



Durham Constabulary

Press Release

26.10.11

DRIVE TO MAKE DURHAM 'SAFEST CITY IN BRITAIN'

POLICE are spearheading an ambitious project designed to make Durham the safest city in the UK.

The main aims are to drive down even further the city's current low levels of crime and increase the feeling of reassurance for residents, retailers and visitors.

"When you ask members of the public about levels of crime their perception is almost always out of touch with reality," said **Insp Paul ANDERSON**, who heads Durham's neighbourhood policing team.

"Many people imagine there are 30, 40 or even 50 crimes per day in Durham city centre when the actual figure is three."

An initial meeting was held in the town hall earlier this summer to consider various issues and possible solutions. Local residents, councillors and business people were among those who attended and agreed to form a working party to progress actions.

Tactics already agreed include the merging of two 'Watch' schemes covering licensed premises and shops, which will now form a unified 'City Watch'.

This means details of shoplifters, drunks and other troublemakers can be passed quickly between retailers, licence-holders and the police to ensure a 'joined'-up' approach.

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Other measures include offering drug or alcohol referral advice offered to all those arrested in a bid to prevent future offending and extra patrols by police and street wardens in certain locations across Durham.

A series of initiatives are also planned aimed at reducing the number of students targeted by thieves and burglars, while also encouraging students to be considerate to their resident neighbours.

The campaign will be regularly evaluated using a number of criteria including levels of recorded crime, reports of anti-social behaviour and public confidence.

'We will be working very closely with colleagues in various organisations, such as the county council, the university and Safe Durham Partnership to make this a success.

"Durham is already a safe city, with crime down seven per cent in the last 12 months, but our intention is to make it the safest in the country,"* said Insp Anderson.

'Safe City' will be launched in the Market Place in Durham at **11am today, Wed 26th October**. A mobile police station will be parked in the Market Place offering safety and crime prevention advice and a number of people involved in the campaign will be wearing t-shirts bearing the specially designed 'Safe City' logo (attached).

Available for interview will be Insp Paul Anderson and representatives from the other bodies involved including local retailers, publicans and members of the Safe Neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour teams.

Survey forms will also be handed out to members of the public asking them to identify any issues of concern or actions they would like to see taken.

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*In the twelve months to 1 September 2011 there were **2,248** recorded crimes in the Durham policing sector, which includes outlying areas as well as the city centre, compared to **2,409** the previous year.

Crimes involving violence against the person were down 16% over the same period (289 against 343).

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