



CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

14th April 2011

1. MEETING

The Bedfordshire Police Authority met on 18 February 2011.

The main purpose of the meeting was to consider the 2011/12 Revenue Budget but included are other areas which will be of interest.

2. REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12

The revenue budget for 2011/12 has been set at £103.115 million. The Authority agreed to freeze the level of Council Tax which means that the Authority now qualifies for a Government grant equivalent to a 2.5% council tax increase. Residents will therefore pay £144.77 per annum (which works out at 40p a day) in 2011/12 for a Band D property, which is the same rate as last year.

This year's budget leaves a funding gap of £6.170M and the areas of policing where this will be met from have been derived through the series of change initiatives that the Force and the Authority had been considering over the past year which comprise;

- collaboration, deriving further savings from existing collaborations and extending the collaboration programme to include Cambridgeshire,
- Budget challenges, including reductions in overtime payment
- a review of support services and
- the implementation of a new policing model (referred to as Programme 2011).

The overall reductions result in a reduction in the police officer establishment of 56 officers, reducing the overall establishment to 1,187 by 30th September 2011. To achieve this reduction the Force would need to utilise A19 (a method of releasing officers who had over 30 years service). In addition the support staff establishment would reduce by a net 29 staff to 992 with the potential of some 35 redundancies, although all efforts would be taken to redeploy these staff into other areas of the organisation where vacant posts exist.

These changes to internal processes and structures seek out less expensive and more effective ways of working that do not devalue performance or threaten the services that matter most to our communities. Our public consultation provides broad support for measures being taken to

meet the financial challenge with;

- 91% not concerned with how the police were structured if they were there when required
- 83% felt resources should focus more on places where crime and ASB were worse
- 87% did not mind who within the police dealt with them as long as they had the right skills.

The continuation of the Neighbourhood Policing grant for 2011/12 and 2012/13 was confirmed and has assisted with the Authority and Force's commitment to delivering local policing that communities value.

This level of budget will deliver a quality service assuming that Bedfordshire does not have a series of exceptional policing events, such as further protest by the English Defence League. You will recall that the March in February was the largest ever policing operation for Bedfordshire and was been a resource intensive operation. The Authority is seeking a grant towards the cost of the event to minimise the implications for the Bedfordshire taxpayers. The outcome is still awaited.

3. PERFORMANCE

Performance data for the third quarter of the year revealed that detection rates for all categories of crime had seen a major improvement between October and December last year, following a decline in performance from October 2009 to September 2010.

Detection rates for all Crime rose 2.5% in the last three months of 2010 however the biggest improvements were in Robbery, Serious Acquisitive Crime, Domestic Burglary and Serious Sexual Offences, which saw increases of 14.7%, 8.7%, 8.7% and 8.5% respectively.

The progress means the force is edging closer to its full-year targets for detection and has improved its rankings both nationally and among its Most Similar Force (MSF) grouping.

Members are pleased with the improvements made over the past three months but called for further work and analysis to be undertaken to ensure this performance is sustained. Members have asked senior officers to draw up a detailed analysis of the return seen from investments in training and specialist detection units. They also sought reassurances that the current shortfall in investigation skills across the force was being addressed as a matter of priority.

The performance figures do show that more work needs to be done to improve confidence and satisfaction levels among our communities, and solving more crimes and bringing offenders to justice are the most obvious ways we can do that.

The Authority has been assured the force will enforce robust plans over the next few months to target all levels of crime to improve the quality of life of our communities irrespective of the economic climate we find ourselves in.

4 BEDFORDSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND HERTFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC POLICING PARTNERSHIP

A three Force strategic policing partnership was formally announced in December 13 between Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire which will enable the development of a range of business support and protective services functions. All three Police Authorities and Forces are committed to preserving local frontline police services and keeping communities safe from the threat of serious harm.

Local policing will not be delivered through collaboration. This aspect of policing will be delivered by each county's Force with local partners.

The three Forces and Police Authorities are already working together to develop a joint procurement function. This more formal three-county collaborative venture will build on the existing Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Joint Collaboration Programme which has, over recent years, seen the development of a wide range of joint functions including a Major Crime Unit, Firearms Support Unit Dog Unit and ICT.

The Authority at its meeting in February has given approval for a further Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire collaborative venture in respect of Roads Policing The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Roads Policing Unit will deliver a joint resource across six areas of service provision: Strategic Roads Policing Management, traffic patrol, ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) Collisions Investigation, Traffic Management and Vehicle Recovery. The new unit will be operational from 1st April 2011 and will deliver ongoing efficiencies of £697,000, fully realised from 2013/14, and first full year efficiency circa £654,000.

The Authority has also approved the establishment of a joint Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Graphic Design and Print Unit from the 1st April which will bring around £109K of ongoing annual savings.

Regular updates on the collaboration programme are available on the Authority's website.

5 2011/15 STRATEGIC PLAN INCORPORATING THE 2011/12 ANNUAL POLICING PLAN

The 2011-15 Strategic Plan has been approved by the Authority .

The Plan set out changes toward more flexible, responsive and local policing whilst managing significant financial challenges. The plan has a clear purpose 'To fight crime and Protect the Public' and focused on the delivery of four protection outcomes namely;

- protection of life,
- protection from violence,
- protection from property and
- protection from disorder.

Our public consultation activities have indicated support for the focus of the plan.

This year the Strategic Plan incorporates the 2011/12 Annual Policing Plan

outlining specific actions for the year ahead.

All of documents referred to in the report can be found on the Authority's website.

PETER HOLLICK
REPRESENTATIVE ON THE BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY