

Police 'redesign' could save £30m



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HUMBERSIDE Police could be "redesigned" as the force battles to save a further £30m. Chief Constable Justine Curran is reviewing the whole service to examine where savings can be made.

Ms Curran has been asked to conduct the review by police and crime commissioner Matthew Grove, who oversees the budget. It is expected to take several months.

He admits the savings mean the number of police officers - already at its lowest level ever - will fall further.

Mr Grove said: "It is a huge challenge and is not going to be easy, which is why I have asked the chief constable to do this.

"I've given her a clean sheet of paper and asked her to draw a plan for a more efficient police force that still gives the public service.

"We can't do exactly the same thing with much less money. We have to look if there is a better way of doing things.

"It will almost certainly mean policing will be delivered in a slightly different way."

The force has already cut £21m since a programme of savings began in 2011, which was planned to end in 2015.

However, it is now estimated a further amount of between £25m and £30m needs to be cut by 2018.

The initial savings were made after separate areas of the force were reviewed.

Mr Grove said: "What we can't do is what we have done until now, which was looking at all the smaller areas of the organisation under a microscope and asking how we can do the same thing, in the same way, but cheaper.

"That is not enough for the challenge we now face, which is why I asked the chief constable to look at the organisation as a whole. If she suggests there needs to be any fundamental changes, the public will be consulted. If she says the money we have is not enough to provide a good service and we need to raise the council tax precept, I will consult the public.

"It's not my police force, it is theirs."



With 85 per cent of the force's budget going on wages, Mr Grove admits it is inevitable the number of officers and staff will fall. However, he believes the force can continue to reduce crime and provide a good service to victims.

"There is no way you can save what we need to without reducing the number of people," he said.

"You would end up with nothing other than staff - no buildings, no vehicles.

"The reality is there will be a carefully managed reduction in head count, but I am determined to maintain or increase the number of public-facing staff.

"I think the service will change, but I have consistently said necessity is the mother of all invention. We need to plan how to do things better and then I think we can end up with a safer area."

As part of the review, all officers and staff have been asked for their views and ideas on where budgets could be reduced.

Mr Grove said: "It is very much a work in progress and cannot be rushed."

Read more: <http://www.thisiscunthorpe.co.uk/Police-redesign-save-pound-30m/story-19672538-detail/story.html#ixzz2cinnBna7>
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