

PRESS INFORMATION



Ref: 436-budget survey

Date: 7th January 2010

Police Authority Goes On-line for Budget Survey

Residents in Bedfordshire, including Luton, are being asked how much they would be willing to pay towards the cost of policing in the County.

To make it easy for more people to give their views Bedfordshire Police Authority has placed an electronic survey on its website to find out what people feel about the cost of police resources, local priorities and service delivery.

Bedfordshire Police Authority has responsibility for ensuring an efficient and effective police service for Bedfordshire, including Luton. Part of this role involves setting the annual police budget and the Authority is keen to obtain views from as many residents and businesses about the policing budget in what is a particularly challenging economic climate for all public sector organisations.

This forms part of a wider consultation exercise being carried out, asking the public about resources and priorities for policing, the outcomes of which will be used to assist the Authority set the budget for Bedfordshire Police for the year 2010/11.

Peter Conniff, Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority, explained: "We believe that local people should tell us what their priorities for policing are as they invest in the service through the payment of the council tax.

"It is imperative that we make the best possible use of all our available resources and that the way in which we do this reflects what local people feel is most important to them.

"We are aware that the current economic climate is difficult for a great many people, and there is no doubt that this is one of the most difficult financial periods that public sector organisations will face. One of our highest priorities currently is the maintenance of our frontline police services, giving the tax payer value for money. We want to know if people agree."

The police budget is made up of funding from Central Government, which includes contributions from specific grants and business rates, and a proportion (10%) of the locally paid council tax, known as the police precept.

Setting the budget for policing for the County and therefore the amount of police precept local people will pay is a key responsibility of the Police Authority.

The budget will be agreed at a full Police Authority meeting on 12 February 2010, when a number of different budgetary options will be presented to the Police Authority for consideration. The final decision will take into account the views from local people, including the feedback from the electronic survey.

The survey can be accessed from the front page of Bedfordshire Police Authority's website, www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk or from the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CZVBY67>

The closing date for responses is Sunday 31st January 2010 and feedback will be available on the Authority's website following the Police Authority meeting in February.

ENDS

Media Enquiries: Sallie Blair, Better Times 01283 821012