



My proposals for the 2019/20 Policing Precept

Each year, as your Police and Crime Commissioner, I have responsibility for setting the budget for policing in Hertfordshire. It is one of the most important functions for a Police and Crime Commissioner as it sets out how the Constabulary will spend its money over the coming year. It also seeks to underline the strategy I have set for how we deliver an effective and efficient police force, one that meets the growing demands of reported crime, protects frontline policing and spends public money wisely.

Ahead of setting the police precept for Council Tax, I issue an Open Letter that sets out my proposals and seeks your views on the level of the precept. I firmly believe that in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing, the police need to be properly resourced and equipped, they need to focus on preventing crime as well as fighting criminals, they need to work with partners and be open and responsive to the needs of the public. Collaborating with our neighbouring police forces has enabled us to improve services at lower cost through the sharing of several operational and back office functions. I have been able to keep council tax low and continue to ensure that, as a Hertfordshire resident, you pay one of the lowest council tax contributions for policing in the country.

This year presents a number of new challenges. Nationally, serious violence is at the highest levels in the last seven years and represents a significant threat. Hertfordshire is not immune to these pressures. In line with the rest of the country Hertfordshire Constabulary have also seen increases in reported fraud, cybercrime and other emerging crime types. It is positive that victims now have the confidence to report the crimes and get the help they require, but it is vital that we have the right capacity to investigate complex cases and safeguard vulnerable people and businesses. Whilst the capability of our detective teams remains excellent to deal with each of these threats, I also recognise that it represents additional pressure on the force's resources and further investment is needed to build additional capacity and develop our capability to ensure that we continue to meet those demands.

Unlike many police forces that have been cutting back their frontline, I have continued to invest heavily in preserving and strengthening local policing - it remains at the core of my Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan and a distinct style of policing in Hertfordshire. It helps to create a police force that is embedded in, and supported by, a community working together to cut crime, rather than one which is distant and isolated, only engaging when called upon in an emergency. Our Safer Neighbourhood Teams in each of the 10 districts and boroughs in the county form the core of

this model and help to meet many of the challenges outlined. I was pleased that for the second year running the police inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), praised Hertfordshire as an efficient and ethical force and acknowledged its greater level of spend on frontline operational policing in its value for money profiles relative to other forces of its size.

Thanks to early delivery of efficiencies and prudent financial management, the force built up a significant reserve over a number of years. I have used that fund over the last two years to protect our local policing model and to provide additional funding for the Chief Constable to respond to spikes in demand. However, those reserves are now much reduced and I need to find alternative funding to replace them so we can retain strong local policing and maintain the increase in officer numbers we have seen this year. I also intend to provide funding for new investments to meet the new priorities I have outlined above.

The income raised will enable the Chief Constable to invest to meet current demands and builds on the increases in officer numbers we have achieved this year, allowing the recruitment of an additional 75 officers, which will take frontline numbers to 2,034. These additional officers will undertake the proactive work in neighbourhoods that you tell me you want to see and increase capacity in some of our specialist units including our Scorpion Teams to tackle the growing threats from serious violence, county lines and travelling criminality. We know that intervening early and preventing people from entering the criminal justice system is key to reducing demand and achieving better outcomes for individuals and families. Through additional investment, a team of police officers will be deployed to work in schools and with young people to address serious violence and cybercrime. Each district and borough will have at least one named police officer to provide early intervention work.

My Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan focuses on putting victims of crime first and finding ways to improve the support they require and their journey through the criminal justice system. Further investment will be made in improving the service that victims receive and the outcomes for victims engaged with the criminal justice system. This will include an expansion of our Beacon Victim Support team to provide a much more comprehensive service to victims of cybercrime and fraud.

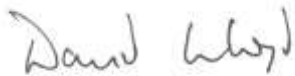
Last month I undertook a public consultation (full details are contained in Annex A) in order to understand the thoughts of the public on the principles I outlined in my Open Letter, that I will only take from the public what is absolutely required for policing in order to maintain local policing, build the necessary capacity and capability to meet new and growing threats, support efforts around prevention and early intervention, and provide increased support for victims throughout the criminal justice system. I am grateful to the 827 respondents¹ who took the time to provide detailed responses. Of the 827 that responded, three quarters (77 per cent, 511 positive and 128 No objection) would be willing to pay the increased level of precept. The majority of those in favour cited policing being value for money, that the increase was considered to be very small and in-line with everyday living expenses. Of the 639 respondents who were in favour, nearly a third expressed the view that they value having frontline officers who have local knowledge about crimes in specific

¹ 827 residents responded to the 2019/20 consultation. This is more than double the number that responded in 2018 (370) and more than three times the number in 2017 (261).

localities and tackle neighbourhood issues relating to drug dealing, professional begging and anti-social behaviour. Many respondents also showed a genuine desire to pay more for policing than what was being proposed in the consultation with some requesting the opportunity to enter into a voluntary agreement.

Taking this into account, I am proposing to raise the precept by £24.00 on the average (Band D) property equivalent, a 14.6 percent increase, to a figure of £188.00 per annum. An increase in the precept would mean that the vast majority of households would pay between 42 and 92 pence per week more than in 2018/19. Even with this increase, residents of Hertfordshire will still continue to pay one of the lowest council tax contributions for policing in the country. Increasing the precept will generate an additional £10.9 million² in income in 2019/20, an additional 5.6% on the net budget, enabling the protection and investment of frontline policing and capacity and capability building to meet growing demands.

This is a positive and transformative budget which will bring some significant benefits over the next year. In summary, I am proposing to increase the police element of the precept in 2019/20 in order to protect frontline policing, invest to meet growing demands of reported crime, support efforts around early intervention and prevention, and provide increased support for victims throughout the criminal justice system. I will continue to ensure that taxpayers continue to receive a first class policing service that protects the public from harm and still delivers a service that is value for money.



David Lloyd
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

² NB: The figure of £10.9 million is amended from the original £10.7 million outlined in the Open Letter to reflect the increase in the council tax base and the movement on the collection fund surplus following updates from district and borough councils.