

# **SOCIAL INCLUSION, HOUSING AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 16 May 2000  
(*Afternoon*)

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# CONTENTS

**Tuesday 16 May 2000**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>DRUGS INQUIRY .....</b>	<b>1078</b>

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## **SOCIAL INCLUSION, HOUSING AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMMITTEE**

### **18<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2000, Session 1**

#### **CONVENER**

\*Ms Margaret Curran (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)

#### **DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP)

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con)

\*Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD)

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)

Mr John McAllion (Dundee East) (Lab)

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP)

\*Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

\*Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)

\*Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

\*attended

#### **WITNESSES**

Colin McKerracher (Strathclyde Police)

James Orr (Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency)

#### **CLERK TEAM LEADER**

Sarah Davidson

#### **SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK**

Mary Dinsdale

#### **ASSISTANT CLERK**

Rodger Evans

#### **LOCATION**

The Festival Theatre



## Scottish Parliament

### Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee

Tuesday 16 May 2000

(Afternoon)

[THE DEPUTY CONVENER opened the meeting in private at 14:34]

15:04

*Meeting continued in public.*

**The Deputy Convener (Fiona Hyslop):** I would like to move that items three and four, our forward work programme and the evidence from the Scottish Prison Service, be considered in private. We have been given satisfactory reasoning as to why the evidence from the SPS should be heard in private. Are we agreed?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab):** Could I check one point? The note that I received said that the official report will produce a report of the evidence, but that it will not appear as the *Official Report*. Can it be published as the *Official Report* later?

**Sarah Davidson (Clerk Team Leader):** The official report will produce a transcript of the SPS evidence, which will be published with the committee's evidence. However, it will not be the *Official Report*.

**Mike Watson:** Can it appear as the *Official Report* later on?

**Sarah Davidson:** No.

**Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** It is not being made public now, but will be made public when we publish our report.

**Sarah Davidson:** Yes.

15:05

*Meeting continued in private.*

16:59

*Meeting continued in public.*

**The Convener (Ms Margaret Curran):** We now move into public session. We cannot go beyond 6 o'clock. Can we focus our questions and try to finish in three quarters of an hour? The questions are shorter for this part of the meeting.

### Drugs Inquiry

**The Convener:** I offer my sincere apologies to James Orr for keeping him waiting. The delay is a reflection of the committee's energy and dedication to this subject. Members are a very hard bunch to move on—I am not talking about Keith Raffan, as he is about to discover.

I welcome you warmly to the meeting. We are very pleased to have you here so that we can pursue this line of questioning. You are probably aware of the inquiry that we are undertaking. We have received substantial written evidence from a range of agencies and we thank you for your submission.

Please introduce yourselves and make a very brief statement.

**James Orr (Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency):** My opening statement lasts about four minutes—is that acceptable or is it too long?

**The Convener:** Okay—if you go over four minutes, I will shut you up.

**James Orr:** The following comments are made on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and relate primarily to the questions that the committee asked previously.

In Scotland, intelligence from forces suggests that the majority of heroin users come from the most deprived areas. In Glasgow, for example, research by Glasgow City Council addiction service found that 73 per cent of drug-related emergency admissions between 1993 and 1998 were of adults from the most deprived areas of the city that contain only 38 per cent of the adult population. The same research indicated that adults from the most deprived areas are 14 times more likely to be admitted to hospitals for drug-related reasons than are adults from more affluent areas.

You will probably be aware of that research, so I will summarise the results. It is estimated that we have about 30,000 drug users in Scotland. Figures from the information and statistics division of the Common Services Agency in Scotland suggest that between April 1998 and March 1999 9,500 new clients or patients were identified, 60 per cent of whom reported that they had started problem

drug use before the age of 20. More than 80 per cent of the 9,144 new clients or patients whose employment status was recorded were unemployed. As the main drug of abuse in more than 50 per cent of cases is heroin, the research tends to support the submission from the forces that the majority of heroin users come from deprived areas.

In the past five years, reported heroin use has increased from around 38 per cent in 1994-95 to 58 per cent in 1998-99. Drug seizures doubled between 1992 and 1997, from 8,024 to 16,393. Drug-related deaths increased slightly, from 263 in 1997 to 276 in 1998. The figure for 1999 is not yet available but it is likely to be about 300.

The ACPOS drug strategy sets out our main objectives in relation to targeting policies, liaison with statutory and voluntary organisations, consistency of approach and standardisation of educational programmes across Scotland. The objectives of the recently created Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency complement the ACPOS drug strategy and relate to the action priorities that were set out in the Scottish Executive's enhanced drug strategy under the heading "Availability". That aim concerns stifling the availability of illegal drugs on our streets and, in particular, reducing access to drugs among five to 16-year-olds.

The new national intelligence model is a vital tool in directing law enforcement operations and will provide an enhanced focus in the fight against drugs nationally and locally.

All forces throughout Scotland are predominantly targeting heroin dealing and distribution. Through additional finance that is provided by the Scottish Executive, as a first step, the SDEA is strengthening drugs enforcement in Scotland by funding an additional 100 officers in Scottish forces. That is a unique opportunity to have a significant impact on drug criminality in local communities. At present, it is difficult to provide evidence of a lasting impact, as most initiatives require long-term evaluation. However, there are many excellent initiatives going on in Scotland, on which I can elaborate later, if you wish.

Almost all the drugs action teams have plans in place for drugs education, prevention and harm reduction. Police support will be enhanced by the introduction of the SDEA national drugs co-ordinator, who will co-ordinate the enforcement contribution to Scotland's national drugs strategy in consultation with the relevant statutory and voluntary bodies such as health and education bodies, the Scottish advisory committee on drug misuse, the Scotland against drugs campaign, and drugs action teams.

**The Convener:** Thank you. That was very

concise and to the point but we are so short of time and members have so many questions that we will rattle through them.

**Mr Raffan:** We have another co-ordinator—we have co-ordinators coming out of our ears today. Is this Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency co-ordinator a tsar?

**James Orr:** In the main, we hope that each police force will have a drugs co-ordinator. The new SDEA national drugs co-ordinator will be responsible for liaising with them, identifying best practice throughout Scotland and liaising with the key players in the other partner agencies.

**Mr Raffan:** He will be accountable to you.

**James Orr:** He will be accountable to me. Operationally, I am accountable to the standing committee of chief constables. In terms of the drugs priorities of the agency, I am accountable to the drugs enforcement forum, which is chaired by Mr Angus MacKay.

**Mr Raffan:** I will try to be brief—excuse me if I am abrupt. You will be aware of the national treatment outcome study, which shows that for every £1 spent on treatment, £3 is spent on enforcement. You will also be aware that the RAND organisation backs that up even more dramatically in the states—its research is more to do with crack and cocaine. Overall in the UK, 75 per cent is spent on enforcement, 13 per cent on treatment, and 12 per cent on education—we all know the old figures.

The figures are slightly different in Scotland: 46 per cent is spent on enforcement. In light of the national treatment outcomes study and the RAND foundation research, it is clear that there is an imbalance in expenditure towards enforcement. Should we not be spending on treatment, which cuts demand, rather than on enforcement, which cuts supply?

**James Orr:** The challenge for us all is to achieve the correct balance of enforcement, prevention and education.

**Mr Raffan:** It is not a balance at the moment.

**James Orr:** It is critical that we achieve that balance. There is sufficient energy in the Scottish Executive and the Parliament to determine the correct balance. It would be wrong for us to send out a negative signal on enforcement; serious and organised criminals would see Scotland as an open door for drug trafficking. I repeat what I said before: it is vital to achieve the correct balance. However, it is not for me to speculate on whether the balance is wrong or right.

**Mr Raffan:** Okay. I would like to quote a deputy chief constable—he was tipped for your job but did not get it—who said that he would rather the

money was spent on treatment than on the agency. A chief constable told me that he does not want his senior drugs officers pinched from him and running round Glasgow estates instead. Obviously I cannot name those people, although you can probably work out who they are. Neither of those officers believes in the Drug Enforcement Agency. They have sent me their comments in the past few months.

**James Orr:** Individuals are entitled to their own opinions.

**Mr Raffan:** What is the agency going to bring—at a cost of £10.5 million—to the issue that police forces cannot bring now?

**James Orr:** I have long experience in law enforcement—my background was Strathclyde police. When I left to take up this post, crime in Strathclyde had gone down by 7 per cent and the detection rate was at an all-time high of 44 per cent. My team and I can bring the skills to co-ordinate and harmonise the enforcement effort throughout Scotland. For the record, let me say that I have had nothing but outstanding co-operation from my colleagues in the police service in Scotland, HM Customs and Excise and the National Criminal Intelligence Service. We are professionals and we want to do a good job and to improve the situation.

The Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency will go beyond enforcement. The national drugs co-ordinator will deal with our colleagues in all those other important areas, such as how we relate to young people and to our communities. We must ask what communities expect of their police service. Those are wonderful and exciting challenges, which we welcome. It is not rhetoric.

**Mr Raffan:** If it is not rhetoric, what is it? You are not telling us what you are going to do. Until words are backed up by action, they are simply rhetoric.

**James Orr:** We will implement the new national intelligence model, which provides strategic and tactical tasking co-ordination. That is happening. Through the National Criminal Intelligence Service and police forces in Scotland, I have commissioned a most comprehensive review to try to determine the true nature of drug trafficking in Scotland. It is not rhetoric, because the first steps are a reality. However, there is no immediate solution—it will take time. Nevertheless, people are enthusiastic and, over time, we will make a difference.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Three points have emerged from the evidence that local communities and others have given us. Many people tell us that they support the broad outline but feel frustrated because there is little success in arresting and prosecuting known drug dealers. It takes a lot of

courage to report known drug dealers: but before we know it they are back on the streets and the people who have reported them are being intimidated. What is your answer to that?

**James Orr:** It is important that the police service and law enforcement in general considers drug trafficking and supply in its totality. That means that we focus on the major players as well as on those in communities who are overtly or covertly dealing in drugs. At the end of the day, the people who will be able to say whether the agency has been successful are people in the community.

I remember attending public meetings in Cranhill and talking to groups of mothers against drugs, whose work I support. We will be in discussion with forces about how we tackle drug trafficking at community level. Colin McKerracher, who is assistant chief constable for community safety in Strathclyde, is the chairman of the community safety sub-committee. Colin has extensive knowledge of how the police service currently relates to community partnerships and social inclusion partnerships.

**The Convener:** Keith Raffan and I visited the Glasgow family support groups, who said that the war against drugs has already been lost. The perception is that you are losing the battle. Can you reassure us that that is not the case?

17:15

**Colin McKerracher (Strathclyde Police):** In the two months that I have had the community safety portfolio, I have been very encouraged by what is happening. My experience over the past 26 years has been that the police often get left to drive every initiative there is. We are now tackling drugs problems in partnership. No longer are we expected to drive initiatives on our own. There are good people in all the partner agencies and local action groups who are willing to take the lead in such areas. That is tremendous.

Enforcement does not mean that we lock people up and leave them there. Enforcement opens doors for people, for example into health groups that can help addicts with their problems, into the routes out of prostitution project, and into education, training and workplace opportunities. It is not all about heavy-handed policing. We have good all-round support.

**The Convener:** I understand that. There has been a lot of progress in working in partnership with local communities, but there is still a perception that we are not meeting the challenge. Drug dealers run many communities; people are frightened and worried about their kids. They want the police to protect them.

**Colin McKerracher:** It is a bigger issue than just the police.

**The Convener:** I appreciate that, but I would like to concentrate on the police aspect for a moment.

**James Orr:** I am happy to pick up on that point. It is important that communities have total confidence in their police service and that people can contact the police and give information in confidence. Before we act on anonymous information, it must be properly assessed. People can be reassured that we will act, although only after we have properly assessed the information.

It is about how to foster and develop a climate of trust within communities. It is all about challenges. How can communities articulate which areas cause them the greatest concern? When we have identified an issue that causes concern and decided in partnership how to tackle it, it is wonderful to see that issue resolved. Drugs action teams are leading players in the system. They must link into communities to allow community voices to be heard. It is not an easy challenge.

**The Convener:** I fully support that and we are strongly advocating that approach. However, community voices would say that they are articulating their needs and making demands. What can the DEA deliver to communities that did not exist before?

**James Orr:** The DEA can deliver a range of things. The national drugs co-ordinator and I intend to visit all the drugs action teams. We have already begun to speak to police boards. We will be as visible as we can be and listen to community concerns. Over time, the DEA will deliver a complete law enforcement response to drug trafficking. However, we will have to change the mindsets of some of my colleagues, so that they totally embrace the concept of intelligence-led policing. Furthermore, we must investigate the people who cause the most damage to Scottish society, whether they are at the top or at the lower levels of the system. However, we need the trust and confidence of the communities, who must be able to feel that they can come forward.

**The Convener:** I will be held to account in public meetings in Cranhill for the money that we spend on the DEA. How can we reassure people that we are getting the big guys who are making enormous amounts of money out of drug dealing, not just the small-time user-dealers in communities?

**James Orr:** Drug dealing is a complex issue that requires a complex response. In Osprey House in Paisley, where I work, there is the Scottish police service, Customs and Excise and the National Criminal Intelligence Service. As a result, we can use the joint intelligence of the lead

agencies to obtain answers. We can do many things to tackle main dealers: for example by investigating their financial lifestyle and examining issues such as money laundering. Although the process will take time, it will happen.

**The Convener:** Are you confident that it will work?

**James Orr:** I am confident that, over time, we will make a difference.

**Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab):** You have highlighted the fact that the problem of illegal drugs use is getting worse and that the quantities of drugs being used is increasing in some of our most deprived communities. Communities have told us that the police have seemed unable to stop the flow of drugs in the past. Why have the police appeared to be ineffective? What can the DEA add to the fight against drugs? Can you genuinely stop the flow of drugs?

**James Orr:** Last year, in Scotland, the law enforcement community recovered more than £40 million-worth of drugs. That is a huge amount. Such seizures prevented many individual deals and stopped drugs reaching the streets and playgrounds of our communities.

We have people who are dedicated to making a difference. Furthermore, we do not work just in a Scottish context; we deal with colleagues in the rest of the UK and, through Customs and Excise, access what is happening abroad. Although we hope to stop drugs ever reaching Scotland, that is a utopian dream. All we can do is ensure that we have the very best intelligence about what is happening at higher and lower levels and deploy resources where they matter, at the right time and against the proper targets. The issue is all about focused deployment and understanding the true nature of the opposition—if I can use that term. There is no magic solution and the process will take time; however, with the correct systems and people in place, we will make a difference.

That said, enforcement is only one element in the response, and must be balanced against such issues as prevention and education. For example, in the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre last week, Strathclyde police hosted a drugs awareness event that was attended by 32,000 schoolchildren. There were simultaneous awareness sessions for teachers and, in the evening, parents. That was not just a one-off; the programme is being developed in schools. The police are heavily involved in assisting teachers with drugs education and the DEA is in dialogue with individual force drugs co-ordinators about the best possible education package for Scotland. Once the prevention and effectiveness unit is operating, we hope to work closely with the



Scottish Executive to help it understand more about what the police can contribute; equally, we want to benefit from the material that the unit produces. This issue is all about partnership, and we are only one part of the overall response.

**Karen Whitefield:** One of the best ways of tackling this problem is to listen to the communities that are most adversely affected by drugs. Will there be a role for communities in the protection and effectiveness unit?

**James Orr:** I agree entirely with that point. The police will be integral to all community safety arrangements. The local police must listen to the communities' concerns, which can then be turned into a local action plan to improve the infrastructure, facilities, and different lifestyle opportunities in those communities. Equally, any intelligence from the community must be fed into the local intelligence bureau and assessed. I can confidently say that the eight Scottish police forces form a listening police service and that communities must be part of anything that we do.

**Karen Whitefield:** Do you think that the current Scottish criminal justice system allows us to deal with drug users effectively, or are there other procedures that would allow more effective prosecution of users who deal to feed their habits and big-time dealers, to ensure that our communities are not destroyed by people who deal and use drugs?

**James Orr:** The agency has three main pillars—intelligence, drugs co-ordination and operations—each of which is led by an experienced senior detective. I want to enter into dialogue with every police force about those elements, assess what we are doing, speak to colleagues and consider how we can improve our performance in each of them. For example, I applaud the work on the very difficult prostitution and drugs situation in Glasgow.

The police service cannot work in isolation. We need to transfer elements of good practice in one force to other forces or the rest of Scotland, bearing in mind the fact that many solutions pertain to local problems. What might be appropriate in the south of Scotland might not be appropriate in the north in Scotland. I want the police service to improve its performance across the three central pillars of its work.

**Karen Whitefield:** My question was whether you think the criminal justice system deals effectively with small users who sometimes deal drugs by imprisoning them.

**James Orr:** The answer is no. We need to consider a range of solutions to a complex problem, including issues such as arrest referral and diversion. That said, enforcement and imprisonment are still relevant procedures for

suppliers.

**Fiona Hyslop:** You said that the Drug Enforcement Agency is only one part of the solution. It is a very expensive part; with £10 million, it has the lion's share of the Executive's budget for drugs issues.

So far, we have heard you talk about the national intelligence model, which already exists, and which you want to progress, and the schools education programme, which already exists but is not funded by the Drug Enforcement Agency. You have also spoken about visiting DATs, the work DATs are doing and the co-ordination they provide, but DATs already exist and are not funded by the Drug Enforcement Agency. What will you add? From what you are saying, it sounds as though you will not be delivering anything and that this is largely a sales promotion job. We have to justify to people who are struggling to get £5,000 to help them with rehab the fact that the Drug Enforcement Agency is getting £10 million. What concrete initiatives have you proposed?

**James Orr:** I am sorry if I misled you in any way.

**Fiona Hyslop:** This is your opportunity to tell us what concrete things you will add to the strategy for tackling drugs misuse in Scotland.

**James Orr:** The national intelligence model is a brand-new system that we will drive throughout Scotland, supporting Scottish forces.

The £10 million of new money is made up of £5 million per year over two years. I have been asked by the Executive to deliver to the Scottish police service—to forces and to the centre—up to 200 officers, over two years, if possible. When balanced against the cost of 200 new officers, £5 million a year is not a great deal of money.

17:30

The first phase of the programme will supply 100 new officers to Scottish forces. Chief constables will recruit new officers so that they can release experienced people to take part in working against drugs. Other people will be recruited to the Scottish crime squad. That will add value numerically to the squad. I will add value through a new management team, which does not exist at the moment.

We are bringing significant police experience to the structure at Osprey House, to harmonise it in an unprecedented way and to give it focus and vision. We will ensure more focused deployment, which should deliver better results over time. That is new. The budget of £5 million is significant, but it is not a huge amount when measured against the people power that I am being asked to deliver.

**Fiona Hyslop:** I am sure that my colleagues will want to pursue that. Next, I would like to address the issue of the black economy. In the document that it produced, the Executive stated that theft amounting to more than £200 million is used to fund heroin use. How concerned are you about drugs-related stolen property? To what extent is that part of the fabric of many communities? We hear that people can steal to order and that many people who do not use drugs themselves benefit from the drugs-related economy.

If the Drug Enforcement Agency is successful and we manage to tackle the drugs-related economy, what do we replace it with? If we recognise that drugs and poverty are related, do we not need to examine how to replace in many communities the money that is generated by the black economy?

**James Orr:** Some of the spotlight operations conducted by Strathclyde police showed a clear relationship between drugs and house-breaking, in particular. It will take a long time to solve the drugs problem. I do not see a quick solution. Improving the situation within communities is about giving people hope and confidence.

A few weeks ago, I spoke to some drug addicts who were going through a rehabilitation process. They spoke to me in graphic terms about the trauma of their lifestyle, their lack of confidence and their lack of job opportunities. The solution does not lie totally with law enforcement. We will play our part, but others will need to play theirs so that sufficient rehabilitation is provided. We need employers to have the courage to recruit former drug addicts and to introduce them to a meaningful life. We need educational opportunities.

**Fiona Hyslop:** You are starting to speak in general terms again. I would rather we remained specific. We know that there is a partnership solution—we have heard that mantra before. However, if £200 million is taken out of, for example, the Glasgow economy, do you not recognise that that money will have to be replaced? It will not come through enforcement, but through jobs and through ensuring that people have the wherewithal to buy televisions and so on legitimately, rather than via the black economy, as is happening at present. If you recognise that the black economy will have to be replaced but £10 million is being spent on enforcement, is it not possible that the balance is not correct?

**James Orr:** I cannot comment on that. I have no feel for how the money generated by the black economy can be replaced.

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** It is perhaps fair to say that, coming from a police background, you have a natural sympathy with the law-abiding

citizen.

**The Convener:** That is a fair assumption.

**Robert Brown:** We were struck by the evidence that we took earlier from the Scottish Prison Service about the cohort of people who go to prison. Most have drug problems and many are from difficult backgrounds involving abuse and so on. Almost half of them have been to special school. We are not talking about an average group of people representative of society at large, or even of deprived schemes. I was struck in particular by the fact that people between the ages of 16 and 21 entering Longriggend had an average of 20.4 referrals to children's panels. Do you think that we are catching people with intervention policies that might change their chaotic life habits at an early enough stage? Do you have any thoughts about the best way of tackling that?

**Colin McKerracher:** We are always learning. At the moment we have very good partnerships with educational institutions. In Strathclyde, we have a partnership with Glasgow University, and there are other good initiatives throughout Scotland. Some interesting pieces of research are awaiting publication. One that you may be aware of, the Adam project, relates to arrestee drugs abuse monitoring. It involved a partnership between Fife constabulary and Strathclyde police, in which arrestees were interviewed about their drugs misuse as they came into police custody at Fife, Govan and London Road police offices.

The aim was to establish links between drugs abuse, health issues and the commission of crime. One of our officers in Strathclyde did another piece of research on the criminal histories of 533 drug offenders, which is providing good information on the age at which people get involved with drugs, their habits and so on. That research has to be evaluated, so that we can learn lessons from it and work them into our strategies.

The choices for life initiative to which Mr Orr referred a minute ago was aimed at primary 7 schoolchildren, because it is recognised across the board that we should seek to influence children before they move into high school and are affected by peer pressure in years 1, 2 and 3. Choices for life started last year and was repeated this year. Last year it involved 12,000 children; this year it may involve 32,000. Over the next three or four years, we must go back to those children to ask them what message they received and whether it helped them.

We are still in the early stages of such work. The police service is only one element in tackling the drugs problem, but we are trying to make inroads into it. I have papers here from all the Scottish forces, which indicate that any number of pieces of

research and initiatives are under way to ensure that we do not concentrate only on those people who are drawn into the disastrous lifestyle of drugs abuse. We work with all the main agencies to ensure that our policies are aimed not just at enforcement and that there is far more to them.

**Robert Brown:** I am not entirely sure about the stage that drug treatment orders are at in Scotland. Are the pilot schemes in Glasgow and Fife off the ground yet?

**James Orr:** I understand that the pilot scheme in Glasgow has started and that the one in Fife has started or is about to start. They will be evaluated after two years.

**Robert Brown:** Do you have a part to play in monitoring the success of those projects, or will you liaise with those who do?

**James Orr:** We will certainly be interested in the success of drug treatment and testing orders. The Strathclyde police force drugs co-ordinator is involved in the working group of the Glasgow project and we will speak to him and review papers.

**Robert Brown:** In closing the loop of treatment, prevention and enforcement, getting rid of the causes of the problem would make your job easier. Do you have effective liaison arrangements in place with the other agencies?

**James Orr:** Yes. We have very firm liaison arrangements in place. We have, for example, strong links with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Two weeks ago, I chaired an international conference in Scotland on North American drug courts. I found that interesting. It is important that we are seen to be taking part in a wider debate.

**Mr Raffan:** As Robert Brown said, it is important to complete the loop. It is cheaper and more cost-effective to give people treatment rather than incarcerating them, after which they merely offend again.

I would like to go back to the matter of the SDEA. I would like to ask some questions that have been suggested by the interesting answers that you gave to Fiona Hyslop. You mentioned that 200 police officers will be recruited in two tranches of 100. You also said something that worried me, which was that chief constables will recruit and train new people, which will release experienced officers. That seems to confirm the worries of the chief constable, to whom I referred earlier. He is worried about losing experienced officers to a central organisation; he would lose the experience, information, contacts and so on that those officers had built up in that police force area. That problem might undermine detection of drug dealing.

**James Orr:** What will happen is that a chief constable will recruit a number of new police officers, which will allow him to redeploy the same number of experienced officers who will work in his force's area.

**Mr Raffan:** So you would not lose officers in Paisley.

**James Orr:** Absolutely not. Officers who were redeployed would work in their own force, in front-line drug squads, drugs education or drugs intelligence. The local chief will not lose officers. Those who are redeployed will be additional to his staff.

**Mr Raffan:** To whom will those officers be answerable?

**James Orr:** They will be answerable to the chief constable. They will certainly not be answerable to me.

**Mr Raffan:** How will you relate to the officers?

**James Orr:** I will relate to them through the local intelligence structure.

**Mr Raffan:** What does that mean?

**James Orr:** I mentioned strategic task co-ordination, which means that we have an intelligence map of Scotland that shows clearly who the key people are. We deploy police personnel to tackle those targets. For target A, the lead agency might be HM Customs and Excise, for target B the lead agency might be the Scottish crime squad, and the lead agency for target C might be Strathclyde or Lothian and Borders police. We will work hand in glove with each force.

**Mr Raffan:** Will that not be difficult? There are many different relationships that you and the SDEA must develop. You will have to be budding members of the diplomatic corps to avoid creative tension or friction.

**James Orr:** I have visited each force and spoken to each chief constable and I have spoken to the head of the Criminal Investigation Department. All have offered total co-operation.

**Mr Raffan:** I would like to go back to your point about focusing on the major players. Do you accept that most drugs come to Scotland through England?

**James Orr:** Yes.

**Mr Raffan:** How do you relate to what is going on in England? Most drugs probably come into the country through Dover. I understand that on an average summer Sunday night in the small fishing village of Bosham in Sussex, 120 yachts come in from across the channel. About 12 of them apply for customs clearance, but customs officers are so overworked that they can clear only about four of

them. It is very easy to get drugs into the country—we all know that. The south coast is the major route by which drugs come into the country via the channel tunnel and so on.

How will you relate to the English police forces? Many people would say that the reason there are so many major players in the game is that it is so difficult to detect them because they have nothing to do with what is happening on the street. How will you reach the major players in England? You will have to work very closely with the police forces there. How will you do that?

17:45

**James Orr:** The National Criminal Intelligence Service's Scottish office is based in Osprey House in Paisley. That is a UK organisation that is based in London. It has offices in all the regions of England and Wales. The NCIS works closely with our counterparts in the regions of England and Wales and customs officials at Osprey House work very closely with their colleagues in England and Wales. We communicate clearly with each other. Each agency contributes to the end game, which is an arrest or the disruption of a target.

**Mr Raffan:** I would like to make a final point. Most drugs come from down south via the channel, so most of the major players are, as we know, based there. There are, to be simplistic, major players here, but they are secondary to those down south. I am not suggesting that we should frivolously leave the problem to the English forces—we must relate to them—but will the huge investment of money and effort that we are putting into pursuing the major players in Scotland achieve anything more than we achieve now?

You mentioned the great figure of £40 million in relation to recovery of drugs, but the black market in stolen goods in Glasgow is estimated to be worth between £190 million and £200 million. That market is estimated to be worth £400 million in the whole of Scotland. That is ten times the figure that you mentioned, which illustrates that what you recover is the tip of the iceberg. We should, perhaps, try to cut the supply routes from the south.

**James Orr:** You have made some statements and I will try to answer some of your questions.

**Mr Raffan:** I was being provocative.

**James Orr:** I do not want to repeat what I said, but the agency will provide greater co-ordination of resources in Scotland. That means that proper targets will be produced and deployment will be focused for best value and best use of resources.

In looking at the bigger picture, although importation of drugs happens in the south of England, the ultimate target of an operation might

be in Glasgow. We will work closely with customs officials, who will deal with the importation. We can deal with colleagues in England and Wales to target parts of the route and we will deal with the Glasgow end. That means that we work in harmony. Each agency takes on one element of an operation. Some of those operations are highly complex and they require complex responses. We will provide clarity in the response.

**Mr Raffan:** Margaret Curran and I heard at the Glasgow drug crisis centre about a day when there was a huge increase in admissions because a car that was carrying a large part of the supply of heroin for addicts in north Glasgow had been stopped for a traffic offence. That cut off the supply on that day, which led to a crisis. That shows how difficult the situation is: a major haul of heroin for the north of Glasgow was made purely by accident. You are looking for a needle in a haystack. That relates to my question about enforcement as opposed to cutting demand.

**James Orr:** There must be a combined response. Enforcement is but part of the solution. The challenge for us all is to achieve the correct balance. It is not for me to say that the balance nationally is correct or not—that is for others.

**The Convener:** That is for us to do.

**James Orr:** All I know is that, as an agency, we have been presented with a significant challenge and we will do our best to rise to it.

**Colin McKerracher:** It would also be fair to say that good police work always relies on a slice of luck. The £40 million that was mentioned would have come through well-planned operations, but it is very nice if a constable walks round the corner and finds somebody with a huge stash of drugs. We will take that as well.

It is too easy to be simplistic about the matter and say that everything happens down south. A lot happens in Scotland—that is why the Drug Enforcement Agency is a necessary addition. It will co-ordinate the response. We have targets up here. Do not think that all the drug barons live in England. We must ensure that we view the problem in the proper context.

**The Convener:** I would like to ask a couple of final questions. Two years from now, what will you consider as success?

**James Orr:** I would dearly love to see a reduction in the number of drug deaths. That is crucial.

**The Convener:** Realistically, can we expect that?

**James Orr:** I do not know. Only time will tell. I am very interested in what is happening in the Glasgow area in relation to some of the recent

tragic deaths. I want to know what really happened. I also want communities to say that we have made a difference. I mentioned Cranhill. I would like to see that experience replicated elsewhere. I want people to be able to say that life is tangibly better in their communities.

**The Convener:** Perhaps we will talk to you in two years.

Finally, what does the DEA need to help to tackle the problem? It cannot be perfect; there must be a weakness.

**James Orr:** We need time for people to allow us to consolidate and get on with our job. The other X-factor is information, which the police service always needs from the public. We need communities to trust law enforcement agencies. We probably do not know about Mr Smith or Mr Jones who deal from their close or back garden. We need to get that information from the public.

**The Convener:** I am sure that we will have a continuing dialogue about those issues. Thank you for your extremely helpful evidence.

As a matter of course, the committee asks witnesses to follow up their evidence with written submissions of any other evidence that they come across. I am sure that you will be willing to help in that way.

**James Orr:** Yes. Thank you.

**The Convener:** That concludes our business.

*Meeting closed at 17:52.*



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