



Durham Police Authority

PRESS RELEASE

Local taxpayers set to benefit from policing Council Tax freeze

Thousands of local council taxpayers across County Durham and Darlington are in line to see the policing element of their council tax bill frozen from April 2011.

Durham Police Authority, which oversees policing on behalf of the public, is facing huge financial challenges as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review; despite this, the Authority's Finance, Audit and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 1 February 2011, decided to make a recommendation to the Full Authority for a council tax freeze for 2011-12. The ultimate decision will be made by the Police Authority at its annual budget meeting on 22 February.

If it does decide on a council tax freeze, the Police Authority will have access to funding from the Government's grant scheme, which is equivalent to raising the council tax by 2.5 per cent. With payments staying the same as last year, for a Band D property the council tax rate would remain at £153.41 per year for policing.

Mr Peter Thompson, Chairman of Durham Police Authority said:

"The opportunity to freeze council tax for policing for this coming year will help to ease the financial burden on local taxpayers. In future years however, there is no certainty that we will be able to do so."

The Authority and its police force have looked at a range of bold and innovative measures aimed at cutting costs including the new 'Hub and Spoke' Force Operating Model, measures aimed at increasing productivity, a recruitment freeze across the whole Force and the recent redundancy process for back-office police staff. The resulting savings have allowed Police Authority Members to make the recommendation to freeze the council tax.

Mr Thompson continued:

"We have had some difficult financial decisions to make recently, in particular the compulsory redundancy programme which we concluded late in 2010.

"Policing finances have seen a massive hit during this last year. However we are determined to put front-line policing at the forefront of our priorities as we move ahead into an era of stringent financial restraint. The Police Authority will continue to support the Chief Constable and his officers in every way

possible to ensure that the Constabulary maintains its status as one of the best performing Forces in the whole of the Country”.

ENDS

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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