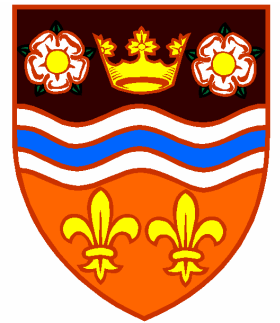


PRESS INFORMATION

Date: 12th February 2008
Ref: 176 Budget



HUMBERSIDE
POLICE AUTHORITY

Police Authority Agrees Budget for Policing

HumberSide Police Authority met today (12th February 2008) to approve the police revenue budget for the year 2008-2009. This was agreed at £173.340M, making the amount local people will pay towards policing £156.31 for a Band D household for the year.

This is an increase of 4.5% in the Council Tax precept, a rise of £6.73 per annum, less than 13p a week for an average household (Band D).

At £173.340M, the total budget is an increase of 3.1% over 2007-08 figure of £168.127m. The policing precept accounts for £44.326m of the total budget, with the remainder coming principally from Government Grants.

The Authority also agreed a capital programme for 2008/09 of £11.5m which will see further expenditure on refurbishment and new build projects to complete the network of Neighbourhood Policing Team bases. It will also facilitate investment in other aspects of the force estate such as custody facilities as well as essential spending on IT and communications equipment and new and replacement vehicles.

Chair of the Police Authority, Ms Alene Branton MBE, said: "This budget is designed to help the force continue building upon the welcome and substantial improvements in performance that have been achieved over the last two years. Cutting crime and keeping people safe does cost money, but we have been able to keep the increases this year well below 5% as a result of prudent financial husbandry and efficiency savings.

"As part of its commitment to Neighbourhood Policing and Citizen Focus, the Authority will continue to honour its pledge to provide over 330 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) across the Force area, which we know means so much to local people.

"We will also focus more on our volunteering scheme, which will be managed internally and a Community Safety Unit will be created to assist in the development of partnership working to generate further efficiencies."

Cont/...

.../2

A partnership reserve will also be created to deal with any issues arising from changes to the grants paid to Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), which in the past have supported initiatives, including policing activities, to make communities safer places. More money will be directed at seizing cash and assets from criminals by expanding work on Hi-tech crime and identifying money laundering activities and there will also be extra spending on tackling internet sex offenders.

Ms Branton continued: "The Authority is now benefiting from a policy of setting budgets in the context of medium term financial plans. Prior to the budget being agreed, members considered a detailed report on the financial prospects for 2008/09 to 2012/13.

"The Authority has had a policy of setting money aside in reserves in recent years to cushion the impact of increasingly tight financial constraints on Force spending. Whilst Government funding has increased by only 2.6% in 2008/09 and Ministers have said that they will consider capping budgets if Council Tax increases are not substantially less than 5%, access to these reserves will mean that there will be no cutbacks in front line services next year and the Authority will be able to increase spending in some important areas."

She continued: "It is disappointing that despite the significant improvements that the Authority has overseen in force performance over the last two years that this improvement has not been reflected in public satisfaction. Therefore there will be an increased emphasis on communication and public reassurance."

The close co-operation with the other Forces and Authorities across the Yorkshire area, working jointly on initiatives to deal with organised crime, strategic roads policing and serious and cross border criminality will continue, with the Authority making money available to invest in these activities.

Chief Constable Tim Hollis, welcoming the budget decision, said: "This is a good budget for the force and our local communities. Our practice of setting annual budgets within the context of our five year Financial Strategy continues to serve us well. We have achieved substantial improvements in performance in the last 18 months and this budget means that we can not just maintain performance but build upon those improvements during 2008/09 by investing for the future, in particular through improvements to our custody estate."

"As ever, we have choices to make and some are not easy. These will become even more difficult in the future as we cannot completely overcome a settlement under the Comprehensive Spending Review which is markedly lower than we have seen in recent years and below the average for English and Welsh Police Authorities. We are changing the way we deliver services through a programme of business and workforce modernisation which will bring new challenges and opportunities to the force and the Police Authority.

Cont/...

.../3

“I am proud that we have delivered on our promises to the public with regards to improved call handling and incident response and in respect of numbers Police Community Support Officer on our Neighbourhood Policing teams. These, together with the dedicated policing estate we have built over the last three years, make for a visible demonstration of our commitment to improve neighbourhood policing across the force area.

“Over the last two years we have also improved markedly the levels of operational policing performance achieving both significant reductions in crime levels and improvements in detection rates.

“As this budget demonstrates, we have sound financial foundations in place on which we can now build with the other Yorkshire regional forces and partners in our area higher levels of performance, service and productivity to the people living and working in and visiting the Humberside Police area.”

Ends

Media Enquiries: Sallie Blair, 01283 821012 / 07702 541401