



CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

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Contact: Clive Alcock

Telephone: 01768 217734

E-mail: clive.alcock@cumbria.police.uk

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY WELCOMES GREEN PAPER ON POLICING

Confidence in policing is vital both to our country and our county, and modern police authorities play an ever-stronger role in holding the police to account on behalf of local people for delivering the best possible policing. This is why Cumbria Police Authority has welcomed the clear message of government confidence in police authorities and strengthening of their role in the recently-released Green Paper: "*From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together*" (17th July 2008).

The new paper may set the shape for policing for a generation, building on Sir Ronnie Flanagan's recent 'Review of Policing' and a Cabinet Office Review "*Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime*". Its three 'key issues are empowering citizens and authorities; professionalising and 'freeing-up' the police; and establishing a clear framework so government can fulfil its strategic leadership role whilst supporting local police authorities, forces and officers as they get on with the job. The 'Policing Pledge' is a new way of spelling out to the public exactly what they can expect from local police officers.

Under 'Empowerment', government's wish for a greater role for local people and police authorities in more accountability at a local level is expected to include the public directly electing representatives onto police authorities.

Cumbria County and Carlisle City councillor, Reg Watson OBE, chairman of Cumbria Police Authority, welcomes the new Green Paper:

"This is all about giving people the sort of policing service they want, which must be right. In Cumbria we're fortunate to have one of the top-performing forces in the country, with detection rates amongst the highest, overseen by a largely-apolitical body winning accountability from policing every day. With criminals having a good chance of being caught and crime levels falling, we don't have the problems some have, of public satisfaction lagging far behind our policing achievements. Like government, confidence and satisfaction are key outcomes for us in Cumbria, where 84% of people are satisfied with the policing service received. Even amongst those who've not had dealings, people report much higher confidence in policing in this county, although we're still aiming for better. There's a lot in this paper to consider, but my earliest reservation is about unclear proposals in the Green Paper for direct elections to the authority. Why do we need this? After 12 years of independent police authorities as authentic representatives of their communities, do you really want to risk politicising British policing through some group of eccentric, single-issue types or even political extremists becoming the majority on the public body meant to oversee and support your local Chief Constable?"

News Release

Maintaining an efficient and effective police service



“Since the merger process collapsed in 2006, the Constabulary has gone from strength to strength and, as far as I’m concerned, the Police Authority is not going to volunteer for merger again, not unless we’re forced to – although proposals to remove protections in the Home Office funding formula could threaten real headaches for Cumbria. I do like the Green Paper’s approach to reinforcing the duty for collaboration between police forces. That’s been one major dividend from the 2006 process and we have some tremendous operational collaborations across the north west that Cumbria has played a big part in, as I know from chairing the NW Collaboration Group. These joint initiatives are delivering real results, both in fighting crime more effectively and improving our organisational efficiency together. I also like the Green Paper’s ideas about reducing bureaucracy for our officers out on the streets, and its ambition to cut down on ‘top-down’ targets is another welcome element.

“What the Authority is going to do now is for its Members to sit down with the Chief Constable and talk through all these implications with him. We’re also consulting with the people of Cumbria, and would be glad to hear everyone’s views on the Green Paper, so that together we can provide some good, strong Cumbrian feedback to the Home Office consultation ending in October. On our website at www.cumbriapoliceauthority.org.uk/yourview.htm there’s a feedback link to capture people’s ideas about all this, which we’ll use in representations to government on your behalf”

Notes to Editors

- For further information please contact Clive Alcock by telephone (01768 217734) or e-mail (clive.alcock@cumbria.police.uk).
- Police authorities, along with the Home Secretary and chief officers of police, make up the tripartite relationship responsible for the governance of policing in England and Wales.
- Police authorities are made up of local people: a mix of local councillors, magistrates and independent members (selected from the community) represent the views of local communities.
- The job of police authorities is to:
 - **appoint (and, if necessary, dismiss) chief constables and senior police officers**
 - **consult with local communities to find out what they want the local police to do**
 - **set the budget for their police force, and decide how much local people should pay for policing in the local council tax**
 - **set the strategic direction for policing locally and decide what the police should focus attention on locally based on their consultations with local communities**
 - **make sure the police force is continuing to do a better job**

