



Durham Police Authority

PRESS RELEASE

10 November 2010

Police financial reserves remain secure

Durham Police Authority is astounded to read a suggestion proposed by the Telegraph newspaper, that all Police Authorities should use their financial reserves to counter the impact of central government cuts. Mr Peter Thompson, Chair of Durham Police Authority said:

“Mortgaging the future in this way is not in the interests of the communities of County Durham and Darlington in the longer term”.

The Authority, responsible for the police budget, currently holds approximately £13.55m in reserve of which £7.75m is earmarked for specific purposes and subject to External Audit scrutiny. The remaining £5.8m is held as a General Reserve and represents 4.86% of our budget requirement. This is in line with the Authority's reserves policy which requires that we aim to maintain general reserves at between 4% and 5% of our budget requirement.

External Audit review financial reserves as part of their annual work and they have not commented that the Police Authority's reserves are unreasonable.

Durham raises a below average percentage of its income from council tax and therefore is more susceptible to grant reductions than other police forces and therefore requires financial resilience, especially given the cap on council tax.

Mr Thompson continued:

"Clearly in these difficult financial times, it would not be prudent to disguise the cuts necessary to meet the Government's challenging demands by supporting ongoing staffing costs with a one-off

contribution from reserves. These reserves can be used only once – when they've gone, they've gone, so what will happen next year and the year after that?

“And, with no or little reserves, how can we reassure the public that we can protect them from unforeseen crises that can occur in communities from time to time, perhaps a natural disaster like severe flooding or a public order incident.”

“We are doing everything we can to protect front-line policing services but a suggestion like this is quite simply irresponsible and impractical”.

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 ensure that policing in County Durham and Darlington is fair, effective and visible”

The Authority's Mission

“To be the effective voice of our communities in securing the delivery of high quality policing by:

- Exercising strong & effective leadership
- Engaging positively with communities to build confidence in local policing
- Strengthening partnership working
- Promoting equality, tolerance & respect for human rights
- Scrutinising and challenging police performance to secure continuous improvement
- Scrutinising and challenging business systems and processes to ensure effective use of resources

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