



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAPPING ANNOUNCEMENT DOES NOT DO JUSTICE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Commenting on a Communities and Local Government announcement today (27/3/8) that 7 police authorities will be capped, Association of Police Authorities (APA) Chairman, Bob Jones, said:

"Today's announcement does not do justice to communities who have said they are prepared to pay more for their local policing, in return for an improved police service. Capping police authorities means those local communities' voices have not been heard.

"Police authorities owe it to their communities to set police council tax at a level which ensures effective and efficient policing for all local people. Neighbourhood Policing, for example, has been massively successful, but has been very costly to achieve and will require further funding to sustain and develop.

"By comparison, increases in police council tax represent only a fraction of council tax bills, and generally mean only a few extra pence per week for the average household.

"Police authorities set council tax bills only after very detailed consideration and discussion, including working closely with communities and local partners to ensure police council tax is sufficient for local needs. Police authorities themselves are made up of community members, and communities are extensively consulted before police council tax is set, so we believe that levels are justified, and do have broad support.

"The police service already has a very good track record in delivering efficiency gains, and through good management, has exceeded its efficiency targets consistently for many years. Police authorities are committed to maintaining their impressive track record, but it is our duty to ensure that police deliver the high standards of policing that the public quite rightly expects.

"The APA will continue to support all police authorities as they consider the impact of today's announcement on local communities."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- For further information please contact APA Communications Manager Chris Cairns on 020 7664 3174, mobile 07798 50 40 77.

- From 1999/00 to 2004/05 all police authorities had an efficiency gain target of 2% of net expenditure. The average gain was 2.7% of which 1.1% was cashable, an impressive achievement by police authorities and chief officers given that an extremely high proportion of the police spend is made up of fixed costs such as pay.
- The Association of Police Authorities (APA) represents all police authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the British Transport Police Authority and the Civil Nuclear Police Authority.
- Local police authorities, along with the Home Secretary and chief officers of police, make up the tripartite relationship which is responsible for the governance of policing in England and Wales.
- Police authorities are made up of local people: a mix of local councillors, magistrates and independent members (selected from the community) represent the views of local communities.
- The job of Police Authorities is to:
 - appoint (and, if necessary, dismiss) chief constables and senior police officers
 - consult with local communities to find out what they want the local police to do
 - set the budget for their police force, and decide how much local people should pay for policing in the local council tax
 - set the strategic direction for policing locally and decide what the police should focus attention on locally based on their consultations with local communities
 - make sure the police force is continuing to do a better job