

Police force is strong despite budget cuts

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By **Alexa Copeland**

POLICE and Crime Commissioner Ron Hogg has made assurances that frontline police services are safe despite a £10m budget cut.

Mr Hogg told councillors at a full meeting of Darlington Council yesterday (Thursday, March 21) that since he was elected in November last year, he has had to deal with a £10.6m reduction in funding for the Durham force plus a further £1m lost through inflation.

Despite this, he said he was confident that the police remained strong enough to deliver essential services and that he was keen to open up the organisation to further public accountability.

He said: "We have protected frontline officers, neighbourhood policing teams and PCSOs across the whole force area."

"That is what people asked us to do and that is what we are delivering."

He added: "We carried out a full review of the office to make sure that it is fit for purpose and delivering value for money."

"Key measures are to increase public satisfaction in the police service and increase public confidence."

"If we can do this successfully, then we are delivering a service that people want."

Key policing priorities for the Darlington area include tackling anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse.

Mr Hogg also revealed that money is being made available from the budget reserves to buy speed signs for use at speeding hotspots around the Darlington borough.

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