



Durham Police Authority

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Audit Commission gives Police Authority clean bill of health**

Durham Police Authority has received praise for its financial planning by the Audit Commission for its arrangements for achieving value for money in the police service.

At a recent Special meeting of the Police Authority, Members received a report from the external auditors, which looked back over the previous year, and assessed the Authority's financial planning for the coming year.

The recent economic downturn has put enormous pressure on the public sector, of which the Auditors commented: "During 2011/12 the Authority and Constabulary have proactively pursued cost reductions and savings across a range of activities, from a position of financial stability. This has involved fundamental review and restructuring of the workforce". The Audit Commission reported further on the Authority's handling of the financial challenges: "Early and proactive planning and implementation of savings releasing initiatives have already delivered a significant proportion of these by challenging historical practices and driving through significant reforms to workforce mix and improvements in productivity".

This year all public bodies had the difficult task of adopting new International Financial Reporting Standards, a complex and unfamiliar process to most organisations. In terms of the Police Authority's Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement and what this means for local residents, the external auditors said: "The Authority adopted a proactive approach to this challenge and made good progress from an early stage".

In terms of Value for money for the residents of County Durham and Darlington, the Police Authority were assessed on two specific areas: financial resilience and securing economy efficiency and effectiveness, of which the Auditors said: "The Police Authority has good overall arrangements for promoting and sustaining a Value for Money culture for the police force" and went on to say: "The Authority has a sound financial foundation from which it has planned in detail for the medium term, but is not complacent and has actively sought and delivered significant savings".

Mr Peter Thompson, Chair of Durham Police Authority said: "Members of the Police Authority have worked hard to ensure both the Authority and Constabulary achieve Value for Money for the council tax-payer. I am pleased that the Audit Commission has recognised these achievements and that both the Authority and Force have maintained a unified direction during the year, despite external financial uncertainties. The auditors also recognise that due

to the decisions made to 'do more with less', there has been no reduction in scrutiny and challenge of policing, nor any impact on police performance or public confidence".

## **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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