



## **My proposals for the 2018/19 Policing Precept**

Each year I set a budget for policing in Hertfordshire. It is one of the most important functions of a Police and Crime Commissioner as it sets out how the Constabulary will spend its money over the next 12 months. It also underlines the strategy I have set for how we protect Hertfordshire and keep people safe. My starting point each year is to make sure the public are protected and that the police service is as effective and efficient as possible. I have a duty to spend your money well, and the purpose of this open letter is to inform you of my intentions and seek your views on a decision which affects all of us.

Hertfordshire has been praised by the police inspectorate as an efficient and ethical force, which represents good value for money. Working with neighbouring police forces, we have made significant savings, and share several operational units which ensures we are as effective as possible. I have been able to keep council tax low and as a Hertfordshire resident you pay one of the lowest council tax contributions for policing in the country. In what has been an extremely busy year for the police in Hertfordshire (and beyond), we still have a comparatively low level of crime.

### **A Rise in Demand**

The horrific terrorist attacks in Manchester and London led to an increased threat level resulting in Hertfordshire officers working around the clock performing additional duties. In the last year, the Force Control Room, where staff take your emergency calls and online crime reports, has seen a 10% increase in the number of 999 calls received. After the Manchester attack, that rose by 18%. Each day we are now receiving the same number of calls we would expect on New Year's Eve – one of our busiest nights.

More people are reporting cases of domestic abuse to Hertfordshire Constabulary – the number has nearly doubled in the last 3 years - and these now account for over 12% of all crimes in the county. We've also seen a significant increase in reports of offences involving vulnerable victims – child abuse, trafficking and modern slavery. This is actually positive news. It means that far more people who in the past were reluctant to report these horrible crimes now have the confidence to come forward and ask for help. It is absolutely vital that we recognise their courage by properly investigating these crimes and provide victims with high quality support. I am pleased to say that Hertfordshire is meeting this challenge but I

also recognise that it represents a significant increase in pressure on the force's limited resources.

Local policing is at the heart of my Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan and we have invested to maintain this popular model. There are dedicated neighbourhood teams in each of the ten districts of the county and each has a chief inspector setting the local priorities. There are cheaper ways to police the county, but I believe they are not as effective and certainly not what the public of Hertfordshire have told me they want. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary has recognised in a recent report that we put more into frontline policing than most forces – 72% of the entire budget is spent on frontline staff.

The rise in demand impacts on how we spend our money. In order to protect our neighbourhood policing model and strengthen the teams tackling burglary and other serious crimes, it will be necessary to raise additional funding from local people. The government has made it possible for me to increase the amount you pay towards policing by an additional £1 a month. I propose to take advantage of this flexibility and raise the precept. This will allow the Chief Constable to preserve our local policing model as well as invest to meet the demands on the force. This amounts to an increase of just over 3 percent in the total police budget. Despite this rise, Hertfordshire will continue to have one of the lowest levels of council tax spent on policing in the whole country.

Practically, this will deliver more officers on the streets working in our neighbourhood teams and in specialist units like our Scorpion teams. These are our proactive crime-fighting units which have been proven to help reduce anti-social behaviour, burglary and drug dealing. With more calls coming in, it is necessary to invest more money in our Force Control Room, providing additional resources to meet the demand and provide the excellent victim care you expect when you dial 999, 101 or log on to the website or app. Significant additional resource will be invested to improve the response to victims at the first point of contact with the police and to assist with investigations.

I am regularly told by members of the public how much they value the work of our Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the Chief Constable agrees with me that they are a vital part of our successful local policing model. A number of force areas around the country have announced plans to drastically reduce PCSO numbers but I intend to continue to maintain funding for them here in Hertfordshire.

I have lobbied the Home Secretary for greater flexibility in setting the budget and giving the locally accountable PCC the ability to raise enough for their area without the costly expense of holding a referendum. However, we also have a duty to ensure that we are as efficient as possible and the Constabulary has made significant savings since I first became your Police and Crime Commissioner. I have ensured we are making the best use of the resources we already have and we have committed to spend around 80% of our reserves over the next four years.

We will continue to collaborate where it makes most sense and I will ensure we work with other emergency services to share locations and resources where operationally possible.

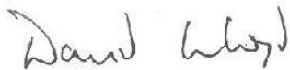
Keeping council tax low has been one of my overriding ambitions as PCC and my commitment has been that I won't ask you to pay any more for policing than is absolutely necessary. That remains the case to this day and I believe this modest rise will be enough to ensure our police service continues to provide the care and protection you expect.

### **Your views are important**

This is your chance to have a say on the amount you pay for policing in Hertfordshire. Every year I've written an open letter setting out my thoughts, and many of you have taken the time to let me know yours. I have a duty to consult on all aspects of our expenditure, including our capital spending. Your views and comments are a crucial part of this process.

If you would like to send me comments, please email them to [your.views@herts.pcc.pnn.gov.uk](mailto:your.views@herts.pcc.pnn.gov.uk) or by letter to: The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, 15 Vaughan Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 4GZ by 31st January 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Lloyd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

David Lloyd

Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire