



CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

Wednesday 14 February 2007

Police Authority meets to set budget

CUMBRIA Police Authority met today, Wednesday 14 February, and agreed a total Budget of £94.029m in 2007-08 – representing an increase of £3.6m (4.1%) over 2006-07 and requiring a Band 'D' Council tax of £171.09 - an increase of £8.01 (4.91%) over the current year. For a typical band 'B' property in Cumbria, the increase for 2007-08 represents a rise of 12p per week - similar to this year's increase. The annual cost of policing in the County for a two-adult household band 'B' will therefore increase by £6.23 to £133.07 a year – equivalent to £2.56 per week.

Reg Watson, Chairman of Cumbria Police Authority, said: "This budget has been very carefully and skilfully-balanced so that it meets the Government's objective for the lowest-possible tax increase whilst at the same time enabling the Police Authority to sustain the investment it has already made in Local Policing resources over the past four years. This is in order to provide improved levels of policing, including in the key area of 'Protective' policing (i.e. serious crime and counter-terrorism) identified by government for increased attention. At the same time, the Police Authority has still been able to approve provision in its budget for major new capital investments totalling £26m over the next five years. These will help deliver improvements in infrastructure and support for the Constabulary, including making provision for a new BCU Headquarters for North Cumbria – successfully replacing part of what the old Rickergate station in Carlisle used to provide us with."

To achieve this budget, the Police Authority has:

- Accepted savings and efficiencies of £1.344m identified by the Chief Constable.
- Agreed to fund £549,000 of expenditure (net) from specific reserves and a further £5.67m from its capital financing reserve.
- Made an additional revenue contribution of £1.7m towards the cost of the 2007-08 capital programme.
- Limited net demands for increased resources to meet operational and central pressures to just £537,000 (including £165,000 capital financing costs) - more being met by the reallocation of internal resources and changes in priority to improve 'Protective services' over the next 3 years.

Councillor Watson said: "This budget continues the long-term strategy and steady focus of the Police Authority and the Chief Constable towards investing in boosting public reassurance and reducing crime in Cumbria. During the Police Authority's consultations at public meetings over next year's budget, one clear message which emerged was the huge fund of goodwill and support held for the police and of taxpayers support for a council tax increase of up to 5%. That support was given on the proviso it was used to sustain front-line policing and the members of this Authority believe that we have achieved and demonstrated this priority in the budget approved today. I believe this Police Authority has acted responsibly both to meet Government targets and deliver the policing service that the people of Cumbria say they want. We do that efficiently and effectively and at the same time in a way which is mindful of householders' abilities to pay. As a result I strongly believe we have achieved the right balance in setting the budget for 2007-08."

Chief Constable Michael Baxter said: "Cumbria Constabulary performance has been improving year-on-year over the past five years and this places us in a strong position to face future challenges. The past year or so has been particularly challenging given the potential amalgamation with Lancashire Constabulary and then, at short notice, the collapse of that proposal. This resulted in a shorter time than usual for us to plan as a stand-alone Constabulary to meet the challenges that still exist of a reducing budget over the next four years and the need to improve our protective services provision.

Maintaining an efficient and effective police service



We are committed to three very clear objectives:

- maintaining a good standard of Neighbourhood Policing through our Local Policing Team approach;
- investing in, and improving, Protective Services;
- ensuring that our support infrastructure is not just affordable but also effective.

"We now have a four year programme in place, which has been endorsed by the Police Authority, to deliver these objectives. I am pleased that the Police Authority have agreed a budget, and an ambitious capital programme, that will help to achieve our three principal objectives and I am confident that the Constabulary working closely with its key partners can make Cumbria even safer."

Editors' note:

Cumbria Police Authority is made up of local people - a mixture of councillors, magistrates and independent members - and acts as the bridge between Cumbria Constabulary and all communities across the county in policing matters. Legally, it owns all the buildings and land in the police property portfolio and is responsible for:

- *setting the budget for Cumbria Constabulary, including raising local council taxes for policing;*
- *consulting and engaging with local communities in Cumbria to find out what they want the local police to tackle;*
- *setting the strategic direction for policing in Cumbria; deciding local priorities for policing and setting the Constabulary challenging targets to drive performance higher*
- *appointing the Chief Constable; Deputy Chief Constable, and Assistant Chief Constables;*
- *monitoring and managing local police performance.*

NOTE TO NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS:

For further information, contact the Police Authority's Treasurer Douglas Thomas on 01768 217734 or email: policeauthority@cumbria.police.uk

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