



Luton

Bedford Borough Council and Central
Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Council

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

Clerk: L. Church

The Police and Crime
Commissioner for Bedfordshire

(by email)

Please ask for: Jeremy Welch
Direct line: 01234 228903
E-mail: Jeremy.welch@bedford.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref:
Date: 08 February 2024

Dear Commissioner

Proposed precept and budget for the Bedfordshire Police for 2024 - 2025

On behalf of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel may I thank you and your staff for attending the Panel's meeting on 6 February 2024 to present your proposed precept for 2024 - 2025, and for responding to Panel Members' questions.

Following due consideration the Panel resolved to approve your proposal to increase the Police element of the Council Tax by £13.00 per annum (for a Band D property) being the maximum allowed without invoking a referendum and to accept your proposed precept as set out in your budget report provided to Panel. The Panel also made certain comments and recommendations and these are set out below:

- 1) The Panel noted that the Commissioner's Precept proposal was tabled in the same year in which there would be elections for a Police and Crime Commissioner and that, during 2024, a new Police and Crime Plan would be drafted, considered and published. The Panel noted that no one could forecast the result of that election, nor the content of the Police and Crime Plan 2024. The Panel noted that the Chief Constable had agreed that he could continue to police Bedford to the highest possible standards based on the proposed budget.
- 2) During the meeting significant concerns were raised by Members about the numbers of Officers allocated during the past year to Community Teams and a deterioration in Force performance in "Reducing Neighbourhood Crime", based on figures extracted from the Commissioner's website on the date of the current meeting against four crime types, these being: Burglary; Vehicle Crime; Personal Robbery; and Theft from the Person.
- 3) Members acknowledged the Commissioner's statement, that this budget would enable the maintenance of 1,466 police officer and staff in line with the priority-based budget, to be employed in areas prioritised by the Chief Constable in line with the current Police and Crime Plan, enhancing the

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service received from the police in five specific areas as set out on page 7(9) of the Commissioner's report and provided again below.

- Retail Crime
 - Force Control Room
 - Crime Prevention
 - Improved outcomes for victims through immediate justice
 - Speeding
- 4) The Panel was aware that it had three options as far as its considerations were concerned: either to approve the precept, or to approve it with recommendations, or to veto the precept. Members were also aware that any veto would have required the Commissioner to return to the Panel with an updated proposal which they could not then veto. To veto the precept would have required nine Panel Members (two thirds of Panel membership) to vote against it. Upon a vote, seven Members voted to veto the precept which was not sufficient to secure a veto however it was noted that a majority of the 13 Panel Members present had voted to veto the proposal.

RESOLVED

- 5) That the Commissioner's proposal (subject to any variations as a result of the final police grant settlement figures and changes to the council tax base and collection fund surplus) that the budget requirement for 2024/2025 be set at £149.164M including a contribution from reserves of £0.298M, with £82.1M of this sum by way of a Central Government Police Grant, and £61.8M to be raised locally, and that this would result in the policing element of an average Council Tax at Band D of £265.09, an increase of £13.00 per annum / £1.08 per month compared to 2023/2024 be supported.
- 6) That the Commissioner's proposal that the proposed growth budget, savings plan, and reserves as set out in his report and associated appendices and as set out in the tables provided in the report of the Chief Finance Officer be approved.

In accordance with the requirements of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, please accept this letter as the Panel's formal report.

Yours sincerely



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Laura Church
Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council
Clerk to the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel