



RON HOGG

DURHAM POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Annual Report 2013-14



Contents

	Page
Welcome / Introduction	2
Performance	3
Progress towards the achievement of my priorities	
• To reduce the impact of domestic abuse, particularly violence against women and girls	4
• To reduce the impact of hate crime	6
• To improve engagement with the local communities across the constabulary area	8
• To tackle anti-social behaviour	9
• To tackle harm caused to individuals and communities by alcohol and drugs	10
• To improve road safety	11
• To make our policing services visible and accessible at all times	12
Finance and Resources	14
Contact Us	16

Welcome/ Introduction



As Durham's first elected Police and Crime Commissioner I take enormous pride in my role in representing the people of County Durham and Darlington. I have now been in office for 18 months and this Annual Report sets out the progress I have made towards achieving my Police and Crime Plan priorities.

My vision for County Durham and Darlington is **“to achieve excellence in local policing and the highest levels of public confidence by working alongside communities and partners to address what matters locally”**.

There are many challenges to face in my quest to achieve this vision, the greatest being the reduction in financial resources available as the austerity period continues. Initially it was indicated that the austerity period would be drawing to an end at this time. However, the Government now report that it is likely to continue until at least 2020. The funding we receive from the Government has decreased year on year, and when moving into 2014-15 a further cut of £4.2 million has been made. The force has responded well so far by delivering huge efficiency saving exercises and will have to deliver more over the next few years. It is going to be a challenge and things will get tough but it is a storm we have to weather.

Despite difficult times, I am happy to report that County Durham and Darlington remain among the safest places to live, work and visit in the country. Although during the last 12 months there has been a 10% increase in recorded crime compared to the previous year, crime levels remain similar to the low levels of the early 1980s and Durham Constabulary still has one of the lowest recorded crime rates in England and Wales.

In my first Police and Crime Plan I set my objectives in the form of my personal and community priorities. These priorities are designed to aid the achievement of my vision. During my time in office good progress has been made towards the fulfilment of the

priorities and accordingly I have not changed these for the refreshed Police and Crime Plan which I have published for 2014-15.

Throughout 2013-14 I have regularly been out and about in our communities and met with the people I represent. I have formally met with my Community Panels and I plan to build upon this and engage with even more of our citizens during 2014-15. A valuable part of my role is ensuring that I listen to your views, issues and comments.

I am thankful for the ongoing commitment of officers, staff and PCSOs alike. However, the police alone cannot fight crime. I am grateful to our partners and communities across County Durham and Darlington for working together in partnership to achieve our policing priorities and improve our communities. Together we can make a difference.

Performance

Durham Constabulary has seen year-on-year reductions in recorded crime between 2006 and 2013 which resulted in a 44% fall in offences and almost 24,000 fewer crimes.

During 2013-14 there has been a 10% increase in crime compared to the previous year. Whilst this is not the result we would have wished for, the Constabulary will be making every effort to bring crime levels down. It should be kept in mind that crime levels remain similar to the low levels of the early 1980s and Durham Constabulary still has some of the lowest recorded crime rates in England and Wales. County Durham and Darlington remains one of the safest places in the country to live, work and visit. We have detected more crimes this year and continue to have some of the best performance for investigating crime in the country.

We continue to put victims first, investigating and solving crime and community problems. This is reflected in the excellent feedback we have received from victims. In the 12 months to the end of March 2014, 88% of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by the force when dealing with their incident. This is one of the highest in the country.

Victims are also satisfied with the ease at which they can contact the force (98%), with the action

officers take in dealing with their incident (89%) and the treatment they receive (97%).

The increase in crime largely relates to drug offences, violent crime, sexual offences and theft. We have seen an increase in the number of recorded drug offences. Some of this is due to members of the public being more confident to report these crimes and provide us with vital information. 'Operation Sledgehammer' has continued to actively target and remove drug dealers from our streets, reducing the harm that these individuals cause to our communities.

The increases in violent crime and sexual offences largely relates to a higher volume of historical incidents that are being reported in response to the Jimmy Savile investigation. Durham Constabulary's investigation of the Medomsley Detention Centre illustrates that victims are now confident to come forward. We will continue to deal with such crimes effectively and sensitively, ensuring that the victim remains at the heart of everything we do.

The increase in theft (and stealing) offences is predominantly in relation to shoplifting where the most commonly stolen items are food, toiletries and clothes. However, people in our communities are now less likely to be victims of household burglary or to have property stolen from their vehicles.

During 2013/14, Durham Constabulary solved almost 1,300 more crimes than in 2012/13 resulting in an overall solved rate of 38%. Other

rates are generally similar to those of 2012/13 giving Durham some of the best solved rates nationally.

Durham Constabulary continued to see reductions in anti-social behaviour incidents with when compared with 2011-12. This is reflected in both incidents of alcohol-related and youth-related anti-social behaviour which have fallen by 33% and 28% during the same period, respectively.

In my Police and Crime Plan I have set the following three indicators for performance:

Indicator	2012-13	2013-14
Crime - Victim based police recorded crime	26,537	29,303
Public Confidence The police are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter in the area	73%	75%
Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area	74%	75%
How good a job do you think the police are doing in your area	60%	61%
Victim Satisfaction % of Victims satisfied with whole experience	89%	88%

To reduce the impact of domestic abuse, particularly violence against women and girls

The past 12 months have seen a range of activity in relation to this priority:

Domestic Abuse Seminars

In April 2013 I held my first Domestic Abuse Seminar. The purpose was to identify gaps in service delivery and create mechanisms where partner organisations can work better together in the future. The ultimate goal is to improve outcomes for those vulnerable to this form of abuse and to increase confidence for individuals to report incidents, instead of suffering in silence.



The seminar was well attended by approximately 90 representatives from a broad range of organisations, including public and voluntary sectors, victim services and community groups.

Volunteers from across the organisations agreed to work together over the coming year in small

groups to take the identified actions forward, and maintain the momentum of service improvement.

In February 2014 I held my second Domestic Abuse Seminar in partnership with the Constabulary and both Community Safety Partnerships.

This joint event marked the launch of a new local 'Love is many things... (but never abusive)' campaign to raise awareness of abuse in LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) relationships

The event was aimed at continuing to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence locally within County Durham and Darlington. Participants had the opportunity to learn more



about what is being done locally to prevent these types of crimes and how victims and survivors are being provided with the support they need to move forward and rebuild their lives. Attendees also heard how perpetrators of this kind of crime are being brought to justice.

White Ribbon Campaign

On the 13th July 2013 to show how serious I take this issue I was joined by the leader of Darlington Borough Council, Bill Dixon, the Bishop of Jarrow, Mark Bryant, and the town's Deputy Mayor, Gerald Lee on a sponsored walk in Darlington.



The walk was organised by the Darlington Housing Action Group to raise awareness of the White Ribbon campaign, which is an initiative that seeks to prevent violence against women and girls.

I took part in the walk in a pair of ladies heeled shoes to show my support for the campaign and for Darlington Borough Council who have applied for White Ribbon Status, which would highlight the town as one which strives to prevent domestic violence.

Durham Women Rising

On Valentine's Day 2014, women and girls from across the North East joined a major global campaign to end violence against their peers by staging a variety of events in Durham City, and thereafter across the wider region.



I was delighted to be involved in the event and spoke to members of the public about my policing

priorities and how I am working with partners to reduce the impact of domestic abuse.

Campaign to help men and women recognise the signs of domestic abuse

A project has been recently launched by the Soroptimist International of Darlington and District Group, drawing attention to ways of recognising the signs of unacceptable behaviour in a relationship.

The 'Loves Me, Loves Me Not' list was created and printed on over 13,000 bookmarks and posters which have been distributed to schools, doctors, and dental surgeries, colleges and public buildings around Darlington. The bookmarks and posters were designed to appeal to both male and female victims of domestic violence.

Funding for the project came from a request made by the late Betty Herman, a long-serving member of the club to my Community Safety Fund along with the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Network (DASAN).

Regional PCCs join forces to tackle violence against women and girls

I have worked with the other Police and Crime Commissioners in the region, Northumbria's Vera Baird, and Cleveland's Barry Coppinger to launch the first ever regional strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.

Together we have devised a 20-point plan to provide support and protect women and girls who are victims of physical or emotional violence or abuse.



The Violence Against Woman and Girls Strategy, with a foreword written by Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, follows months of consultation with a range of partners and the North East Women's Network. It contains pledges around:

- Domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- Human trafficking and sex work
- Forced marriage and so-called honour crimes
- Harassment and stalking
- Female genital mutilation

I believe that we have produced a strategy which can drive forward major improvements in service delivery, and which most importantly will deliver better outcomes for victims.

Also included in the priorities is a strategy for employers - 'Domestic and Sexual Abuse and the Workplace' – seeking to ensure anyone affected can find confidential support at work and be

helped to safety. A substantial number of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Champions will be identified.

Other plans include establishing a Police Rape Scrutiny Panel in each force area to scrutinise case files which have failed to attain the requisite evidential level for prosecution, or, where a prosecution has failed, to see what lessons can be learned.

To reduce the impact of hate crime

The past 12 months have seen a range of activity in relation to this priority:

Hate Crime Seminar

I held the first of my Hate Crime Seminars on 18th April 2013. Approximately 80 representatives from



a broad range of organisations including, public and voluntary sectors, victim services and community groups contributed to the event. The 6 areas

covered included Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Race Belief and Faith, Disability, Gypsy Roma Travellers and Learning Disability.

I am pleased to say that Durham Constabulary is now recording offences motivated by hatred for members of alternative cultures, such as goths, emos and punks. I believe that correctly recording such incidents as hate crime will be an important step in tackling the abuse and oppression of vulnerable minorities.

I have planned a follow up seminar for June 2014 to review how actions identified at the event have progressed.



Working with partners to reduce the impact of hate crime

Work with Independent Advisory Groups

The Constabulary have a series of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), which represent the diverse sectors of our communities including:

- Black Minority Ethnic (BME) IAG
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) IAG
- Disability IAG



The groups are made up of individuals from these diverse sectors who volunteer their time and

knowledge to examine various issues and opportunities for people within these communities across the force area.

I am grateful to these individuals for the valuable work and effort that they contribute for the benefit of our communities, for raising awareness of our diverse communities and for being active volunteers in tackling related issues on behalf of the public.

Hate Crime Events – East Durham College

In March 2014 I supported the work of the IAGs and the Constabulary as they joined forces with East Durham College to help raise awareness of hate crimes amongst local young people and to help reinforce positive messages to students and staff at the College

The two events, held across the College's Peterlee and Houghall Campus', were a big hit with over

1000 students participating. The events consisted of a number of different interactive sessions including talks from IAG



members as guest speakers on racial hate crime, LGBT hate crime, and disability hate crime. The events were so successful that the College have committed to running them every two years to ensure that all students get the opportunity to participate. Throughout 2014 it is planned to roll out similar events across other higher education establishments.

Victims of Hate Crime urged to speak out

In October 2013 I urged victims of hate crime to speak out following press reports of a rise in the number of these crimes. It is reassuring to hear that victims are becoming more confident in reporting hate crime, and I urge all victims not to be afraid to come forward and want to assure them that all reports will be dealt with very seriously. My ultimate goal is to reduce the incidence of hate crime and to increase confidence for individuals to report them.

Show Racism the Red Card

In November 2013 I took part in a Show Racism the Red Card event at St James' Park in Newcastle Upon Tyne to help teach young people the dangers of racism.

Pupils from Catchgate Primary in Stanley, Co Durham and Canning Street Primary in Newcastle also attended to take part in a range of anti-racism

workshops as well as watching a screening of a Show Racism the Red Card film.



This was an excellent event and I would like to say well done to all of the young people who attended.

They participated well and they were able to gain a better understanding of the negative effects of racist behaviour and belief. I am confident it will help to prepare young people to play an active role as good citizens in a multi-cultural society.

reporting means increased confidence. The scheme will be formally launched at the Hate Crime Seminar in June 2014.

Hate Crime Resource Pack

I have provided funding to Durham Agency Against Crime for a Hate Crime Resource Pack which will include a DVD and lesson plans to be used by various partners to deliver educational workshops to young people across County Durham and Darlington. The resource pack will officially launch in 2014-15.

Community Hands



Members of the Disability Independent Advisory Group have been busy setting up a volunteer advocate scheme to help those who have had or are having problems with hate crime. I am fully

supportive of this excellent scheme and thank the volunteers for working tirelessly to get this innovative scheme up and running. The volunteer advocates will meet with the clients and listen to their concerns, and help them to report, which is always a good thing; increased

To improve engagement with local communities across the Constabulary area

I have been working hard to engage with and listen to the communities across County Durham and Darlington, not just through formal engagement and consultation activities but also by getting out and about and meeting with as many of you as possible. I have attended Town and Parish Councils and Meetings, Residents Associations, Area Action Partnership Meetings and other specialist groups. I have also spoken to groups of students in schools and colleges, I have hosted seminars on priority topics, visited PACT meetings and held street surgeries and walkabouts. I have also held joint surgeries with my MP colleagues.



I also meet regularly with key partners across the Constabulary area to ensure that we are all working together. These include meetings with the Leaders and Chief Executives of both local

authorities, and representatives from the other Criminal Justice system agencies, such as the probation service and the prisons.

Engagement Strategy

During 2013-14 I have developed a joint engagement strategy with the Constabulary for delivery from April 2014 onwards. We firmly believe that effective engagement is essential for us to be able to deliver the high quality policing services that meet the needs of the community.

We aim to achieve effective and inclusive engagement with every community in County Durham and Darlington. We will ensure that you have the opportunity to be involved with shaping and developing policing services through consultation, listening to your views and working with you to solve your problems.



I hope you have had or will take the opportunity of reading my monthly newsletters which I send to the members of my community panels and locally elected councillors and which I publish on my website.

In addition to the newsletters, in January/ February 2014 I invited panel members to meet with me to hear about the activity I had undertaken during my first year in office. We also discussed the policing priorities and the proposed budget and council tax level.

As well as my first face to face meetings with the community panels I have entered into the virtual world and have started to undertake 'online' panel meetings where panel members submit topics for discussion.

Get Involved

Moving into 2014-15 I will be undertaking formal consultation on a variety of topics including:

- My priorities/ objectives for 2015-16
- The Council Tax level for 2015-16

If you would like to be involved in my community panels please contact my office. Contact details are included on page 17 of this report.

To tackle anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is any selfish activity which is a nuisance, intimidating, destructive or adversely affects someone else's quality of life. Much of the activity that has been undertaken in this area ranges from financial support for youth diversion schemes such as the 4motion Skate Park in Darlington, Sacriston Youth Club and the YMCA Y-Skate project. Of the funding I provided to the Safe Durham Partnership a proportion was used for posts within Neighbourhood services for Anti-Social Behaviour Officers.

Many people speak to me about anti-social behaviour issues and the impact it has upon their life and I help where I can. I have attended and participated in events, such as a community litter pick initiative at Grange Villa which was originally requested by young people themselves and I was delighted to see first-hand how residents of all ages have come together for the betterment of their community.

Biting Back at Loan Sharks

I gave my full support to a campaign launched by Durham Constabulary against loan sharks in



Shotton Colliery last July. The campaign was aimed at encouraging people to turn away from

loan sharks and to report the matter if they have been a victim.

The signing of the 'stopping loan sharks' charter in partnership with the Constabulary, Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council and the National Illegal Money Lending Team, sends out a clear message. Loan sharking will not be tolerated across County Durham and Darlington. We want our communities to feel safe and confident.

Cyberbullying Competition

This was a competition I held to design a logo against cyberbullying. The purpose of this competition was not just to design a logo, but to also get young people talking together, and with their teachers, about the dangers of cyber bullying and the effect this can have on victims.

With more and more reports in the media nationally of young people being targeted over the internet by bullies, it is important that we work together to keep our young people safe.



Local safety carousels

Year 6 pupils from County Durham and Darlington joined Durham Constabulary and

partner agencies in the annual safety carousel in November 2013. This is a fantastic example of partners working together and helping to keep our children safe.

The pupils had the opportunity to take part in six fun interactive workshops, which included home fire safety, arson awareness, electricity safety, water safety, first aid and cyberbullying. The cyber bullying session was particularly important and was well received by all the children who now have a clearer idea of what cyber bullying is all about. I'd like to give my appreciation to those who delivered the sessions.

Community Remedy

The Community Remedy is being introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (sections 101-103). The Community Remedy document is a list of actions which can be chosen by the victim, for the perpetrator to undertake as a consequence of their behaviour or offending.

Restorative approaches and informal interventions can play a significant role in tackling anti-social behaviour and low level crime, providing an effective way of resolving problems.

The Community Remedy document for County Durham and Darlington will be used when a community resolution, conditional caution or youth conditional caution is the chosen disposal.

The Community Remedy document is being developed and will be consulted upon and finalised during 2014-15.

To tackle the harm caused to individuals and communities by alcohol and drugs.

This priority is about reducing underage drinking, excessive alcohol consumption, dealing with licensing issues and irresponsible retailing, drug taking and drug dealing. There is some excellent partnership working taking place across County Durham and Darlington to tackle these issues.



Minimum Unit Pricing

I have worked with my regional PCC colleagues in Cleveland and Northumbria to lobby and support

Balance North East (Regional Alcohol Office) in the quest for minimum unit pricing for alcohol. My colleagues and I believe there is a direct link between cheap alcohol pricing and crime and disorder. During 2010/11, over £300m was spent clearing up alcohol related crimes in the North East. It is a major cause of concern to communities and residents across our region. The evidence for Minimum Unit Pricing is established. We are now asking the Government to do what is right and introduce a minimum price.

Know your limits

Over the festive season I urged people to 'know your limits' and opt for responsible drinking and to look out for each other, particularly for those who may become vulnerable and are therefore most at risk.

Dry January

I was supportive of the Dry January campaign which encourages people not to drink, alcohol for the month of January. The campaign aims to highlight the benefits of cutting down on alcohol – you'll sleep better, have more energy, better skin, save money and could lose weight.

In showing my support I participated in a dry pub crawl organised by Darlington



Borough Council with colleagues from the Constabulary and Balance to show that you don't need to have a drink to enjoy a night out.

Decriminalisation of drug addicts

You may be aware that throughout the last few months the Chief Constable and I have attracted lots of media attention regarding our shared view on the decriminalisation of drug addiction.

It is no secret that Organised Crime Gangs control the illicit drug supply market and that the majority of the monies being made by organised criminals are from drugs. It is with this in mind that we must consider different approaches by stemming the

opportunities available to the suppliers and treating the addict as a victim and not a criminal.

In my view, providing drug consumption rooms where addicts can receive their drugs in a safe and secure environment, whilst being actively helped to reduce their dependency, can only be a good thing.

What I am suggesting is nothing new. Heroin has been prescribed in the UK since 1926, although not on the scale I am suggesting. Together we can take the demand out of this market, and remove the opportunities from dealers. Of course, education of the risks of drug taking and support for those who succumb is one of the key elements of this approach.

Furthermore, I would like to re-assure you that Durham Constabulary has a good track record in tackling organised crime groups and dealing with the illicit drugs trade.

To improve road safety

This priority seeks to improve road safety by tackling careless and dangerous driving, speeding, illegal or inconsiderate parking, mobile phone use when driving and other inappropriate behaviour.

There has been lots of activity in relation to this priority and I have welcomed changes to legislation around dangerous driving, participated in numerous community speed watch initiatives, worked to reclaim footpaths, dealt with parking issues and supplied funding to the neighbourhood

policing teams for laser speed guns for deployment in speeding hotspots. I am an active member of the Road Casualty Reduction Partnership where partners meet to discuss this important topic.



Campaign to reclaim footpaths for pedestrians

Throughout the year I have had an ongoing campaign to regain the footpaths for pedestrians. I have urged drivers to be considerate when parking on public footpaths. I have undertaken walkabouts in a variety of locations including Shildon and Barnard Castle.

Over recent months concerns have been raised by pedestrians in County Durham and Darlington who feel that in some instances, their safety is being

compromised due to footpaths being blocked by cars or vans. This can be especially hazardous for the elderly and disabled, or for those with pushchairs or with children.

As part of this ongoing campaign I have also urged adult cyclists to be considerate when using public footpaths. It is encouraging that more people are using their bicycles as it is a sustainable way to travel, healthy and a much cheaper alternative to cars.



However I urge cyclists to be considerate when using their bikes and to leave cycling on footpaths for children.

Road Safety near schools

I feel strongly that our children should be able to arrive at and depart from school safely. I would ask all drivers in the vicinity of schools at these key times to take additional caution and to reduce their speed. It is also important to park with care and consideration. The work I am doing with partners to tackle parking near to schools will increase as we move into 2014-15 as I have a series of planned activity to highlight this issue.

I am also campaigning to have 20mph speed limits introduced in the vicinity of schools.

Linked to this issue I gave my support to a new initiative aimed at using CCTV (closed circuit



television) cameras to reduce parking problems around schools.

This is happening elsewhere in the country, and I am in full support of this approach. I look

forward to seeing whether or not this encourages people to park further away from school instead of inconsiderately blocking footpaths, or illegally parking on double yellow lines.

Community Speedwatch

I have attended several community speedwatch initiatives across the Constabulary area. The Community Speedwatch projects involve partnership working between the police, local councils, and local residents to identify local speeding hotspots. The speedwatch sessions are carried out to measure and address the problem.

Community speedwatch is a great way for local residents to be actively involved in addressing concerns about vehicle speeds in their area. It's about education rather than enforcement and helps to make drivers realise the error of their ways when they ignore a speed restriction.

To make our policing services visible and accessible at all times

When I am out speaking to residents a reoccurring theme is the visibility of the police. This priority is very important to both myself and the Chief Constable, and some of the ways we are working to ensure that we are more visible are:

Joint premises venture

In December 2013 in partnership with Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service we embarked on our first joint premise venture. This collaboration, believed to be one of the first in the country, sees our local policing teams working from Newton Aycliffe Fire Station, a move that which will save over £70,000 per year.

So not only are we giving the people of Newton Aycliffe a town centre presence that they want, but we are also saving money compared to the cost of renting the previous location at Parson's Court on the industrial estate out of town. We are also building on the excellent working relationship we have with our colleagues within the fire service who have been extremely supportive of this initiative.

Launch of volunteer police cadet scheme



An exciting new volunteer police cadet scheme has started in Darlington. The scheme, which will be run by Durham Agency

Against Crime (DAAC), which boasts national and regional recognition for its other very successful youth engagement projects, launched in Darlington, recruiting 15 young people aged 13-17 yrs old to take part in an action-packed programme covering education workshops, community support and help, problem solving local issues and activities including the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

This is a very promising scheme which supports our strategy to engage with young people and also recognises the tremendous contribution that young people make to communities. The scheme will eventually be rolled out across County Durham.



Volunteering

I am encouraged by the increasing number of volunteers across the constabulary area, ranging from the Special Constabulary, volunteers from the community and the Neighbourhood Watch Network. This extended 'police family' helps the constabulary to work effectively at all levels in local communities, tailoring the service to match local needs and finding long term solutions to local issues.



Within the force I have supported a campaign which successfully recruited a further 29 'special constables'. In total, the Constabulary now has over 100 Specials, who all play a vital role and enable us to maximise the number of visible officers we have in our neighbourhoods. I am also championing Neighbourhood Watch and the vital role those volunteers play within our local communities and the reassurance they help to provide. We are very lucky to have over a third of all our households in County Durham and Darlington covered by a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. This is one of the highest coverage rates the country.

Independent Custody Visitors

I am responsible for maintaining an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme whereby trained volunteers visit police stations to check on the welfare and treatment of detainees. It offers protection to both detainees and the

police, and reassurance to the community at large. There are currently twenty four custody visitors who fulfil this role.

Further details of the scheme can be found on my website at:
<http://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/Get-Involved/Independent-Custody-Visitors.aspx>

Partnerships and Cooperation

Effective partnership working is essential in helping me to achieve my priorities, as many areas of policing and crime cannot be tackled by a single agency. For example anti-social behaviour needs a coordinated approach from a range of partners to ensure that effective and sustainable solutions can be found.

During 2013 we developed some excellent partnership working in relation to Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse and the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

My aim is to continue to encourage and assist partners to work more closely together and to bridge gaps in service delivery throughout County Durham and Darlington. I expect this work to continue throughout 2014 to maximise the opportunities and improve the outcomes.

Inspection

During 2013-14 the Constabulary has been inspected by HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies) in a number of areas which have been positive in their assessment. These areas are:

- Neighbourhood Policing
- Domestic Abuse
- Valuing the Police (3)

These inspections are an important part of local policing, ensuring external validation of key areas of police activity.

Finance and Resources

Budget

I am responsible for setting the police budget, and I face significant challenges ahead, due to the continuing austerity measures imposed by Central Government. I am committed to ensuring our communities receive value for money by ensuring that the budget available to us is used in the most effective way.

The budget I set for 2013-14 was balanced without relying upon the use of reserves, with a Council Tax precept increase of 1.99%. I have continued with this principle whilst preparing the budget for 2014-15, which again required a Council Tax increase of 1.99%. With the support of the Chief Constable the proposed precept increase was presented to the Police and Crime Panel in February 2014, where panel members agreed the increase. This increase will add 6p per week (£3.11 per year increase) to the average Band D property Council Tax bill. The increase will only raise £480,000.

I am very conscious of the challenge that people face in terms of their household finances. I have taken this decision due to the simple fact that we are losing over £4m a year as a result of cuts in government funding.

I have worked with the Constabulary to update our projected financial position over a five year period. The projections in the plan will require some difficult decisions. However, the past practice of trying to 'keep ahead of the curve' in terms of delivering savings puts our budget in a relatively strong position as a basis for planning ahead.

The unaudited year-end financial outturn for 2013-2014

Budget Heading	Original Budget 2013-14 £'000	Revised Budget 2013-14 £'000	Actual Spend 2013-14 £'000	Variance Under / Over £'000
Employees	100.5	100.5	100.3	0.2
Premises	4.9	4.9	4.6	0.3
Transport Expenses	2.8	2.8	2.6	0.2
Supplies & Services	7.9	7.9	8.5	-0.6
Others	7.7	7.7	9.1	-1.4
Income	-2.8	-2.8	-5.5	2.7
Reserves	-1.5	-1.5	-0.1	-1.4
Net Expenditure	119.5	119.5	119.5	0.00
Central Govt Funding Precept	-94.8	-94.8	-94.8	0.00
	-24.7	-24.7	-24.7	0.00
Net (Surplus)/ Gap	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Collaboration

Providing better public services with less money was a key theme of the Government's last Comprehensive Spending Review. This included a requirement upon Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces to deliver greater value for money policing services, while at the same time maintaining or improving upon current performance. One of the solutions encouraged by the Government was enhanced collaborative working between forces and other public sector or private sector partners.

The Constabulary is currently an active partner in more than 80 separate initiatives for collaborative working with partners. Some of the most significant projects relate to firearms and roads policing and tackling serious and organised crime. There are also a number of national collaborative initiatives where the Constabulary is an active partner, the most notable being Operation Tornado, which is the national response to the issue of metal theft. The jointly agreed approach of the Chief Constable and myself is that collaboration with one or more partners within clusters, other than for local policing, will be considered in all areas of business as part of a range of options to address the threats identified across County Durham and Darlington.

Currently around 9% of our overall expenditure is spent in connection with collaborative initiatives and we are working with more than 40 strategic partners.

Value for Money (VFM)

Value for Money is important to each of us and is considered when we make decisions that will impact on the lives of ourselves, our families and our community. VFM has the same level of importance to the police service when it is delivering services to the community of County Durham and Darlington. It is the way that we consider what services are needed by our communities and measure the outcomes from that service delivery. VFM drives the process that ensures the appropriate resources are applied to each service area, enabling the Force to respond promptly and effectively to emerging priorities.

Governance arrangements exist with the Force to ensure that VFM is monitored and delivered across the breadth of the Constabulary's services.

Assets

In 2013 I approved the Estates Capital Programme for the force area as set out in the 2013/14 Medium Term Financial Plan (Budget Book), which can be found on my website at: <http://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/Finance/Financial-documents-and-reports.aspx>

During the summer of 2014 the Constabulary will move into the new police headquarters on the Aykley Heads site. This new building is estimated to save over £750,000 per year in running costs, as it will have a much smaller footprint and will be more efficient in the use of resources.

Staff

During 2013 I undertook a staffing review in my office and have reduced the number of staff to the equivalent of 5.6 full time staff. This, along with other savings, has reduced my annual spending by £200,000. I am committed to having a lean structure with multi-skilled personnel. In addition to the staff employed within my office, I am using seconded staff from partner organisations to carry out specialist roles and I plan to offer business apprenticeships and internships to graduates.

Commissioning

In my role as Police and Crime Commissioner I am responsible for commissioning a range of community safety services utilising funding streams which were previously directed to local authorities and other agencies.

Throughout 2013-14 I have developed a commissioning framework for investment and distribution of Community Safety Grants. For 2014-15 I decided to award a proportion of the funding to the Community Safety Partnerships,

Youth Offending Teams and the Drug and Alcohol Action Teams. I have awarded the funding on the condition that these partnerships apply the funding towards the achievement of my priorities. The available funding has been reduced by 25% compared to the funding I was able to allocate last year, however I do expect these partners to challenge themselves and achieve or even exceed current performance and identify areas where savings could be made next year.

The remaining proportion of the fund will be used to create a 'Community Safety Fund Pot' to which organisations including those in the voluntary and community sector can bid for funding where they think that they can give added value and help to achieve my personal and community priorities.

From April 2014, I am in receipt of funding to commission victim services. I have established a mechanism to ensure that this funding is spent in line with government guidelines and to assist in the achievement of my priorities..

For further information about the funding available and the process for applying please contact my office or details can be found on my website:

<http://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/Finance/Commissioning.aspx>

Contact Information

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RON HOGG

DURHAM POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER