

Petition to stop cuts to Merseyside Police

Hundreds of people have signed a petition urging the Government to end the cuts to Merseyside Police.

Merseyside's Police Commissioner Jane Kennedy and the Merseyside Police Federation have started the joint petition on the UK Government and Parliament petitions website calling upon the Prime Minister David Cameron to put an end to the budget cuts.

Jane Kennedy is currently considering making all Merseyside Police PCSOs redundant, disbanding the mounted section and the basic command unit structure which has served the Force for 40 years. This will mean a loss of a further 1,400 people by 2018/19.

If the petition receives 10,000 signatures it will receive a government response and if it receives 100,000 it will be considered for debate in Parliament.

The Commissioner is now urging people across the region to help Merseyside Police by signing the petition at www.petition.parliament.uk/petitions/110893 . They intend to submit the final petition to the Government before November 25 when the Chancellor will announce the funding for the police for the next three years.

Jane Kennedy said: "There was an overwhelming response to the open letter I put out to the public of Merseyside last week and I am grateful for all the messages of support and understanding which I received.

"Now I am urging the people of Merseyside to help the police by asking the Prime Minister to bring these cuts an end.

"The Chief Constable and I have worked really hard to make the police as efficient as they can be. We have streamlined every process. We have improved communications and equipment. It is no longer a case of improving efficiency; if the cuts are to be made next year we will have to fundamentally change the way policing is delivered to the detriment of everyone who lives here.

"The sad reality is that our police service will not be able to provide the really effective crime prevention, community safety and victim support services it has done in recent years. The danger is it will become an emergency only response to 999 calls.

"From all the messages, emails and letters I have received, I don't believe this is what people on Merseyside want from their police service and the Federation and I are standing together to ask Merseysiders for their help."

Merseyside Police has seen its budget cut by £77 million since 2010, with a further £48 million worth of cuts already being demanded by the Government the end of the financial year 2018/2019. This means they must cut the strength of the Force from 7,300 in 2010 to 4,400 by 2019.

This position looks even bleaker now the Government has revealed its proposed new funding formula for policing, which may see a further 2.2% cut from the budget. It is also anticipated that the savings required in the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review will also be worse than expected when it is announced in November.

In the joint petition, the Commissioner and the Federation urge the Prime Minister to "end the damaging cuts to the budget of Merseyside Police" saying: "If the cuts don't stop now, Merseyside Police will lose all PCSOs, the entire mounted section and will be forced to cut 1,000 more police officers and staff.

"Further cuts will affect the teams which fight serious and organised crime, investigate rape and sexual violence and tackle hate crime. They will also affect the Force's ability to provide neighbourhood policing to Merseyside's communities, as it is depleted from a strength of more than 7,300 in 2010 to less than 4,500 in 2019."

They warn him that the cuts may "seriously weaken Merseyside Police's ability to keep us safe from harm."

Police and Crime Panel Chair Cllr Christina O'Hare said: "The Police and Crime Panel met last week and discussed with the Commissioner the potential impact of the massive cuts being imposed on Merseyside Police Force.

"As a Panel, we share the concerns about the effect this might have on the communities of Merseyside and fully support the joint petition by the Commissioner and the Police Federation to bring this to the attention of the public and the Government."

People can help the police by signing the petition at www.petition.parliament.uk/petitions/110893