



Durham Police Authority

PRESS RELEASE

Durham Police Precept

Durham Police Authority has today (26th February, 2009) agreed a financial package for policing across County Durham and Darlington during a meeting where the main focus was to protect front line policing, balanced against pressures imposed by the current economic climate.

The Police Authority, which oversees policing on behalf of the public, agreed a budget for Durham Police in the order of £119.4 million at a meeting at Darlington Town Hall, an increase of 2.8 per cent on the 2008/9 budget.

The measures will cost the majority of Durham's householders in Band A the biggest single grouping an increase of 6 pence a week, a 3.5 per cent rise on last year.

The weekly increases for Band B -8 pence per week, for Band C- 9 pence per week, Band D-10 pence per week, Band E-12 pence per week, Band F-14 pence per week, Band G-16 pence per week and Band H-19 pence per week.

Chairman Mr Peter Thompson of Durham Police Authority commented, "This time of year is always difficult for the Authority and we have consulted the public through the Citizens Panel and through meetings with the business community. The consultation has demonstrated a clear recognition of the difficulties faced by the Police Authority as a result of inadequate funding from Central Government, compounded by increasing demand on policing services.

There was a general feeling that having regard to the current economic situation, Council Tax should be kept to a minimum and it is pleasing to note that people of County Durham and Darlington will continue to benefit from one of the lowest levels of Council Tax for policing in the Country.

Concluding Chair Mr Peter Thompson said, "Whilst we do not under-estimate the challenge of achieving a low level of increase in Council Tax, we are confident that the Police Authority and Durham Constabulary will strive in partnership to continue to ensure effective policing. We can reassure the public that County Durham and Darlington will remain one of the safest places to live and work in the whole of the country"

Chief Constable Mr Jon Stoddart said

“Durham Constabulary continues to provide really good value for money and we have long been recognised nationally as a high-performing force. This has been achieved partly through our continuing modernisation programme. As a result, while the overall number of people employed by the organisation has remained constant the balance between officers and other staff has changed and we now need fewer officers.

“I had hoped for a higher percentage rise in our police precept to help us move from good to excellent service, so my natural reaction is one of slight disappointment. But I appreciate the continued support we receive from the police authority, especially when we are all feeling the effects of the downturn in the global economy.

“I can assure members of the public they will not notice any significant difference this year in the number of officers. We have pledged to provide a ‘name in every neighbourhood’ and will maintain the current strength of those on the frontline of everyday policing. However, there may come a time in the future when I cannot make any similar guarantees, especially if our reduction in officer strength continues to be amongst the highest of all the forces in England and Wales.”

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 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

For further information or comment, please contact: Victoria Fielding, Policy and Communications Officer Durham Police Authority Tel. No: 0191 3835511

Email: durham.pa@durham.gov.uk

Website: www.durham-pa.gov.uk