



REPORT TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

7 January 2010

1 MEETING

The Authority last met on 11 December 2009. Set out below are some of the issues discussed.

2 PROVISIONAL BUDGET SETTLEMENT 2010/11

On 26 November 2009, the Minister of State for Local Government announced the proposed Local Government Finance Settlement for the final year of the 2008/09 Three-Year Settlement.

The announcement confirmed that the level of grant included in the Three-Year settlement for 2010/11 continued to be at the level of grant Bedfordshire expected to receive.

For 2010/11 the settlement for Bedfordshire was an actual increase of 3.3% as expected increasing Police Grant from £70.754M to £73.089M, an overall increase of £2.335M.

However as with previous years the actual settlement, due to the use of 'floors and ceilings' is £3.551M less than Bedfordshire Police should actually receive through the relative needs formula. Since 2006/07, the actual reduction in the grant Bedfordshire has received, due to floors and ceilings, totals £19.2M.

The following is a summary of the overall position for 2010/11

	2010/11	2009/10
	£M	£M
Total Formula Grant	73.089	70.754
Funded by:		
Business Rates	26.580	23.879
Revenue Support Grant	3.860	5.511
Police Grant	42.649	41.364
Total	73.089	70.754

This is the final year of a three-year settlement and without the announcement of a Comprehensive Spending Review; the expected level of grant for ensuing years is very much speculative but there is a consensus of opinion across the police service that grant is not likely to increase but instead could actually reduce over the next three years. It is predicted that the grant would gradually reduce down from the 3.3% received in 2010/11 to somewhere around 0.5% by 2012/13. In addition to the predictions on formula grant it is also estimated there could be a general reduction in specific grant over the Medium Term averaging approximately £0.300M reduction per annum.

Due to the uncertainty over the Medium Term, the Authority is to consider increasing its general reserves in 2010/11 to offset the funding gap for the period 2011/12 to 2013/14.

Based upon this settlement and the pressures to deliver a service that the public deserve the 2010/11 budget the potential budget requirement is £104.198M leaving a funding gap of £1.6M.

In recognition of the potential funding gap the Authority continues to deliver efficiencies through initiatives such as collaboration and a process improvement programme and the savings expected in 2010/11 could reduce this funding gap to £1.1M based upon a 3% Council Tax increase.

The Authority is very cognisant of the current financial climate and the ability for capping to be applied will be considering budget options based on Council Tax increases of between 2% and 4%. Given that financial outlook is bleak when considering the budget scenarios for 2010/11 the Authority will also be looking at the impact of reduced levels of funding on the delivery of a police service over the next two years.

The Authority is in the process of consulting with the public around the budget and views expressed will be taken into account when considering the budget.

The Authority on 12 February 2010 will determine the budget, budget requirement, Precept and Council Tax for 2010/11.

3 PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Half yearly performance figures show that Bedfordshire Police is continuing to improve performance with significant reductions in most crime areas.

Members of Bedfordshire's Police Authority's Performance Committee were pleased to see that overall crime had reduced by 8% (1990 less crimes) in the first six months of the year compared to the same period the previous year. The areas where key reductions have been made are:-

- Robbery
- Domestic burglary
- Theft from a motor vehicle
- Theft of a motor vehicle
- Fraud and forgery
- Sexual offences

There has been a slight increase in violence against the person and drugs offences. The Authority is keen to see violent crime reduced and have considered a detailed report on the work being undertaken to combat knife crime and other violent crimes. Members hope that its next performance monitoring report will show an improvement in performance around all violent crime.

These latest performance figures show that the Authority's investment in policing is continuing to pay dividends and thanks to a lot of hard work performance is being sustained in priority areas. There are now considerably fewer victims of crime, which is very good news.

The force is also continuing to perform well against the targets set down in the Policing Pledge. In October the HMIC released the findings of its Inspection on the progress of the Policing Pledge. Bedfordshire's inspection had been undertaken in April and the Force had had been grade as fair. This placed Bedfordshire in the middle part of the grading table compiled following this Inspection. Bedfordshire. Only 8 forces had been graded as good and 2 as excellent.

4 PUBLIC PROTECTION UNIT

A Public Protection Unit (PPU), set up in April 2007 with the help of Police Authority investment, is paying dividends in helping to keep vulnerable people safe.

A special report presented to Bedfordshire Police Authority's Performance Committee highlighted some of the excellent work the PPU is providing.

The Unit deals with specialist areas such as Domestic Abuse, Forced Marriage and Honour-based Violence, Child Abuse, Rape, Sex Offenders, Vulnerable Children and Missing People.

The report highlighted the increased confidence the public are showing in the domestic abuse investigation team, with more cases being reported, and a reduction in the number of repeat offences. This team also works closely with multi agency partners to help protect vulnerable people at risk from domestic abuse.

Members were pleased to learn more about the work to protect young people. The Vulnerable Missing Children/Young Person Co-ordination Unit, again supported by Police Authority investment, has led to a significant reduction (36%) in the number of people reported missing on three or more occasions. Further funding has led to the creation of a multi-agency Missing Children Group to respond when young people go missing, to identify the reasons for them running away and to try and resolve the problem.

The Authority places great significance on this area of business and Members are pleased to see that our ongoing investment and support are delivering results."

5 USE OF RESOURCES ASSESSEMENT

Bedfordshire Police Authority has been formally assessed by the independent Audit Commission as 'performing well' in its 'Use of Resources'.

Bedfordshire, is one of a handful of Police Authorities to be assessed as Level 3 (performs well), with no Authority being awarded a '4'. There are four possible levels of performance running from Level 4 (performs excellently) to Level 1 (performs poorly).

The recent report looked at how well Bedfordshire Police Authority used and managed its resources to deliver value for money and better and sustainable outcomes for local people.

This assessment is particularly pleasing as it refers to the year (2008-09) when the methodology behind the assessments was revised. The new approach focuses on three themes:

- Managing Resources
- Managing Finances
- Governing the Business

This is independent verification that Bedfordshire Police is managing its finances and all other resources effectively and providing good value for money.

This positive assessment is particularly pleasing in the current economic climate as, like every Police Authority, we face some very challenging decisions regarding funding in the next few years.

PETER HOLLICK
REPORT OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY