

Millions more to be cut from Derbyshire police force budget



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POLICING in Derbyshire will get £2.3 million less funding than expected from central Government in 2014-15, the county's police and crime commissioner has revealed.

But commissioner Alan Charles said the force had been building up significant reserves since 2010 which meant it did not have to "go into panic mode and start making people redundant".



Alan Charles was expecting to have a cut to the Derbyshire police budget of £4 million next year but Home Secretary Theresa May has now told the force it must save £6.3 million.

The news, however, puts a damper on the results of the Government's spending review, in which Chancellor George Osborne revealed the Home Office's policing budget would be hit by a cut of 4.95% in 2015-16.

This is less than half the size of the cut which will hit the Department for Communities and Local Government - which funds councils - for that financial year. Mr Charles had been predicting a cut of 8% to 10%.

But the Derbyshire force has now been informed by Home Secretary Theresa May that it will have to reduce its budget for 2014-15 by £6.3 million - Mr Charles had been expecting a £4 million cut. This will leave the force with a budget of between £166 million and £169 million to spend in that 12 months.

Mr Charles said: "That seems to have come up from underneath the hedgerow."

"While the savings we've got to make between now and 2015-16 are slightly less than expected, we've got to make some earlier."

Since the Government's last spending review in 2010, Derbyshire police has seen its numbers of civilian staff reduced by 151 full-time-equivalent posts, down from 1,550, and police officers by 170 from 2,092.

Mr Charles said the force's reserves were being used to pay for recruitment but that this solution was a "time-limited".

Asked what effect the cuts would have on numbers of employees in 2015-16, he said: "I think it will be virtually impossible not to be in a position where there will be fewer officers and staff."

He said he expected that, by the end of 2015-16, the force would have made about £26.4 million of cuts since the spending review in 2010.

He added: "You can't take that much out of the service without it having an impact."

He said that he hoped the budget cuts would not have an effect on response times to emergency calls and he would be "working to make sure that's not the case".

He added that crime had fallen in Derbyshire by more than 50% over the last 10 years thanks to the hard work of police officers and staff and "despite the savage cuts inflicted by the Government".

Chief Constable Mick Creedon was unavailable for comment as he is on holiday.

But a force spokeswoman said: "We still await the exact details but we anticipate a significant budget cut next year, 2014-15, followed by a further reduction in 2015-16.

"This will be another considerable financial challenge for the constabulary but we have already started to develop a plan to make the necessary savings."

Read more: <http://www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/Millions-cut-Derbyshire-police-force-budget/story-19453083-detail/story.html#ixzz2YTIZTIRP>

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