

Cleveland Police axes mounted section to save cash

Cleveland's mounted police section is to be scrapped to save money.

The force has already said it will axe hundreds of officers in an effort to save an estimated £26m by 2014.

Chief Constable Jacqui Cheer said disbanding the unit of five horses, two members of staff and seven officers was "one of the hardest" she had ever made.

The officers will be redeployed, but the two members of staff will lose their jobs. The force said the move would save about £88,000 a year.

The force said the unit, based at Ormsby Hall, costs £521,000 a year to run.

Mrs Cheer said: "I want to make it clear that this is in no way a reflection on the section itself.

'Caring homes'

"All aspects of the organisation are under scrutiny, and we need to ensure that every service we provide is as efficient as possible and meets our policing priorities.

"Everyone will also be aware of the financial cuts that we have to make and the police officers we have had to lose to make those savings.

"The police officers will be moved to other frontline duties, two police staff posts will be lost and the equipment will be sold.

"Where it is deemed an operational necessity to have horses in the future, we will look to other forces to supply this service at a small cost or consider other policing tactics to maintain the safety of the public at large events."

She said efforts would be made to ensure the horses were found "safe and caring homes".

Cleveland's police and crime commissioner Barry Copping said: "I understand that this decision will be a matter of public debate and I shall be raising questions and concerns with the chief constable.

"I would ask residents to contact me with any concerns they have so that I can discuss these with Mrs Cheer.

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