



BUDGET SETTING

BACKGROUND

Each year, GMPA liaises with all the councils in Greater Manchester when deciding the amount of the police portion of the council tax bill (precept). By law, police forces are only allowed to increase the amount they ask people to pay by 5% each year and GMPA has in recent years traditionally set its budget at a level which represents a 5% increase in the police portion of the council tax bill. In 2008, it became apparent that a 5% increase would not provide enough cash to allow the Authority to increase investment in important areas of policing such as neighbourhood policing and priority neighbourhoods. The councils in Greater Manchester (represented by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) felt this could be addressed by increasing the budget over the next three years by 7.5% as opposed to 5%. They asked GMPA chairman Cllr Paul Murphy and the Authority's financial planners to look into this option.

GMPA ACTION

After exploring the proposal, GMPA developed a budget deal which represented the key features requested by AGMA - a three year deal with the police portion of the council tax bill increasing by 7.5% each year. This would allow continued investment in important areas including.

- Neighbourhood Policing
- Priority Neighbourhoods
- Tackling drug dealing in local communities
- Dealing with gang and gun crime
- Child protection issues
- Continued investment in new police buildings and properties (estates)

Conditions of the deal included the delivery of 104 extra police officer posts ring-fenced for neighbourhood policing, regular progress reports to AGMA about the delivery and performance of these extra officers. The Authority also agreed that GMPA would reduce the budget back to a level which represents a 5% increase in council tax levels if the extra officers were not delivered, effectively paying back the extra 2.5% collected.

AGMA leaders fully supported the budget deal and GMPA approved what is believed to be the first three year term budget ever approved by a police authority - usual practice is for precept levels to be set one year at a time. The cost of the deal to the average Band D household in 2008/2009 equated to an extra 17p per week.

OUTCOMES

The increases in the council tax bills in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 will only be a few extra pence a week but this extra money will help provide additional resources which will benefit everyone. The benefits include:

- The provision of 104 extra police officer posts restricted to Neighbourhood Policing Priority Neighbourhoods identified with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
- Further investments in neighbourhood policing and also the protection of vulnerable people.
- Initiatives to be planned and put in place on a sustainable basis rather than against a backdrop of funding uncertainty.
- A positive impact on anti-social behaviour in priority neighbourhoods and a reduction in volume crime levels.
- Increased satisfaction levels and confidence measures.