

Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council
Clerk to the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

Sent via email

04 March 2024

Dear Laura/ Police and Crime Panel

Thank you for your letter dated 09 February 2023.

An important part of my role as Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner is to ensure that Bedfordshire Police has the resources it needs to keep our communities safer, following consultation with residents and our Chief Constable.

This increase and budget will enable the maintenance of 1,466 police officer and staff in line with the priority-based budget, to be employed in areas prioritised by the Chief Constable in line with the current Police and Crime Plan, enhancing the service received from the police in five specific areas:

Retail crime – We want to work with retailers and partners to improve the investigation of retail crime by using artificial intelligence linked to CCTV technology. We want to put CCTV in real time in the hands of police officers and support the identification of suspects through facial recognition.

Force control room – The Control Room continues to experience high levels of demand, with a total of 23,000 emergency and non-emergency calls received in November 2023. To respond to this demand the Force will increase the level of resourcing and use a mixed workforce of police staff and police officers. Chat and voice bots will help with non-emergency demand. This will free up officers and staff to deal with police incidents.

Crime prevention – Bedfordshire continues to be impacted by knife crime and serious youth violence. We want to bring in a dedicated Superintendent role to develop a countywide crime prevention strategy with a specific focus on preventing serious youth violence and reducing knife related crime.

Improved outcomes for victims through immediate justice – We want to make more and better use of alternative ways of dealing with offenders by increasing our use of processes like out of court disposals. This will help us to speed up resolution for some victims of crime and help to shape offender behaviour to prevent further victims of crime.

Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire

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Speeding – We want to train and equip our Special Constables with monitoring and enforcement techniques to reduce speeding in key areas across our county at periods of high road use. During 2024/25 there will be a sustained campaign throughout the year to recruit more Specials in the Force as part of our commitment to Community Policing.

I am pleased that the my proposal was supported (subject to any variations as a result of the final police grant settlement figures and changes to the council tax base and collection fund surplus) that the budget requirement for 2024/2025 be set at £149.164M including a contribution from reserves of £0.298M, with £82.1M of this sum by way of a Central Government Police Grant, and £61.8M to be raised locally, and that this would result in the policing element of an average Council Tax at Band D of £265.09, an increase of £13.00 per annum / £1.08 per month compared to 2023/2024.

My focus now is on ensuring the Chief Constable delivers on these funded commitments in delivering on the public's policing priorities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Festus Akinbusoye".

Festus Akinbusoye
Police and Crime Commissioner
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire