

 **Bedfordshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Making the money work

Hello everyone,

This is in some ways a hard message to write, as it is the last I will send you as the elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire. I trust that all regular readers understand that I leave Bedfordshire Police in a very much better place than that in which I found it in 2016. I inherited a force which was uniquely graded as 'Inadequate' by the police watchdog - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - even though I did not accept that this was fair. On 7 February 2020, HMI Matt Parr, who is now our HMICFRS Inspector, graded Bedfordshire Police 'Good' in all possible categories within his inspection for the last year; good for all of effectiveness, efficiency, leadership, legitimacy and keeping people safe. Furthermore, he publicly credited me, together with my Chief Constables past and present - Jon Boutcher and Garry Forsyth - with the transformation of Bedfordshire Police and the fact that the watchdog now accepts that it is both "well run" and "well led". In an interview that night, HMI Parr said:-

"Considering where the Force was two or three years ago, this is really impressive achievement and I commend the Force, its leadership, the PCC and her staff, who've all contributed to a real turnaround."

This is obviously an enormous matter of pride to me and I consider it the greatest achievement of my 38 years in the workplace.

I hope that, as valued partners, you will reflect as I have done on the other significant advances that I have been able to achieve, through my office and working in partnership with my exceptional Chief Constables. These include, but are not limited to, the creation of the Signpost Victim Support Hub which contacts those affected by crime by letter or phone within 24 hours of it being recorded by Bedfordshire Police. The Signpost service has been singled out by HMICFRS this year as "notable practise" to be recommended to all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Signpost was joined this year by Direction; my new call centre and website service linking those exiting prison in Bedford to the support services they require to get their lives back on track. This has included a new arrangement, brokered by my office with the Department of Work and Pensions, so that all Jobcentres in our county offer same day access to benefits and employment advice for ex-offenders to this same end.

I also became the first PCC in the country to fund Family Drug and Alcohol Courts, in Bedford and Luton, requiring parents with drug and alcohol addictions to sign up to an intensive rehabilitation programme and visits with the judge to retain their children in care proceedings. Such courts, in Milton Keynes, have proved 50% more effective

at ensuring that a parent is free of their addictions and living with their children five years on.

Coronavirus allowing, I will be holding an event to launch my End of Term Report at the conclusion of this four year term, on 19 March 2020, and hope I will see you there since there is much to tell in terms of this year's successes and the improvements I have worked with Bedfordshire Police to innovate and introduce over my whole term.

The report will reference achievements since I took up the post in May 2016, including the reintroduction of Community Policing across the county in the seven Community Hubs of Inspectors, PCs and PCSOs that I promised you, plus two further permanent Hubs and bases in Ampthill and, this year, in Toddington at the Community Fire Stations, that I have been able to help the Force to deliver since then.

By persuading the Home Office to change the rules on its Special Grants to win £4.571m last year, with a second grant due in 2020, and by helping to bring in £1.37m of uplift funding to support more visible policing, better data to direct resources and swifter forensics to tackle gang, gun and knife crime plus £880,000 this year and next to tackle the roots causes with partners, I can say entirely truthfully that I have helped to bring more extra Government money into Bedfordshire Police than for more than 20 years and presided over higher recruitment than for more than a decade - even before the promised national uplift.

The decision not to seek re-election has been a difficult one but, when I was asked to declare my hand last summer, I could not sign up to another term as a point of principle; when the College of Policing is imposing the need to study for a degree in policing on all those wishing to enter the service to become a Police Constable. The Home Office has not yet intervened, even though you would have lost almost one in ten of your officers in Bedfordshire into a classroom by May 2022 if I had not taken this stand. In fact, Bedfordshire Police is now one of only three forces in the country where the College has agreed to allow us to offer a twin track of a degree and an enhanced Initial Training and Development Programme (IPLDP) until at least 2022.

It has been a pleasure to work with you and I wish you all well in a future of ever greater partnership and effective joint working with a force that is now - as a result of the last four years of hard work by me, my office, its Chief Constables and every single officer and member of staff - well and truly on the up and up. You now have a police force to be proud of.

Yours
Kathryn



Kathryn Holloway
Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire



News from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner



As new grant is expected, Bedfordshire PCC stands down to allow her replacement to invest new and different skills in the improvement of policing.

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, has announced that she is to step aside as the PCC for the county after four years in the role - as another Policing Special Grant from Government is expected imminently - to give another Commissioner the chance to invest new skills in policing in the county, in line with the original plan for the role.

In the last financial year, the PCC has been successful in getting the Government to re-write the rules of its Special Grant process, which usually relied on making a payment to cover an event on one particular day outside business as usual in policing, to win £4.571m for cash-strapped Bedfordshire Police to meet the unprecedented cost of fighting gang, gun and knife crime in the previous two years and that anticipated in 2019-20. The money allowed the Force to double its specialist unit - Operation Boson - creating one team for the north, in addition to the existing response in the south of the county - delivering 150 years of prison terms as a result. The PCC was also able to protect recruitment as a result and deliver on her promise to recruit 160 officers, in a higher recruitment drive than for a decade in the Force, and exceed this by another 18 officers to replace potential candidates falling out of training, plus a further 18, as the first of the national uplift promised by the Government.

"I think it's always a good idea to quit while you're ahead and I'm more proud of what's been achieved on behalf of Bedfordshire Police, which deserved someone to fight its corner and to do so with the gloves off, than of anything I've ever done in the workplace in 37 years.

"I'm expecting a second Special Grant once more this year - any day in fact - and have it in writing from our current Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse, and his predecessor that this is guaranteed. I've waited as long as I can before the selection process for a candidate to replace me in Bedfordshire to make this announcement but, as it takes place on Saturday (29 February 2020), it's time to break my silence.

"The whole idea behind PCCs was never that this should be a job for life but that people with specific, proven experience in the wider commercial world should come into policing and invest those skills before moving on to allow someone else to arrive to bring in a whole new range of skills. I'd built up a business working internationally in Crisis Management and Communications with multiple governments, police forces, our military and the boards of large corporations before coming to Bedfordshire Police. I stood as PCC because I felt that the message about Bedfordshire Police's absolutely genuine level of need, due to its historically

inadequate share of national police funding under every government of every shade, needed to be presented differently, with proper evidence and someone telling it like it is.

“The two unique Special Grants prove conclusively that this fantastic force, staffed by colleagues I will treasure all my life - especially my current Chief Constable Garry Forsyth and his predecessor Jon Boutcher - is not given a core grant which can cover all the complex crime it faces here and which it cannot drive away due to factors totally outside policing; including an international airport that connects with some of the most fragile states in Europe, main transportation routes such as the M1 and A1 which appeal to Organised Crime Gangs, its proximity to London crime which spills over through county lines drug running and gang, gun and knife crime.

"Despite all this - this month - the Force where I inherited an 'inadequate' grading from the police watchdog has been graded 'good' across the board and this has been very much part of my decision and of the pride I feel in what has been achieved here with the help of every single officer and every single member of staff, together with our partners," said PCC Holloway.

* On 7 February, the police watchdog Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services credited Commissioner Holloway publicly, along with her Chief Constables past and present, for a turnaround in its grading of Bedfordshire Police since its 'inadequate' grade - which she challenged - was issued to the Force for its effectiveness for 2016. Bedfordshire Police is now graded as 'good' in every category of the inspection, for all of effectiveness, efficiency, leadership, legitimacy and for keeping people safe. Bedfordshire's HMI Matt Parr said: "Two or three years ago Bedfordshire Police was languishing with some pretty poor grades from (the) Inspectorate: they've absolutely turned it around. I think we don't often say this but genuine credit to both the former and current Chief Constable and to the Police and Crime Commissioner who's presided over a big turnaround."

* The victim support service PCC Holloway established - the Signpost Hub - contacting victims of recorded crime within 24 hours by letter or via freephone 0800 0282 887 and also at signpostforbedfordshire.com, was singled out by the watchdog as "notable practise" ie best practise in policing, to be recommended to the 43 forces of England and Wales.

* Since May 2016 when she took up the post, Commissioner Holloway has brought more funds from central government than for more the 20 years into the cash-strapped and under-resourced force by arguing its case robustly in public, in the media and behind the doors of government. Outside council tax precept rises and the £4.571m Special Grant so far, in the last year, the PCC helped to win a further £1.36m for an uplift in visible police response to the serious youth violence problems of Bedfordshire, £880,000 to set up a new Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit uniting police, local authorities, the youth offending services, health and charities to target the root causes of youth violence and a repeat promise of matched funding of the unit this year.

* Also in the past year, Kathryn Holloway has become the only PCC in the country to fund the setting up of Family Drug and Alcohol Courts in Bedfordshire for the first time, which involve parents with drug and alcohol addictions in regular meetings with a judge in care proceedings, being supported in an intensive rehabilitation programme. These courts have been assessed by both Lancaster and Brunel Universities as having a 50% greater chance of keeping families together, with parents free of their addictions, five years after taking part in the process.

* On 10 February, Commissioner Holloway achieved her ambition to set up a new Sexual Assaults Referral Centre, outside a hospital setting for the first time in

Bedfordshire, in a soothing environment with separate age-appropriate rooms for children, teenagers and adult victims and those who accompany them.

* The PCC also funded a new service for ex-offenders in 2019-20 to try to stop the revolving door back to prison - Direction, a website (with contents of available support services prepared with ex-prisoners from HMP Bedford)

DirectionforBedfordshire.co.uk and a call centre on freephone 0800 917 5579. Her office negotiated an agreement with the Department of Work and Pensions to create same day advice in its Jobcentres in Bedfordshire so that prisoners get access to benefits and employment advice to try to prevent an income gap likely to drive them straight back to crime.

Bedfordshire's Chief Constable, Garry Forsyth said "Kathryn Holloway has been simply an outstanding PCC for Bedfordshire Police and has been instrumental in the transformation of the force over the last four years through the support she has afforded not only to myself and my predecessor Jon Boutcher but to all the officers, staff and public of Bedfordshire.

"Kathryn has worked tirelessly with passion and commitment for the public she was elected to represent and with the core values that drive her so strongly combined with her genuine care and compassion for the workforce she has made a real difference in the role. She has never hesitated to speak truth to power, robustly when it's needed, and has been a tremendous force for good for the force and the county. I and my colleagues wish her every success in her future ventures."

The PCC said, "Garry is a superb Chief. He understands policing business here inside out and how to connect with our communities and the whole force too. I will miss him enormously but suspect - and hope - that we will still connect over an outstanding Bedfordshire curry to discuss the way the Force continues to be on the up and up under his command in future years!

"I've tried my level best to deliver exactly what I promised and, if anyone of any political persuasion examines the Police and Crime Plan that I created in 2016 for this four year term, I trust they will agree with the Police and Crime Panel who hold me to account that this is exactly what has been done. I've tried not to divide partners or the public through politics - as policing should be the only thing that matters in this role - and Bedfordshire Police is the most extraordinary force for keeping its head up and delivering policing to a high national standard to turn expectations around. I will always come out of my corner to fight for it if necessary and the public should be exceptionally proud of the police force which serves it to the very best of its ability, despite all of its challenges," said PCC Holloway.

Paul Cain, the politically independent Chair of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel said: "It has been a real pleasure working with our elected PCC, Kathryn Holloway over the past 4 years simply because she has been such a driving force in leading and pushing for change over the period of her appointment. Whilst I am personally very sorry to see Kathryn leave office, she has left behind a huge legacy in all of the many areas she has delivered on. The original Police and Crime Plan issued within days of her appointment in 2016 has been fully delivered and we cannot underestimate the efforts she has continually placed behind lobbying for better funding for the force. Bedfordshire Police is in a very much better place today

than it was 4 years ago due to her drive and determination, and the extra funding she has achieved.

“Looking forward, the Police and Crime Panel will continue to hold the incoming elected PCC to account to deliver their new Plan for Bedfordshire Police, and we will continue to work closely with the new PCC in order to assist in any way we can. We certainly do not underestimate the massive funding issues we still need to overcome in order to continue to properly support and fund our Force and the ongoing changes needed to protect the people of Bedfordshire from ever-changing threats.”



PCC opens new youth hub to help divert young people away from gangs, violence and anti-social behaviour

Bedfordshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, has formally opened a new youth meeting point for young people in Shefford after funding its refurbishment.

The project in Millennium Green, Shefford, has been backed with £5,000 of funding from the Commissioner’s new Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) which works with communities as well as partners such as local councils, the Youth Offending Service and charities to combat youth violence and wider crime.

Shefford Town Council and the Grand Union Housing project will also work with other VERU-backed projects to engage with children and young people in the town.

“I’m absolutely delighted to be able to back this project that gives young people somewhere to go and allows the very talented youth workers running projects in the town to have a location for mentoring.

"I couldn't be more impressed by the approach of Shefford Town Council, which is frankly a model for all such councils across Bedfordshire, in stepping into the void of youth provision after school and in the school holidays now so many youth clubs and extra curricular activities no longer exist.

“The Mayor, Paul Mackin, and his councillors work ceaselessly with Bedfordshire Police’s Community Policing Hub for North Bedfordshire to deliver enforcement where crime is being committed but we all, also, want to step in earlier before involvement in Anti Social Behaviour or gangs blights these young lives and those of victims,” said Commissioner Holloway.

The project in Shefford has enabled former changing rooms to be brought back into use for a range of sessions for young people. As well as sports activities, the space will also be used to facilitate a bike repair project, mentoring young people, employment support and drop in sessions.

The project has been driven forward by the town council and, in particular, Nicola King, a town councillor and youth participation officer at Grand Union Housing.

The housing association is running an outreach programme in the town where youth workers mount patrols to engage with young people and offer them advice.

The 'Inspiring People' project, which is running workshops with young people teaching them skills such as photography and media production, will also be holding sessions at the youth hub.

Both of these projects have been funded by the VERU.

As well as the VERU, the PCC also recently ran a separate grant funding round from her £1.6m Commissioner's Fund for projects focussing on early intervention for young people, with a focus on drivers of crime such as drugs

Councillor Mackin said: "Shefford Town Council has operated a vigorous youth activities programme for several years. Recently, we became aware that the needs of young people were changing with the growing criminal activity moving into the area, compounded by a lack of resources in other social services departments.

"This meant that the requirements of the young people were becoming more difficult to fulfil; they need a deeper level mentoring and supervision service rather than just a simple recreational activity.

"Thanks to the funding provided by the PCC, we were able to renovate a disused building that will be staffed by qualified volunteers, led by town councillor Nicola King, to provide dedicated mentoring and one-on-one counselling.

"The youth hub will be used by our youth involvement team to carry out this work and a full range of activities, as well as a secure meeting place and, with the provision of an internet connection, a range of communication facilities. We are truly grateful to the PCC for the opportunity to create this youth hub for the benefit of the young people in Shefford."



OPCC seeks Youth Ambassadors to give young people a voice on policing in the new Beds Youth Council

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, is calling on teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 to help create the *Bedfordshire Youth Council (BYC)* and become an influencer in focus groups.

The aim of the BYC is to encourage local young people to have their say on how to improve the quality of policing and to improve trust and reassurance within communities. The group will give Bedfordshire Police advice on issues that affect young people, for example, gang, knife and gun crime. They will also consult with police on plans that might impact on youth culture, offering a new way in which to make a difference to how young communities are policed.

"The problem has traditionally been that organisations too often put in place plans affecting young people that they think will work rather than allowing them to have a voice themselves. It's never been more important to have the input of teenagers in policing because the social media they use to connect and share information is changing all the time. Just look at Facebook, it's something their parents and grandparents use and they can't be reached through television news because fewer and fewer young people watch tv programmes at set times at all, streaming the material they want to watch when they want to watch it instead," said the Commissioner.

“I don’t just want to reach young people who are already on side where confidence in police is concerned. I need those who have the opposite view too so we can understand why that is, and there’s something in joining the council and taking part in focus groups for them too: every college and almost every job requires a CV and testimonials; being involved in something like this is something to shout about,” she said.

BYC members will, initially, be between the ages of 13 and 17 and drawn from a broad range of backgrounds. The council will include those who may be at risk of entering the criminal justice system, ex-offenders and victims of crime or come from areas where youth violence is part of their everyday lives.

The council will offer Bedfordshire Police a continuous sounding board of those who may be most affected by crime and police intervention and will allow the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Force to fully hear the voices of young people across Bedfordshire.

The vision of the BYC is to allow young people to have the chance to:

- Speak directly with police officers and decision makers to “youth proof” policies, protocols and strategies.
- Provide advice to Bedfordshire Police to help monitor and improve the quality of the policing service being delivered and help them understand issues that affect young people.
- Build relationships between police, young people and communities.
- Be able to express their views openly and honestly.
- Raise the profile of young people within the community while improving their leadership skills.

OPCC Community Engagement Officer and Beds Youth Council Lead, Zoe Fraser explained “This is a fantastic opportunity for the young people of Bedfordshire to have their voices heard. We've already taken this concept to colleges around Bedford and we have had lots of interest. We are really looking forward to hearing what young people have to say about policing and what they would like to see happen in their towns and villages.”

“Please get involved. It’s no good complaining about how police approach issues like knife carrying in your schools and colleges if you’re not prepared to speak up and tell them what you think would get the message across instead,” said PCC Holloway. If you would be interested in joining Bedfordshire Youth Council, or for more information, visit the [Beds Youth Council \(BYC\) page](#).



PCC, Police and partners celebrate opening of new centre to support victims of sexual crimes described as the new ‘gold standard’

Bedfordshire’s PCC, Kathryn Holloway, Bedfordshire Police and the NHS have opened a new specialist centre to support victims of sexual crimes and investigate on their behalf, designed by the Commissioner as a new ‘gold standard’ service (on Monday 10 February 2020).

The PCC's office had been seeking a building for almost four years in which to base the Sexual Assaults Referral Centre (SARC) in order to move it from a hospital setting to a more supportive and home-like environment for the first time in Bedfordshire.

The PCC has invested £475,000 in the new SARC for the county, made up of £300,000 of her police budget, £175,000 of her Commissioner's Fund - as her single largest grant of her four year term - and £75,000 of help from the NHS. Moving forward, the running costs of the new centre will be split 50-:50 between Police and the NHS.

"In 2020 and in future a hospital is not the appropriate place to base services for those who've experienced rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse, in my view. However fantastic the service - and I know that provided by the Bedfordshire SARC staff currently is exemplary - a hospital is associated with sickness, death and disease and that is unhelpful, at the very least.

"Incredibly I showed a picture of the new SARC building to my staff nearly four years ago and said 'this is what I'm looking for; a building that looks like a beautiful house, in a peaceful setting, with dedicated parking and an entrance for victims of sexual crimes but a separate entrance and parking area for police officers'. It needed to have space for forensic examination rooms and police evidence suites but, also, for non-forensic waiting rooms that are more like an ideal home from home, to allow such service users to start their recovery as soon as possible.

"Almost unbelievably, after considering dozens of alternative sites, the original building which was my inspiration became vacant and I opened negotiations for a long lease on the property with the landlord, which will save around £250,000 a year and provide a far better setting for both victims of crime and the officers, staff and volunteers who work in this very challenging area," said Commissioner Holloway.

While a board of representatives from Bedfordshire Police, the NHS and specialist SARC service provider Mountain Healthcare, drew up the operational and forensic requirements, the PCC designed the interior herself and sourced, purchased, stored and installed every other item in the building. She was inspired by the Cambridgeshire SARC, The Elms, whose management, staff, volunteers, forensic nurses and a representative of SARC service users she interviewed to gain their advice concerning the best aspects of design and any learning points, such as recessed upper cabinets in the forensic examination rooms to allow nurses to label samples with clear headroom.

The completed Bedfordshire SARC was visited for the first time by regional NHS head of health and justice, Claire Weston, who leads the commissioning of health services for people who have experienced sexual assault and abuse. She told launch guests, "It's fair to say that when SARCs were first launched there was a huge desire to provide the best service possible but to do that, some compromises had to be made. We've all learned so much since then and from what I see of the new Bedfordshire SARC today there don't seem to have been any compromises on what is now being offered. NHS England is confident that the Bedfordshire SARC offers a compassionate and expert response to survivors of all genders and ages, whether or not they choose to pursue their case through the courts, or not"

The PCC commented: "I've heard three things from visitors which have absolutely delighted me, given the ambition I had for this building: a five-year-old who was shown the family waiting room having been told that children need to be looked

after there said, completely unprompted, “It’s so peaceful and safe.” A recent user of the existing SARC service toured the building and told us that, while the people who had looked after her were unfailingly kind and supportive, she felt she would have been far happier about the whole experience if she had visited the new facility.

“Last but not least, the regional lead for the NHS told the Deputy Chief Constable, my Chief of Staff and I that my original inspiration - the Cambridgeshire SARC - had been her own ‘gold standard’ but she now thinks that the Bedfordshire facility has moved into that position. This makes this quite simply the greatest achievement of my term as PCC and the one of which I am proudest.”

Deputy Chief Constable Trevor Rodenhurst told the audience: “If a member of my own family was a victim of this sort of terrible crime, that can happen to anyone, I’d like to think that they would feel supported by coming to this building. It’s taken a huge amount of work and partners working together to iron out all the competing needs but now it’s been achieved. Many people have been thanked but I’d like to say thank you to the Commissioner without whose focus and drive this may never have happened.”

The Bedfordshire SARC will become a base for some of Bedfordshire Police’s specialist rape and sexual crimes team, a visiting base for the DCC and the workplace for specially trained SARC staff, volunteers and forensic nursing staff. It includes two interview suites to allow police to interview those who have suffered sexual crime, if the victim wants this to happen. Victims can also be referred to the SARC by the Signpost Victim Support Hub on confidential Freephone 0800 0282 887 Monday-Saturday. Outreach teams will also use the unit for counselling.



Extra officers to be recruited after Bedfordshire public back plan to increase council tax precept

Bedfordshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, has announced that she is to back the recruitment of 156 new Police Constables after an increase in the police share of council tax which was approved by the county’s Police and Crime Panel on Tuesday (4 February 2020).

The panel approved the precept increase - £10 a year for a Band D home - or 84p per month - in order to achieve another £9.7m funding for Bedfordshire Police in 2020/21. It means the PCC can deliver on her promise she made when setting the budget last year of recruiting an additional 20 police officers by 2021, as part of a total of 156 PCs - of whom 36 are Bedfordshire’s share of the national uplift in 2020/21 and 100 are needed to replace leavers. (The core grant from Government also includes payment for 18 extra officers who were recruited in the financial year 2019/20 as the first part of the national uplift).

The Home Office had allowed Police and Crime Commissioners nationally to raise the precept without the need for consultation, however Bedfordshire’s OPCC issued a survey which saw 82 per cent of respondents supporting the proposed increase.

“I laid out my plans last year to increase the number of police officers in Bedfordshire, so I am delighted to now have the backing to make this a reality.

“As I have promised, I’m determined that the extra officers will be front line and visible to strengthen the police presence in our communities, so the people of Bedfordshire are directly contributing to making their towns and villages safer”, said Commissioner Holloway.

“I’m delighted that this latest budget continues my pledge to boost the front line of Bedfordshire – which has seen the force grow throughout my four years as Police and Crime Commissioner and means there is a proper plan in place to secure Bedfordshire Police’s future recruitment.

“I have overseen the implementation of Community Hubs across Bedfordshire and the introduction of a Neighbourhood Enforcement Team to tackle those key issues which matter to our residents. The further investment of effectively just 84p a month from every household will have a significant benefit to the county,” said the PCC.

The Home Office had previously given forces extra money to pay for inflation impacted costs such as pay, pensions and insurance.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is also expecting further good news from the Home Office imminently in relation to her application for a second Special Grant to help pay for the force’s response to gang, gun and knife crime. The PCC was previously given a £4.571m Special Grant for Bedfordshire Police for 2018/19 to pay for Boson, allowing it to be doubled with a permanent unit in the north as well as the south of the county.

Commissioner Holloway said: “As I’ve said before, continuing to fund the investment in policing through the council tax precept is simply not sustainable. Bedfordshire must be given funding which reflects the complex crime challenges it faces, rather than continually having to find alternative means to pay for this additional policing requirement through one-off payments or grants.”

Police and Crime Panel Chairman, Paul Cain, said: "At our meeting on 4 February the Police and Crime Panel welcomed and fully supported the commissioner's plans to deliver an increase in police numbers over the coming financial year, and to increase the council tax precept in line with the Government's guidelines. We fully support the ongoing drive to increase police numbers in Bedfordshire.

"However, the panel also strongly voiced their views that central Government simply cannot continue to ignore the central funding issues and their policy of repeatedly asking for the investment through council tax precept funding, and one-off grants. This situation is no longer tenable."



Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme

The Police and Crime Commissioner has a statutory duty to maintain an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme for Bedfordshire. Independent custody visiting is a well-established system whereby volunteers attend police stations to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The scheme offers protection and confidentiality to detainees and the police and provides reassurance to the wider community.

Beds OPCC has recruited four new ICVs which will begin training soon. We are still recruiting in Bedfordshire so if you are interested in becoming an ICV, please visit the Police and Crime Commissioner Website to complete an application form - <https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/independent-custody-visiting-bedfordshire>

ICV Quarter three data (Oct - Dec) 2019/2020

Total number of detainees through custody	Number of ICV visits	Total number of detainees in custody at time of ICV visits	Total number of detainees unavailable*	Number of detainees observed	Total number of detainees visited
2170	19	129	39	39	90

*for the number of detainees unavailable – detainees were either in interview, asleep, intoxicated or too high risk to be seen.

ICVs have reported on the following:

- Identifying detainees which need additional support within custody and asking the 'critical' questions to whether or not Appropriate Adults have been contacted or whether a Mental Health Assessment was required.
- Reported that staff were helpful
- Asking detainees whether or not they needed to notify family/friends of their detention
- ICVs are ensuring that female detainees are being allocated a female officer and hygiene pack is provided.
- ICVs observe the Health and Safety process whilst in Custody, ensuring detainees are safe.
- The OPCC are trying to recruit more ICVs via social media and Community Voluntary Service (CVS). ICVs have also attended IAG meetings to promote the scheme



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