



## Durham Police Authority

# PRESS RELEASE

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### ***Durham Police Authority's plea to the Government to keep extremism out of Policing***

The 17 members of Durham Police Authority are united in their stand against the Home Secretary's plans to introduce Directly Elected Crime and Policing Representatives onto Police Authorities, believing that this could open the floodgates for politically extremist groups to take control of local policing.

The Police Authority, which provides governance over policing on behalf of the public in County Durham and Darlington, has responded to the Government's Green Paper entitled "From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together" and are now lobbying local MPs to support their local campaign. The Green Paper sets out how the Government proposes to continue to work with the police to bring down crime, increase public confidence, give local people more information and a bigger say in how their neighbourhoods are policed. However, the paper has caused huge controversy nationally over its proposals to introduce directly elected representatives onto Police Authorities.

Peter Thompson, the Chair of Durham Police Authority commented

"The inherent risk in the Government's proposals for direct elections is that it could be used as a mechanism for inappropriate organisations to gain representation onto what is currently accepted as a proportionately structured and properly appointed body made up of local councillors and independent members. The electorate would have little enthusiasm for voting in such an election and some thoroughly inappropriate and unsuitable people are likely to generate a campaign to get themselves elected potentially on single issues and emotive topics. Another fundamental flaw in the Government's proposal is that it dismisses and undermines the important role of elected councillors on Police Authorities. This could prove damaging to the excellent relationships between Local Authorities and the Police."

Early estimates provided by the Home Office indicate that the implementation costs for Police Authority elections in the first year could exceed £30,000,000. Mr Thompson added,

“Given the current financial climate, it is senseless that the Government wants to invest significant amounts of tax payers’ money in setting up Police Authority elections. This will not engender public confidence in local policing.”

Durham Police Authority has offered the Government an alternative proposal to improve police accountability in its response to the Policing Green Paper. The Police Authority’s counter proposal is based on introducing Community Partnership Representatives onto the Police Authority without the need for costly elections. To see the Police Authority’s response in full, please visit the website [www.durham-pa.gov.uk](http://www.durham-pa.gov.uk) .

If you would like to support Durham Police Authority’s campaign against directly elected Police Authorities, you can write a letter of support to your local MP. Alternatively, you can register your protest against the Government’s proposals on the Number 10 petition website at:

[www.petitions.number10.gov.uk/700morepolice/](http://www.petitions.number10.gov.uk/700morepolice/) .

## **Notes to Editors**

**Mr Peter Thompson is available for interview please contact directly on 07798816737 or 07824460463**

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 and 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 be the effective voice of our communities in securing delivery of the highest quality policing.”**

Our mission

**“Working in partnership to ensure fair, effective and visible policing”**

The Authority aims to: -

- Exercise strong and effective leadership in partnership working
- Engage positively with our Citizens and Communities to build confidence in local policing.
- Promote equality, tolerance and respect for human rights.

- Scrutinise and challenge police performance & procedures to secure continuous improvement
- Ensure Effective use of resources