

**Covering paper on the  
Commissioner's 2015/16  
precept proposal and budget**

**20 January 2015**



## **Recommendation**

That the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel approves my proposal to freeze the precept for 2015/16 and notes my budget for 2015/16 as detailed in the attached report.

## **Rationale**

I recommend my precept proposal and budget to the Panel based on the following considerations:

The Chief Constable and I have had to make decisions about how to deliver improved efficiency, both financially and in service delivery, whilst also improving our capability and resilience to tackle new forms of crime in the areas of safeguarding, cybercrime and child sexual exploitation. Despite these challenges, Hertfordshire Constabulary remains a top performing force - the best in its Most Similar Family (MSF) of eight police areas when looking at both absolute numbers of crime and levels of crime per population. As a result, Hertfordshire remains one of the safest places to live.

Police officer recruitment has increased significantly during 2014/15 with an anticipated 138 additional officers being recruited this year. There are also plans to boost officer numbers over the medium term through the Operational Capability reserve, including 150 new officers in 2015/16 which, on the basis of current turnover projections, would achieve 1,966 officers by 31/03/2016, including all Hertfordshire officers in BCH collaborated units

My election commitment was to keep taxes as low as possible. Prudent financial planning over the last three years has put Hertfordshire in a strong position to face continuing cuts to police funding, which will therefore have less impact on Hertfordshire than elsewhere in the country.

My budget is based on a medium term financial strategy underpinned by a well-developed savings programme. Through sound financial management, Hertfordshire has continued to strengthen its reserves, which provide comfort against unforeseen circumstances and also give the flexibility to phase-in savings over the four years of the plan, as a managed response to reductions in funding and the challenges facing policing today.

If the police precept is frozen, Hertfordshire will then be entitled to the government's council tax freeze grant which equates to £0.7 million. Because of this, and projects currently in place to deliver future efficiencies, we are able to balance the books without the need to increase the police precept for 2015/16. The Panel should note that the difference in income between what we shall receive in freeze grant, and that which would result from increasing the precept to just below the referendum trigger, is relatively small.

I confirm my commitment to continue to fund the vital partnership work across the county which keeps our communities safe in each district and borough. My 'Commissioner's Community Fund', which provides grants to community projects which support delivery of my Police and Crime Plan, will also continue.

I trust that the Panel will find this a robust and sustainable budget for the medium term and very much in line with my commitments to the electorate. It is a budget that supports the local policing style that is highly regarded by the public of Hertfordshire whilst keeping taxes low.

**David Lloyd**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire