



**Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
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To: Cleveland MPs; Council leaders; Chair & Members Police & Crime Panel; North East PCCs and Chief Constables

10 December 2015

Dear Colleague

Update regarding financial situation, NPAS & Durham Tees Valley

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you re the financial situation, as known, following the recent CSR, as well as an update re National Police Air Services and in particular Durham Tees Valley airport.

Can I start by thanking all of you who joined with me in making representations to the Government with regard to the proposed 25-40% cuts to police budgets.

I have prepared a brief financial update report for today's Cleveland Police & Crime panel, which is attached, which sets the scene in terms of over the last 5 years Main Government Grants received for policing in Cleveland have reduced by £22.4m in total. In addition to this, other government grants have been reduced by £1.4m, which brings the total cash reduction in Government Funding for Cleveland, over the 5 year period, to £23.8m. In real terms, given the effects of inflation this equates to around a £35m reduction in spending power on the Police Service within Cleveland over just 5 years. This reduction over 5 years equates to a 22% cash reduction in funding from the government which in real terms equates to a 32% reduction. As a result of these cuts the force has had to lose 400 police officer posts.

You will be aware on 25th November the Chancellor made a statement re CSR. During this, towards the end of the speech was an announcement to the effect policing would be protected. That was a national statement. On the same afternoon, Chief Constables and PCCs received a letter from the Home Office advising within the overall budget, police funding, including funding for Counter Terrorism, has been cut by 1.3% in real terms over the next four years. The letter also referred to the factoring in by the Home Office of 'the scope that you have to raise local council tax', i.e. the precept. Our medium term financial plan has built within it a 2% precept increase, which equated to 5p per week for the majority of households. We expect to get the detailed grant allocation for Cleveland later this month.



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The culture of top-slicing the policing budget for national initiatives, such as the IPCC; HMIC; College of Policing; the Innovation fund; the Police IT company the Home Office set up, is now well established. The announcement re CSR also included further top-slicing going forward - £1billion to link-up emergency services; up to £1.65billion to drive closer collaboration between police forces on specialist capabilities like firearms, cyber crime and child sexual exploitation.

Counter terrorism funding will be increased by £500m. Numbers of police armed response vehicles available to respond rapidly to critical incidents will be increased by up to 50% and funding will be made available to increase the number of specialist counter terrorism firearms officers and to train existing officers.

At a Home Office Police Reform summit on Tuesday of this week, which the Deputy Chief Constable and myself attended, case study presentations were outlined including on Forensics and biometrics and on Digital investigation. I believe it almost inevitable that this will lead to further top slicing going forward. The Home Secretary in her published speech made clear 'every force will still need to make savings year on year' and we have been very much planning on this basis.

Whilst these above initiatives are all worthy, they will impact on the level of funding going forward available to deliver policing in Cleveland and in other forces. I will continue to stress to the Home Office the importance of Neighbourhood and other local Policing which I know from public consultation is as important to many people in Cleveland as the policing measures outlined above.

As you will also be aware, I represent the North East and Yorkshire region on the National Police Air Service board. As with many other public sector organisations, the Board has managed significant funding cuts and, as a result, has had to reduce the number of bases nationally from 25, to 22, then to 15. The police air support base at Durham Tees Valley was one of the bases due for closure from April 2016.

On Wednesday of this week I attended the latest meeting of NPAS. During discussions on the implementation of the new operating model and in particular on the fixed wing project, we were updated on delays re procurement of the 3 fixed wing aircraft, including late confirmation by the Home Office re some funding aspects.

I proposed, and the board accepted, that NPAS continue to operate from the Durham Tees Valley base until April 2017 and that the implementation of the new operating model continue to be kept under review, and the board be kept updated.

I know this will be welcomed locally and I am happy to respond to any questions or comments you may have as appropriate.

Yours faithfully

Barry Coppinger
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland