



# PRESS INFORMATION

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## Police Authority To Consider Its Options

At the meeting of Bedfordshire Police Authority next Friday (16<sup>th</sup> July 2010) Members will consider a report outlining a range of options for policing the county in the future.

The Authority has been looking at possible ways in which it can stretch available resources and provide a more effective police service for some time. The report includes an outline business case on the options considered feasible for further exploration.

The timeliness of this report is highlighted by the recent Government announcements of in-year budget cuts and the possibility of an overall reduction in funding of 25-40% over the next four years.

Peter Conniff, Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority, said: "Our overall aim is to maintain an effective local policing service on behalf of local residents in the face of unprecedented financial challenges.

Recent cuts aside, funding, or rather the lack of it, has been a concern for some years, since the funding formula was changed and Bedfordshire's annual allocation was reduced by approximately £3.6M. Over the years that adds up to nearly £20M.

Historically, we have addressed this with prudent financial planning and an ambitious value for money programme including extensive collaboration. I'm proud that Bedfordshire is acknowledged as one of the pioneers for effective collaboration projects with other forces.

However, we need to do more and Members will therefore consider a number of options from increased collaborative work to a full merger between Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary."

Hertfordshire Police Authority will consider the same options at its own meeting to be held the same day and members of the public are welcome to observe either meeting. Bedfordshire's meeting will take place at Bridgebury House, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford MK43 9AX, commencing at 10.00am.

Mr Conniff continued: "I would like to stress that we will not be making a decision on whether to merge at this meeting and obviously, whatever happens, both Police Authorities will need to agree their preferred way forward.

"No decisions will be taken on a merger without extensive consultation, so if both Authorities agree to move to consultation as the next step, we will engage with residents, partners and other stakeholders to discover their views. A merger will only be considered if we have extensive public support and the approval of the Home Secretary."

An Executive Summary and the Full Report will be available on the Police Authority's website: [www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk](http://www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk) from Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July.

ENDS

**Please note: The Police Authority has no intention of making any further comment until after the meeting on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.**

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