

MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE

LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

Response to the Government's Capping Decision

[26 June 2008] Leicestershire Police Authority has today been told that the Government has decided to restrict the Authority budget in 2009/10 and 2010/11 to a 3% precept increase.

In February this year the Police Authority set a budget which increased the Police precept by 15.43%. This move sought to cover the shortfall of £9.3 million in government funding over the next three years. This resulted in a weekly charge of £3.08 for the cost of policing for a Band D household, an additional 41p on last year's cost. This increase was aimed particularly at meeting the risks of serious harm such as child protection, gun crime and sex offender monitoring.

The Police Authority had consulted with Council Tax payers in November 2007 in order to gauge their opinion on how much money they were willing to pay for their local policing service and in January 2008 local opinion formers put their views on the precept to the Chairman and Chief Constable. Understandably, consultees consistently said they wanted more visible policing, quicker follow-up and more feedback when in contact with the Police.

Throughout the year the Authority, along with support from the Constabulary and Members of Parliament, have put pressure on Government Ministers to implement the 'needs' formula which would provide the Authority with the funding to which they are entitled. Limited results from these discussions led to the Authority having to look to the Council Tax payer in order to make up the funding gap.

Byron Rhodes, Chairman of the Police Authority, said – "Despite the blanket statement from John Healey, the Local Government Minister, that no Authority had presented strong arguments justifying their precept increase, the Government have supported the 15.43% rise this year with no re-billing. I am disappointed that they did not feel able to meet our needs in full. We are now faced with some difficult decisions next year and the year after. I will be meeting with the Chief Constable to establish how we will reconcile the funds we have been given with the demands placed on us".

Council tax bills remain valid. The Government has not required the Authority to re-bill this year. Any adjustment will be made when the Authority sets next year's budget in February 2009.

.....ENDS.....

NOTE TO EDITORS:

1. Mr Rhodes is not available for further comment today (26 June) or tomorrow (27 June).
2. A meeting of the police Authority will be convened shortly to consider the capping issue.
3. Mr Rhodes' photograph can be downloaded from the Leicestershire Police Authority website: <http://www.leics-pa.police.uk/about/members/>
4. Leicestershire Police Authority monitors the Leicestershire Constabulary, which polices the area of Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland.
5. Police Authorities are independent bodies made up of local people. Police Authorities hold the Police Force to account on behalf of local communities.
6. Local Police Authorities along with the Home Secretary and Chief Officers of Police make up the tripartite relationship which is responsible for the governance of policing in England and Wales.