

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

Press Release
February 2016

Police and Crime Panel Approves Council Tax Rise to Protect Policing

Members of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel have approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed budget for 2016/17 at their meeting on 4 February.

The agreed plan means that the policing precept will increase by 6p a week (£3.18 a year) for a Band D Council taxpayer in Bedfordshire. The Police precept for a Band D Council taxpayer currently stands at £159.67 and will rise to £162.85 in April.

The Police and Crime Panel scrutinises and supports the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner by maintaining a regular check and balance on PCC Ollie Martin's performance, on behalf of all its residents.

One of the Panel's jobs is to consider the Commissioner's recommended precept level, the policing element of local Council Tax, and to seek assurances that the proposed increase represents value for money for communities in Bedfordshire.

The Commissioner presented his budget plans to the Panel, reporting that the precept increase would help protect the Force's frontline capability as well as increasing the number of special constables and volunteers combined with forward planning to keep future budget gaps to a minimum.

Public feedback over the past 12 months has indicated that local people are willing to pay a little more towards keeping their neighbourhoods safe.

Chair of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Fiona Chapman, said: "As a Panel, our priority was ensuring that the people of Bedfordshire would directly benefit from the extra £3.18 Band D taxpayers will be paying a year for policing. After considering the Commissioner's report, we felt that the budget was appropriate and that the precept increase was necessary to ensure the Police and Crime Plan could be delivered. The Panel will be keeping the delivery of the Plan under close scrutiny."

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Ollie Martins said: "In common with the majority of Police and Crime Commissioners, and indeed many local authorities, I have increased the council tax to protect the frontline in the face of reduced funding from central government.

"I nonetheless maintain that Bedfordshire receives an inadequate level of government Police Grant, given the policing challenges we face, and I know that this view is widely shared amongst Panel members. I will continue to press for a fairer share of the government's police funding cake."

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