

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 22nd February 2010

SUFFOLK POLICE AUTHORITY AGREES POLICING BUDGET AMIDST SEVERE FINANCIAL PRESSURES

Suffolk Police Authority has today, Monday 22nd February, set a budget of £113.5 million for policing the county in 2010/11.

At today's Authority meeting, members also agreed an increase in the police's part of the council tax of 3%, maintaining the Constabulary's position as one of the lowest cost forces in the country.

Police Authority Chair Gulshan Kayembe said that, as in previous years, members had agreed the budget and level of council tax precept while considering factors including local people's views.

"I believe we have got the balance right," said Mrs Kayembe. "The financial situation for the Constabulary is currently very difficult; we have to work under increased pressure to realise large efficiency savings, which this year are set at £2.4 million. This is alongside the fact that we have once again received the lowest level of government grant."

A key part of the budget setting process involves targeting funds towards priority policing areas, decided through public consultation and detailed research.

Mrs Kayembe continued; "Through robust financial planning and consideration of public concerns, we aim to continue work in key areas that we know are priorities to our communities. Following extensive public consultation, operational service priorities for this year's budget have been agreed which focus on anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and violent crime, among others."

Whilst balancing force priorities and efficiency pressures, a key factor in the authority's decision is to avoid making large increases to Suffolk residents' council tax contribution. This year's increase will result in a rise of less than £5 for the year for a Band D property compared with last year.

Mrs Kayembe continued; "This year, as in previous years, the Authority has set a budget which is aimed at giving the Constabulary the means to continue providing a quality, responsive service to local people while trying to keep council tax increases to a minimum."

Continues...

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At today's meeting, Suffolk's Chief Constable Simon Ash outlined some of the positive steps made by the Constabulary during the past year, including continued work on the embedding of the Policing Pledge throughout the force, an update on the progress of Project Response, aimed at making further improvements to the Constabulary's response service, and an update on continued collaborative work with Norfolk Constabulary, moving towards more efficient and effective services for local communities through sharing resources.

"The year ahead will be financially challenging, but we are committed to providing the best possible policing to our communities, to listen to and act upon their concerns and to increase their confidence in their police force" he said.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Full Police Authority papers can be viewed online at www.suffolkpoliceauthority.co.uk

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