



Durham Police Authority

PRESS RELEASE

DURHAM POLICE AUTHORITY APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT TO LET LOCAL PEOPLE DECIDE THE FUTURE OF LOCAL POLICING

Durham Police Authority is calling for local people to have their say on what the future should look like for policing in County Durham and Darlington.

Responding to the Government plans to introduce directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners by May 2012, the Police Authority is encouraging the people of County Durham and Darlington to put forward their views on these proposals which are set to cost tax payers in excess of an estimated £50Million in election and set-up costs alone.

The Police Authority wants to represent the public view in their response to the Home Office consultation 'Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People'. Mr Peter Thompson, Chair of Durham Police Authority said:

"We, representing our local communities are passionate about front-line policing and are of the view that if it isn't broke don't fix it. Home Office statistics published just days before this consultation paper support this. Nationally, crime is down by 50% and the chance of being a victim of crime is at its lowest level since records began in 1981. In Durham and Darlington, crime has fallen by 9.6% in the last year which means that 3,950 fewer people have suffered at the hands of criminals. This is evidence that Police Authorities have done a good job in prioritising public concerns and holding to account their local Police Forces. I take the view that this goes against any basis for significant constitutional change at a time when financial restraint is even more essential".

Durham Police Authority also wants to know what the Coalition Government's evidence is for suggesting that an Elected Commissioner for Durham and Darlington will do a better job in representing the populations of Durham and Darlington than the Authority's current arrangements of 17 members covering 12 main towns, 260 small towns and villages and a population of 609,000.

The Authority welcomes other aspects of the consultation paper, such as the focus on reducing bureaucracy and issues of workforce reform and is committed to working with the Government during this challenging period. However, a key priority for the Police Authority right now is to represent the views of the local communities in which it serves. Many of which are supported by Town and Parish Councils."

Mr Peter Thompson added

“As the voice for local policing, we appeal to our communities to give us their views on these proposals.”

Members of the public can provide their views via a questionnaire on Durham Police Authority’s Website at www.durham-pa.gov.uk or via a telephone survey on Tel: 0191 383 5511. The closure date for the consultation is Wednesday 8th September 2010 in line with the Government’s deadline.

Notes to Editors

Durham Police Authority is an independent body responsible for ensuring Durham Constabulary delivers an efficient and effective police service. It is made up of 17 local people who include 9 councillors, 8 members of the public who are the independent members.

The Authority ensures that the Constabulary is accountable to the people of County Durham and Darlington and ensures that citizens have a say in how they are policed.

The Authority is responsible, amongst other matters, for setting the budget for the Constabulary and, following consultation with local communities, mapping out the strategic direction of policing. This includes agreeing policing priorities and setting the Constabulary challenging targets to drive performance higher.

The Authority’s vision

“To be the effective voice of our communities in securing delivery of the highest quality policing.”

Our mission

“Working in partnership to ensure fair, effective and visible policing”

The Authority aims to: -

- Exercise strong and effective leadership in partnership working
- Engage positively with our Citizens and Communities to build confidence in local policing.
- Promote equality, tolerance and respect for human rights.
- Scrutinise and challenge police performance & procedures to secure continuous improvement
- Ensure Effective use of resources

For further information or comment, please contact: Durham Police Authority
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