

PUBLISHED BY

# Bedfordshire Police Authority

This document was produced as a wrap-around cover for the Bedfordshire On Sunday Publication, Sept 2010

## Letter from the Chief Constable



For three years, Bedfordshire Police has been working to the four aims of reducing the number of victims of crime, helping people feel safer in their communities, increasing the levels of satisfaction with our services and increasing confidence. We set these aims against a very clear purpose statement “to serve communities and make them safe from

crime” whilst instilling in all our staff the value that we are here to serve the public. I am pleased to say that we have seen some very real progress in all of these areas.

Of course we would want to see even less crime, particularly burglaries and robberies which can be very traumatic for victims. But it is very challenging being one of the smallest forces in the country with limited funding compared to other forces, continually assessing and reassessing the balance of resources between urban and rural areas, dealing with everything from anti-social behaviour to counter-terrorism whilst seeking to protect vulnerable young people, victims of domestic abuse and hate crimes.

Sometimes we don't get the balance right and sometimes we make mistakes but last year we attended 151,335 incidents and crimes, received 96,342 999 calls, answered 506,195 non-emergency calls and dealt with 3965 road traffic collisions. On a daily basis I see incredible professionalism, commitment and bravery that doesn't often hit the headlines and I know that the majority of the public appreciates what we do on their behalf.



I am proud and privileged to have led Bedfordshire Police for the last five and a half years and although the coming years will be financially challenging with inevitable reductions in some services, I am confident that the officers, police staff and volunteers that make up Bedfordshire Police will continue to do their utmost to protect people of every community, prevent and detect crime, reduce disorder and bring offenders to justice.

GILLIAN PARKER

# Police Authority's



# to Police & Crime Commissioner



Members of Bedfordshire Police Authority have grave concerns that the plans are being rushed through at precisely the wrong time and without clarity on key points. The first elections are destined for 2012, with a four-year term assured for the successful candidate.

Police Authority member Penny Fletcher said the Authority's stance is not a 'save our role' plea, but driven by genuine concerns. "As budget cuts begin to bite and officer numbers come under threat, does the public really want to see their money spent on elections for such a role?" she asked. "We don't think so.

"Valuable experience will be lost just when it's most needed and there is a strong view that with the planned support structures and Police and Crime Panels bureaucracy will increase and costs will rise. We also question how one individual can possibly attempt to provide real representation for local people.

**The Government's plans for policing include greater collaboration, more use of local volunteers, and promises of less bureaucracy, greater access to information and regular beat meetings. However, the most controversial element is the proposal to introduce directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners to replace Police Authorities.**

"Manifestos from election campaigns will influence priorities and the reality is that only those with a political campaign mechanism or serious private funding will be able to stand. As a result policing will become more susceptible to political interference than ever before. We do not believe that the public wants that."

If the plans get the go-ahead, the Commissioner will set priorities for the Force and hire and fire Chief Constables. The Commissioner will also hold the Chief Constable to account, leading to fears that policing priorities could be driven by politics or pressure groups, not local people.

The Authority has serious doubts that local people are particularly interested in the idea. Councillor member Fiona Chapman, said: "We think that people want to see crime cut and offenders caught, not an election for an individual

who they probably won't vote for anyway. Turnout is notoriously low for local council elections and mayoral elections, so how many people are likely to vote in this instance?"

Chair of the Police Authority, Peter Conniff, added: "We strongly support reform where the benefits are plain to see, but we do not believe in change for change's sake. Support for the concept is at best lukewarm. We would like to see more time devoted to exploring the best model, not just another model."

**Tell the Authority what you think.**

**Visit the website and answer the questions on the home page or use the 'Contact Us' link.**

**More information about the Government's proposals can be found on the Bedfordshire Police Authority website.**

# Restoring justice



## It is unsurprising that Restorative Justice (RJ) is proving a big success.

Instead of putting people, often teenagers, through the criminal justice system, RJ hails a return to common sense policing.

Many victims just want to meet the offender face to face and tell them the impact their actions have had on them and get an apology.

Restorative Justice makes this possible.

Vice-chair of the Authority, Linda Hockey, said: "We approved the use of Restorative Justice as it has proven more effective at preventing reoffending than traditional methods. Victims can explain to offenders the full impact of their actions and offenders can do something to try and repair the harm.

"This means that offenders learn a valuable lesson, which seems to be successfully deterring them from behaving in this way again."

In just five months, RJ was used to resolve over 300 crimes across the Force.

Linda added: "The feedback from all parties has been tremendously positive, reoffending is reducing and victim satisfaction is increasing. Officers can spend more time on patrol and not on paperwork and they are welcoming the chance to use their discretion and professional judgement."

## The Quest for improvement – doing more for less.



New ways of working are making Bedfordshire Police more efficient – and Bedfordshire residents are seeing the benefits. Police performance has been transformed in the eyes of local communities with increased capacity, improved customer satisfaction and tangible efficiency savings, all thanks to Operation Quest.

Operation Quest is widely regarded as one of the leading and most successful performance improvement programmes in UK policing.

Operation Quest is all about using existing resources and facilities in different ways to achieve improved results. With the research and development costs sponsored by the Home Office, the Police Authority gave the go-ahead in June 2009 and then agreed to reallocate elements of the budget to introduce new methods of working.

Improvements include the highly popular appointments system, whereby officers agree a mutually convenient time to meet residents with non-urgent issues. This has freed up officer time, increased police visibility and reduced the administrative burden. Restorative Justice has been introduced with highly positive results and crimes are recorded more efficiently.

The new ways of working mean that 45 officers have been redeployed to deal with serious and organised crime and protecting vulnerable people – two of the Authority's key priorities for this year.

Tony Brown, Chair of the Authority's Finance Committee, said:

"Operation Quest, which the Authority has monitored very closely from the outset, has delivered the goods. On top of financial and time-saving benefits to the tune of £3M, police officers are attending more incidents, satisfaction levels are rising and the Force is working more effectively. As funding gets tighter it is more important than ever that we use opportunities such as Quest to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the service."

## RJ in practice

A 34-year-old woman, who had never been in trouble with the police before, stole a £32 bag from Debenhams. The security officer, who had been to a Bedfordshire Police presentation on Restorative Justice, commented: "When I first heard about it, I thought it was just letting them get away with it, but it really did work. The lady was clearly upset and I felt that she was sorry for what she had done and wouldn't do it again."

A woman in her early twenties was walking along a path in broad daylight when she was approached from behind and slapped on the back by a 14-year-old boy. Although he ran off he was soon identified. The woman did not want to see the boy arrested and agreed to restorative justice.

Afterwards she said: "All I wanted was an apology and to let the lad know how it made me feel. I was really pleased with how it went and the way the officer explained the process."

The officer involved added: "The process was easy to follow and it was clear that the lad and his friends, who were filming what they had done on their mobile phones, understood the error of their ways."

Unhappy with the service -  
**TELL US**

Complaining has never been so easy.

If you're unhappy with the service you've received from anyone working for either Bedfordshire Police Authority or the Police Force

you can, and should, complain. Not only will any wrongdoing be addressed but lessons will be learned so that it doesn't happen again.

Penny Fletcher, Chair of the Authority's Complaints and Professional Standards Committee, said: "You can make a formal complaint, or you can simply register your dissatisfaction. There are clear and easy steps to follow on both the Authority's and the Force's websites, or you can ask for a written copy."

The Authority handles complaints about senior officers, Police Authority members or staff, or Authority policies or practices. It also ensures that complaints handled by the Force are dealt with fairly and in a timely manner.

The Police Force deals with complaints against Police Officers, Special Constables and Police Staff. The Force also deals with complaints about the quality of the service or the detrimental effect of any of the Force policies.





## Meeting your needs... Safeguarding services...

Peter Conniff, Chair of the Police Authority, considers the unprecedented funding issues facing the Authority in the future. "The way in which services are delivered will change over the next few years as the Government's funding reductions take effect. However, the Police Authority's commitment to preserving 'frontline and visible services' remains constant.

"In Bedfordshire the Authority has driven an efficiency programme amounting to £17.9M, of which £12.5M is cashable savings, between 2006/7 and 2009/10. Now all areas of work need to be reviewed even more radically in the face of further funding cuts. This means that the Force will have to adopt new ways of working in order to protect local policing and keep people safe.

"In October, the Government will announce the new funding regime for the next four years. When we know the full extent of the cuts we face, we will consider our options, including extended joint working programmes with other Forces and organisations.

"We have a strong track record for obtaining value for money. Our recent inspection credited us with keeping costs low, focussing on efficiency savings and moving our resources effectively to support priority areas.

"The intention is to put as much as we can in place now so that we are in the best possible position when the cuts take effect."

## Making a difference



The Eastcotts and Wilstead Community Safety Forum is proving a hit with local residents who have discovered that they really can influence the main priorities for community safety in the area.

Police Authority member Sarah Holland chairs the meetings, which are held every three months in different villages to give everyone the chance to go along. She says that attendance has gone up from just a handful of people in the early days to a regular turnout of about 30 people.

"We get representatives from the Police and various partners such as the Fire Service and Youth Offending Team to attend. They all explain what their role is and people can ask questions," she explained.

"The Safer Neighbourhood Team for the area works hard to establish the local priorities by talking to local residents, community representatives and Neighbourhood Action Groups. We then check at the meeting that people agree with the top three issues that have been raised, so that we know we've set the right priorities."

To encourage young people to attend the next Forum it will be held in the daytime, during half term week in October.

## Listening to you!

Local people really can influence the way in which policing is delivered, simply by telling the Police Authority what matters most to them. Your views and opinions help us to set the local priorities for policing. If you would like to be involved in our consultation please let us have your details, including if possible an email address. You can do this on the Contact Us section of our website or by writing to or telephoning the Authority.



## Confidence improves

Although the Coalition Government has removed the single confidence target for policing, the Police Authority still believes that it is important that local people have confidence in the police.

That is why we are still asking people whether they have confidence in Bedfordshire Police and if they think that the police understand the issues in their area.

### The most recent results show that:

- Confidence in the police has gone up to 86%
- Nearly 76% of people think that Bedfordshire Police understand local issues

This mirrors the findings of Police Authority Members at Community Safety Forums who have reported increasing numbers of residents attending to raise local issues and set the priorities for their Safer Neighbourhood Team, in the firm belief that their views will be acted upon.



## Improvements continue in 2009/10



In the year ending March 31st 2010, the Authority set Bedfordshire Police a target to reduce Overall Recorded Crime by 3% compared to the previous year. In fact, the Force actually achieved an 8% reduction which equates to over 3000 fewer crimes across Bedfordshire and Luton. Bedfordshire's overall crime rate in 2009/10 was just below the average across our Most Similar Forces (MSF).

Local concern about crimes such as burglary, robbery and vehicle crime led the Authority to agree a challenging target to reduce Serious Acquisitive Crime offences by 10% compared to the previous year. Working effectively with key partners, the Force actually achieved a 19% reduction which equates to over 2000 fewer victims across Bedfordshire and Luton. As a result the Force is now much closer to the rates of Serious Acquisitive Crime seen in our MSF.

House Burglary is a key component of Serious Acquisitive Crime. Working with partners the Force achieved the target for a 15% reduction in 2009/10

compared to the previous year which equates to over 600 fewer homes burgled across Bedfordshire and Luton.

Another key element of Serious Acquisitive Crime, Robbery, was given a target of a 15% reduction compared to the previous year. By working with partners the Force actually achieved a reduction of 30% which equates to 300 fewer victims of this crime type across Bedfordshire and Luton. This reduction was one of the largest seen across the UK.

### Other key improvement areas in 2009/10:

- A 19% reduction in vehicle crime offences - over 1000 fewer crimes.
- An 8% reduction in Criminal Damage offences - approximately 700 fewer victims.
- Increased public confidence that the police and local council are dealing with crimes and ASB – met target of over 50%

## About Us

Bedfordshire Police Authority is a separate, independent, organisation from the Police Force. It works on behalf of local people to improve local policing and ensure that the service provided meets local needs.

The Authority does not carry out any operational policing, which is the Chief Constable's responsibility.

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Bedfordshire Police Authority is committed to equality and diversity in every area of its business. If you need this document in another format or language, please let us know.

Both the Authority and Force are committed to delivering a policing service that is valued by the public and have a Value For Money strategy and action plan to achieve this.

# Funding policing in Bedfordshire



In setting the budget for this year the Authority has again seen a reduction in its Government grant of £3.6m for 2010/11 through adjustments made to the funding formula. At a time when we are considering significant cuts, the loss of this grant creates an additional challenge and has a real impact on our ability to improve performance. We will be urging the Government to stop penalising those Forces, like Bedfordshire, who do not receive their fair share of funding.

In addition, following the Chancellor's announcement of cuts in public sector spending the Authority also had to find a further £1m of savings in the current year. We do recognise the difficult financial climate in which we are all operating and have kept the police portion of the council tax to an affordable level whilst trying to deliver the policing service that taxpayers deserve. We made significant savings in the last year by increasing collaboration with Hertfordshire and other Forces in the Eastern Region, reducing bureaucratic processes and focussing on adding value to the service received by the public such as the popular appointments system and restorative justice. We have had to re-prioritise resources to ensure that we maintain frontline service delivery and enable investment into areas that residents have told us are of importance to them, such as protecting vulnerable people and neighbourhood policing. In addition we have invested heavily into policing serious and organised criminality.



The total budget this year was set at £102.821M, an increase of £3.314M over last year. This means that the amount of council tax paid by an average household (Band D) is £144.77 in 2010-11, approximately 10% of the average council tax bill across the county. Bedfordshire continues to have one of the lowest policing precepts in the country. The Authority also agreed a capital programme which will allow the Force to utilise Information Technology to streamline processes and achieve greater productivity from the police workforce as well as undertaking essential estate modernisation work.

## Who to call when you need help

Recent surveys undertaken by the Police Authority have highlighted that people are not always sure who to call for non-emergency local issues. Below is a cut out and keep guide to Who Does What.



**Remember in an emergency  
CALL 999**

Other useful numbers	
Bedfordshire Drug & Alcohol Action Team	01234 276051
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Victim Support	0845 303 0900
Fire & Rescue Service (non emergency)	01234 845000
NHS Direct	0845 46 47

More information about Bedfordshire Police can be found at: [www.bedfordshire.police.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.police.uk)

Responsible for:	Bedfordshire Police	Luton Borough Council	Central Bedfordshire Council	Bedford Borough Council
Reporting Crime	01234 841212 01582 401212			
Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour	01234 841212 01582 401212	North & West Luton 01582 548233 South & East Luton 01582 733991 Town Centre & Central Luton 01582 547265	0300 300 8000	01234 275260
Noise Nuisance		01582 510332	0300 300 8000	01234 227266
Reporting Parking Nuisance		01582 547272	0300 300 8000	01234 227477
Parking Tickets		01582 548520 0845 130 8182	0300 300 8005	01234 227477
Dog Fouling		01582 510330	0300 300 8000	01234 221781
Street Lighting		01582 510333	0300 300 8049	01234 228661
Road/Pavement Maintenance		01582 510333	0300 300 8049 0300 300 8074	01234 228661
Abandoned Vehicles	01234 841212 01582 401212 (only if also obstructing a road)	01582 510333	0300 300 8000	0800 121 8888
Street Cleaning		01582 510333	0300 300 8631 (North) 0300 300 8632 (South)	0800 121 8888
Cold Calling		01582 510330	0845 404 0506	0845 404 0506
General Enquires	01234 841212 01582 401212	01582 546000	0300 300 8000	01234 267422

