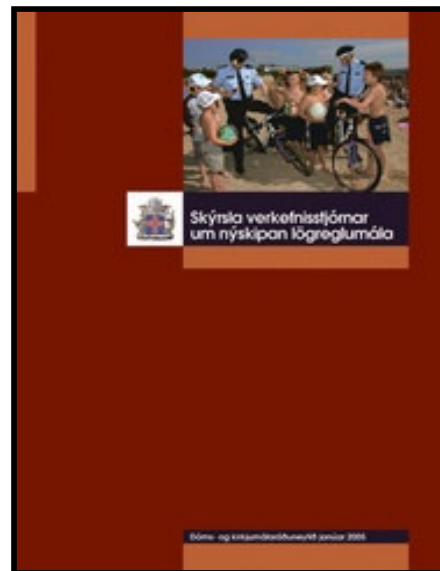


Report by the Task Committee on the Future Structure of Policing



*Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs
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1. Introduction

By a letter dated 4 November 2003, the Minister of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Björn Bjarnason, appointed a task committee to make proposals on the revision of the structure of policing in Iceland. In his letter of appointment, the minister stated that he had decided to use his influence to make changes in the regional command structure of policing and the internal functions of the police, but without any reduction in the number of district commissioners. The principal task entrusted to the committee according to the letter was divided into two parts: firstly, to submit ideas on a new structure aimed at strengthening and developing the functions of the police and the district commissioners, and also to make better use of the funding allocated to these authorities, and secondly to draw up a policing strategy for the coming years, setting out a priority ranking of tasks to be tackled, with quantifiable goals to be aimed at in policing. The committee was also entrusted with making an assessment of the results of the enactment of the current Police Act and the structure and division of responsibilities it introduced, using as a reference point the work that has been done in recent years on a computer model for the operation of the district commissioners' offices, and adopting a position on the opinions expressed recently on the prosecution authorities, the definition of the criminal investigation police in legislation, etc.

The letter of appointment stated that the aim of the exercise was that the police and prosecution authorities should be fully capable of dealing with offenders, and should preferably be in a superior position. Particular mention was made of the growth in economic crime and the use of digital technology in offences of this type, and it was emphasised that there was a constantly growing need for specially-qualified personnel for the investigation of new types of offences. It was also emphasised in the letter of appointment that police training, facilities and equipment must be commensurate with the aims of the police and the demands and standards expected of them at any given time, and that the training of command units should take into account the tasks and risks they undertake in the course of their most important functions.

Mention was also made in the letter of the necessity of bearing two main points in mind when considering the work of the district commissioners. One was that it was important, in the interests of the local communities in Iceland, not to aim at a reduction of the support they derived from the functions of the district commissioners' offices and the services they provided, and the other was that it was not essential for the functions of the district commissioners to be identical in all locations.

Those appointed to the committee were Stefán Eiríksson, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice (Chairman), Skúli Magnússon, at the time a Reader at the University of Iceland, now a judge at the Reykjavík District Court, and Ragnheiður Ríkharðsdóttir, Chairman of the Mosfellsbær Municipal Council.

The task committee began work as soon as it was appointed, gathering information from a wide range of sources, examining work that had already been done and isolating individual aspects of the task. At the beginning of 2004 the committee decided, in consultation with the Minister of Justice, to approach four persons and ask them to submit their ideas and suggestions regarding a new structure of the police in Iceland. These were Jónmundur Kjartansson, Chief Superintendent at the Office of the National Commissioner of Police, Karl Steinar Valsson, Superintendent of the Reykjavík Police, Kjartan Þorkelsson, District Commissioner in Hvalsöllum and Ólafur K. Ólafsson, District Commissioner in Snæfellsbær. These persons were consulted both because of their knowledge of police issues and the structure of the police and in view of their general experience and education in the field; their proposals were not supposed to reflect the viewpoints of the units they headed or by which they were employed. They received no other instructions regarding this work. These four persons submitted their proposals individually towards the end of the winter, and they proved extremely useful to the task committee in its subsequent work.

In its letter of appointment, the committee was instructed to engage in close and candid consultation with the leaders of the police and the district commissioners, and this has been the case from the outset. The chairmen of the National Association of Police Officers and the District Commissioners' Society received regular information on the progress of the committee's work, and the committee chairman also gave an

account of the status of the project and answered questions at meetings of the National Association of Police Officers, the Chief Superintendents' Society and the Icelandic Criminal Investigation Police Society. A first draft of the committee's report was shown to the chairmen of the National Association of Police Officers and the District Commissioners' Society, but no special request was made for comments on its contents, since the task committee is entirely responsible for the report itself, and the proposals it contains.

Besides this Introduction, the committee's report is divided into three main sections, with a Summary, Sources and Appendices. In the main sections, an attempt is made, firstly, to present a thorough survey of the present state of affairs and the changes that have taken place in recent years, and to evaluate these changes. Secondly, proposals are made concerning substantive points in the policing strategy in the years ahead, i.e. principal points on which the Icelandic police should focus in its work. This section, entitled "Strategic Planning in Policing" contains both a survey of strategies followed up to the present day and points that the committee considers should play a key role in strategy in the future. Thirdly, the report contains a discussion of the ways in which it would be desirable to develop policing in Iceland so as to make it possible to achieve the goals that are aimed at. This part of the report outlines how the police could be made stronger through structural changes, greater collaboration, improved administration and other means. It also contains a special discussion of aspects of the district commissioners' work other than policing, the role of the National Commissioner of Police, the structure of the prosecution, etc. Attention is also given to administrative structure, the use of performance-related management agreements and other matters with a bearing on administration and strategic planning.

As is described above, the task committee was entrusted with a dual principal role: to draw up a plan for policing in the coming years and to present ideas on a new police structure in Iceland. Naturally, the fact that these two elements were linked in this way had an effect on its work and the proposals presented in this report.

2. The Structure of the Police in Iceland

The Police Act, No. 90/1996, took effect on 1 July 1997, replacing the older Police Officers Act and the State Criminal Investigation Police Act. The new act introduced many important changes. Firstly, there was a fundamental change in the senior command structure, with the establishment of the position of the National Commissioner of Police and the abolition of the State Criminal Investigation Police. Furthermore, clear rules were enacted on the execution of police work and the rights and obligations of police officers.¹ The newly-established office of the National Commissioner of Police was entrusted with the overall command of the Icelandic police on behalf of the Minister of Justice. The National Commissioner took over various functions that up to that time had come under the Police Affairs Office of the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, the State Criminal Investigation Police and, to a small extent, the Reykjavík Police Commissioner. It was also decided to have an investigative department at the National Commissioner's Office for Economic Crime and Tax Evasion, and a support department staffed by specially-qualified investigators to assist individual regional police forces with the investigation of difficult cases. The act also provided for a laboratory at the National Commissioner's office for the investigation of forgeries, fingerprinting and other forensic studies.

Amongst other changes introduced by the new Police Act were the establishment of the position of a Deputy Police Commissioner in Reykjavík, provisions on operational regions of the police forces, including an authorisation to the Minister of Justice to decide that part of a national force may exercise police functions all over the country, and the decision to place the investigation of the vast majority of cases under the control of the local police commissioners. Substantial changes were also made to the structure of the National Police College. It was stated in the explanatory notes to the act when it was presented as a bill that reference had been made to legislation elsewhere in the Nordic countries, and in particular to the Norwegian and Finnish police acts of 1995, when it was drawn up.

Some amendments have been made to the Police Act, and thus to the structure of the police, since the act took effect in 1997. While there is no need to trace these all in detail here, the following should be mentioned:

- By an amendment made in 1998 the National Commissioner was empowered, after consulting police commissioners, to authorise a police force in one region to exercise police functions temporarily in other police regions. Provision was also made for the Minister of Justice to authorise, at the proposal of the National Commissioner, structured collaboration between police forces on the execution and direction of specific policing tasks, the transfer of police personnel between police forces for the execution and direction of specific policing tasks and the transfer of police personnel between police forces in a specific area in order to protect public safety and maintain law and order. It was also decided that the minister could, at the proposal of the National Commissioner, entrust police commissioners with specific policing tasks outside their own regions if this were considered to be of advantage in terms of local conditions.
- In 1999 the Directorate of Immigration was made into an independent body. Before that, it had been under the control of the police and, since the commencement of the Police Act, under the Office of the National Commissioner of Police.
- In 2003, senior command of the civil defence authority was transferred to the Office of the National Commissioner; up to that time it had been handled by a separate body, Iceland Civil Defence. As a result, a special Civil Defence Department was set up at the National Commissioner's Office.
- Changes were made in 2004 in the structure of forensic investigations by the police, with the responsibility for such investigations being transferred from the Office of the National Commissioner to the Reykjavík Police Force. One of the aims of this was to bring the skills and equipment used in forensic investigations together in a single location.

¹ For further information, see the manual *Lögreglulögin ásamt greinargerð og almenna umfjöllun* ('The Police Act, with notes and general discussion') in the explanatory notes accompanying the act as a bill when it was presented to the 120th legislative session of the Althingi.

- Other changes that have taken place without calling for legislative amendments include the establishment of a Police Telecommunications Centre, changes in the structure of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team and the establishment of a Police Vehicle Centre.

2.1. Police regions and the sizes of individual forces

As is provided for under the Police Act, Iceland is divided into police regions which are identical with the divisions into government administrative areas. The administrative district commissioners (*sýslumenn*; representatives of the executive branch of government) are also police commissioners in their respective jurisdictions, with the exception of Reykjavík, where control of the police is exercised by a separate police commissioner. The police commissioners in each region exercise control of the local police force, being in charge of the day-to-day functioning of the force and responsible for the execution of police functions within the region.

There are currently 26 police regions in the country. The number of policemen in each local force varies greatly: from one up to nearly 300, as can be seen from the following table.

Table 1 – numbers of police officers in each force

Police force or body	Number of police officers ²
National Commissioner's Office	59
National Police College	8
Reykjavík	271
Akranes	12
Borgarnes	8
Stykkishólmur	9
Búðardalur	1
Patreksfjörður	4
Bolungarvík	2
Ísafjörður	13
Hólmavík	2
Blönduós	6
Sauðárkrókur	9
Siglufjörður	4
Ólafsfjörður	2
Akureyri	31
Húsavík	11
Seyðisfjörður	7
Eskifjörður	10
Höfn	4
Vík	3
Hvolsvöllur	6
Vestmannaeyjar	13
Selfoss	28
Keflavík	36
Keflavík Airport	47
Hafnarfjörður	39
Kópavogur	26
Total	671

² Figures valid as of 1 February 2004. Trainees and reservists are not included.

2.2. Collaboration between police forces

Police forces currently collaborate on a wide variety of matters, and this collaboration has increased considerably in recent years, in addition to which more and more tasks involving centralised co-ordination have been directed by the National Commissioner's Office. These include the operation and servicing of the Police Telecommunications Centre in the south-western corner of the country, the structure of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team and traffic policing. All changes in this direction have been made in order to increase collaboration and flexibility between the regional forces to enable them to tackle their tasks as effectively as possible. Individual forces have also increased the degree to which they work together; examples include collaboration between the Keflavík and Keflavík Airport district commissioners, between the Keflavík and Hafnarfjörður police on traffic policing on the Reykjanesbraut highway, traffic policing in the north of the country, monitoring of the uninhabited central region of the country, which is exercised jointly by police forces in the south of the country, collaboration between forces in the eastern region in connection with the large-scale industrial construction projects in progress there, etc. The National Commissioner's Office has also been involved in collaborative projects of this type, and in some cases has taken the initiative in organising them or assisted with their execution. It is clear that the prime factor in bringing about greater collaboration between the regional forces has been the establishment of the Police Telecommunications Centre and the adoption of the Tetra telecommunications system. Thanks to this system and the centre, it is possible to monitor the movements and functions of all police vehicles in the south-western corner of the country and to organise responses by the police to calls they receive so as to ensure the most efficient services, irrespective of the regional forces to which the police personnel involved belong.

2.3. Structure of the prosecution

As has been described above, changes were made in the structure of the prosecution authority by the new Police Act; others had occurred earlier with the separation of the judicial and administrative functions at the regional level by the commencement of the Code of Criminal Procedure, No. 19/1991 and subsequent amendments to that legislation which took effect on the same date as the Police Act, i.e. 1 July 1997. The main change introduced by the new Police Act was that it was decided to have a special department for the investigation of economic crime and tax evasion at the Office of the National Commissioner, and also that the investigation of the vast majority of offences was made the responsibility of the regional police commissioners; at the same time, the State Criminal Investigation Police was abolished. The main reason for setting up a special Economic Crime and Tax Evasion Department was that offences of this type are among the most complex that the police have to deal with, requiring a degree of expert specialisation that it was not practicable to attain in more than one investigative department in the country. It should be mentioned that in the original draft of the new Police Act, it was proposed not to have special investigative departments at all police commissioners' offices, but rather that investigative departments in specific police regions should also handle investigative functions in other regions. This arrangement was the subject of a considerable amount of criticism when the bill was discussed in the Althingi, with the result that the provisions on this point were substantially revised, with less specific arrangements being laid down regarding police investigations.

The present prosecution structure is as follows: the Director of Public Prosecutions and the commissioners of police, including the National Commissioner, exercise the functions of the prosecution in Iceland. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Director of Public Prosecutions is the supreme executant of prosecution authority. Thus, he supervises the exercise of the power of prosecution by the commissioners of police and issues general instructions on how it is to be handled; he can give police commissioners instructions on individual cases, which they are obliged to follow; he can take the decision on the prosecution of a case out of the hands of a commissioner of police and review, either on his own initiative or when he receives a complaint from a party who has interests to defend, a decision by a commissioner of police to drop the investigation of a case, drop a case or waive the prosecution of a case.³ The Minister of

³ In this connection, reference should be made to the article by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Bogi Nilsson, *Hvert á að vera skipulag ákærvalds hér á landi?* ("How should the prosecution be structured in Iceland?"), which

Justice oversees the functions of the prosecution in Iceland and can demand reports from the Director of Public Prosecutions on individual cases.

2.4. Evaluation of the results of the enactment of the new Police Act

One of the tasks entrusted to the committee was to evaluate the results of the enactment of the new Police Act and the division of responsibilities that it introduced. As was described in the notes to the act when it was presented as a bill, the committee which drafted the bill had been given a number of aims. First, the act was intended to review the senior command structure of the police. Second, it was aimed to integrate the provisions of the Police Act with a review of the provisions on the prosecution authority in the Code of Criminal Procedure so as to make the investigation of crime quicker and more efficient. The aim was to simplify procedure at the investigation and indictment stages and to entrust police commissioners with power to prosecute in a larger number of categories of offence, so making it possible for the vast majority of offences to be investigated under the direction of the commissioner of police who draws up the charge and prosecutes the case at the district court level. Third, the aim was to enact in law clearer provisions on the execution of police functions, including the measures that were open to the police in order to maintain law and order. Fourth, the aim was to have clear provisions in law on the rights and obligations of police officers. Other aims could be mentioned which were not enumerated specifically in the introductory section of the bill, for example that of ensuring sufficient mobility of police forces, changes regarding the structure of the National Police College, etc. The bill specifically addressed the position of women in the police, and contained some new provisions designed to make it easier for women to join the police. A special section of the bill was concerned with policemen's age limits; it was described how the committee that prepared the bill had discussed the desirability of cutting the maximum age of police officers in stages to 65, though no proposals on this were actually made in the bill.

Briefly, the view of the task committee is that overall, the changes that were intended have come about. Admittedly, certain provisions of the Police Act have been amended subsequently, as has been mentioned, but it must be regarded as a natural part of the development of a new system that measures of this type will be called for to streamline the new structure in the light of practical experience or rectify errors that were not obvious in the beginning or to ensure the achievement of the original aims. A short account of each of the aspects named above follows below.

2.4.1. Senior command structure of the police

There can be no disputing that the aim of reviewing the senior command structure of the police was achieved. In the view of the task committee, the structural changes proposed in the bill, and in particular the establishment of the Office of the National Commissioner, have resulted in considerable improvements in policing in Iceland. As was described in the report submitted by the Minister of Justice to the Althingi in 2002 on the situation and trends in policing, the National Commissioner handles and directs large-scale tasks that call for specialised knowledge and co-ordination of forces, e.g. investigations of offences involving tax evasion and economic crime, in addition to which the National Commissioner's Office assists the individual police forces with the investigation of complex cases. The report also stated that the National Commissioner's Office had given a boost to police functions in Iceland, e.g. in the fields of administration, overall structure, co-ordination, international contact and professionalism in the handling of cases. In addition, it had carried out studies and surveys of crime and trends in crime which had been of great value in assessment by the Althingi and other parties of how to allocate funding in order to promote the security of the ordinary citizen and police services to the community. Last but not least, it was mentioned that the National Commissioner's Office operated an International Department to handle dealings with police forces throughout the world. Mention may also be made of points that are not

appeared in the series *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum IV*, 2003 ("Studies in the Social Sciences", IV, 2003). The author states there that the structure of the prosecution in Iceland is not of long standing; some indication of it was to be found in the Code of Criminal Procedure, No. 19/1991, and the arrangement was fully consolidated by clear provisions in the Act No. 84/1996, amending the Act No. 19/1991 by provisions that took effect on 1 July 1997.

enumerated in the aforementioned report; for example, the task committee regards the Police Telecommunications Centre, which comes under the National Commissioner's Office and serves all police forces in the south-western corner of the country, as constituting a substantial and positive change in the policing structure in that region and police services to the local communities. It is clear that the transfer of these functions to the National Commissioner's Office made good use of the opportunities offered by the new structure. The same can be said regarding the Special Weapons and Tactics Team, which was brought under the National Commissioner's Office in 2004; by its nature, this is a highly specialised force which must be available for deployment in any part of the country.

However, the new structure has not only resulted in the transfer of tasks to the Office of the National Commissioner: some functions have also been transferred from the office. The processing and mailing of collection dockets for fines was transferred from the office to that of the Hvolsvöllur Police Commissioner at the beginning of 2003, and in 2004 changes were made in forensic investigations, with responsibility for comparative studies being transferred from the forensic laboratory to the Reykjavík Police.

In recent years some public criticism has been directed at the Office of the National Commissioner; for example, it has been maintained that the "expansion" of the office has taken place at the expense of other policing activities in Iceland. Furthermore, the priorities adopted in the development of the office have been criticised: it has been alleged, for example, that there is a shortage of qualified specialists at the office in fields other than policing. For the most part, these criticisms have been answered by the aforementioned report on the status and trends in policing, which examines the development of the office's functions and the funding allocated to it. The report states that a large part of the alleged "expansion" of the office resulted from the transfer of functions from individual police forces to the National Commissioner's Office, this having been done on the basis of a professional assessment that this was the best location for such functions, as has been described above. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of specialists who are not trained policemen at the office in recent years. This has taken place in connection with an increased focus on the gathering and processing of statistical information, amongst other things. It has also been alleged that the office has developed in a direction other than that which was originally intended when the Police Act was passed, i.e. that the office has put greater effort into the investigation of police cases and direct involvement in policing than on administration, and in particular on co-ordinative tasks, the issue of rules and instructions, etc.

It is clear from the Police Act that the National Commissioner's Office was intended to cover a varied range of policing functions. Admittedly, the involvement of the office in investigations and individual policing functions has been more publicly visible than the work it has done in other areas, which nevertheless has been considerable and has produced considerable results. For example, the office has in recent years formulated police staffing policy, issued an ethical code for the police, published procedural rules and guidelines on the execution of police functions and issued manuals on police measures, fire investigations, site investigations and co-ordinated crime prevention methods; it has also gathered and processed data on crime, subsequently publishing this in annual reports on crime statistics. The only conclusion that can be drawn from all this is that the functioning of the office has fully lived up to the expectations that were made of it at the outset, and that it has discharged most of its tasks in accordance with the stated requirements and expectations.

2.4.2. Simplification of investigative procedures – gains in speed and efficiency

Another of the aims of the new legislation on the police and the amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure was to make criminal investigations quicker and more efficient. According to the figures available, the time that normally elapses between a complaint being lodged with the police and the matter being investigated has been cut considerably in recent years (on this point, reference should be made to the report by the Minister of Justice to the Althingi on the situation and trends in law enforcement, amongst other materials). Nevertheless, some criticism has been made in the last few years, both as regards the speed and the quality of police investigations.

As is mentioned above, the original proposals made in the bill on the Police Act regarding the structure of police investigations were not adopted. Revisions were made in the course of discussion by the Althingi to the provisions of the act that dealt with police investigations, with the result that the provisions adopted were more general than those proposed in the bill. In the original proposals, allowance was made for

investigative departments to be in operation at ten regional police commissioners' offices. The notes accompanying the bill described how 13 of the 27 police forces in the country had police staff of only five persons or fewer, and that only ten of the forces had ten or more police staff. In the light of these figures, it was considered inappropriate, and even impossible, to have the investigation of major crimes in the hands of the police staff of the smaller regional forces. It was seen as out of the question that police officers in the smaller forces could receive the training and specialisation needed to ensure the high-quality investigation of complex crimes and the solving of the largest possible number of crimes. Further details of the procedure and structure of investigations are to be found in the report.

The arguments presented in support of the aforementioned proposals on police investigations in the original bill are still fully valid today. In this connection, mention may be made of the report by the Traffic Accident Investigation Committee on fatal traffic accidents in 2002; this included a particular mention of police investigations of traffic accidents. The report criticised police investigations on many grounds, stating particularly that the matters investigated or examined by the police varied greatly according to the police region in which the accidents occurred. The report included the following statement:

"It is reasonable to propose the idea of establishing specialist skills for the investigation of traffic accidents at certain localities across the country. Such an arrangement appears to produce good results in other categories of police investigations, e.g. drug offences. It is clear that most of the regional police forces are so lightly staffed that it would not be possible to form separate departments with specially-qualified police staff engaged exclusively on the investigation of traffic accidents, and nor would the numbers of traffic accidents warrant doing so. On the other hand, it is possible to envisage that specialised departments, or investigative teams that would investigate accidents, could be established at certain places across the country." ⁴

The question arises whether the idea described above could not apply equally to the investigation of the more difficult cases handled by the police in all fields. There is no ignoring the fact that many of the regional forces today are very lightly staffed; the populations of their respective regions are also small. It follows that the number of crimes committed in these regions is also small, and long periods often elapse between the commission of offences in individual categories. Consequently, the police in these areas are more often than not inexperienced in certain types of investigation, including, for example, serious traffic accidents.

In this connection, it should be mentioned that in the process that resulted in the appointment of the task committee writing this report, a large number of district commissioners wrote a letter to the Minister of Justice on changes in the structure of policing, informing him of the main priorities that had emerged in the course of informal discussions between them on the matter. Their letter stated that the main drawback to the present system was without doubt the fact that some of the regional forces were too small, and consequently lacking in capacity to undertake difficult or complex tasks. This applied, for example, to the investigation of the more complex cases and police activities in specialised areas, such as drug abuse.

In 2002, a group appointed by the Director of Public Prosecutions submitted a report on the handling of rape cases by the police and the prosecution. The survey by the group included cases referred to the police and the prosecution after 1 July 1997, i.e. after the commencement of the Police Act and the Act No. 84/1996, amending the Code of Criminal Procedure. As has been described above, those amendments introduced new structural arrangements in the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases which were aimed at making investigations quicker and more efficient by simplifying procedure in investigation and prosecution.

All rape cases referred to the police from that date until the end of 2001 were examined. One of the points that aroused attention in this survey was that average time taken by police investigations of rape cases grew steadily across the period, from 96 days (on average) in 1988 to 167 days in 2001. The group's conclusion was that one of the main reasons for this was the division of responsibilities between the investigative

⁴ Banaslys í umferðinni 2002 ('Fatal Traffic Accidents in 2002') a report by the Traffic Accident Investigation Committee.

detectives and the commissioners of police or their legally-qualified deputies, particularly in the larger police regions. It was proposed that commissioners of police or their legally-qualified deputies be involved at the beginning of the police investigations and play an active part in the investigations.

Under the division of responsibilities referred to in the above comment, the police commissioners or their legally-qualified deputies normally become involved only after the investigation of the case is complete, either in order to recommend a prosecution or else to refer the case, with a report, to the Director of Public Prosecutions when it comes under his scope of responsibilities. It may happen that in the course of the examination by the lawyers, matters come to light that need to be investigated more fully, and they therefore issue instructions on further investigations; in this way, possible deficiencies in the earlier stages are put right retroactively, and this arrangement tends to lengthen the time taken to process the case. The change in procedure introduced by the legislative amendments described above, by contrast, was designed as a step in the opposite direction, i.e. by transferring to the police commissioners the power to prosecute more type of case, the aim was to ensure greater cohesion between the police and the prosecution. This allocation of responsibilities can be seen, for example, in the organisational chart of the Reykjavík Commissioner of Police, which shows clearly the division between the Investigation Department, which is headed by a chief superintendent, and the Investigation and Prosecution Department, which is headed by a prosecutor.

There is no doubt that the changes made in this area were, broadly speaking, sensible and that it is best that police commissioners are able to prosecute cases involving traffic offences and other common types of offence; this is the same arrangement as is in place in Iceland's neighbouring countries. On the other hand, it is clear that the procedure as regards the interaction between the police and the prosecution authority, where these are under the same authority, could be made more efficient in the case of more serious crimes. In the view of the task committee, it is important to give particular attention to the structure of the investigation of criminal cases as a whole, the aims of this including the simplification of investigative procedures so as to make them more efficient, having cases brought to court more quickly, reducing duplication that occurs when direct evidential proof is required to be submitted to the courts, etc. These points will be examined later in this report.

2.4.3. Structure of police training

As is described above, various changes were made to the structure of the National Police College; firstly, it was made into a separate institution, and substantial amendments were also made to the rules on the admission of trainees. The main aim of these changes was to enable people to apply for places as trainees in the college without any connection with specific positions in a police force. All those who are involved in police and policing issues agree unanimously that these changes have been of great advantage. Large numbers of competent individuals have applied for entry into the college each year, and this has resulted in very well qualified new recruits entering the force in recent years. There has also been an appreciable increase in the further training of police officers recently, and an executive training course was started at the college last year. Over the past year or two, work has been in progress, at the initiative of the National Police College, on proposals for future changes aimed at supporting and developing its functions still further. The task committee is of the opinion that in further work in this area, it will be important to give attention to further improvements in training at both the basic and the further training levels at the college. It will also be important to consider ways of improving the functions of the police in specific important areas, e.g. the investigation of economic and computer-related crime; further discussion of this will follow below.

2.4.4. Greater numbers of women in the police, etc.

One of the aims of the new Police Act was to increase the number of women in the police forces, this to be done by changing the admission requirements and in other ways. The proportion of women in the police in 1997 was 4.3%; by the beginning of 2003 it had risen to 9.3%. The following table, which was taken from the police homepage, presents an overview of the numbers of police officers employed at the beginning of 2002 and 2003. The figures show that an increase has also taken place in the number of women with policing qualifications in senior positions in the police.

Table 2 – Numbers of police officers, by rank and gender

	2003		2002	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Chief	24	0	22	0
Superintendents / Detective Chief Superintendents	28	1	30	1
Superintendents / Detective Superintendents	87	7	83	4
Inspectors/Detective Chief Inspectors	222	15	222	10
Inspectors/Detective Inspectors	38	0	50	0
Sergeants	203	34	165	25
Constables	18	1	49	14
Temporarily employed	81	4	91	6
Reservists	27	13	36	12
Trainees	728	75	748	75
Total				

Regarding the age of police officers, a committee was appointed to make proposals on the composition of the police forces by age; when the bill which became the Police Act was introduced, the government was of the opinion that it was not an appropriate time to propose a reduction in the maximum age. The committee submitted its report in 1999, proposing, amongst other things, that the maximum age be reduced to 65 years. This proposal was accepted and confirmation of this was made in 2002 with amendments to the policemen's collective agreement and the Police Act.

2.4.5. Increased collaboration between police forces

The Police Act opened up new possibilities for collaboration between the regional police forces, and use has been made of them. Other factors, it must be acknowledged, have also played a part in this, such as rapid technical developments, particularly as regards telecommunications. Changes in administrative methods, for example the introduction of performance-related management agreements between the ministries and government institutions, together with other factors, have also resulted in the regional police forces setting themselves clear and quantifiable goals, drawing up strategic plans and publishing annual reports examining the results achieved over the past year and setting out aims for the coming year. Many examples of fruitful collaboration between police forces on both major and minor tasks could be given, e.g. between the Keflavík and Keflavík Airport Police, between the Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík Police on the monitoring of traffic on the Reykjanesbraut highway, collaboration between forces in the north of the country on traffic policing, etc.

The collaborative tasks tackled by the police forces seem to follow mostly from initiatives by the commissioners of police and other police officers rather than being part of an overall structure with specific aims or attempts to meet specific challenges. There are, admittedly, exceptions to this, for example policing arrangements in connection with major events such as the meeting of NATO foreign ministers in 2002, in which many regional forces were involved under the direction of the National Commissioner.

3. Strategic Planning in Policing

3.1. Strategy up to the present

Work on policing strategy has taken a number of forms in recent years. Naturally, the largest strategic task in the past decade was the work on the new Police Act, but further strategic work of various types has been in progress since then. Examples of this can be seen in many places: for example, in actions taken by the government to combat drug abuse by expanding the Drug Squad and upgrading its equipment, the enlargement of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team during the current year and plans for further enlargement in the coming years and a greater emphasis on traffic policing. The National Commissioner of Police has also set out a strategy in various areas, including crime reduction. Individual police commissioners, furthermore, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, have defined strategies in certain types of policing by means of performance-related agreements and long-term plans in which they set themselves specific targets in various areas, e.g. the reduction of traffic accidents, cutting burglary rates, etc. Further details of some of the points mentioned above follow below.

3.1.1. Strategic planning by the government and the Althingi

One of the main priorities to be addressed has been the establishment of stronger drug policing, which is a part of the government's policy on measures to combat the drug problem and alcohol and tobacco consumption. This has taken the form of a considerable increase in the number of Drug Squad policemen, both in Reykjavík and in other regional forces. Their equipment has also been upgraded by means of special funding.

Other strategic developments include Iceland's participation in the Schengen scheme, which led to a tightening of border controls and the establishment of a special International Department at the National Commissioner's Office and the expansion of international police collaboration, including the making of a special co-operation agreement between Iceland and Europol. Other strategic projects include the establishment of the Police Telecommunications Centre, an upgrading of traffic monitoring in connection with an overall strategy on traffic safety and emphasis on neighbourhood and district policing; the upgrading of policing in all these fields has involved the government and the Althingi in one form or another. The Althingi and the government also set out strategy aimed at improving traffic safety which involves the police in a variety of ways.

3.1.2. Strategic planning by the National Commissioner

Work on strategic planning in many aspects of policing has been done at the National Commissioner's Office in the past few years. A recent publication about the office stated that much work had been done in recent years on internal co-ordination in the police and also on improving working procedures in various areas of police work and raising efficiency. This has included the establishment of various registers and databases on crime and offenders, manuals, rules, instructions, reports and recommendations, surveys and academic studies. The focus of attention in recent years is described in the publication as having been, broadly speaking, on the following areas:

- Co-ordination of police working procedures, co-ordination of police units and assistance to police units.
- Specialised projects carried out on a nationwide basis or under international collaboration, which the National Commissioner is in a better position to handle than are individual police commissioners owing to the co-ordination or service functions of the office.
- Personnel and internal police affairs, the upgrading of technical facilities and equipment and the acquisition of a reliable overview of the position of the police in Iceland and trends in crime.⁵

⁵ The Office of the National Commissioner of Police – an Introduction.

An example of individual strategic planning projects is that in 1998 the National Commissioner requested all police commissioners and the principal of the National Police College to take account, in their strategic planning, of the aim of preventing crime and reducing the incidence of crime as far as possible. In particular, it was suggested that the commissioners set themselves the goal of reducing break-ins, theft, bodily assault, robbery and vandalism by 20%. In this connection, the National Commissioner drew attention to “active deployment” of the police, involving, for example, a concentration of policing resources at the places where, and times when, the majority of crimes tend to be committed. Thus, each police commissioner was able to set his force a clear goal and to prioritise the tasks he regarded as being the most urgent.⁶

In 1998, the National Commissioner appointed a committee chaired by his deputy, Þórir Oddsson, which was entrusted with the task of making proposals on strategic planning and objective setting for the police for the next five years. The committee completed its work in 2000, submitting a report entitled (in Icelandic) “Strategy and Goals for the Police for the Next Five Years”. This consisted of two parts; the first examined some fundamentals in all discussion of the police and policing issues. It examined the use of certain terms and concepts, explaining the role of the police and their main tasks and some of the main objectives they should work towards. It went on to set out various suggestions by the committee regarding police administration and structure and other matters. The second part of the report presented the conclusions produced by a larger group of experts and professionals in the field of policing, etc., examining the main objectives of the work of the police and the prerequisites for achieving them to the fullest possible extent.

The first part of the report identified the following main objectives which, in the view of the committee, corresponded closely with the role of the police as defined in law:

- The police should strive to prevent crime by taking active preventive measures.
- Through protective measures and monitoring, the police shall ensure compliance with valid and prevent accidents.
- The police shall investigate crimes efficiently and professionally.
- The police shall take measures to ensure the rule of law in Iceland and to strengthen the public’s sense of security.

Further goals were also set in order to make it possible to achieve the principle goals listed above. The report stated that the police must have as their guiding principle the maintenance of good relations with the public, so promoting the rule of law in Iceland and giving citizens a sense of security. The following points were identified as being conducive to good policing and building up a relationship between the police and the public:

- The police are to have service to the public as their guiding principle in their work.
- They public should have easy access to the police.
- Policing shall be purposeful and visible in order to strengthen the public’s sense of security under the law.
- The police shall maintain active contact with the public in order to publicise information about matters that have a bearing on people’s daily lives and concern civil security.
- The police shall be obliged to conduct themselves with moderation and to apply force as appropriate to the circumstances in any given case in order to maintain law and order.
- By means of employing well-educated and competent staff, the police shall ensure that tasks are executed efficiently and professionally in accordance with modern standards.
- In criminal investigations, care shall be taken in the gathering of evidence, employing the latest equipment and methods.
- Priority shall be given to treating all cases efficiently and to a high standard.
- The police should be on the alert for criminal activity and direct their attention to groups in which undesirable situations are developing or organised crime is being prepared.
- The police shall use the funding available as efficiently as possible. This may necessitate the priority ranking of tasks.

⁶ The annual report of the Office of the National Commissioner of Police for 1999.

- Priority ranking of tasks should be done in a professional manner, based on statistics and data collected.
- The police should strengthen their contact with other authorities, particularly those in the social services and school systems, in order to achieve collective solutions to existing problems.
- The police shall take part in international law-enforcement operations as decided by the government. The police shall also participate in collaborative work with police forces in other countries, as necessary, in order to prevent or solve crimes that are connected to some extent with international crime.

The report continues with a further examination of the administration and structure of policing, including management of police finances, their equipment, the use of digital information technology, education, training and staffing, and some of the main priorities in the work of the police were listed. The list includes items such as preventive work, the protection of children and young people, remedial treatment for young offenders, anti-drug policing, traffic policing, specialised investigation of economic crime, computer-related crime and traffic offences and policing in the uninhabited highland regions, monitoring of known recidivists and issues relating to state security; mention was also made of collaboration under the Schengen scheme and other aspects of international police collaboration.

As regards other strategic planning projects done by the Office of the National Commissioner, mention should be made of the police staffing policy which was issued in 2003. The aim of setting out a staffing policy of this type for the police was to put them in a better position to play the role they are intended to play in the community as provided for under law and in accordance with executive decisions. It was also intended to promote a better spirit in the force and improve the quality of the service and security that the police are expected to provide to the community. A code of ethics for the police was also issued in 2003; this was based on the resolution by the European Committee of Ministers on a European Code of Police Ethics. Codes of police ethics in other countries were used as guidelines in the preparation of the code, and the Ethics Institute of the University of Iceland was also involved in compiling the code.

3.1.3. Strategic planning by individual police commissioners

As a result of the initiative taken by the National Commissioner's Office and the introduction of performance management agreements between the Ministry of Justice and individual police forces, it has become more common for individual forces to draw up clear strategies and set themselves quantifiable goals. A comparison of these goals and the results achieved is then presented in the annual report of the regional force involved. In the same way, the structure and administration of the individual forces has, to an increasing extent, been based on such goal-setting, and far more use is now made of statistical data in the administration of the forces. For example, at the beginning of 2004, the Reykjavík Police Commissioner set the goal of charting and analysing incidents of housebreaking in the city and reducing them by 20%. An analysis of the results achieved over the first eight months of the year was made by the Reykjavík Police, and showed that housebreaking had been cut by 12% over the 8-month period, as compared with the same period in 2003.⁷

By way of examples from other regional forces, it could be mentioned that the Hafnarfjörður District Commissioner drew up and announced a strategy covering certain types of offences in 2003. The main aim was to cut the incidence of particular types of offence that were seen as having a particular impact on the public. At the time, according to the report by the Hafnarfjörður District Commissioner on strategy and goals for 2004, there had been an alarming rise in the number of break-ins, thefts and acts of vandalism, and these goals took this into account. The report stated that during 2003, there was a drop of 15% in the number of break-ins, 26% in the number of thefts and 10% in incidents of vandalism. Continuing on the basis of this experience, the commissioner set further clear goals for the year 2004. Other regional forces that have been prominent in strategic planning and/or shown initiative in other ways are those in Ísafjörður, Kópavogur, Stykkishólmur, Akranes, Húsavík, Keflavík and Selfoss.

⁷ Morgunblaðið, 13. september 2004. *Eftirlit með þekktum afbrotamönnum gefur góða raun.* (An article in the newspaper Morgunblaðið on 13 September 2004: "Monitoring of known offenders produces good results.")

No special mention has been made in this section of the present report of strategic planning by the Minister of Justice or the Ministry of Justice; it is evident, however, that the ministry has been involved, directly or indirectly, in the planning activities of all the authorities mentioned above, either through making budget allocation proposals, formulating traffic-safety policy, making performance-related agreements, or in other ways.

3.2. Position of the task committee on future strategic planning

The most extensive strategic planning exercise that has taken place in policing in Iceland was the outcome of the work by the committee of police commissioners that was described above. The report produced by the committee, “Strategy and Goals for the Police for the Next Five Years”, was an extremely high-quality and well-produced report which for some reason did not, initially, meet with the reception that might have been expected. Possibly the main reason for this was that few of the regional forces were, at the time of the publication of the report (in 2000), receptive towards work of this type, being ill-equipped, from the point of view of structure and administration, to make use of the basis that the report presented. In the four years since the report appeared, a fundamental change has taken place in this respect; this is partly due to the introduction of performance management agreements, improved knowledge in this field on the part of the directors of the regional forces, not least reflecting the administrative training courses held by the National Police College, and other factors. None the less, the points highlighted in the report have been clearly addressed in all strategic planning regarding policing, both at the National Commissioner’s Office and the individual commissioners’ offices mentioned above. Thus, it can be said that the report laid the foundations for the strategic planning that has been done by the police in Iceland over the past few years.

As is described in the Introduction to this report, the task committee was entrusted with drawing up a policing strategy for the coming years, setting out a priority ranking of tasks to be tackled, with quantifiable goals to be aimed at. Proposals of this type follow below.

The role of the police is defined in detail in Article 1 of the Police Act:

- a. to maintain public safety and law and order, strive to ensure the safety of citizens under the law, and to protect the right of ownership, the public interest and lawful activities of all types;*
- b. to prevent crime and activities that interfere with the security of the public and the state;*
- c. to work at the solution of crimes, stop unlawful activities and follow cases up in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure or other statutes;*
- d. to be of assistance to the public as appropriate and to help them when danger threatens;*
- e. to provide the authorities with protection or assistance with the execution of their work in accordance with the provisions of law or custom, as necessary;*
- f. to co-operate with other government authorities and institutions that deal with matters that are related to the field of operations of the police;*
- g. to execute other tasks entrusted to them under law or by custom.*

This enumeration can be seen as a certain priority ranking of the tasks that the police are expected to handle. Their main task is the one listed first, i.e. to maintain public safety and law and order, ensure the safety of citizens under the law, and also to protect the right of ownership, the public interest and lawful activities of all types. Next comes the preventive function, i.e. preventing crime, then the investigative function, the service function and then the co-operative function, which is divided into two parts: assisting other authorities in the execution of their functions and assisting other parties that deal with matters related to the field of operations of the police.

The task committee sees no reason to question or change the clear prioritisation of tasks presented in this way in Article 1 of the Police Act. Instead, it will attempt to identify points of emphasis under each of the items, i.e. priorities within each individual area. It should be pointed out that, obviously, channelling particular efforts into points in one area may produce results in more areas, so having an extensive value in terms of strategic planning.

3.2.1. *Maintaining safety, ensuring security under the law and protecting the right of ownership and other public interests – the security function*

The principal role of the police in Iceland, according to the Police Act, is to maintain public safety and law and order, strive to ensure the safety of citizens under the law, and to protect the right of ownership, the public interest and lawful activities of all types. If anything, the significance of this role has grown somewhat in recent years due to the increased threat of international terrorism following the terror attacks on the USA in 2001. As has been mentioned above, measures to meet this threat have included the strengthening of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team, more extensive and tighter border control and a greater level of collaboration with police forces in other countries.

However, this function also includes general police supervision regarding the life, health and property of members of the public, and various types of new equipment have been adopted by the police in order to raise and improve the safety of the public in general. These include police surveillance cameras, which are used in the centre of Reykjavík and in traffic monitoring. Additional emphasis has been placed on visible policing, increased monitoring to prevent housebreaking, an expansion of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team and other measures.

To further ensure the achievement of the goals regarding public safety, the task committee recommends that particular emphasis be placed on the following:

- *Greater visibility of policing.* In terms of this aim, it is desirable to take measures, such as streamlining in working procedures, improving the equipment used in police cars, etc., to enable policemen to spend as much time as possible in general patrolling and monitoring. The aim should be to extend the service area of the Police Telecommunications Centre to cover as many of the regional police forces as possible, so raising the number of police officers who are able to attend to ordinary patrolling, as happened in the south-western corner of the country when the telecommunications centre was established. The aim should also be that police cars be equipped in such a way as to enable police officers in them to attend to the largest part of their reporting there; also the number of specialised secretaries should be increased so as to reduce the workload of this type on police officers.
- *Increased collaboration with the public.* In order to ensure public safety as well as possible, it is necessary that the public be aware of threats that may arise and how to respond to them. Therefore it is important that the police be open and seek greater collaboration with the public so as to increase public safety in the broad sense of the word. Emphasis should be placed on the following points:
 - *A smooth and effective flow of information from the public to the police and vice versa.* At present, the public always respond positively to special appeals by the police in connection with the investigation of individual cases, and also to general instructions from the police in various contexts. It is pertinent to ask how the mutual exchange of information between the police and the public could be expanded further and put to even better use, in particular with regard to the possibilities that have been opened up by the establishment of the internet and e-mail. The police themselves currently use the police website for general information purposes with good results. It can be asked whether it would not be a good idea to give the public the opportunity of registering e-mail addresses with the police, divided by area in the larger towns and districts, so that if necessary, the police could send out special announcements to local residents. This would apply, for example, when information is needed or to draw attention to a particularly high incidence of crimes of a particular type in a locality, etc.
 - *Increased neighbourhood watch activities.* Neighbourhood watch schemes have produced good results and raised the awareness of the public of how people can be responsible for their own security. It would be a natural step if the police were to encourage, on a systematic basis, neighbourhoods (individual streets or even smaller units, as appropriate in each individual case) to establish systematic neighbourhood watch schemes. To do this,

it would be possible to offer courses for representatives of local residents' associations in which the key points of such schemes could be explained, and such groups could be assigned special contact persons within the police, or district policemen in their areas, where these exist.

- *Increased collaboration with specific groups.* Over the years, collaboration between the police and specific groups within the public has produced good results in a number of fields. Examples are projects such as the “parents’ patrols”, which together with other measures have had a positive effect in preventing children and teenagers from being out of doors after the prescribed times at night, and on other matters. Collaboration of this type could be increased and extended to other interested groups, for example pupils’ and parents’ associations in schools, sports clubs, old people’s associations, etc. Collaborative projects could take a number of forms, from individual preventive actions to larger campaigns to tackle specific projects.
- *Building up the Special Weapons and Tactics Team.* The government has announced its policy as regards the strengthening and expansion of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team. The task committee regards this as an urgent matter, particularly in view of increasing ruthlessness and violence in crime in recent years, the growth in international criminal activity and the threat of terrorism. Building up the team would guarantee public safety more reliably than is the case at present and would also be of crucial significance in increasing the security of the police themselves in their work.
- *Clearer rules on the role of the security police.* Under Article 5 of the Police Act, one of the responsibilities of the National Commissioner is to operate a police investigation department to investigate treason and offences committed against the government of the state and its highest authorities. In Iceland’s principal neighbouring countries, tasks of this type are handled by the police, but generally by a special department or a special security police unit which functions under clear authorisation in law, and even under special legislation, it being specified in such legislation that it functions under special supervision. No further details of this function of the police, or of its authorisation, are to be found in Icelandic legislation, and it is important that this situation be remedied.
- *Increased use of technical equipment in policing and monitoring.* As has been mentioned above, the police have made far greater use of technical equipment of many types in policing in recent years. It is clear that this equipment, e.g. the surveillance cameras in the centre of Reykjavík, have enabled the police to respond far more quickly to emergency situations in centre of the city, in addition to which images recorded by the cameras have proved very useful in the solution of many offences, both minor and serious. Film recordings made by security cameras owned by private parties, e.g. banks and shops, have also played an important role in investigating robberies in such places. Policing could be made more effective if more surveillance cameras were installed in various locations, e.g. the larger traffic intersections in major towns and various other key points. In this context, mention should also be made of the Police Telecommunications Centre and the overview it provides of the position and deployment of police vehicles. It is owing to this system, more than to anything else, that the time taken by the police to respond to emergency calls has been reduced greatly in the region covered by the Tetra telecommunications system.
- *Increased collaboration with other emergency and security services.* The Police Act states clearly that one of the roles of the police is to collaborate with other parties whose functions are related to those of the police. In the view of the task committee, one of the most important preconditions for being able to ensure public safety to the highest standard is that all emergency and security services collaborate closely. Furthermore, this is the policy behind the establishment of the Emergency and Rescue Centre in Skógarhlíð [in Reykjavík]. In this context it is vital that such collaboration be facilitated and encouraged.
 - *Division of responsibilities between the police and other parties.* The division of responsibilities between security companies and the police has been the subject of examination recently by a special committee appointed by the Minister of Justice in 2003. In the opinion of the task committee, it would be proper to examine this division with a view to considering whether particular tasks which up to now have been exclusively

handled by the police could be assigned to others, e.g. to state or private bodies. Just as it is relevant to point out that the public could play a key role in reducing break-ins in residential areas through increased neighbourhood watch activities, for example, it could well prove possible to involve private bodies for similar purposes to a greater extent than is done at present. This applies, for example, to private security firms, security and caretaking services provided by private persons, etc. Another possibility in this context would be that various public bodies could be granted more extensive authorisations or roles in order to prevent offences of certain types, by utilising to the full the remedies that already exist. This applies, for example, to traffic offences and environmental violations in the uninhabited regions in the centre of Iceland.

3.2.2. *Combating crime – the preventive function*

The main role of the police in this area lies in their obligation to take action where the commission of an offence may be imminent, but all other types of preventive work are also included here. In the explanatory notes to the bill that became the current Police Act, it was stated clearly that ever greater importance had been attached to this role of the police in recent years. This emphasis has certainly not declined in the intervening period. In the opinion of the task committee, many of the main areas of focus in this area have already been named above. The following may be named in addition:

- *Development of neighbourhood and district policing.* A key element in the preventive work of the police is that it must be in close contact with the local people in the region, have a good knowledge of local conditions and enjoy the trust of the local community. In many ways, these goals are easy to achieve in the smaller police regions in the rural areas, but call for more work and organised effort in more populous regions. Priority has been given to these goals in all police regions; in the view of the task committee, still more effort needs to be concentrated on this task. Thus, all the larger regions should be divided up into parts or districts, with specific police officers being designated as district policemen. At the same time, it is necessary to define clearly the role of such district policemen, the form that their dealings with public authorities and the local community are to take, etc. In this context it is important that district policemen should be in close and direct contact with the people in their districts, this involving the use of the latest communication equipment in order to publicise information and receive tip-offs and suggestions.
- *New ways of dealing with juvenile crime.* A committee appointed by the Minister of Justice submitted a report on new ways of dealing with juvenile crime in May 2004. Its proposals paid particular attention to the remedy known as “reconciliation”, in which the offender and the victim are brought together in order to make the offender realise the wrongness of what he has done, have him apologise to the victim and have the two of them reach an agreement on the resolution of the matter. Trials of this type involving juveniles who are not criminally responsible have been made with good results by the Reykjavík Police, specifically in the suburb of Grafarvogur, under the title “Hringurinn” (“The Ring”). The committee that proposed the introduction of conciliatory schemes of this type into the Icelandic justice system argued that it would involve many benefits, including a particular preventive influence on the offender. The task committee is of the opinion that it is important to implement these proposals as soon as possible.
- *Deployment of police forces on the basis of information as to where offences are likely to be committed.* The police now have a great deal of knowledge about the places where certain offences are likely to be committed. This applies, for example, to major categories of offence such as traffic offences; the police acquire important data as a result of the detailed recording of traffic accidents and their location and the investigation of their causes and local conditions. To an ever-growing extent, traffic surveillance by the police is based on such data. This also applies to other types of offence, such as break-ins into houses and cars. Data on the frequency of such offences, broken down by district and street, are important for planning police patrolling and surveillance for preventive purposes.

- *Utilising the latest techniques, knowledge and skills.* In connection with the importance of deploying police forces on the basis of crime data as described above, there is no avoiding recognising how important it is for the police to be in possession of sophisticated technical equipment and a knowledge of the latest techniques and methods. This also highlights the need to exercise great care in the gathering and processing of data by the police to ensure that such deployment will be reliable. It is therefore vital that special attention be given to both these points in the future development of the police.

3.2.3. *Work on the solution of crimes, stopping unlawful activities and following cases up according to the provisions of legislation – the investigative function*

One of the most important roles of the police is to investigate crime and stop unlawful activities where necessary. As is outlined above, the new Police Act and the amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure were intended to simplify the investigative process and promote quicker and more efficient criminal investigations. As has been described above, even though various achievements have been made in the past few years, the task committee regards it as important to review the structure of criminal investigations as a whole with the aim of simplifying investigations and rendering them more efficient. The following are among the main points of emphasis in this context and for other purposes:

- *Simplification of investigations and raising of efficiency.* In the opinion of the task committee, it is necessary to give particular attention to the structure of criminal investigations with aim of simplifying the investigative process, raising efficiency, bringing cases before the courts more quickly and cutting duplication of effort within the police and between the police and the courts. This is a rather extensive task, which it would be natural to carry out under the direction of the Director of Public Prosecutions in close collaboration with representatives of the police and, as appropriate, the courts. In such a review, attention would have to be given to matters including the division of responsibilities between ordinary police officers and detectives, collaboration between the police and the prosecution at the investigation stage, etc. If this were successful, it should prove possible to find ways of shortening the time needed for investigations by the police and also raising the quality of investigations. At the same time, this would result in those cases that are brought to court reaching the courts more quickly, which is of great significance for security under the law and the process of presenting evidential proof in court.
- *Warrants and measures available to the police when conducting investigations.* In the investigation of crimes, it is important that the police have recourse to all the measures necessary to undertake the investigation of complex and large-scale cases. It is recognised that criminal activity is becoming increasingly international, in addition to which criminals are quick to make use of new technology and methods. The police must therefore be able to use the methods necessary to undertake the investigation of such crimes, both as regards technical equipment and skills and also legal measures. For obvious reasons, it is important that the Icelandic authorities should be at least on the same footing as those in Iceland's neighbouring countries in this respect.
- *Increased special training and specialisation of detectives.* Due, amongst other things, to the fact that many criminals have adopted the use of sophisticated skills and equipment in their activities, criminal investigations are becoming constantly more complex. It is vital that the police have the appropriate technology at their disposal for carrying out investigations and that their skills and knowledge in this field should be at the highest possible level. This can be guaranteed by upgrading the further training and special training courses at the National Police College. It would also be useful to investigate the possibility of training specialists for work in the police in specialised fields, e.g. financial and computer experts. There is an evident need for such special skills, and for increasing levels of skill, and it is therefore important to give this point special attention in the context of the forthcoming review of police training.
- *Division of responsibilities between the police and specialised research and monitoring institutions.* As is generally known, various specialised institutions carry out analyses and studies in narrow and demarcated forensic areas on the basis of special statutory authorisations; on the

other hand, procedures at these institutions are generally not in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure. It is natural that the expertise of these institutions should be employed when criminal investigations involve matters that fall under their specialised fields. The best way of structuring collaboration between the police and the institutions depends on the fields in which they operate and the nature of the individual cases. The task committee stresses that the division of responsibilities between these parties and the police should be unequivocal, and there should be clear provisions in legislation or in the rules of procedure between the institutions themselves stating when, and how, cases are to be referred for police investigation. In other respects, the task committee regards it as being outside its brief to comment on the involvement of these parties in criminal investigations.

- *Individual categories of offence.* Priorities given by the police to the investigation of crimes vary according to the nature and seriousness of the offences. Thus, a policy has been established, both directly and indirectly, under which serious sexual offences and crimes of violence are given top priority; as has been described above, special emphasis has been placed on the investigation of drug offences in the past few years, and economic crime investigations are growing constantly both in scope and importance. In the opinion of the task committee, it is important that attention be given to building up the investigative capacity of the police in the following areas in future:
 - *Economic and financial crime (White-collar crime).* Organised crime is a constantly-growing problem, with more and more countries becoming affected. One effective way of combating the problem is to put greater effort into studies and initiatives to tackle economic and financial crime. The same also applies, in fact, to terrorism and drug smuggling. The better equipped the police are to carry out investigations and studies in these areas, the more effective their efforts will be, as there is often a clear connection between crimes in these categories and general criminal activity. It is also important for the business sector that the police should be capable of undertaking investigations of large-scale and complex cases of white-collar crime. It is evident that gains of many types would follow from putting additional resources into police investigations in this area.
 - *Violent crime and sexual offences.* Probably no other categories of crime elicit such strong reactions from the public as crimes of violence and sexual offences. It is vital that the police investigate such crimes thoroughly and to a high standard and have competent detectives on their staff for this purpose, including specialists on the forensic side, and that they are able to complete investigations in a short time. To maintain credibility with the public, it is essential that the police carry investigations of crimes in these categories rapidly and professionally.
 - *Drug offences.* Great efforts have been put into the investigation of drug offences in recent years, with good results. It is important that this work be continued.
 - *Computer crime.* It is important that the police be well prepared to tackle crimes in which computer technology is involved. These include crimes in a number of categories, including white-collar crime and crimes directly connected with the use of computers and the Internet, such as software piracy. The Internet is one of the main channels of communication used by producers and distributors of child pornography and other illegal materials. The police must be able to acquire, and use effectively, the latest technology and know-how in this area and be prepared to act decisively and effectively to combat crimes committed with the use of information technology and the Internet, no less than in other areas.

3.2.4. To be of assistance to the public and help them public when danger threatens– the service and assistance function

The service and assistance role of the police, and how they perform it, is a key factor in maintaining the positive attitude that the public generally has towards the police in Iceland: the police come out extremely well in annual surveys of public confidence in state institutions. It is therefore important to continue to attend to this role with full commitment, but at the same time to make a clear distinction between what is

the role of the police, on the one hand, and of other parties on the other. The following are the principle points of focus in this area:

- *Easy access to the police.* In order to ensure that the police are able to discharge their service role towards the public in the best possible way, it is important that the public should have easy access to the police and to information that the police provide. The development of the police homepage in the past few years has been an important part of this process, no less than the establishment of the Emergency Line and the Police Telecommunications Centre, which has made it possible to contact the police by telephone at any hour of the day or night.
- *Providing information to the public.* In connection with the further development of the police homepage, attention must be given to enabling the public to use it, and other new technology, to send information to the police and receive information from them on important matters, e.g. in the form of e-mail or SMS messages via mobile phones. In this context it is of particular interest to examine the possibility of sending information on security-related matters in particular locations by using the latest telecommunications technology and other related facilities. This possibility also has a bearing on other points of focus in connection with preventive work, neighbourhood policing and security matters, as has been mentioned above.
- *Information on strategy and influence on strategic planning.* In connection with the providing of information to the public, it is important that the public should be well informed about police strategy and priorities at any given time. This applies equally to general strategy and to special points of emphasis which may vary according to the season of the year, the population centre or the individual neighbourhood. In connection with strategic planning, it is also important that the public should have the opportunity to express its opinion on priorities in the strategy at any given time, and should be expressly encouraged to do so. The supply of clear information on strategy and aims by the police to the public, and well-defined channels for the public to influence that strategy, constitute an important factor in enabling the police to meet the requirements made of them in this and other areas.
- *Short response times.* It is very important that the police should respond quickly and decisively to appeals from the public for help, and particularly in serious cases. Using the Police Telecommunications Centre and the Tetra system, it is possible to measure response times accurately. It is important to monitor closely the response times in serious cases and to set goals regarding them.
- *Prioritisation and division of responsibilities.* Regarding the service and assistance functions of the police, it is important that it be defined clearly what services the police are to provide and what services are to be provided by parties other than the police; such parties may be in a better position to provide such services. A comprehensive review of the service and assistance role of the police should be made for this purpose and to lay down clear policy in this area in collaboration with all involved.

3.2.5. Provide the authorities with protection or assistance with the execution of their work – the auxiliary function

Assisting other organs of authority with the execution of their work is less publicly visible than many other police roles, but is of great importance for those who need such assistance. The notes to the bill which became the Police Act, No. 90/1996, cited many statutory provisions that entrust such a role to the police. Obviously many government authorities including the courts, the competition authorities, the child welfare authorities and others rely on the police to play a part in certain aspects of their work. It is important that the police perform this function smoothly and in conformity with the legal provisions.

3.2.6. Co-operation with other government authorities and institutions that deal with matters that are related to the field of operations of the police – the collaborative function

The collaborative function is of great importance in the work of the police, and in the view of the task committee its importance is growing. Many of the aims of police work are completely compatible with the aims of various other parties; examples include preventive work against alcohol and drug abuse and traffic

safety issues. Thus, it is important that the police should be not merely open to collaboration with other bodies in these and other areas, but should rather take the initiative on such collaboration and develop it further. Reference should be made to Section 3.2.3., in which mention is made of the division of responsibilities between the police and specialised research and monitoring institutions. Other principal points of focus in this area are as follows:

- *Closer collaboration with local authorities.* Close and successful collaboration with local authorities' school and social welfare departments is an important element in preventive work by the police against drug and alcohol abuse. Collaboration in other areas has also been growing, as can be seen from the interest shown by individual local authorities in working with the police on measures against housebreaking, etc. It is important that such collaboration take place in as many areas as possible, and that it should be supported and developed. Article 12 of the Police Act contains a special provision on collaborative committees involving the police and the local authorities. A survey of these committees made in 2003 by the Office of the National Commissioner revealed that at the time of the survey, committees had been appointed in 14 police regions, but only seven of them were active. Following the report, ways of stimulating and supporting collaborative work of this type have been sought. It is necessary that the police take the initiative on establishing active collaboration of this type in each and every police region.
- *Collaboration with other parties involved in security.* It is no less important that the police should work closely with other parties involved in security, salvage and rescue issues. Key entities in this connection include the Reykjavík Directorate of Customs and the Coast Guard, and bodies such as the Icelandic Maritime Administration and the Civil Aviation Authority. It is also vital that the police maintain close collaboration with the scout rescue teams and their national association, and with the Emergency Line and the fire brigades in each police region. Finally, it is important that there should be effective collaboration between the police and private operators of security services of various types.

3.2.7. Attending to other tasks according to law or custom – other functions

The police handle many other tasks which, strictly speaking, do not fall under any of the categories listed above. These include monitoring functions, the issue of licences, etc.; a detailed listing is to be found in the explanatory notes to the bill which became the current Police Act. Some changes have since taken place since that list was compiled. These functions should be examined systematically with a view to assessing whether it is natural and proper that they should all be handled by the police, after which proposals should be made as to where responsibility for them should lie in the future, in the light of the considerations discussed above.

3.2.8. Summary

The task committee is of the opinion that the priority ranking of police functions that is set out in Article 1 of the Police Act is sensible; consequently, it proposes no changes in that ranking. Nevertheless, it identifies points of focus under each of the priority categories which may be regarded as priorities within each area, and proposes that these points be taken into account by the parties involved in strategic planning, i.e. the Government, the Althingi, the Ministry of Justice, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the National Commissioner of Police and the individual police commissioners.

3.3. *Quantifiable goals and performance assessment in policing*

The foregoing section contains a thorough survey of the role of the police as defined in the Police Act and the points that the task committee considers should be given special attention, or made into special priorities, in the work of the police in the next few years. For strategic planning and goal-setting, it is vital

that it be possible to assess the degree to which goals, once set, have been achieved. The task committee was commissioned to formulate a strategy on policing for the coming years with a priority ranking of tasks and quantifiable goals. Here follow some ideas on quantifiable goals, taking account of the points of emphasis identified in each category above. It should be pointed out that scales of achievement and goals may belong under many categories, so constituting performance assessments in many areas. At the same time, the task committee wishes to stress that, as before, it will be up to the Minister of Justice, on behalf of the government and in collaboration with the police, to delineate policing goals in further detail at any given time and to define the standards used to assess performance in the light of the goals. It is with this qualification that the following ideas on scales of achievement and quantifiable goals are proposed.

3.3.1. The security function

Principal areas of focus proposed in this area include greater visibility of policing, increased collaboration with the public, building up the Special Weapons and Tactics Team and the priority ranking of tasks in the light of policing needs. The aim is to guarantee the security of the public at all times and in all places, to protect individuals and private property and also to protect the public interest and lawful activities of all types.

The following are examples of scales for assessing achievement and quantifiable goals:

- A) Numbers of police officers, including members of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team and detective officers, and the number of police vehicles and the distances covered by marked police vehicles. Statistics of this type may serve as an indication of, or even as a means of assessing, the visibility of policing at any given time.
- B) The number of collaborative agreements and collaborative projects carried out between the police and specific groups. Statistics on these may indicate the degree of emphasis placed by the police on greater collaboration with the public and specific groups, and the extent to which policy in this area is translated into action.
- C) The number of offences committed in specific regions and neighbourhoods.
- D) The proportion of residents in individual towns/localities/ neighbourhoods that the police are able to send information to directly by means of e-mail.
- E) Reductions of serious offences by specific proportions over a given period, broken down by category of offence and the locations in which they are committed.
- F) Reductions in serious traffic accidents by specific proportions over a specific period.
- G) Response times. For example, it would be possible to set the goal of having response times in 90% of cases of emergency calls under a certain number of minutes.
- H) Public confidence in the police at any given time, as established by annual surveys.

3.3.2. The preventive function

Principal areas of focus proposed in this area include increased emphasis on neighbourhood or district policing, the deployment of police forces based on statistical data on crime, and the utilisation of the latest technology. The aim is that the police should prevent crimes from being committed as far as possible.

The following are examples of scales for assessing achievement and quantifiable goals:

- A) The number of neighbourhood or district police.
- B) Reductions in numbers of offences, achieved by specific measures or projects.
- C) Numbers of meetings between the police and local residents and/or residents' associations in a specific neighbourhood/town/district at which preventive projects and ways in which the residents can play a part in reducing crime are discussed.
- D) Target ratios regarding recidivism amongst young people who have undergone reconciliation proceedings (*cf.* recent proposals on this point).

3.3.3. The investigative function

Priorities in this area are that criminal cases should be investigated professionally and that investigations should be completed within an appropriate period. The goal is that the police solve as many as possible of the offences they investigate.

Examples of scales for assessing achievement and quantifiable goals:

- A) The shortest possible time should elapse between the reporting of offences and the initiation of investigations.
- B) It should never happen that the punishment for a crime is reduced because the investigation took an excessively long time.
- C) The proportion of cases solved in each category should increase.
- D) The number of criminological studies made.

3.3.4. The service and assistance function

Priorities in this area are that the public should have easy access to the police, that the police make information freely available to the public and that police response time be short. The goal is that the police should discharge their service role effectively.

Examples of scales for assessing achievement and quantifiable goals:

- A) The number of visits to the police homepage.
- B) The attitude of the public towards the police, as established by surveys.
- C) Response times (*cf.* item g. of Section 3.3.1. above).

3.3.5. The auxiliary function

The priorities in this role are that the police should discharge their obligations as provided for under law regarding assistance to various authorities. The aim is that those parties that need police assistance in the course of their normal work should be able to rely on it at all times. No scales of measurement or quantifiable goals are set out in this area.

3.3.6. The collaborative function and other functions

The priorities in this area are that the police should increasingly seek to collaborate with other parties that share their aims in order to ensure that these common aims be achieved.

Examples of scales for assessing achievement and quantifiable goals:

- A) The number of collaborative agreements made and joint projects undertaken by regional police forces and individual local authorities.
- B) The number of collaborative agreements made between the police and other public bodies operating in the same field.
- C) The number of collaborative projects involving, e.g., the police and the Coast Guard and the customs authorities.

3.3.7. Further definition of policing goals with reference to performance assessment

In the nature of things, it is the responsibility of the Minister of Justice and the National Commissioner of Police to decide on the application of the principal policing goals in the long term and how performance assessment is to be carried out. In broad strategic planning of this type, various scales of achievement can be defined, including those based on criminological studies and other statistical materials that are mentioned above. Aims can be set regarding specific reductions in crime rates and traffic accidents, or specific numbers of policemen and police vehicles for certain population sizes, for example. On the basis of general strategic goals of this type, individual police commissioners can then set themselves more exact

targets and define their scales of achievement in those terms. These could take the form of reductions in the incidence of crimes in a particular area, a cut in traffic accidents in a particular region, targets regarding the time taken to process cases by individual commissioners' offices, etc. It could then happen that, on the basis of strategic goals set by a regional commissioner, individual departments of the force, or even individual police officers, could set themselves goals based on certain scales of assessment. For example, the aim could be expressed in the number of kilometres that a police vehicle is to be driven per year, or that oral testimony be recorded within a certain time from the reporting of a crime, or that the investigation of cases be completed, on average, within a certain time. In this way, performance assessment could be of use both in the formulation of general policing strategy and also in planning by individual police forces, divisions with them and even by individual officers.

Section 4.5.1. examines how the task committee envisages performance assessment being used in strategic planning on policing. It should be emphasised that the task committee considers that it should be the absolute duty of each and every police commissioner to draw up a clear and accessible strategy on policing for the region on the basis of the overall strategy issued by the National Commissioner and the Minister of Justice, and to define scales for assessing performance in terms of the strategy. As will be discussed in Section 4.5.1., many performance-management agreements are already in force between the Ministry of Justice and individual police commissioners in which use is made of performance assessments. The logical course of action would be to implement policing goals and define scales of assessment regarding them in agreements of this type.

The task committee is aware that there are various limits to performance assessment in policing. Regarding some policing goals, e.g. increasing the visibility of policing, there are obvious obstacles to establishing a means of assessment. With other goals, however, performance assessment may give useful indications, even though it does not perhaps constitute an exhaustive analysis of the situation. For example, public attitudes as revealed by opinion surveys may indicate whether the police are discharging their service and assistance role, even though they do not tell the whole story. The task committee therefore wishes to emphasise that performance assessments are among the means available when setting policing goals and also when examining when and whether these goals have been achieved. Performance assessments can be used in drawing up long-term policing strategy, in setting goals for specific projects or specific regions and in managing departments within individual police forces or managing individual police officers. Assessment of policing, on the other hand, can never be reduced to a simple mechanical procedure or absolve senior police administrators from their responsibility to exercise independent and critical vigilance at all times.

4. Ways to Achieve Goals – How can the Icelandic Police be given the support necessary to ensure that the goals set will be achieved?

4.1. Introduction

This third main section of the present report examines whether it is appropriate or desirable to make changes to the present policing structure so as to maximise the likelihood that the goals set will be achieved. In short, the task committee is of the opinion that structural changes in policing are necessary for this purpose. In particular, under the current structure, many regional forces are too small to be able to handle their work satisfactorily and provide the necessary services. This is not in any way to disparage the work of the commissioners and police officers in these regions; the committee wishes only to point out that it is difficult for a small police force to meet the manifold demands that are made regarding policing in Iceland today.

Both the public and the government today make high demands of the police. They are expected to perform all their work well and in accordance with the needs of the community and trends and developments at any given time, also taking into account the requirements of the population within each individual police region. The police are expected to be efficient and their work is expected to produce good results; at the same time, the police are expected to be open and receptive towards the wishes and demands of the ordinary citizen, to be visible in their work and above all to ensure the safety of the public and the government. Concurrent with these demands, the police are expected to be capable of attending to the investigation of complex crimes, rapidly assimilating new techniques and developments in their profession, and to play an active part in international policing and criminal investigations, and also to ensure that investigations of both serious and minor crimes are completed within a reasonable time and in conformity with statutory provisions, human-rights conventions and the Constitution. In addition, it may be mentioned that increasing demands are being made of the heads and directors of public institutions in general as regards management in the broadest sense of the word; in recent years, managerial authority has been transferred to public bodies themselves, higher standards of administration are now expected as a result of the enactment of the Administrative Procedure Act and the Information Act, and new management techniques, such as performance management, have been introduced. All this means that greater demands are now placed on the management and staff of public institutions, including the police.⁸

As can be seen from Table 1 above, it is immediately evident that most of the regional police forces are very small, yet serve large geographical areas with both rural and urban populations. Obviously these small forces are not as well able as the large forces to carry out investigations that call for specialist skills, as is discussed above. Very few of the regional police forces are staffed round the clock; instead, they have stand-by shift systems, which are expensive, yet unavoidable in forces with such small numbers of staff. The present regional boundaries mean that at present, it is sometimes not the police force located nearest to the event that answers a call-out, but the force in the same administrative region, which in fact has further to go. This problem, however, can be expected to become a thing of the past when the Tetra telecommunications system is extended over a wider area. Another point is that the constant pressure of responsibility and demands regarding being on the job or on stand-by are extremely wearying for the staff of the small forces, and this may have an adverse effect on the quality of policing. Also, the smaller forces are less able to tackle the demands made by local functions that are attended by many people, e.g. outdoor festivals or municipal celebrations, without having to call in police from other forces, which involves extra expense. Other points could be mentioned in this connection, such as the growing prominence of human-rights considerations and the demands that these place on the police and demands in connection with modern administrative procedures such as performance-related management, goal-setting and performance assessment.

It will be clear from the foregoing remarks that there is a need to make changes to the structure of policing in Iceland. The question is how to make improvements in the areas touched on above and put the police

⁸ Further on this point, see the opinion of the committee on the responsibilities, powers and administrative mandate of the heads of state bodies published (in Icelandic: *álit nefndar um ábyrgð, valdsvið og stjórnunarumboð forstöðumanna ríkisstofnana*) by the Ministry of Finance in 2000.

(both the individual regional forces and the force as a whole) in a better position to attend to their legally-prescribed tasks and duties and at the same time better able to work towards the goals, both long-term and short-term, that are set in policing and security. When it began its work, the task committee was given little room for manoeuvre in tackling this question, as it was instructed to examine the matter without allowing for any cut in the number of district commissioners. On the other hand, it was recognised as a possibility that the duties of the district commissioners did not necessarily have to be identical in all instances; this opened up the possibility that some district commissioners might be entrusted with the command of police forces in other administrative regions besides their own.

As is stated above, the task committee regards it as essential to make changes to the structure of policing in Iceland. In terms of the given premises, it sees two realistic options for doing this. The first is to cut the number of police regions considerably. This would call for a considerable amount of preparation, legislative amendments and an adaptive process. The second alternative is to recommend a great increase in collaboration between regional police forces, with their deployment reflecting the tasks they face far more than the boundaries of their local regions. This second alternative may necessitate legislative amendments, which would mainly be designed to strengthen the position of a centralised authority that could give instructions on collaboration and the form it is to take. Below follows a discussion of these alternatives and possible forms that their application might take. Attention is also given to matters with a direct or indirect connection, i.e. how more effective policing might be achieved through greater emphasis on management, monitoring and strategic planning based on performance-management agreements, the use of a computer model, etc. Also included is a brief discussion of the role of the district commissioners and what ways should be sought to consolidate and develop their functions, independent of their role in policing.

4.2. Revision of the number and size of local police regions

4.2.1. Enlargement of the police regions and reduction of their number

As is stated above, the task committee asked four persons to formulate proposals on means of developing policing, based on their views, knowledge and experience of working within the police. Their reports follow as appendices to this report, and contain four different visions of how it would be possible to expand and upgrade the police in Iceland. Three of the four reports propose very extensive changes; one is more conservative.

As has been stated, one of the two realistic options for consolidating and developing the functions of the police would be to reduce the number of local forces, at the same time expanding their size. This would result in larger forces that would be more capable of tackling the tasks they have to deal with, both in the field of ordinary policing and criminal investigations. It would then also be possible to have round-the-clock shift staffing at most or even all police stations in the country, with the result that the funding allocated to policing would in fact be used more effectively on actual policing.

If this option is chosen, then the task committee is also of the opinion that it would be correct to merge many of the regional forces into larger units. The larger each unit becomes, and the more resources it has, the better it would be to tackle the tasks at hand, provide satisfactory services in any locality and meet the demands made of the police.

As can be seen from the reports in Appendices 1-4, various approaches to the matter are possible. A structure can be drawn up by deciding in advance how large a police force is needed, as a minimum, in order to be able to handle most of the tasks that will arise in a given region, and then basing the size of the regions on this estimate and the present structure. It is also possible to take account of geographical factors into account, and the fact that comparisons can be made between individual forces regarding the relationship between size and effectiveness, the ratio of police officers to the local population and other matters. In the view of the task committee, it is necessary to take all these factors into account when making proposals on this topic.

4.2.2. *The current situation*

The situation at present is that Iceland is divided into 26 police regions; in addition, policemen are employed at the Office of the National Commissioner and at the National Police College. The district commissioners (sýslumenn) are also the commissioners of police (lögreglustjórar), each in their own administrative district, except in Reykjavík, where the command of the police force is in the hands of a separate police commissioner. The total number of police officers actively employed as of 1 February 2004, according to the personnel records of the National Commissioner's Office, was 671. Most of the regional forces outside the capital area are very small, as can be seen from Table 1 above: 19 of the 26 regional forces have fewer than 15 police officers; of these, 14 have fewer than 10 and eight have fewer than 5. The number of people per policeman in each region also varies widely, from 300 to 1,000. In eight of the regions there are currently more than 500 people per police officer.

Ten of the regional forces now maintain round-the-clock services; besides those in the capital area, these are the forces in Akranes, Ísafjörður, Akureyri, Vestmannaeyjar, Selfoss, Keflavík and Keflavík Airport.

Of the 26 regional forces, 13 have investigation departments; five of these have only one detective.

4.2.3. *Proposals regarding changes in the demarcation of police-force regions*

In its letter of appointment, the task committee was instructed to have as its main aim a situation in which the police and the prosecution authority should be completely adequate to deal with law-breakers, and preferably be in a superior position. It would be easiest to secure this principal goal, and the subsidiary goals that contribute towards it, through an increased pooling of human resources and equipment. The main premises that the task committee has assumed in this connection, and the arguments in support of them, are as follows:

Geographical factors: Geographical factors, and the communications and transport infrastructure, must be taken into account when making proposals on a new demarcation of police-force regions.

Numbers of police officers: The task committee's view is that a police force must have a certain minimum number of police officers on its staff in order to do justice to all the principal tasks that arise in its region. This number is based on the capacity to maintain round-the-clock operations, develop specialised capacities both within a general department and an investigative department and handle most of the major events that occur within the region without having to incur great additional expense.

Other points: As will be discussed further in the discussion of the computer model of the operation of district commissioners' and police commissioners' offices, there is no single absolute yardstick that can be used as a basis for assessing the volume of work to be handled in a single region. Many factors have to be taken into account. In its own way, the size of the population is one yardstick, but it is by no means absolute, due to differences in residence structure between regions (whether they are urban or rural, or the proportions of each) and other considerations, such as concentrations of traffic in conjunction with tourist spots or holiday-cottage centres. Even though population is not an absolute yardstick, it is nevertheless natural to take the number of people in each region and the number of police officers into account.

The task committee believes that various courses of action are open, as can be seen from the ideas outlined in Appendices 1-4. Relatively modest reductions could be made in the number of regions (and, correspondingly, in their enlargement), which would produce results; on the other hand it would be possible to take bolder measures. Since it is not the brief of the task committee to set out in detail any one proposal for the future structure of policing rather than another, it will restrict itself to identifying one or more rational courses of action, without going into all the details, so preparing the ground as well as possible for further decisions on this point; the same purpose lies behind the presentation of the proposals in Appendices 1-4. It should be stated that the position of Keflavík Airport District Commissioner comes under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; on the other hand, this fact does not prevent including that office in the overall scheme examined here.

If this course of action (an enlargement of police regions) is adopted, then the task committee considers it would be sensible to take bold steps in this enlargement and the corresponding reduction in their number,

recognizing at the same time that both geographical circumstances and special considerations may impose certain restrictions. Below follows a discussion of the alternatives that the task committee considers attractive, divided by geographical region.

Metropolitan area and environs: Most of those who have examined the matter and regard a merger of police forces as a viable course of action consider it would be proper to combine the three police forces currently operating in the metropolitan area into a single force. Mention has also been made of the possibility of combining the Akranes and Reykjavík forces, on the one hand, and the Kópavogur, Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík forces, on the other, the latter group perhaps also to include the Keflavík Airport Police. Strong arguments can be advanced for both alternatives. Merging the forces in the metropolitan area would result in a force embracing 350 police officers, which more than half the total number in the country. A merger of the Hafnarfjörður, Kópavogur, Keflavík and Keflavík Airport forces, on the other hand, would result in a force of about 150, with another unit of 270-280 in Reykjavík and perhaps embracing Akranes as well, in which case that force's region would also cover, e.g., all the municipalities in Hvalfjörður. There are strong arguments in support of the view that it could be sensible to build up two large police forces; these include comparison between the units, etc. If it is decided to merge the forces in the metropolitan area, then it would be necessary to consider whether the Keflavík force should be merged with the Keflavík Airport Police and/or the forces in the south of the country (see below).

Western Region and the West Fjords: Combining the seven forces currently operating in these regions would result in a force of about 50 police officers. On the other hand, the geographical features of the area, with the difficulties in transport and communication over the winter months, and in particular the danger of avalanches in the West Fjords, argue rather in favour of having two forces in this area: one for the West Fjords, the other for the Western Region. The simplest arrangement would be to combine the Akranes, Borgarnes, Stykkishólmur and Búðardalur forces into a single force of about 30, with the forces in Patreksfjörður, Ísafjörður, Bolungarvík and Hólmavík forming another force of 21 police officers. Other arrangements are also possible, as can be seen in Appendices 1-4.

Northern Region: The simplest arrangement would be to combine the forces currently operating in this region, i.e. those in Blönduós, Sauðárkrókur, Siglufjörður, Ólafsfjörður, Akureyri and Húsavík, into a single force. On the basis of the present force sizes, this would produce a force of 63 police officers. Transport and communications in this region are relatively straightforward and reliable, and the forces in the region have collaborated for some time on traffic policing.

Eastern Region: A larger and more capable force would be produced in the Eastern Region by merging the Eskifjörður and Seyðisfjörður forces; these currently consist of 17 police officers in total. It is a question whether the force at Höfn, consisting of four police officers, should be included under the Eastern Region or the Southern Region. Including it in the Eastern Region, in a merger with the other two forces named above, would result in a broader force with a larger staff.

Southern Region: A merger of the four southern regional forces, i.e. those at Vík, Hvalsöllum, Selfoss and Vestmannaeyjar, would produce a force of about 50 police officers. If the Keflavík force were included, this would add another 36; adding the Keflavík Airport Police would raise the number by a further 47. A Southern Region force including all the forces named above would therefore have a staff of over 130 police officers.

As has been said, many factors must be taken into account when presenting proposals and ideas on this matter. The same applies to the application of such ideas in further detail: various courses of action are open; in the present context it will be sufficient to refer to the ideas presented in the appendices to the present report. Further possibilities can also be considered, e.g. the idea of removing the command of the police and prosecution functions completely from the district commissioners' sphere of responsibilities,

with the foundation of separate police commissioners' offices, etc.⁹ Structural changes of the type proposed here would also necessitate decisions on where regional police headquarters are to be located, i.e. which of the district commissioners would function as the regional commissioner of police. Proposals would also need to be made on the size of the individual divisions within each regional force, the distribution of police officers over the region, the shift arrangement, etc., etc. Legislative amendments would be called for if this course of action is taken, and careful preparations would be necessary involving various parties.

4.3. Increased collaboration between the local forces

No exhaustive public discussion has yet taken place of the various ideas regarding the upgrading and development of policing in Iceland; thus, it is not possible to draw conclusions as to what proposal is most likely to receive broad support. In fact, the only idea in this area that has received any discussion is that of reducing the number of district commissioners; a committee was appointed a few years ago to make proposals on such a reduction. The committee did not complete its work, whether this was because of a disagreement on proposals or because it was not considered likely that such proposals would be accepted at all.

In this connection it should be mentioned at the annual general meeting of the District Commissioners' Society in October 2004, a survey was made of the members' attitudes regarding proposals on a new policing structure. This revealed that none of the district commissioners regarded a reduction in the number of police regions, and their expansion through mergers, as discussed above, to be a viable solution in this context. On the other hand, a large majority among them considered that a reduction in the number of district commissioners, or increased collaboration between them, would be attractive options.

As is stated above, the task committee is of the opinion that far closer collaboration between the regional police forces in Iceland could strengthen the police as a whole and put them in a better position to deal with their tasks and achieve the goals they are aiming towards. Also, it seems more likely that a consensus could be reached on proposals of this type, besides which they would not involve such extensive legislative amendments as would a reduction of the police regions and their expansion through mergers. Nevertheless, the task committee believes that the solution presented first above would be a far better way of achieving the goals set rather than expanding collaboration between the regional forces; however, if the former proposal (reduction in number, expansion in size and strength) is not adopted, then it would be necessary to stimulate and develop collaboration in order to put the police in a better position to meet the demands that are made of them. The task committee is also of the opinion that if the collaboration option is chosen, then collaboration would have to be extended to a large number of areas; there would have to be far clearer divisions of roles and responsibilities within the police than is now the case, organised on the basis of the tasks being tackled at any given time rather than the boundaries between forces' regions. On the other hand, greater collaboration and task-oriented command of the police on a national scale would call for a far stronger central command, or rather a clearer authorisation for such a central command to give instructions on collaboration in all areas. This applies to collaboration on specific tasks of a restricted nature, such as the investigation of cases, or shared working shifts in order to introduce round-the-clock shifts in more places; clearer authorisations in law would also have to be available for transferring police forces between regions, either to meet the needs of specific tasks or else on the basis of collaborative agreements, etc. Additional collaboration in this area would make the police better able in many ways to tackle their duties than they are at present, at the same time making greater demands of those who direct and co-ordinate police work in all places.

Even if the alternative chosen is that of enlarging police forces and reducing their number, as is outlined above, it will still be necessary to examine how collaboration between the forces and command of the police could be made more effective with regard to the tasks in hand, the aim of this being to make the best use of the funding available for policing at any given time and the energies and skills of each individual

⁹ On this point, see for example the ideas presented by Bogi Nilsson in his article *Hvert á að vera skipulag ákærvalds hér á landi?* ("How should the prosecution be structured in Iceland?"), which appeared in the series *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum IV*, 2003 ("Studies in the Social Sciences", IV, 2003).

police officer. For this reason, the two alternatives should not be regarded as mutually exclusive; rather, they should be seen as two aims that could be integrated in one way or another.

4.3.1. Collaborative projects and increased collaboration – further

When attention is turned to potential collaboration between police forces, various possibilities suggest themselves. Regarding the police forces that could be involved in fruitful collaboration, the earlier discussion of the possible reduction and expansion of police regions may be used as a guideline. Thus, the arrangement could be that particular forces could be entrusted under collaboration agreements with the investigation of serious crimes in more than one region; this could apply, for example, to serious violent crime, rape, white-collar crime and specialised investigations such as traffic accidents. In this way it would be possible to build up skills and specialised techniques in one location that would be of use over a larger area, so promoting effectiveness and efficiency in criminal investigations.

It would also be a matter of urgent necessity to examine closer collaboration between police forces in the field of general policing and surveillance. This applies both to projects aimed at establishing joint round-the-clock police services in regions which at present have insufficient staff and also to more isolated and occasional functions such as policing in connection with major events such as outdoor festivals, or to additional policing requirements at certain times, e.g. in holiday-cottage centres. Here follow brief descriptions of possible collaborative tasks, based either on their nature or the areas in which they could be executed.

Criminal investigations: Under collaboration agreements between two or more regional police forces, one of the forces could be commissioned with the investigation of certain types of crime occurring in the regions involved. In this way, special skills and facilities for such investigations would be established and built up in one location, and there would be a guarantee that the number of such cases would be sufficient to exercise and maintain the skills and knowledge of the staff. Thus, specific police forces would provide other forces (generally, those in adjacent areas) with services of this type. In fact, this idea is similar to that which was proposed to the Althingi when the bill on the new Police Act was submitted in the mid 1990s; as was described above, this was amended during discussion in the Althingi. A similar arrangement would be possible in connection with certain types of investigation, as is the case at present with drug investigations and forensic studies. For example, it would be sensible to have serious traffic accidents in all parts of the country investigated solely by specialised detectives, whether they formed a single investigative team or more than one such team.

General policing: The visibility and effectiveness of policing in various areas could be increased greatly through increased collaboration between regional forces. The precedents for such collaboration that have been mentioned show clearly the results that can be produced. Collaboration agreements in this area could take many forms. A few examples may be mentioned. Various regional forces could enter into agreements to ensure 24-hour joint manning of services in their regions instead of relying on the stand-by shift arrangements currently in use. This could be of benefit in the four Western Region forces, i.e. in Akranes, Borgarnes, Stykkishólmur and Búðardalur. In fact, collaboration agreements could cover anything from the manning of shifts at certain times to a comprehensive arrangement on a jointly shared shift system round the clock every day of the year. It would also be possible to have agreements covering specific shared tasks, e.g. the planning of joint traffic policing, surveillance to combat drugs, detecting and preventing housebreaking, preventive campaigns, etc. Many collaborative ventures have already been established between individual police commissioners, either at their initiative or at that of the National Commissioner or the Ministry of Justice. Such projects have produced good results and the desire exists to extend and increase such collaboration.

4.3.2. Prerequisites for greater collaboration

For collaboration of the type mentioned here to achieve its purpose, it would be necessary to develop various aspects of command and strategic planning in policing. The individual police forces would have to feel greater motivation to develop active collaboration with each other, and all administration and strategic planning would have to take account of this. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice or the National Commissioner of Police would have to have greater authorisation in law to order such collaboration, in

consultation with the Director of Public Prosecutions, where appropriate, in connection with criminal investigations. The task committee considers that the most natural course of action would be to entrust the National Commissioner with the authority to give orders on greater collaboration between individual regional forces, and in certain cases to require police commissioners to arrange matters in a particular way; this authorisation would be additional to that already provided for under the Police Act. This must be regarded as an important prerequisite for instituting the reforms that are called for and are aimed at. While this measure would not entail such extensive legislative amendments as the proposal on reducing the number of regional forces and expanding them, it would nevertheless necessitate clear rules on how such collaboration were to be arranged, with details concerning command and administration, responsibility, financing, etc. For the most part, this work would have to be tackled by the party that would exercise the centralised command authority in this area.

4.4. Other matters

Many other matters, both large and small, must be taken into consideration when considering the development and reinforcement of policing in Iceland. Below follow brief accounts of some of the key points that will have to be considered, irrespective of the course chosen for the future structure of policing.

- *The Police Telecommunications Centre:* There is no ignoring the fact that much has been done in recent years that has been designed, directly and indirectly, to strengthen and develop the police in Iceland. One of the most important moves in this context was the opening of the Police Telecommunications Centre, which at present serves the police forces in the southwestern corner of the country. The planned extension of the Tetra telecommunications system eastwards past Vík í Mýrdal and northwards into the Western Region, and also in the vicinity of Akureyri and Ísafjörður, will make it possible to upgrade more stations and involve forces to a greater extent in the same sort of collaborative work as is done in the area currently covered by the telecommunications centre. It is important that development of centre be continued so as to enable it to serve all police forces in the country. It will also be important to give attention to the development of a nationwide telecommunications system for the police and other emergency service providers.
- *Upgrading of equipment:* As is common knowledge, the pace of technological development is rapid and in fact it can be said that a revolution has taken place in police working procedures in recent years owing to technological advances in many fields. It is important that the police have the requisite means and that priorities be ranked so that the latest technology is available for use in policing in Iceland. In this, it is important to consider not only the techniques used in laboratory investigations but also technical advances which could facilitate on-site work by the police.
- *Changes in the structure of police training and further upgrading of continuing education.* Work was started at the beginning of this year on a review of the structure of police training, and a managerial training course was also begun at the National Police College in collaboration with the University of Iceland's Institute of Continuing Education. The changes made regarding admission of new recruits to the college when the new Police Act took effect have resulted in large numbers of capable individuals with a variety of backgrounds now applying for admission each year. Another factor in this is that policemen's wages and terms have improved a great deal in recent years. Despite this, those in charge of the National Police College consider that the time has come to consider making changes in the structure of the training that it offers with a view to upgrading it further. This work has already begun. It is important that these changes be implemented, and also that the college's further training department be built up, and in particular the managerial training course, which has already produced very good results.
- *Simplification of investigative procedures and greater efficiency:* As has already been stated, the task committee considers it is necessary to give special attention to the structure of criminal investigations with a view to simplifying the investigative process, raising efficiency, bringing cases to court more quickly and cutting duplication of effort, both within the police and between the police and the courts. Proposals on how this work could be tackled have been presented above; the importance of this work is emphasised.

4.5. Performance management in policing, better utilisation of financial resources, the role of the National Commissioner and the division of responsibilities between ordinary policing and criminal investigation departments

Together with the structural changes discussed above, or even independently of them, it is important to give attention to administrative matters relating to the structure and command of the police, particularly as regards the interplay between the Ministry of Justice, the National Commissioner's Office and the regional police commissioners. The role to be played by each of these parties in this process must be clearly defined so as to guarantee rational strategic planning and the successful application of the strategy adopted at any given time. In this connection, the use of performance-related agreements could also be considered; these could then open up greater possibilities for improving the utilisation of financial resources within the police. Here it is also worth looking into whether the use of a computer model could be of value when assessing financial allocations and how these are divided between individual police regions and tasks. Last but not least, the role of the Office of the National Commissioner and its development in the coming years must be considered here.

4.5.1. Performance management in policing

In recent years, the government and the Ministry of Finance have urged Iceland's government ministries to make performance-management agreements with their subordinate bodies as a framework for relations between them in both the long and the short term. Performance management entails that actions taken by the ministries and administrators are directed specifically towards ensuring that each body performs its functions as well as possible. Performance is then assessed in terms of what they produce and the efficiency of their operations. To achieve the best results, clear goals are set and attempts are made to meet the needs of those who use the services provided; attempts are made to prevent problems arising; power and responsibility are delegated to those who are actually involved in taking action; means of assessing results in quantifiable terms are applied, etc., with the object of making continual improvements in operations.¹⁰ As has been mentioned above, performance management agreements are in force between the Ministry of Justice and most of the bodies and institutions under the ministry. On the other hand, the degree to which the individual bodies have complied with the terms of the agreements as regards systematic performance assessment, annual reports, etc., has varied from body to body, as is revealed, for example, in the report last year by the National Audit Office on performance management in public administration. That report reveals that even though the plans on the part of the state to institute performance management have not been realised, the National Audit Office considered that performance management could be an important tool in public administration if it were applied properly.¹¹

One of the most important prerequisites for successful performance management is that a clearly defined strategy, with goals, should be formulated. The matters that the task committee regards as being of key importance in strategic planning by the police authorities in the years ahead have been listed above. On this basis, it should be possible for the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the National Commissioner and the regional forces, to draw up a policing strategy for the coming years. Regarding policing specifically, the task committee considers it desirable that the Ministry of Justice make a special performance management agreement with the National Commissioner's Office defining principal points of strategy and goals for the long term. It would then be the role of the National Commissioner, in collaboration with the regional police commissioners, to meet these goals, and he would be given all the available means to do this, including, for example, the measures outlined above in the discussion on increased collaboration between regional police forces. In this way the division of responsibilities between the ministry and the police would be far more clear: the role of the ministry would be to formulate a

¹⁰ Árangursstjórnun í ríkisrekstri. Fjármálaráðuneyti 1996. ("Performance management in State Administration. Ministry of Finance 1996".)

¹¹ Náðist árangur – skýrsla Ríkisendurskoðunar um árangursstjórnun í ríkisrekstri. 2003. ("Was it successful? – Report by the National Audit Office on performance management in State Administration. 2003.")

specific overall strategy on the basis of valid legislation, which the National Commissioner, working with the regional commissioners, would then be entrusted to apply in practice and in detail.

The role of the individual police commissioners would be to draw up a strategy and a plan of action, in collaboration with the National Commissioner and, where appropriate, other police commissioners, so as to ensure as well as possible the implementation of the strategy adopted and the achievement of its goals. Thereafter, each police force would carry out the individual tasks applying to it. To take one of many possible examples by way of illustration, a district policeman in a particular district within a large region might, in consultation with his superior, set himself specific targets in his work corresponding with the overall strategy adopted. In this way, it would be possible to make each and every member of the force more conscious of the strategy applying at the time and of how his or her efforts could contribute towards its success. In the view of the task committee, it should without question be the duty of each and every regional police force to draw up its own strategy, based on the overall strategy adopted; this strategy should be clear and accessible, and both the members of the force and the local people should be well aware of it, having taken part in its formulation. The task committee refers to the ideas set out above regarding quantifiable goals and performance assessment in Section 3.3. In order to put the examples given there into a clearer context, the following possible points for inclusion in agreements between the individual parties involved may be considered:

- One of the issues addressed in a performance management agreement between the Ministry of Justice and the National Commissioner's Office on policing strategy and goals could be to increase the security of the ordinary citizen. Details of how this is to be achieved would then be left to the National Commissioner, in collaboration with the other police commissioners, and could take various forms.
 - One of many examples of the detailed implementation of this project might be that in order to achieve this goal, the National Commissioner would make an agreement with the commissioner of a specific region where the traffic accident rate has been high, the aim being to reduce accidents, e.g. by 10% over a year, by taking certain measures. The regional police commissioner would then set a target for the force detailing the measures to be taken to achieve this goal; this would be worked out in close collaboration with all members of the force, as is outlined above.
 - Another example of implementation could be an agreement between the National Commissioner and a regional force concerning response times of the police in answering emergency calls; this would involve recording the time elapsing between the receipt of a call and the arrival of the police on the scene, which can be done easily in the areas covered by the Tetra telecommunications system.
- At the end of a certain period (normally one year), each regional police commissioner would then review the results achieved over the period and make an assessment in consultation with the National Commissioner. This would include examining to see whether serious traffic accidents had been reduced, whether the response time to emergency calls had been shortened, etc. When data on all points is available, the National Commissioner, in consultation with the ministry, would assess whether the overall goal set for the period had been achieved and set goals for the coming year; this would close out one period and open another.

As is stated above, it is important in strategic planning to include as many as possible of the people who will be involved. This applies both to the overall strategy that is planned by the ministry and the National Commissioner and the strategies planned and implemented in the individual regions, and all the stages in between. All possible measures must be taken to involve the public in strategic planning and the setting of goals; this is important for the success of implementation. At the same time, it is important that strategies and goals be revised in the light of experience and performance assessments, and those who play a part in formulating and implementing the strategy should receive feedback on the outcome of their work.

4.5.2. Better utilisation of financial resources

In the course of the task committee's work, the question has been asked whether it would not be natural for all financial resources for policing to be channelled to a single point from which they would then be allocated in accordance with the strategies, goals and needs at each location at any given time. The National Commissioner's Office would seem to be the most appropriate initial recipient of funding; arrangements of this type are in force in both Norway and Denmark. This would have advantages of various types; amongst other things it would probably put the police in a better position than they are at present to rise more easily and more effectively to the demands of a sudden growth in their workload in one locality, etc.

The task committee has not weighed in detail the pros and cons of making changes of this type in the funding structure, however, and takes the view that if this were to be considered viable, it would not be put into practice until a new overall policing strategy has been drawn up and some experience gained of how it works. Nonetheless, it is already possible to envisage certain changes that would bring benefits in this area and stand in direct connection with what has been outlined above on the making and implementation of performance management agreements on policing. Having the National Commissioner play a key role in this area would automatically give him a far better overview of the capacity and scope of the individual police forces, and of the police as a whole, than is the case at present. This would make it easier for him to assess where, at any given time, the police were in need of extra resources in terms of the strategy and priorities in place. It would be desirable, in the preparation of each year's national budget, to have the National Commissioner call for, and assess, proposals from the regional police commissioners regarding changes, e.g. moves to strengthen the regional forces and, in collaboration with the regional commissioners, to make overall proposals to the Ministry of Justice, with the individual projects ranked in order of priority and accompanied by suggestions on how to implement them, based on various premises. All these proposals would be based on the strategy known and applying at the time. This procedure would result in a better basis for the proper utilisation of the funding granted for policing in the budget, and also encourage the choice of the most cost-effective alternative when more than one is possible.

4.5.3. The use of a computer model

A committee was appointed in 1999 to construct a computer model for the operation of district commissioners' offices. The committee has not formally completed its work; the construction of the model proved to be a more complex task than was originally thought. As is stated in the task committee's letter of appointment, further work on a computer model of this type would take into account the goals set regarding the structure of policing and the internal functioning of the police, and a properly designed model that allows fully for all the main elements in the work of the district commissioners and the police would be instrumental in ensuring the success of any changes made, as well as possibly proving to be an invaluable aid for implementing the changes. The view of the task committee is that it would be sensible to seek ways of completing work on the computer model. On the other hand, those who have been involved in this work have said that in its present form, it is too complex to have any practical value or be of use as a workable administrative tool. It is therefore necessary to review the premises that were laid down concerning the design of the model with the aim of reducing the number of variables that it contains. The task committee believes that the key variables should be the size of the region and the number of its inhabitants, broken down by rural and urban areas, with data on crime rates and categories also taken into account. The task committee recommends that if the ideas outlined above on performance management agreements and a better utilisation of financial resources are adopted, then the National Commissioner should be entrusted with completing work on the computer model, which would be based on the above premises and be intended for use in planning and making proposals on policing. If it is successful, such a model could become a standard for measuring the need for policing and an important tool for assessing policing performance and administration in policing.

4.5.4. The role of the National Commissioner

As is stated in the first of the main sections of this report, one criticism that has been voiced is that the Office of the National Commissioner plays too large a role in the investigation of crimes and the execution of individual policing tasks, and that it would be better if it concentrated its energies and resources on

administrative functions in policing and left it to the regional forces to see to other matters. As is stated above, it cannot be seen that this criticism is justified, since in both cases the functions exercised are those that the office is expected to discharge according to law, and it has discharged them with diligence.

On the other hand, a more considered criticism has been made of this arrangement and these functions of the National Commissioner as provided for under the Police Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure, i.e. the fact that the National Commissioner should exercise powers of prosecution at all. In the aforementioned article by the present Director of Public Prosecutions and former National Commissioner of Police on the structure of the prosecution, it is stated that the arrangement under which the National Commissioner of Police exercises powers of prosecution stands out as a sort of incongruity in terms of the role and position of the Office of the National Commissioner in the law-enforcement system under the Police Act.

The author of the article sees this as clearly needing to be revised. In his article, he goes on to examine how white-collar crimes are investigated in the other Nordic countries; this reveals, amongst other things, that the national commissioners in Denmark, Sweden and Norway do not exercise powers of prosecution and it seems it has never even been considered a possibility that they should do so.

Further discussion of ideas regarding a change in the structure of the prosecution follows in Section 4.6 below; here, the focus is on whether there is reason to change the role and structure of the National Commissioner's Office in the light of the criticism described above and the tasks that lie ahead.

It is evident that if the proposals of the task committee are put into practice, the tasks of the National Commissioner's Office will undergo changes of various types. More emphasis will be placed on having it bring about closer co-operation and further co-ordination between the regional forces; it will also play a larger role in strategic planning and financial administration. Last but not least, the requirement of having the administration of the police based to a greater extent on statistical data would result in a need for more processing and analysis of statistical data and other types of information received by the police authorities. This would automatically require certain changes in emphasis in the work of the office and the composition of its workforce.

The question must also be considered whether the many-sided support functions currently handled by the National Commissioner's Office would be more appropriately located in some of the larger regional forces. The trend in recent years, based on professional assessment, has been to transfer more of the support functions to the National Commissioner's Office, e.g. the Police Telecommunications Centre and the Special Weapons and Tactics Team. If the regional forces are expanded and reduced in number, the need for assistance to individual forces would be reduced. On the other hand, the need for specialist skills in particular fields would not be reduced, and it remains to be decided where it would be best to locate such specialist functions in the long run.

The task committee makes no specific proposals on this point, but points out that the larger the individual units, the better they will be to undertake to provide such functions in restricted fields on a national basis. Professional assessment has been the deciding factor in recent developments in this area, the latest examples being the transfer of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team from the Reykjavík Police to the National Commissioner's Office and changes in the structure of technical investigations by which certain tasks were transferred from the National Commissioner's Office to the Reykjavík Police. The main focus of the work of the National Commissioner's Office should be on co-ordination and integration of policing, but naturally the office is also responsible for discharging the responsibilities placed on it under the Police Act. Professional and thoroughly-grounded assessment should continue to form the basis of decisions when specific tasks are delegated to individual units within the police structure.

4.5.5. Division of responsibilities between ordinary policing and criminal investigation departments

As is stated in the task committee's letter of appointment, policing rests on two principal pillars: ordinary policing and criminal investigations. There must be open and free contact between the two, even though the working methods applying to them differ in certain ways. The letter of appointment states that the idea has been put forward of defining investigative departments, or investigative police departments (detective departments) in law, and that it is necessary to adopt a position on this ideas.

As the task committee sees it, the interplay referred to here between ordinary police functions and criminal investigations is an extremely important point in the administration of individual regional forces. Thus, it is vital that the command and administration of the forces be such that police officers involved in ordinary policing should, as far as possible, carry out the investigation of the less complex cases, and also that police detectives be involved to a greater extent in the early stages of investigations of cases. Many possible arrangements could be tried out, and it is important that this point be borne in mind in the general administration and command of police forces.

As has been discussed above, one of the solutions the task committee proposes is that one police force be delegated, by agreement, responsibility for carrying out investigations in other regions. If this is adopted, then it will be important to ensure that the involvement of the relevant investigative department be clearly defined, including provisions for the overall direction of investigations, responsibilities, etc. On the other hand, the task committee does not see that any need has been demonstrated for defining investigative departments or police detective units particularly in law any more clearly than is the case at present.

4.6. The structure of the prosecution

4.6.1. The National Police Commissioner's powers of prosecution

The task committee was instructed in its letter of appointment to adopt a position on various views on the prosecution expressed in recent years by persons with specialised knowledge and great experience. This is evidently a reference to the views aired recently in both speech and writing by Bogi Nilsson, Director of Public Prosecutions and former National Commissioner of Police. As has been mentioned above, he considers there is no question as to the necessity of changing the arrangement under which the National Commissioner exercises powers of prosecution (specifically, in cases of white-collar crime); the provisions on this were enacted in the Code of Criminal Procedure in the mid-1990s.

The explanatory notes to the bill which became the Act No. 84/1996, amending the Code of Criminal Procedure and consolidating this arrangement, contain little to indicate why it was decided to confer powers of prosecution on the National Commissioner of Police. Broadly, the system applying in the other Nordic countries regarding the investigation and prosecution of white-collar crime is that a prosecutor, supervised by the director of public prosecutions, is in charge of, and responsible for, the investigation of white-collar crime. The police officers who are involved in the investigation of these cases, on the other hand, are under the direction of the national commissioners of police in the countries concerned. In Denmark, for example, the arrangement is that the prosecutor concerned is the head of a separate prosecution authority but is assisted by police detectives made available by the national police commissioner; these carry out the investigation under the direction and guidance of a prosecutor in the aforementioned authority.

The task committee concurs with the Director of Public Prosecutions that the situation in Iceland constitutes an incongruity of a type in terms of the principal role of the National Commissioner of Police, who in this respect is subordinate not only to the Minister of Justice but also to the Director of Public Prosecutions when exercising power of prosecution. On the other hand, this does not at present apply to other police commissioners.

It would be perfectly possible to make structural changes and introduce the same sort of arrangement in this area in Iceland as exists in Denmark, i.e. to have a special prosecutor to deal with white-collar crime directly under the authority of the Director of Public Prosecutions. This prosecutor would then call for assistance from police detectives from the National Commissioner's Office or, as appropriate, from one of the regional police forces. Obviously, this would correct the incongruity criticised by the Director of Public Prosecutions in his article, and would also emphasise the desire to have the National Commissioner's Office concentrate rather on co-ordinatory and collaborative functions. On the other hand, it can be said that the arrangement which is provided for under the current legislation and which has been followed in recent years seems to be efficient. Under the structure of the National Commissioner's Office, the Economic Crime Department deals not only with the investigation of white-collar crime, but also assists the smaller police forces with extensive investigations and handles the investigation of treason and subversive activities, and also surveillance and risk analysis. In many respects, it is a convenient solution for a small

country to have this arrangement, so using the energies of the prosecutor and legally-qualified deputies in the department for other tasks which are frequently related. An argument for the alternative arrangement is that if a special prosecutor's office were established as described above, this would emphasise the importance of giving close attention to the investigation and prosecution of economic and financial crime. If this alternative is adopted, then special attention will have to be given to preserving in some way the advantages that are found in the present arrangement.

4.6.2. Further changes in the structure of the prosecution

In his article, the Director of Public Prosecutions considers not only the power of prosecution exercised by the National Commissioner of Police, but also the structure of the prosecution as a whole. Amongst other things, he mentions the general principle in Icelandic law that it should be possible to refer a decision taken by an organ of government to another government authority. He points out that under the current procedural legislation, the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is the supreme executant of the power of prosecution, takes decisions on various matters of opinion at the initial stages of prosecution against which there is no appeal. This could be rectified, he argues, in a relatively simple and convenient way, by adding an administrative level into the prosecutory structure; this would be a second prosecutory level, in between the National Commissioner of Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions. This person could have the professional designation of "prosecutor" or "district prosecutor". In his much-cited article, the Director of Public Prosecutions goes on to consider in further detail the division of responsibilities between these parties, what the main functions of the Director of Public Prosecutions would be after such a change and other aspects of the arrangement. His ideas regarding the structure and number of police regions, which in many ways correspond with those of the task committee, have been outlined above.¹²

The task committee considers there is reason to give attention to the ideas of the Director of Public Prosecutions regarding the structure of the prosecution and to undertake a review of the current arrangement in accordance with these ideas. The natural course of action would be for this to take place at the same time as the restructuring of policing.

4.7. Developing the role of the district commissioners

As is obvious from a perusal of this report, it is concerned primarily with the current situation and future arrangements regarding policing, little attention being given to other roles of the district commissioners (sýslumenn) or how their work could be made more effective in other areas.

In 1995 a committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice submitted its report on additional functions to be assigned to the district commissioners, with various proposals on the transfer of such functions. It cannot be said that these proposals received much support. The report stated that much had been done to put the district commissioners' offices in a better position to handle mixed service functions for individual parties and that a sensible course of action would be to make the district commissioners' offices into service centres for public administration of all types. This has not been adopted; instead, development in various areas of public administration has followed other paths. A detailed report entitled *Átak um eflingu sveitarstjórnarstígsins – Fyrstu tillögur nefndar um sameiningu sveitarfélaga* ("Upgrading Local Government – First proposals by the Committee on the Amalgamation of Local Authorities") was published in September 2004. This contained detailed proposals on the subject, one of the main advantages to be gained by merging local authorities being that it would give them greater capacity to tackle new functions.

The criticism that has been made of the district commissioners' offices regarding policing, which for the most part centres on how small the units are and their consequent lack of ability to tackle more complex functions, also applies to some extent to other functions that they handle. Thus, the State Social Security Institute has in recent years regularly criticised the handling of certain functions that the district

¹² Further reference should be made to the article by Bogi Nilsson, *Hvert á að vera skipulag ákærvalds hér á landi?* ("How should the prosecution be structured in Iceland?"), which appeared in the series *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum IV*, 2003 ("Studies in the Social Sciences", IV, 2003). A discussion in the same vein is to be found under the title *Framtíðarskipan ákærvalds* ("The future structure of the prosecution") is to be found in the Annual Report of the Director of Public Prosecutions for 2003.

commissioners' offices carry out as its agents; to an extent, the reason for this criticism is to be attributed to how small the offices are. It is evident that further amalgamation of local authorities in all parts of the country would create a clear and realistic basis for deciding where it would be most appropriate to locate individual functions and reviewing the current structure.

As is stated in the task committee's letter of appointment and has been stated in many other contexts, the existence of district commissioners' offices with good functional capacity all around Iceland is of great importance for the rural areas, even though the actual functions carried out by the individual offices are not necessarily identical.

Now already, the community of district commissioners and their offices can be viewed as a single large community of supportive effort and expertise whose members can consult each other regarding skills and experience when dealing with complex matters. This important aspect could be developed still further in various ways, both within the District Commissioners' Society and also in other ways. For example, specific offices could be given a "parent" role in certain fields, and would then function as leaders in the dissemination of skills and information, both within the community and outside it. A similar arrangement could be adopted as regards services to the public. An information and telephone service could be set up at a single locality for the whole country, with the skills and expertise required to give the public both general and specialised information on all fields of the district commissioners' functions; this could also be capable of putting enquirers through to individual employees of all the district commissioners' offices. The same applies to the development of electronic administrative channels: if the district commissioners' offices were to take the lead in this area, it is likely that this would consolidate and strengthen their capacities and standing in the future. Changes of this type could make the offices more capable of handling the tasks they deal with at present and make them into serious candidates to be entrusted with new tasks or to take over old ones.

4.8. The state of affairs in some of Iceland's neighbouring countries

Policing structure has been under review recently in Iceland's neighbouring countries. For example, extensive structural changes were set in motion in Norway in 2000 under the title "Politireform 2000", when the number of police regions in that country was cut from 54 to 28. The main aim of these changes was to improve policing in all areas, one of the ways of doing this being to use the money saved by this large reduction of regional police forces in order to raise the number of policemen. The aim was that the funding allocated to policing was best used for policing purposes, i.e. to prevent and fight crime; this end would be best achieved by reducing the superstructure of the regional police forces by expanding them and reducing their numbers and by concentrating more effort and resources on the service functions of the police towards the public. It was also considered that enlarging the regions would create better basis for developing specialised policing skills, such as those required to deal with drug offences, environmental crime, white-collar crime, etc. The impression to be gained from official published materials, including the annual report of the Norwegian police authority (Politidirektoratet) for 2002, is that these reforms were successful and that the changes produced the intended results. This states, amongst other things, that more policemen are now out on the streets engaged on policing, with fewer administrators sitting at office desks. Work was started in Denmark to examine policing structure in detail and make proposals on structural changes in 1998. The committee appointed then submitted detailed proposals in February 2002 on a new structure, including a reduction of the number of regional forces from 54 to 25. The main reason for proposing this reduction was the committee's view that the smallness of the regional forces restricted their efficiency in terms of the growing demands being made of the police. However, these proposals were not implemented. Instead, in mid-2003, work was launched on a comprehensive future strategy for the police, in which many parties were involved. It was considered necessary that a strategy of this type should be clearly laid down before any further moves were made, this being aimed at creating a better and clearer basis for discussion of the need for structural changes within the police, and so achieving better consensus on such changes if they proved necessary. The committee working on the overall strategy had not completed its work when the final touches were put to this report.

The task committee did not look into the situation in Iceland's other neighbouring countries in comparable detail; nevertheless it is clear that many of them, serious attention is being given to structure and strategy in this area. For example, structural changes of many types are being made in the British police, and ways of strengthening the police are being considered in Sweden; work in this area has mainly been carried out within the police themselves, e.g. in the form of greater collaboration between regional forces and through the development of specialist skills in certain forces in certain areas, these then serving other forces on the basis of agreements.

The cursory examination that the task committee made of the state of affairs in other countries revealed that the analyses used as the basis of proposals for changes in structure in Norway and Denmark were similar to the present analysis. In short, it can be said that in all three cases, the perception is that the small size of the individual police forces limits their capacity to meet the increased demands that are being made of the police in all fields, and that a solution to this problem must be found.

5. Summary – Principal conclusions and the proposals of the task committee

An attempt has been made in this report, firstly, to give a clear account of the current state of policing and the changes that have taken place in recent years, and to evaluate their success, particularly following the enactment of the Police Act, No. 90/1966. Secondly, the report discusses the strategies that have been pursued up to the present time and the priorities that the task committee considers should be taken into account when planning a future strategy. Thirdly, the task committee has identified the structural and administrative changes necessary to secure the best possible results in terms of the goals set in the work of the police. In connection with these topics, attention has also been given to more restricted topics applying to policing, such as performance management, the expansion of the role of the district commissioners and the use of a computer model.

The task committee's view is that the changes introduced into the structure of policing with the commencement of the new Police Act in 1997 were generally of benefit, and that the goals aimed at when it was enacted have for the most part been achieved. Regarding the National Commissioner's Office, the task committee considers it has discharged most of its functions in accordance with the specified demands and expectations, though certain aspects of its operations have been more conspicuous than others. On the other hand, the task committee considers it necessary to give particular attention to the structure of criminal investigations with a view to making them quicker and more efficient, and ways must also be sought to raise the quality of police investigations in certain cases. Regarding this last point, it is mainly because many of the regional police forces are so small that they are unable to build up a body of experience of certain types of investigation.

Work of many types relating to strategy has been done in the past few years, both by the government and the legislature and by the National Commissioner and individual regional police commissioners. The task committee sees no reason to change the definition of the role of the police stated in Article 1 of the Police Act, No. 90/1996, or the priority ranking of police functions reflected in the order in which they are listed in that article. These functions are referred to in this report as the security function, the preventive function, the investigative function, the service and assistance function, the auxiliary function and the collaborative function; in addition to these, the police are obliged to undertake other functions assigned to them by law. On the other hand, the task committee has identified certain points of emphasis within each of these functions which may be used when setting policing goals.

In connection with the aforementioned functions of the police, the task committee has indicated measuring standards that could be used in setting goals and assessing performance in policing. The task committee sees it as the responsibility of the Minister of Justice and the National Commissioner of Police to specify what the legally-prescribed overall goals of policing should be and how performance should be rated in further detail in relation to these goals. On the basis of general strategic planning of this type, individual police commissioners, or departments within the regional forces, or even individual policemen, could then set themselves goals and define standards for measuring their achievements. The task committee points out that the most natural course would be to set forth policing goals, with definitions of the standards to be used to measure them and how performance is to be assessed, in performance management agreements between the Minister of Justice and the National Commissioner of Police, and also in agreements between the National Commissioner and individual police commissioners.

One of the task committee's principal conclusions is that the smallness of many of the regional police forces in Iceland makes it difficult for them to discharge the functions they are required to perform by law and prevents them from achieving the results that they aim at and are expected to achieve. Enlarging the regions covered by a single force, and merging forces, would be measures aimed at having a capable force in each region with the capacity to tackle the tasks arising in its locality. The task committee proposes that most of the regional forces be expanded considerably, their number being reduced to result in a total of perhaps five or seven regional forces in the whole country. The task committee has chosen not to make final proposals on this point, but instead to refer to some of the various possibilities that were named in

reports that the task committee commissioned. If the idea of having fewer, but larger, regional forces is not adopted, then the task committee considers it evident that the central command authority of the National Commissioner of Police would have to be upgraded substantially in order to promote cohesion and collaboration between the individual regional forces.

In the task committee's view, enlargement and amalgamation of the regional forces is the prerequisite for reforms and improvements of all types in policing. Nevertheless, the task committee also presents proposals regarding the command of the regional forces, the simplification of the investigation of criminal cases, the use of performance management agreements and the use of a computer model in connection with funding. As has been stated above, the task committee regards the most natural course of action being that the National Commissioner of Police should enter into performance management agreements with the individual regional commissioners on the basis of the general strategy adopted and be in charge of their application. This would make it easier for the National Commissioner to assess at any given time where the need for support and concentration of resources was greatest in the police. In this context, the task committee points out the advantages of having the National Commissioner gather and assess the funding proposals submitted by the individual regional commissioners and drawing up, in consultation with them, a comprehensive proposal to be submitted to the Minister of Justice.

The task committee makes no proposals regarding changes to the legally-prescribed role of the National Commissioner of Police. On the other hand, the proposals it makes would involve a greater emphasis on having the Office of the National Commissioner use its influence to promote greater collaboration and integration between the regional forces, in addition to which its involvement in strategic planning and financial administration would be increased.

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