



Durham Police Authority

PRESS RELEASE

DURHAM POLICE AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO HOME SECRETARY: THE PUBLIC WANT TO SEE MORE POLICE ON THE STREETS NOT POLITICIANS

Following the comments made yesterday by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, the Chair of Durham Police Authority, Mr Peter Thompson has responded:

“I am appalled at the Home Secretary’s notion that politicians should be the face of operational policing. The public want the police to police the streets, not politicians”

Theresa May, Home Secretary, said yesterday that there was a lesson to be learnt from last week’s riots in London and elsewhere.

“In London, the Mayor was on the streets of his city, working with the Acting Commissioner and representing Londoners to central government. The contrast with unaccountable, unelected and invisible police authority chairmen in other parts of the country could not have been clearer.”

Mr Peter Thompson responded:

“This assertion is far from truth. My colleagues from Police Authorities up and down the country were actively involved in the process at the right strategic level. Just because Police Authority Chairs’ were not photographed on the streets does not indicate inactivity behind the scenes. On the contrary, we were involved throughout. I particular was supporting the Chief Constable in his decision to release police officers to the Met under mutual aid prior to the return of the Home Secretary and the Mayor of London from holiday.”

In the same statement released by the Home Secretary, she talks about the need to cut the policing budget:

“And as we cut the deficit, the police are going to have to take their share of the burden.”

Yet the national rollout of an untested US Policing Model via the introduction of Directly Elected Commissioners in May 2012 is set to cost the public purse a further £100M or more. Talking specifically about the costs to the tax payer, Mr Peter Thompson commented:

“The cost of holding the election in County Durham and Darlington next year will just fall short of a million pounds.”

Mr Thompson added:

“As a Police Authority covering the Constabulary area, we engage extensively with our communities. Just last week through the press, we invited the general public to attend an event on the introduction of a Police and Crime Commissioner to County Durham and Darlington. So far, we have received one response from a member of the public. If this represents the public appetite for change, the Government has got a long way to go in justifying the significant costs and implications to British policing of what is expected to be a political appointment and interference.”

END

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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