4.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of carrying out independent reviews of major crime investigations is recognised throughout the Police Service. The ACPO Crime Committee issued revised guidance for major crime reviews in 1998 and this section is based on that guidance.

4.2 OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

The objective of any review is to constructively evaluate the conduct of an investigation to ensure:

- It conforms to nationally approved standards;
- It is thorough;
- It has been conducted with integrity and objectivity;
- That no investigative opportunities have been overlooked;
- That good practice is identified.

Set against this objective is the fundamental need for the review to be carried out in a spirit of cooperation between the reviewing officer and SIO. The review should always be regarded by the SIO as being of assistance and support to the investigation, and should never be seen as a threat.

Reviews should be considered for both undetected and detected crimes. In the case of undetected crimes, the review can reassure the SIO and the organisation that the lines of enquiry were appropriate. Equally, the process may reveal aspects of the investigation which should be pursued or modified.

Every review should be seen as an opportunity to improve future working practices by identifying lessons learned and good practice. These lessons can be found in detected and undetected cases.

4.3 POLICY

Chief officers are advised to ensure that clear policy exists to reflect individual force expectations in relation to the conduct of major crime reviews. Policy must make a clear distinction between the formal review process and day-to-day senior management supervision of the investigation. In this regard, it may prove useful to define the strategic role of ACPO, which is to commission reviews, determine terms of reference and appoint a reviewing officer, in conjunction with the head of crime in their role as senior investigative consultant.