

Response from Hertfordshire County Council, received 13 October 2023

Consultation – Dacorum Borough Council, Local Council Tax Support scheme 2024/25

Thank you for your email of 26th September 2023 outlining proposed changes to Dacorum Borough Council's Local Council Tax Support scheme from April 2024.

I write to outline Hertfordshire County Council's strong objection to the proposal. The impact will be to reduce funding for services to residents by £411,000 next year, and then every year after that. A funding reduction of this scale will inevitably impact services. Given that spending on adult social care and children's services accounts for around two thirds of the total council spend, it is likely these services would be impacted (especially given that the proposals also impact the adult social care precept).

I note that your email included a link to the report submitted to Dacorum Borough Council's Cabinet meeting on 12 September 2023. I was surprised to see that the report made no reference to the significant financial impact on the County Council as a major preceptor, even though it would have been possible to estimate this from the proposal. I consider that this is a major omission of information necessary to enable the Cabinet to make a reasonable decision on the proposal.

In light of this I would request that this is made clear in any future DBC report in this matter, and that response is similarly included within further Dacorum Borough Council reports.

Response from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, received 13 November 2023

Re: Local council tax support scheme 2024/25 consultation

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation and for your responsiveness to our initial questions.

After reviewing the Cabinet report, I must express my strong objection to the proposed increase in local council tax support and its potential impact on policing in Hertfordshire. It is disappointing to note that the consultation appears to have taken place after the proposed policy change has been presented to your Cabinet on 12 September 2023.

Like our county and district council partners, Hertfordshire Police is facing significant financial challenges in both the present and the future. Any reduction in funding, however small, will place further strain on the Constabulary's ability to maintain its current officer levels and deliver essential services to the people of Hertfordshire.

As public safety remains one of my top priorities, it is imperative that I ensure that our Constabulary has the necessary resources to protect and serve our community effectively. A decrease in funding for policing could lead to adverse consequences, including increased response times, insufficient resources to address issues like anti-social behaviour and domestic violence; and challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced police officers.

While I acknowledge the importance of responsible fiscal management, the planned reduction in police funding raises significant concerns and therefore I urge Dacorum to reconsider its proposed policy changes.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to hearing about the actions taken to address these concerns.