

News Letter

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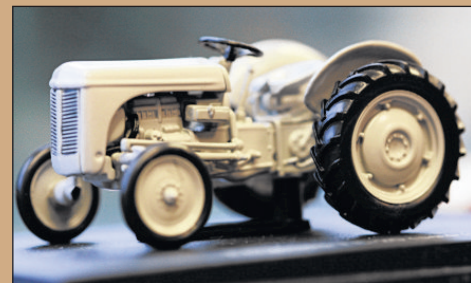


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52 PSNI stations 'could be facing axe'

BY GEMMA MURRAY

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MORE than 50 police stations could be under threat as a result of a PSNI review, it emerged last night.

The proposals for the review of 52 police stations were passed to the News Letter after Sir Desmond Rea, chairman of the Policing Board, postponed a special meeting – due to have been held on Thursday past – to discuss the potential closure of 16 rural bases.

Last night, DUP Policing Board member Ian Paisley Jnr said he was concerned that some of the police stations up for review were in dissident republican strongholds.

He said that his party was prepared to consider closing some stations which are not active.

He added: "But looking at the plan of more than 50 stations in front of us we are very concerned that there is a pattern here where police stations are being withdrawn from some of the areas that are under severe

dissident threat.

"That sends out a poor signal of withdrawal even though the police reassure us about having more men on the streets and will have more service available when they use the money [from the sale of the stations] to that effect.

"We think the police need to show us a better alternative plan than what we have seen to date."

The Policing Board said: "It is expected that around 50 police stations will be reviewed as part of the draft PSNI Strategy over the next three/four-year period."

A spokesman said the meeting, due to be held on January 15 to consider the draft PSNI Estate Strategy, had been postponed to allow additional information to be provided by the PSNI.

A spokesman said during consultations over the last number of months, serious concerns had been expressed by the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and local communities around station closures. **Turn to page 10**



Young
Dempsey
helping
Zoe keep
her cool

Skating champion
Dempsey Andrews, 12,
from Belfast is giving
Zoe Salmon, inset, a
helping hand in her bid
for Dancing On Ice
glory. **See page 6**

PICTURE: Diane Magill

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