

CONFIDENTIAL - POLICY

that many of **the 1996 reform proposals remain valid today**, and have therefore been incorporated in the present report's recommendations.

The 1998 Review

1.5 **The Review's Terms of Reference and Working Group membership are attached at Annexes C and D respectively to this Report.**

1.6 The review was established last October in response to the Secretary of State's expressed concern about the Scheme's present scale, and her wish to see 'normalisation' in this area as in many others. It was already a Policing Directorate target in 1998/99 to re-visit the earlier 1996 review recommendations, and the opportunity was taken to expand considerably the scope of the new review.

1.7 While the review was undertaken against a background of the lowest levels of recorded terrorist activity for many years, the RUC were nonetheless initially worried about the desirability of a review. They referred to the continuing uncertainties about decommissioning and the terrorists' long-term intentions. Their caution was understandable. **Even so the Working Group recognised that it was not an option to defer all reform to a future, more suitable but unspecified date, given the "normalisation" imperative and the pressing need to begin re-deploying scarce security resources to other programmes in 1999/2000 and beyond.**

1.8 The Working Group was acutely aware of the dangers in downsizing the Scheme precipitously or in an ill-considered manner. **Not least, so long as the potential for terrorist violence remained it was vital to maintain a viable infrastructure and retain sufficient expertise to ensure that the necessary measures would continue to be available to those at risk.** Once dispersed, those resources and experience could not be easily retrieved, if at all, to face any new emergency. That is not to say that resources could or should be retained at their present levels. The present uncertainties were such that a **measured, incremental**