

# PRESS RELEASE



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## FRONTLINE SERVICES PROTECTED AS POLICE AUTHORITY SETS BUDGET

The average household (Band D property) will pay just under 10p a week extra for policing in 2010/11, following the decision made by Hertfordshire Police Authority yesterday (Tuesday) to increase Council Tax by 3.5%.

The decision follows months of discussions and consultation and means that Neighbourhood Policing Teams can be maintained at their current levels for at least another 12 months.

Chair of Hertfordshire Police Authority, Stuart Nagler, said: "The Authority is facing unprecedented financial pressures in the next few years as anticipated reductions in Government funding take effect - this coming year alone we have a shortfall in Grants of over £4m caused by the formula that is used to allocate the Home Office money.

"We thought long and hard before making our decision today and weighed up the need to maintain the high standards of policing, which the public tell us they expect, with the need to limit the financial burden we place on our residents. Even with an increase of 3.5% in Council Tax and the use of £630,000 from reserves, we will still have to make cuts. However, Hertfordshire has an excellent track record on achieving efficiencies and savings and we are sure that the Chief Constable and his team will rise up to meet the challenges ahead."

The largest increase in expenditure will be on officers and staff pay. These are set nationally and account for about 83% of the Authority's annual budget. Additional money is also needed to meet inflation, such as increasing fuel prices and to compensate for reductions in the amount of partnership and other grant funding. There are also a number of areas highlighted in the Policing Plan where more investment is needed, such as serious and organised crime and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Savings will be achieved in a number of ways, including the range of collaboration projects with other forces, especially Bedfordshire. These include a range of joint units such as major crime, firearms and dogs which, together, are expected to save Hertfordshire almost £2.5m over the coming year. There will also be significant savings through the Constabulary's radical change programme, which involves setting up a single Local Policing Command Unit and centralising the support and management of a range of services, including custody and roads policing. However, it is expected that over the course of the next year about 100 posts will be lost, although the Constabulary will work with staff and union representatives to keep redundancies to a minimum. The total number of police officers will remain above 2,000. The Police Authority has also frozen its administrative budget, including members' allowances, for the coming year.

The total Police Authority revenue budget for 2010/11 will be £190.8m, an increase of £5.8m. This means someone living in a Band D property will pay £147.82 for policing in their Council Tax bill, an increase of £5 a year. This is almost 12% below the national average for shire forces.

In addition, the Authority receives an annual Capital Grant from Government and this will remain the same at £2.3m for 2010/11.

Chief Constable Frank Whiteley said: “I recognise that the Police Authority has been faced with a difficult decision, given the current wider financial climate. This settlement will allow Hertfordshire Constabulary to sustain its high levels of performance over the next year, as well as increasing its contribution to fighting serious, organised crime in the Eastern region. This is despite the loss of about 100 staff posts necessitated by this budget.

“However, this settlement will leave the Authority facing significant financial shortfalls in the next few years. This will require increasingly bold decisions over the next 12 to 18 months, if high performing policing services are to be sustained in the medium term.”

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#### Notes to Editors:

- In 2009/10, Hertfordshire Police Authority had £3.7m of its Government grant withheld because of a ‘floors and ceilings’ adjustment to protect other police authorities from significant reductions in their grants. That shortfall will increase to £4.1m next year, with the real possibility of this getting worse in future years.
- Council Tax payers in Hertfordshire pay, on average, 12% less for policing than people living in other shire areas.
- The percentage rise in Council Tax set by Hertfordshire Police Authority is in line with the national mean average increase being made by police authorities (3.45%) for 2010/11 (figures announced to date).
- The £630,000 from reserves agreed yesterday (Tuesday) is in addition to a further £655,000 from reserves, agreed earlier by the Authority, to offset the impact of the Heritable Bank investment impairment.

	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
<b>2009/10</b>	£95.21	£111.08	£126.95	£142.82	£174.56	£206.3	£238.03	£285.64
<b>2010/11</b>	£98.55	£114.97	£131.40	£147.82	£180.67	£213.52	£246.37	£295.64

**Hertfordshire Police Authority** is made up of 17 local people comprising a mixture of nine councillors and eight independent members. It is responsible for:

- Managing all police property
- Setting the budget for the police force, including raising local taxes for policing
- Scrutinising and managing local police performance
- Setting the strategic direction for policing locally, deciding local priorities for policing and setting the Constabulary challenging targets to drive performance higher
- Consulting and engaging with local communities to find out what they want the local police to tackle
- Appointing (and, if necessary, dismissing) the Chief Constable and senior police officers

**For further information, photographs or interviews please contact Sally Patient, Hertfordshire Police Authority, on 01992 555624 (mobile 07954 421331) or email [sally.patient.hpa@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sally.patient.hpa@herts.pnn.police.uk)**