulsory redundancies? Are you working in conjunction with the federation to achieve that?

[71] **Mr Arundale:** Perhaps I can share a case study from my particular force. I am saying that I am hopeful of getting through this process without any compulsory severance from the organisation, but I went extremely early—a year early—to start that process. The federation, Unison and the superintendents' association are involved in all the discussions. We have a personnel forum that makes all decisions. They are invited as a matter of course to staff associations. We have managed to negotiate the only package with Unison for our police staff colleagues, which is a package of cuts, effectively, because our Unison representatives have decided that they want to try to maintain as many people in employment as they can and accept that, in this day and age, they might have to take some cuts. We all have separate business processes that make sure that the staff and the staff representatives are engaged at all times. The message that we give is that we are all in this together. There is no clear instruction manual for how we are going to get through it. We are all in a different place and the only way is to make sure that we have consistent and open dialogue throughout. The one message that I convey to my staff is that we will make mistakes during this process, but they will be honest and genuine mistakes and we hope that, through discussion, everybody will understand that and bear with us as we try to deliver the Government's requirements.

[72] **Mr Roberts:** All four forces and authorities are trying to make this as painless as possible, but it is a painful process. We are doing that through a process of voluntary early retirement, voluntary redundancies and, as a very last resort, compulsory redundancies. We

have been pretty successful, as the chief constable has said, in avoiding the latter category of compulsory redundancies, but it is a difficult process. I think that we are managing it as best we can, but there are difficulties that will crop up along the way. Mistakes will be made, as has been said, but they will be genuine mistakes. We are not trying to go down the road of compulsory redundancies at all unless it becomes absolutely necessary.

[73] **Mr Bohun:** In relation to south Wales, forced retirement is being used; regulation A19 is being imposed so that those who have 30 years' service are being forcibly retired. It is regrettable that it is being used. It is not something that the federation supports as it means that you lose your most experienced and most motivated staff. However, we are grateful to South Wales Police, which is working with us on this and allowing us to provide support to those officers. As I say, it means that you are losing your most experienced and most motivated staff.

[74] **Ann Jones:** You said that you are working alongside South Wales Police force. Is that happening across Wales? I take it that it is in Dyfed Powys. What about in north Wales and Gwent?

[75] **Mr Bohun:** It is fair to say that all the federations throughout Wales are fully engaged with their forces and consulting on things. Although we may not agree at times, we are fully consulted and involved.

[76] **Ann Jones:** Gwyn, you wanted to come back, and then I have Rhodri Glyn and Joyce.

[77] **Gwyn R. Price:** It is just a follow-up question. Obviously, I agree that mistakes will be made along the line. Is an appeals procedure built into this or is it the case that if a mistake is made, it is lost?

[78] **Mr Bohun:** In relation to use of regulation A19 for forced retirement, there is an appeals process in south Wales. There is a defined process in which an officer will be notified that they are going to be forcibly retired and they can apply for an extension on which a decision will be made, and then an appeals process. So, there is a process in place.

[79] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr ydych wedi cyfeirio nifer o weithiau at y sefyllfa heriol mae'r gwasanaeth yn ei gyfanrwydd yn ei hwynebu. Dywedasoeh fod pawb yn wynebu'r sefyllfa hon gyda'i gilydd. A oes tystiolaeth bod hyn yn effeithio ar forâl swyddogion y gwasanaeth? A ydych wedi ystyried y gall hyn effeithio'n fawr ar forâl staff ac y gall hyn gael effaith andwyol ar y gwasanaeth? A ydyw hynny'n rhan o'ch paratodau ar gyfer y sefyllfa newydd hon?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You have referred many times to the challenging situation that is facing the service in its entirety. You said that everybody is in this together. Is there any evidence that this is affecting officers' morale within the service? Have you considered that this could have a significant impact on staff morale, which could have a detrimental impact on the service? Is that part of your preparations for this new situation?

[80] **Ann Jones:** We shall take the three points together as one question. I have other Members who are waiting to speak as well. I will take Joyce and then Ken. It was on this point, was it, Joyce?

[81] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, it is on this point. It is about staff morale and having to cut numbers. We focused on early retirement. I want to bring the focus back to regulation A19, which enables you to force people who are not able to work through illness or injury and who are currently on light duties to come out on the sick, as most people would describe it. How do you think that that is going to fit with the new legislation that is coming out of central

Government? Is there not a mismatch here in that the Government wants to encourage people who are disabled, who are not able to work to full capacity, back into work, but at the same time this legislation that is being used—and your forces are being forced to use it—means that those people will be out on the sick, boosting those numbers? How do those two pieces of legislation sensibly work together?

[82] **Mr Arundale:** On the first point in relation to morale, yes, absolutely, many of these issues have a direct impact on morale. I know that others might speak more directly for the views of the front line, but I have extremely close relations with front-line officers on a daily basis. I feel that the uncertainty of the situation is one of the greatest factors to have an impact on morale. Officers do not know how long they are going to have to work in relation to their length of service before they can retire and they do not know what their terms and conditions are going to look like next year because of the two major reviews, the Windsor review and the Hutton review. Those factors, alongside the restructuring of forces and the impact that that will have on individuals in terms of where they are going to work, all come together and create a level of uncertainty that has to lead on many occasions to morale issues. We are all doing our very best to manage those issues by speaking to our staff, making sure that we know and understand their concerns, and, where possible, giving them absolute clarity about where our policy is taking us. I think that, as chief constables, sometimes we cannot give a cast-iron guarantee where we would want to because we do not have the power over some of the Government-level decisions that directly impact on our staff and our ability to employ. We are working within that framework, but what is going on, including the cuts and changes to terms and conditions and pension arrangements, will have a direct effect.

[83] On the A19 and A20 issues, there is a constructive tension in relation to some of the facilities that are available to us. In policing, we need fully fit, operational and functional police officers to maintain our operational resilience. On the other hand, we have to make sure that our staff who have received an injury are properly rehabilitated to get back into operational policing. The A20 regulation is one that has been around and has been used far more than the A19 regulation, and we are probably more used to that. There probably will be diversions of views in terms of how many staff we can manage in an organisation who are on recuperative duties. The big problem that we get is a permanently disabled police officer who we cannot deploy into fully operational police duties. That is where some of the difficult decisions need to be made at senior level, but they are hard decisions to make, to force someone who has put many years into an organisation to depart from it. On some occasions, that is also what the officer wants and then we can come to an agreement where people move on. The A19 and the A20 are two completely different issues. I will go back to my earlier point: these were brought in for another purpose, not to save cash in organisations. They were to deal with individual circumstances where a person needed to leave the organisation in the interests of efficiency, not large numbers of people. It was not designed for that.

[84] **Mark Isherwood:** Five years ago, our predecessor committee, as I am sure you recall, carried out two inquiries into the then proposed police merger. Joint evidence from your three organisations showed that that merger would have generated deficits of between £78 million and £120 million by 2012, which was one of the main reasons that it did not go ahead. It also highlighted the then differential funding regimes operating between the different forces within Wales.

10.20 a.m.

[85] For example, had we gone forward on some form of merger or closer collaboration, there would have had to be equalisation of police precepts, but at that stage we had south Wales going up significantly, with north Wales going up much less so, and so on. How has that changed over the last five years in terms of that differential balance? I know that there have been changes. It would be helpful if you could update us on that.

[86] You made reference to PCSOs, which are non-warranted officers. What role do you feel, if any, could special constables, as warranted officers, play in this? Would they be a help or a hindrance? I know that paperwork is something that the federation flags up regularly, and the UK Government has made noises about an operational front-line officer spending so much time on duty but in the office filling in forms in relation to his activity on the streets. In real operational terms, what difference has that, or can that, make, if any?

[87] The final question relates to commissioning of specialist services. Obviously, the community safety partnerships and the substance misuse action teams commission services from domestic abuse support units, the sexual assault referral centres, the substance misuse charities, the ex-forces charities for post-traumatic stress disorder and so on. Could an enhanced role be taken on a doing-more-for-less basis, with smart commissioning of those specialist services, or do you feel that everything that can be done is already being done?

[88] **Mr Arundale:** On the first one, the funding anomalies and the funding differences are still there. We still have a very different base right across Wales. If we were to do the calculation again today, I am guessing that the figure would be similar. I do not have the figures to hand, but we can easily make sure that they are made available to you after the meeting, and I can take that action. The issue in terms of the potential for mergers is still extremely problematic across Wales, but there may well be other opportunities in the future to achieve savings by taking a slightly different stance.

[89] In relation to PCSOs and specials, and I would extend that to volunteers in general, because we have pushed extremely hard to get anybody in our communities who is suitably qualified to help us to do so. For example, I have many people helping me at my police stations, keeping the desk open and providing a very valuable service at no cost to me at all. Specials have a level of training that allows them to have police powers; PCSOs do not. My colleagues and I have the ability to grant powers to PCSOs, but there are some dangers in that. For example, if we give them the full range of traffic powers, they can turn into traffic wardens in our communities, and quite clearly the responsibility for traffic warden services is with local authorities. Again, getting back to the 500 PCSOs, we have to be really careful in how we designate and use these individuals, because there could be unintended consequences in how effective they are and what they deal with.

[90] This is one area where we have got much better at dealing with volunteers and specials, but again, it is resource intensive. Managing volunteers means that we have to have co-ordinators, and they bring their own problems to the table and their own training needs and requirements, which do cost us. At the core of that, particularly in rural communities, is that sometimes that is the only police presence many of those communities have, because they are extremely low or virtually no crime areas. So, we are really supportive of that in particular.

[91] On the commissioning services part, there is more that can be done there, particularly with the third sector and the charitable sector. Sometimes, it is very difficult to understand the processes and the hurdles that we and other organisations have to jump to get access to funding. To try to get around part of that, I have set up a social enterprise across the Dyfed Powys area, and that allows very small organisations to bid for funds that they could not bid for before. We have given them an umbrella of the financial support, the accountancy support and the legal support that we have as an organisation to try to draw as much funds into the area as we can. My colleagues have done similar things across Wales. I think that we have got far better than we were, but I am sure that there is more scope for us to improve our response to those areas. There does seem to be less money in the pot, however, and we are all chasing it. Sometimes, we have to learn to give up rather than spend a lot of money, and perhaps let what appears to be the best case win at an early stage. That is sometimes a difficult balancing act to judge, however.

[92] **Mr Roberts:** Could I say something on the question that you raised on the precept and the unequal precept float of the four forces? There is a will to equalise; certainly there is within south Wales, which just happens to have the lowest precept in monetary terms of the four forces. The will has been there for some time to move upwards, if you will, through the implementation of higher council tax precepts. Unfortunately, we have been hampered in that. There was a will a couple of years ago to go beyond 5 per cent, to try to equalise the situation regarding the precept. We were prevented from doing that by the Welsh Government, of course, which has the precept-capping powers. We were told quite firmly that we could not go beyond the 5 per cent or we would be capped. It is fair to say that the other three authorities have been at or around that 5 per cent—slightly below that 5 per cent—so, there has been little opportunity for equalisation. I am not making a plea to reduce or to remove capping, but if that capping limit was not there, there may have been some more equalisation of the four precepts throughout Wales.

[93] **Mark Isherwood:** The documentation question was the final one, which has not been answered yet. In the tabloids, a police officer spends an hour on the streets and nine hours at the station or whatever. That is an extreme example, but certainly the federation campaigned on this. Have there been practical changes? Have matters improved, or will there be improvements in this respect?

[94] **Mr Arundale:** The general issue is one of problems with bureaucracy. We are extremely dependent on the criminal justice system. We do not generate much ourselves. There has been some improvement in some areas, but not all. The harsh reality is that we need to put all the material that we gather before courts and decision makers, and we still struggle with some of those issues, despite the fact that we now use IT to maximum effect. We have electronic file transfer across Wales and complete integration with the Welsh language in courts as well, which is a significant advance for us. I think that that is a fairly slow process because we are dependent on so many other organisations that we service.

[95] **Mr Bohun:** I agree entirely with the comments that have been made. However, with the impact of budget cuts for what are deemed back-office staff, the pressure of bureaucracy on officers is going to increase.

[96] **Ann Jones:** That is the problem, is it not? I do not like these terms ‘front line’ and ‘back office’ because they are all a valuable resource within a force’s area. If you take one of those away, somebody else has to do the job.

[97] I want to ask you, Chief Constable, about the specials. Do specials still have autonomy in the matter of when they turn up and when they do not, or do forces now expect to see specials putting in a certain number of hours a month? Is that rostered anywhere so that people are aware?

[98] **Mr Arundale:** Yes, it is. There are some variations, but generally, the expectation is that they will deliver 16 hours per month, that they will be attached to a geographic station or a shift, so that there is a consistent level of supervision, and that they will notify their supervisors in advance of when they are available to be deployed. There is some variation, but in general, it is about 16 hours a month to a fixed station or shift.

[99] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Thanks. I have Ken and then Peter Black and I think that probably they will be the last two to ask questions, unless you open a can of worms and we have to delve into it.

[100] **Kenneth Skates:** With regard to the expected rise in crime, can you clarify or confirm whether the expected rise in crime is as a consequence of these cuts, and directly

linked to them? There is a lot of evidence that you have provided that would appear to confirm that. Secondly, do you have any projections on increases in crime to come?

[101] **Mr Arundale:** In truth, the criminology behind this is extremely difficult and showing cause and effect is something that is very hard to do. There is a whole range of factors at play here, not just police numbers, policing policy and policing application. It is absolutely true that there are figures that show a direct correlation between police numbers and the level of crimes. On the other hand, there are other figures that will give you a slightly different picture. The commonsense issue for me is that crime is just one measure of policing outputs and policing outcomes. What the communities want is very clear and it is not just around crime issues. It is around reassurance, reducing the fear of crime and dealing with minor things that never even enter the criminal arena in terms of being recorded. For us, it is about managing that range of issues from the true serious crime issues to the quality of life issues that people want dealt with. It is that effective balance. All cuts have consequences. We have never seen cuts of this magnitude, so I think that the fair assumption is there are going to be negative consequences in relation to this. There will also be some great opportunities coming out of it where we will once and for all deal with some real problems of the past and manage some efficiency issues, so there is a balance in there.

10.30 a.m.

[102] **Peter Black:** I just want to comment briefly on the precept issue. My understanding is that when South Wales Police was prevented from increasing its precept by more than 5 per cent different capping criteria were applied in Wales than were applied in England. How has the Welsh Government's use of capping criteria differed from the use of them in England and how has that hampered the police forces?

[103] My second question goes way back to my last set of questions. The chief constable referred to cutting back on the wide number of activities that police forces currently undertake. You say they are diverse things. Can you give some specific examples of what you will no longer do as a result of this?

[104] **Mr Arundale:** On the first issue, in relation to precepts, there are some examples within the documentation of how things are different in England and in Wales. There are various grants and approaches to dealing with this issue. There were Government announcements yesterday in relation to technically how a council tax freeze would occur in England. It is different here and we value the difference because I think that policing and community safety issues have benefited significantly as a result of the approach of the Welsh Government. PCSOs are but one example of that, and we have listed about half a dozen examples in our documentation, because we want to acknowledge those. It comes back to that conundrum that, if we want different structures in Wales, we need to have a different funding base or take a completely different route into this, whereby we maintain some of our existing structures but the management and oversight are bespoke, and we design them to suit Wales and suit policing and policing outcomes.

[105] **Mr Roberts:** Just to interrupt you there, the crude difference between the way it is applied in Wales, or was applied when this happened a few years ago, and the way it is applied in England, is that in England the cap was 5 per cent of budget. In Wales, it was 5 per cent of precept. If we in South Wales Police had been allowed at the time to increase our budget by 5 per cent, it would have meant a council tax precept of almost double that. For a 5 per cent increase in budget, we would have had a 10 per cent increase in precept, roughly. Those are the figures. It was not applied in the same way in England.

[106] **Mr Arundale:** On the second part of the question, the range of activities on which I have statutory duty or a duty based in guidance are absolutely huge, ranging from taking in

stray dogs to issuing peddler certificates to some issues to do with the administration of firearms licences, where we do not get sufficient finance to cover it. What we are all starting to do is to make decisions on some of those issues as well as our support, financially as well as resource wise, for a number of community-based activities where we cannot show significant payback for our expenditure, although we all know that they are good things to do on behalf of the communities. With regard to what we are starting not to do, for example, when we close police stations we are no longer able to take in stray dogs in certain areas, which can have a knock-on effect for other authorities, because those dogs can be a nuisance in communities.

[107] **Peter Black:** That is a local council responsibility, technically.

[108] **Mr Arundale:** It is, but we are the 24-hour resource and if a dog is attacking people and local authority resources are not available, I want my staff to do the right thing. There is a whole range of these issues that we have to start backing off from because of the resource implications. We will also have to back off from many of the community initiatives that staff have done and been applauded for doing in the past, unless they target the real at-risk people in our communities. Many of the people whom we engage with are not necessarily on the fringes of criminality and are not necessarily the disaffected or the vulnerable. Quite often, I now have to say 'no' to things that three or four years ago I would have said 'yes' to, because it is what the community expected. We now have to get better at explaining the business case for these issues and the value we are getting from the input of those resources and cash. Quite often, people do not appreciate having things stopped that they have had provided in communities in the past, perhaps for decades.

[109] **Peter Black:** I have a further very quick question. Just going back to the issue of PCSOs, some PCSOs are funded by local authorities; for example, I think that Wrexham authority funds about 47. Do the impacts of the cuts on local authorities mean that they are pulling back that particular funding? Are you aware of that?

[110] **Mr Arundale:** I am not aware of it. I cannot speak for Wrexham, but we have a range of funding streams. For example, the Countryside Council for Wales funds police officers—wildlife crime officers—right across Wales. The Elan Valley Trust has part-funded a PCSO in the past. We still continue to lobby for and explain the benefit of employing PCSOs, and I encourage town and parish councils up and down Wales in particular to consider it, because it could be a very cost-effective way of them providing visible presences in their communities. So we will not back off and will continue to sell this, because I think that it is a very good way forward, but the funding streams, of course, are more vulnerable now than ever before.

[111] **Ann Jones:** We have run over time. That is not very good chairing on my part. I thank all three of you for coming and giving evidence to us today. You have certainly given us a lot to think about for our report. We will send you a copy of the transcript, so you can check it for accuracy—just in case you would otherwise want to lock us all up for putting down something that you did not say. Thank you all very much. This is a very serious issue that we all have to look at and work together on. I am sure that this committee would want to thank you and all your officers across Wales for the work that they and you do in challenging times. Thank you very much.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.36 a.m. a 10.45 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.36 a.m. and 10.45 a.m.*

[112] **Ann Jones:** I remind Members, if you switched your mobile phones on during that short break, to please switch them off again. If a mobile phone should go off I am going to ask that you give £10 to charity, so you have been warned.

[113] We welcome representatives from the Welsh Local Government Association and the Wales Association of Community Safety Officers. We welcome Naomi back again; she was here last week, but on another subject. We also welcome Helena Hunt. Thank you very much for your paper, which we circulated on Monday afternoon. I was a little disappointed that it came in so late; I understand that you have pressures on your time, everybody has, but the request was in for 60 days prior to the meeting and Members need time to be able to read the paper and to digest it and then to think about questions, so it does help make for effective scrutiny if we can have papers in a little earlier.

[114] That said, we have read the paper; I am sure that everybody has. Do you or Helena have any opening introductory remarks, Naomi? If you do not, I will start off with questions. Looking at the evidence provided by the Wales Association of Community Safety Officers, you explain that community safety budgets have been reduced significantly and will continue to be reduced next year. Can you tell us what impact those budget cuts will have on the capacity of community safety partnerships and on existing service delivery? Is there an example of projects supported by community partnerships that are funded in full or in part by the Welsh Government that may be at risk? Are there projects that will have to be cut because funding will just not be available?

[115] **Ms Hunt:** I have spoken to my colleagues across Wales and this will have a significant impact on the delivery of the community safety agenda. That is the view locally as well, certainly in my area. The cuts are coming from both sides, really. There are the general public sector cuts and then there are the CSP funding cuts. The impact is both on projects and posts and the partnership will feel the impact on both fronts. My colleagues across Wales tell me that they are losing vital services, particularly youth intervention and prevention projects, target-hardening projects and the like. The view among my colleagues is that we will also feel the impact in the loss of staff. These are specialist staff—anti-social behaviour co-ordinators, domestic abuse co-ordinators—who have built up skills, knowledge and expertise over the last 10 years. In terms of partnership support staff, you are talking about administration, finance staff and the like. More recently, we have been developing analytical capacity within the partnership arena. I am aware that many of us will be issuing redundancy notices and I am no different: I will be issuing two redundancy notices.

[116] Part of the challenge within the community safety arena is the nature of the funding. Some of those posts are split-funded, and so are funded partly by the Home Office and partly by the Welsh Government. For example, the main funding for domestic abuse co-ordinators comes from the Welsh Government and it has made a commitment to continue that funding. However, the uplift for those posts comes from the Home Office element. So we are all in a very difficult situation with regard to how we manage the fallout from that, but I am aware that a lot of redundancy notices will be served across Wales, and I am no different in that.

[117] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. Members have questions, and Gwyn is first.

[118] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you, Chair. What, in your assessment, will be the effect on youth offending and re-offending? Given all of the hard work that is put into youth offending teams across Wales—and around the country, in fact—and into preventing re-offending as well, will this have a detrimental effect in that regard?

[119] **Ms Hunt:** I would say that it will. Again, it would depend upon where the main funding for the particular projects and the posts comes from, but the feedback from my colleagues is that a lot of their intervention and prevention projects, and the staff who support those projects, will be coming to an end, particularly in relation to those that are receiving funding from the Home Office element.

10.50 a.m.

[120] Locally, intervention and prevention is a huge agenda for us and we have a lot of success where we have that intervention in place. Locally, we will not feel the impact significantly in the very short term, because the funding is coming from SCF, but I am aware that redundancy notices are already being issued elsewhere in Wales in relation to those posts and those projects that will be coming to an end.

[121] **Gwyn R. Price:** So, with the work that is going in and the reduction in staff, reoffending is a great possibility.

[122] **Ms Hunt:** I believe that it will happen.

[123] **Ms Alleyne:** Some of the feedback that we have had from one local authority is that its youth offending work budget has dropped by 17.65 per cent in this financial year. From its point of view, it has looked at that. The delivery of statutory services will need to be prioritised and it is concerned that the early intervention services will diminish in this funding climate. It highlighted that it has, over the last year, reduced the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system by 32 per cent. So you can see the effect of early intervention and the preventive work that is being undertaken. However, it is concerned that those significant improvements cannot be sustained, because it is such a labour-intensive service, without those significant longer term sources of funding. It also recognised that some of the interventions that are provided are funded via other sources, such as through the Cymorth grant that is made available to children and young people's partnerships. So, it is about discussions at the local level on the continuation of priorities around early intervention and prevention, but with the funding cuts that are coming in, there is a real risk to those services.

[124] **Peter Black:** I want to refer to the passage in your report about the community cohesion fund, the future of which you said is unclear for the coming year. I do not know whether there was any clarity on that in the budget yesterday. Could you give me some idea what the money is used for?

[125] **Ms Hunt:** Locally, we use a lot of that for the training of professionals, for engagement opportunities with our communities and the like. That is predominantly what it is used for. If the funding was to come to an end, that type of activity—

[126] **Peter Black:** What sort of engagement? Would you set up youth clubs with it? What would you do with that?

[127] **Ms Hunt:** What we have done locally is training with voluntary organisations, awareness-raising sessions and the like. Our context is completely different to that in some of the cities. The main issues that we are experiencing are around intergenerational-type stuff. I know that Naomi has got a different perspective across Wales from the feedback from my colleagues.

[128] **Ms Alleyne:** The grant of around £1.7 million is made up of some funding from the Communities First budget. There was a requirement in spending the community cohesion fund to ensure that at least half of that work was undertaken within Communities First areas. Obviously, the community cohesion strategy is very broad in terms of some of the areas that it addresses. Intergenerational issues are highlighted, as are issues around Gypsies and Travellers or asylum seekers, but some work is also undertaken around the preventive agenda linked to the counterterrorism agenda. So, the scope of what projects can be undertaken by partnerships is very broad, as long as it fits within the community cohesion strategy.

[129] I think that one of our concerns—particularly around the prevention element, because

some of the examples of the work that has been conducted are community mapping—is developing a much better understanding of who makes up the communities and what issues need to be addressed in terms of developing and sustaining cohesive communities. With the UK strategy recently published around prevention, a very clear distinction is made between prevention and community cohesion. There is concern that, even if some of that funding continues, some of that funding will not be available to support some other prevention activity in future. What authorities and partnerships will be looking to do is make the connections, if you like, between different duties and responsibilities. Under the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to promote good relations, there are opportunities to make some links to the community cohesion strategy. There is concern that funding that has been there to ensure targeted projects for the last two years is unclear, and I am not aware that we received any clarity from the budget yesterday.

[130] **Peter Black:** Some of the youth offending teams have been working—partially unfunded—with things like restorative justice. Is that sort of work under threat as a result of the changes, or is that becoming more of a priority for those teams?

[131] **Ms Alleyne:** I think that there is a risk around some of the restorative justice. Again, the authority that I referred to earlier gave an example where it has established a project with South Wales Police called the Youth Bureau, which is seeking to take an integrated prevention and early intervention approach. So, that is restorative. There is concern about how that can continue with the funding that it is receiving as a partnership but also given the funding cuts being experienced by the police. So, as Helena said earlier, it is not just the funding cuts that are coming in specifically to the funding for these projects, it is the impact of the broader cuts on other public services and the added value, if you like, or the additional funding that it was possible to provide previously. Authorities and CSPs will need to consider their priorities and look at the effectiveness of different interventions so as to prioritise the allocation of their funding accordingly.

[132] **Mark Isherwood:** To develop your comments about early intervention, offending and rehabilitation, in the previous session I asked the chief constable about the role that commissioning specialist services outside the statutory sector can play and he said that more could be done. He had set up a social enterprise to help smaller organisations and so on. Last week, in debate on the Welsh jobs fund, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action had contacted members to highlight the role that they play in reaching the hardest to reach groups—those who need the greatest interventions and help. As I am sure other Members do, I work with a wide range of groups involving ex-offenders, former substance misusers, ex-forces people and so on, working directly with the very groups that we are talking about with proven quantifiable outcomes, often award-winning outcomes, yet they all tell me that, even when the times were good before the budget cuts, they often struggled to engage strategically at planning level and also in terms of bidding for funds from CSPs or others. It is not a uniform picture, but that is the case in certain parts of Wales. Given the chief constable's response and your own experiences, do you feel that there could be an enhanced role utilising these professional people outside the statutory sector to help you deliver more for less?

[133] **Ms Hunt:** We have some arrangements already in place. I am taking from a local perspective here. For instance, with the domestic abuse service, our predominant service provider is from the third sector. That has helped us to build resilience and capacity. We were talking earlier about funding for the likes of the independent domestic violence advocate. I am aware that, in some areas, that has been put in to a post. Locally, we use the third sector to be able to provide that service. So, when the funding was under threat, where other areas suffered as a consequence of having a post, we were able to secure that business continuity because we had invested in the service. That is just one example. The authority, from a community safety agenda, is looking at litter and dog fouling, and we are looking to bring in a company to pick up issues around ex-service personnel on a cost-neutral basis; that is running

as a pilot programme that went live on 3 October. There are lots of opportunities.

[134] At the end of the day we are still waiting for the cuts to really take effect. We are still trying to deal with that, and trying to get an understanding of business continuity before we get to the point where we are really pushed out. I think that there is real encouragement to go out to the third sector and explore where we can utilise the third sector and bring it on board. We are seeing it happening now. I think that we are just swamped at the minute with what is happening with the cuts.

[135] **Bethan Jenkins:** I want to go back to the restorative justice aspect, because I think that that is quite often seen as an add-on as opposed to an integral part of the criminal justice system and the way of thinking.

11.00 a.m.

[136] Earlier on in the evidence session I asked the police about the use of stop and search powers in Wales and the emphasis on dealing with problems after they have happened, perhaps, as opposed to looking at the preventive agenda. Do you think that the police have their priorities right? When they have to make cuts, are they making them in the right area? The chief constables of the different areas are in charge of the cuts, so have you engaged with them to say, 'We are doing this project, and it should not be cut'? What type of dialogue are you having with the police to ensure that these things do not get lost in the mix at the harshest point of when these cuts will be felt?

[137] **Ms Hunt:** In fairness, it would not be for me to comment on whether those decisions are the right ones. I am sure, within a policing context, they will be the right ones for the police. The whole intervention and prevention agenda does require multi-agency intervention. When we are putting intervention in place, policing is merely one part of the mix. We work with education, with housing, with social services and the like. Apologies, Bethan, I have lost my thread.

[138] **Bethan Jenkins:** You said that it would be for the police to make that decision. I was wondering what dialogue you have had with them. You do not see it as your role, therefore, to have that dialogue with the police, but you accept that they are part of the mix, is that right?

[139] **Ms Hunt:** They are part of the mix. I believe that we will need to have that dialogue. I think that, when the PCCs come in, they will be driven by the policing plan and then, obviously, from a CSP perspective, until the landscape unfolds in that regard we are still working to the community safety strategy and ensuring that we are able to strike a balance on the priorities in both regards. It is a real challenge, since we are working within different geographical boundaries. We will have to have those tough conversations and perhaps a situation may present itself whereby we could have them earlier, but until there is a retraction and a statement that they will withdraw from that intervention and early prevention agenda, it is difficult to pre-empt that conversation.

[140] **Ms Alleyne:** There are several avenues outside of the community safety partnership that allow those kinds of discussions to take place. You have the local service boards, where senior officers and chief executives will come together. In areas such as Gwent and north Wales, in particular, the LSBs or the leadership boards that have been established enable those types of decisions to be discussed and priorities to be identified across the region. In some instances, police priorities may be different from those of local authorities, but I think that the relationships and the discussions that are held are useful in ensuring that they can understand each other's position even if there is not agreement around that. So it is about identifying shared priorities and what can be undertaken, but also being clear about the other priorities that exist. We are lucky with some of the relationships that have been established

between the senior officers and local authorities across Wales.

[141] **Bethan Jenkins:** There is one extra question that I noted, and I am sure that other Members also want to ask about the commissioners. You hinted earlier that priorities could change to being about what people in charge of local service delivery would like to see happen. Could you just expand on that a little bit? There is a concern if decisions become more removed from what needs to be happening on the ground.

[142] **Ms Hunt:** We are in great flux at the minute. There is the partnerships rationalisation programme and the strategies and plans rationalisation programme, and it is still an unfolding agenda. Apologies, Chair. I have lost my thread again. Rather than hold things up, perhaps Naomi could come in and then I will come back in, Bethan. Apologies.

[143] **Ms Alleyne:** There are concerns about how the policing priorities will be identified and agreed with all relevant partners at the local level. Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the police and crime commissioner has a responsibility to develop a policing plan for the force area. The commissioner has to develop that in partnership with a range of organisations, but it is of concern that the commissioner will not be a responsible authority on the community safety partnership. So you can already see that there will be a disconnect there with regard to the discussions that will take place in the CSPs through their analysis of the evidence, and through the feedback they get from partners when they are talking about their priorities. Obviously, the CSPs will need to be cognisant of the priorities that have been set by the police and crime commissioner. It will be difficult to see how it will work in practice until it is introduced, but we will need to ensure that the timeframes are appropriate.

[144] We have also highlighted our concerns that the police and crime panels, which will be established to scrutinise the role of police and crime commissioners, have an opportunity to comment on the priorities or request the commissioner to reconsider some of the priorities if they do not think that they appropriately reflect local priorities. I am not sure whether they can veto them, but they certainly have an opportunity to comment. That dialogue will be needed urgently. If you take the Dyfed-Powys Police area, for example, which is a very large geographical area, the policing priorities in the tip of Pembrokeshire and at the top of Powys may be very different and the plan will need to pick up those different priorities but will also need to be appropriate in terms of being able to be reflected taken forward by the CSPs. So there are challenges in how we move forward and you would hope that it would be done on the basis of partnership and on understanding and listening to what people are saying—not only the communities, but their representatives as well.

[145] **Ms Hunt:** I will come back in there, Bethan. There are processes in place. We have strategic assessments, based on the police's national intelligence model process, which allows for the partnership context. If we look at the processes that we use to identify policing priorities, and there is a very similar process that we use to identify the partnership priorities, within the strategic assessment framework there is a requisite that we look at the national strategies, the local strategies, the plans and various other frameworks and guidance. That is, basically, how we rationalise the priorities. So it would be remiss of a CSP to ignore the police force priorities. Ultimately, it is about trying to identify areas for mutual gain and for cross-collaboration. There is no point having a disconnect between your local priorities and the policing priorities, since it is the police force that will be servicing your local area.

[146] **Ann Jones:** Could I tease out from you whether is there any action that the Welsh Government could take to avoid the duplication of plans? You have mentioned community safety partnerships, there are local service boards, local authority plans and children's safeguarding boards and so on. Is there anything that we could do to prevent duplication and to get a clear understanding of what the statutory plans are?

[147] **Ms Alleyne:** The Minister for Local Government and Communities has made a statement on the rationalisation of the statutory plans. I understand that Welsh Government officials are working on that and that there will be a consultation paper. What you find can happen is that the different statutory partnerships develop their plans without seeing the needs mapping or analysis from elsewhere, so they are done in isolation. This work offers a real opportunity to bring these together, and some of the work that has already been undertaken by Cardiff Council in developing an integrated plan highlights the opportunities from doing that in terms of ensuring that the priorities are clear and that resources are allocated as appropriately. So, steps are being taken in that area.

[148] **Ann Jones:** Who do you think should be the lead agency and who should have the opportunity to lead that plan? Should it be community safety partnerships, the local authorities, or the police?

[149] **Ms Hunt:** Within the partnership rationalisation scheme, we are all put on a level playing field. Naomi alluded to this: it is about understanding the needs of the local area against the backdrop of the regional and national context. Whereas, at the minute, each partnership undertakes an individual needs assessment to try to understand the needs—we do that in each of the public services to try to understand what is happening out there—what we are looking at doing is integrated needs assessments, across the children and young people’s landscape, the health and social care landscape and the community safety partnership landscape. So I do not think it is necessarily about who should lead, but more about having a far more robust process in order to understand what is happening out there and then mapping the availability of the resources both individually, in the public service, in the third sector and the like, as well as within the partnership context, and really understanding that and building up a picture and then having a strategic oversight of that. I understand that that has been provided by the likes of the local service boards, in the interim, although something else may develop in future; it depends on how the landscape unfolds really.

11.10 a.m.

[150] **Joyce Watson:** Talking about landscapes, when you get the new police and crime commissioners, you are going to have another landscape and it is going to be a political one, because they will be elected representatives. They stand for election; they get elected. I have a concern and I want to know how you are going to deal with it. How are you, as community policing partnerships, going to make sure that it is your voice, which may be the minority voice, that is heard around the table, in competition with the lobbying that will happen at a much higher level? That lobbying may be able to rely on greater facilities, whether they are monetary facilities or expertise, and could ensure that the said person is elected with an agenda already in place. We have to assume, do we not, that those people will already have an agenda in place? They will have put that forward to the electorate and they will then, I assume, stand or fall by the delivery of that. It really concerns me that the minority voice may be lost in all of this. In other words, those who have the capacity to shout loudest will get what they want, while all the work that you have just discussed might get lost.

[151] **Ms Hunt:** That is a real worry for us. I think that the landscape is still unfolding; we are still not clear on the detail of how that is going to play out locally. I guess that we are eagerly awaiting whatever mandate comes out of the potential candidates. We will be looking at the policing plan, which will set out the work stream. Again, as I suggested before, there are opportunities for alignment with that, but I am sure that Naomi will be able to give a different perspective.

[152] **Ms Alleyne:** You asked how one can ensure that the voices of the partnerships are heard. Helena has already referred to the strategic assessments that were undertaken, so I

think that it will be around the provision of evidence as to the need for certain priorities within the locality. However, as you said, a commissioner will be elected on a platform that they have stood for in an election and that will require communication around being able to help and deliver and achieve what they have set as their priorities, as well as recognising that there are broader priorities, not only those that will be set locally, but by Wales-wide and UK-wide concerns. So, we will still need to ensure that issues to do with counterterrorism and organised crime, for example, are resourced effectively and taken forward. As Helena said, I think that some of this is still playing out in terms of the landscape, but there is also the role of police and crime panels to consider and the relationship that they will establish with police and crime commissioners, and other routes to influence some discussions with chief officers of police who will be working with the police and crime commissioners on establishing priorities. So, I think that there are a number of routes. I fully recognise the risk involved in that, but I think that, to a certain degree, we will have to see how it plays out once the commissioners are introduced and the platforms upon which they are elected are known.

[153] **Mark Isherwood:** Is it not the case that in order to counter the risk that the populist candidate will simply promise the earth and ignore the core issues, a duty will be imposed on all commissioners in respect of some of the essential, but less populist areas, such as equality duties, domestic abuse issues and so on, that will be universal, whoever is elected to those positions, and which will be subject to scrutiny by the panels?

[154] **Ms Alleyne:** I could not answer in detail on that in terms of it actually being a duty. I know that there will be a requirement to have cognisance of broader issues, but I am not sure that it is to be a duty. We could investigate that view, if you would be interested in that.

[155] **Mark Isherwood:** It would be very helpful to know what is being said about that; thank you.

[156] **Ann Jones:** Thanks. Rhodri Glyn is next.

[157] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** No, I am fine, thank you, Chair; my questions were on areas that have been covered.

[158] **Ann Jones:** Thanks very much for that. Does anybody have any more questions? I see that no-one does. Thank you both for your evidence today. You will be sent a copy of the transcript so that you can check it for accuracy. Naomi knows this because she is a regular attendee at the committee. I also hope that you will read the report or the recommendations when we publish them. Thanks very much for coming.

[159] **Ann Jones:** We are now moving on to our last evidence session, during which we are going to hear from the GMB union. We are going to hear from Jamie Marden who is the organising officer and Gwylan Brinkworth who is a representative from South Wales Police. We had invited Unison to attend this session as well, but unfortunately its witness sent in her apologies on Monday and Unison was unable to find anybody to take her place. So, we will take our evidence just from GMB.

[160] I thank you for your paper. Do you have any opening remarks that you want to make or shall we go straight to questions?

[161] **Mr Marden:** I believe that you have received the report that we sent through, so I just want to reiterate that. The first part was just basically saying that GMB members are mostly PCSOs and control room inquiry clerks and such. I think that you had our report on that.

[162] **Ann Jones:** I will start then. I take it that the GMB has representative rights just for

South Wales Police. Is that true or do you have representative rights in other forces?

[163] **Ms Brinkworth:** We are formally recognised at South Wales Police and that is where I am the branch secretary. I believe that we have members in other police forces, but we are not formally recognised.

[164] **Ann Jones:** We have heard about the steps being taken by the four police forces—in fact, they gave us evidence earlier this morning—as to how they are going to prioritise service delivery for the public when responding to the budget reductions that they are facing. What are your views of the approaches being taken?

[165] **Ms Brinkworth:** We are quite concerned about the speed with which they are being implemented. If you take the public service centre at South Wales Police, we are looking at a 45 per cent reduction in headcount. That is a combination of police officers and staff. While it is all being done on a voluntary basis, and fortunately nobody has been made compulsorily redundant, the speed at which we are losing experienced staff is quite concerning. We would have liked to have seen a much more controlled implementation of cuts. Of course, we understand there is a massive deficit that the force has to fill, but we are concerned at the speed at which cuts are being implemented.

[166] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** O'r dystiolaeth yr ydym wedi ei derbyn y bore yma, mae'n amlwg bod yr heddlu yn glir iawn ynglŷn â'r ffordd ymlaen o'u rhan nhw. A ydych yn credu bod trafodaeth ddigon eang wedi ei chynnal ynglŷn â'r penderfyniadau y bydd heddluoedd Cymru yn gorfod eu gwneud o ran lleihau'r nifer o swyddogion sydd ganddynt a blaenoriaethu gwasanaethau? A ydyw'r drafodaeth honno wedi bod yn ddigon eang, gyda phawb sydd â diddordeb yn y pwnc?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: From the evidence that we have received this morning, it is obvious that the police forces are very clear on the way forward from their point of view. Do you think that there has been a wide enough discussion on the decisions that Welsh police forces will have to make in terms of reducing their officer numbers and prioritising services? Has that discussion been broad enough with all interested parties?

[167] **Ms Brinkworth:** We outlined some concerns when we spoke to the police authority for South Wales Police back in February. If you look at the public service centre alone, some public consultation took place, but it involved a survey of something in the region of less than 0.02 per cent of the public and we believe that the methods used for the survey were lacking. So, GMB has concerns about who has been consulted and how widely that consultation has taken place.

11.20 a.m.

[168] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I suppose the follow-on question from that is: do you think that it is going to impact on the quality of service in terms of the input of officers, in that, as their morale will be affected, they may not be as committed as they are presently?

[169] **Ms Brinkworth:** I think that that is a serious concern that we have. Even with some of the questions that were asked of the public, I looked at them and thought that I would have answered 'yes', as they were not the questions that I believe should have been asked.

[170] **Gwyn R. Price:** What is your view on the compulsory part in the regulations A19 and A20, and have you been brought up to speed with the terms and conditions that your members are going to be forced into taking?

[171] **Ms Brinkworth:** As far as the GMB is concerned, the A19 regulation does not apply,

because it only applies to police officers. What concerns us with regard to the A19 regulation is the knock-on effect it has, because it is outlined in our paper that this will result in a significant loss of experienced officers, which will have an impact on our staff, because it is often PCSOs, for example, who take up some of the slack for police officers. That is where our concern lies, with regard to the knock-on effect, because, while the force is looking to recruit police officers over the next 12 months, they obviously will have far less experience than officers of 30 years and more.

[172] **Ann Jones:** Peter, do you have something on this point?

[173] **Peter Black:** It is a different point, if that is okay. We talked earlier, when the chief constable was in, about the impact of the reorganisation in south Wales. For example, the call centres have, effectively, been centralised in Bridgend, and that has released some police officers to go back to the front line. I understand that that will not be the case every time in terms of efficiency savings, but I am interested to know whether you have some examples of the work of the 'back-office staff'—I use that term, but, actually, as you say, they are all front-line staff—which will be lost as a result of efficiency changes and so may require police officers to come back in to do that work. That is, it will be the other way around.

[174] **Ms Brinkworth:** To date, we have not had any cuts that would indicate that that is the case, but, obviously, that is our overall concern because, at the end of the day, you cannot make a police officer redundant, whereas you can make staff compulsorily redundant, and that is one of our concerns. Two to three years ago, South Wales Police went through a workforce transformation, which was a significant programme of work that was about civilianising posts, that is, putting police officers back on the front line and filling their places with police staff. The concern that we have now is that, if cuts need to be made, the easy and quick option is to make staff redundant, and, to fill those significant roles, you would need to bring police officers back in.

[175] **Peter Black:** Are there any examples at the moment of, say, police officers having to staff front desks that were previously staffed by civilians, or of police officers having to do additional paperwork because things that civilian staff were doing before are no longer being done?

[176] **Ms Brinkworth:** With regard to the example that you use of police officers staffing front desks, the answer is 'no': the solution has been to close the police station, which is obviously of great concern. They have not brought the police officer off the front line to do that work; they have taken other action, such as closing police stations or reducing their opening hours.

[177] **Ann Jones:** Do you hold a view, or is there a view among your members, that they are more likely to be offered redundancy or made redundant first, because it is easier to get rid of them under employment law than to go through the A19 process with a warranted officer? Have members expressed those views?

[178] **Ms Brinkworth:** I hear that feedback weekly. People feel very vulnerable, and they are aware that there is this deficit. They are concerned that any excuse will be taken. We are actively working to reassure them that we will robustly challenge any such case.

[179] **Ann Jones:** Have you put that concern to the police authority? What has been its response to that?

[180] **Ms Brinkworth:** We have received assurances that it will all be done in a controlled and measured way, and that is why we are fully engaged in the process: to make sure that it is.

[181] **Mike Hedges:** The chief constable of Dyfed-Powys Police was here today, and he confirmed that the 500 extra PCSOs will indeed be 500 extra PCSOs and that there cannot be any reductions prior to them coming on. So, there will be 500 more than there are now. What are your comments on that?

[182] **Mr Marden:** We were pleased with the announcement. I think that it is 235 in South Wales Police. I think that was the figure. The three-year fixed contract that was stated was our concern, because the funding is put in place, and then there is the training, and at the end of that there could be a redundancy payment to add to it. So, pleased though we are, we are also cautious about it.

[183] **Mike Hedges:** I think that the three years is to the end of a financial settlement and to the end of one Assembly. I do not think that they have the capacity to commit future Assemblies to this—you do not know what will happen in three years' time for that settlement. I think that the intention is for an ongoing commitment to it, but it cannot be given explicitly because of the situations relating to funding and trying to commit a future Assembly Government. Is that your understanding as well?

[184] **Mr Marden:** We have been told—Gwynan has been in all the meetings as well—that the initial one is for a three-year fixed term, as was stated. We are delighted that the jobs are coming for PCSOs, but obviously, there is that little bit of caution at the end of it.

[185] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you, and good morning. I do not represent any of your south Wales area, but I will ask a question regarding the different tiers and different systems of pay that are currently operated for your staff within the different forces. First of all, it has the potential to knock-on in collaboration, and secondly—this is where I want to take the question from—it could also have an impact on those forces that are losing staff or gaining other staff at reduced costs. Have you looked at the possibility of people moving around and being recruited, because, sometimes, they might be cheaper? We talk about redundancies, and some of those will happen, but equally, as time rolls on, you look to new recruitment. When you are looking at new recruitment, the first thing you look at is the cost of your staff. So, if it is the case, particularly on the edges of the different forces, that one force is paying significantly less than the other, people can look to draw those staff across or, equally, they leak the other way. I bring this to the table because I know that it has happened with social services staff in local government. We have a precedent there, as staff leaked over the border because they were offered a few quid more, or they were recruited because they were found to be cheaper.

[186] **Ms Brinkworth:** We raised that issue with South Wales Police last year, in that one of the areas within the scientific support unit had, for approximately five years, been paid a market forces allowance, which is a one-off payment paid annually. The idea was that it was almost like an honorarium paid on top of the basic salary to bring the staff in line with conditions elsewhere and to stop them from going to other forces that were paying more. This was in the field of fingerprinting. Fingerprint experts were being paid significantly more by other forces, and this market forces allowance was paid to staff to retain them in south Wales. That was discontinued last March, and we raised the issue as one of great concern, in that staff would look to leave and go to other forces. South Wales Police took the view that it would take the risk.

11.30 a.m.

[187] **Ann Jones:** There was talk some time ago about having one police force for Wales, and I think that we can all remember the issues. If that was to raise its head in another issue, such as collaboration or regionalisation, how do you think your members would fare? Do you think that people would look more to uniformed officers rather than staff? Do you see a higher proportion of your jobs going than of uniformed officers?

[188] **Ms Brinkworth:** I think that that is a concern that a lot of our members have. There are a number of collaboration programmes on the table at the moment and staff are very concerned. In certain areas, we are losing staff. There has always been a certain amount of staff turnover in certain departments but, in some areas, when opportunities come up it is quite obvious that we are losing staff. That is because they fear, with collaboration around the corner, that the jobs will not be there or they will be asked to relocate. If you take the information and communications technology department, for example, of which I have direct knowledge, people are saying, 'I will leave, because an IT company has opened up in the local area. I will go there now. I will jump before I am pushed because there is no way that I can relocate to north Wales or even to Gwent.' It is a very real concern for the staff.

[189] **Ann Jones:** At what level would the police force involve you and your members in collaboration discussion, or do they present you with a fait accompli? Does the force say what it is centralising and talk to you about paying travelling expenses for two years or paying you a meal allowance for the time that you are travelling? Is that your experience, or are you involved from the very beginning?

[190] **Ms Brinkworth:** I have seen both sides of that. On some levels, we have been involved. When you look at the scientific support unit, there has been quite a lot of involvement from the unions. There were regular staff briefings and, right from the word go, we have been involved. In other areas, we are less involved. When we have raised that through our programme boards, we have been assured that it is because it is looking at a more strategic level and that, when it looks at more detail, we will be involved. From a staff point of view, the earlier the unions are involved the more confident they are that it will be done in an open and transparent way and that individuals' interests will be protected. At the end of the day, staff look to the unions to be the body that is protecting them, whereas the organisation is looking at a more organisational view.

[191] **Ann Jones:** As no-one else has indicated, I have the final question. How closely do you work with other unions that represent police staff, or are authorities able to pick you off?

[192] **Mr Marden:** We thought that they were going to be here today. We have been involved with Unison. We have been in consultation over the police reform for the last 12 months and we have been working closely with Unison throughout the 12 months. I think that we are the only two recognised unions for police staff.

[193] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. Do Members have any other questions?

[194] **Mark Isherwood:** I have a short question, going back to the collaboration issue. We heard from a previous witness that, five years ago, our predecessor committee did two reviews of the then proposed merger and that a lot of the evidence received, particularly from ACPO, related to the existing proposals even then for sharing corporate services and the operational partnerships that already existed within Wales and between Welsh forces and those outside. Looking at operational collaboration as opposed to shared corporate services, do you feel that disparity in terms and conditions between the forces could have implications? Or in terms of operational practicality, is that not an issue?

[195] **Ms Brinkworth:** I think that it was an issue. A considerable amount of effort was put in to come up with common terms and conditions and it failed to reach agreement. I think that that would have an impact.

[196] **Mark Isherwood:** Certainly on sharing corporate services, if you were setting up an all-Wales computer, for example, or an all-Wales human relations department, that would clearly have an impact. However, in terms of collaborating operationally—there is reference

to Tarian, for example, and the Wales extreme counterterrorism unit—would that disparity in terms and conditions impact on the operational effectiveness, or is it only in terms of shared corporate services that you would see the problem arising?

[197] **Ms Brinkworth:** I believe that there are operational implications, but I am not involved on the operations—I am much more on the shared services side. However, I believe that there are implications for the operational side.

[198] **Ann Jones:** Are members content with the questioning? Thank you, both, for coming in and for giving us your views. We will send you a copy of the transcript of this session for you to look at for accuracy, and I am sure that you will look out for our report as well. Thank you.

11.35 a.m.

Cynnig Gweithdrefnol Procedural Motion

[199] **Ann Jones:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(ix).

[200] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.35 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.*