

Budget Consultation Summary Report February 2019

As set out in section 96 of the Police Act 1996, as amended by section 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the PCC must obtain the views of the local community on the proposed expenditure (including capital expenditure) in the financial year ahead of the financial year to which the proposed expenditure relates.

Public consultation is undertaken on an ongoing basis by the Police and Crime Commissioner. In addition, and specifically in relation to the council tax precept, consultation is undertaken via an independently facilitated event and through an online survey on the PCC's website. The results of the consultation are considered by the Police and Crime Commissioner before deciding the proposed council tax precept.

The public consultation activity on the precept increase has had three distinct elements:

- i) An online consultation, which saw 5,961 people submit responses (the largest number of responses ever received by the Office to a consultation).
- ii) A YouGov survey of 500 demographically weighted respondents across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- iii) A face to face consultation event held on the 12th January; there were two events, one in Basingstoke and one in Netley. These were attended by 98 demographically representative individuals.

The outcome from each individual element of the consultation, and the overall collective outcome shows that there is significant support for a precept increase of up to £24 or more.

The overall survey results are statistically relevant, and show that 76.38% of respondents to the question on the level of precept increase supported an increase of up to or more than £24, and further details are set out in this report.

Online Survey

The online survey went live and was promoted to the public from 14 December 2018. As at the close of consultation on the 12 January 2019, 5,961 residents from across the Hampshire Policing area had fed back their views by completing the online survey.

From the total number of 5,961 responses, 5,908 individuals responded to the specific question:

'Would you support an increase in Council Tax to support local Policing?'

Of those responding:

- 74% said they would support an increase in council tax
- 26% said they would not support an increase in council tax

The online survey then asked:

‘How much more would you be willing to contribute through your council tax next year if meeting policing demands required a further uplift to keep communities Safer’

Respondents who answered this question were given the following choices:

- up to £12 per annum
- up to £24 per annum
- more than £24 per annum

The results show that 77.2% of respondents to this question would be willing to pay up to or more than £24 per annum more in their council tax:

The precept rise residents would be willing to pay	Number of respondents Agreeing	% of respondents
Up to £12 per year	1,024	22.80%
Up to £24 per year	2,174	48.50%
More than £24 per year	1,288	28.70%
TOTAL	4,486	100%

YouGov Survey

An additional survey of 500 respondents was undertaken through YouGov. The survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov panel. The responding sample is weighted to ensure responses are fully representative from across the 14 districts.

The outcome from this survey was that:

- 67% of respondents said they would like to see increased funding go to policing
- of the 67% who would pay more council tax for policing 60% would pay £24 and over
- the top three areas where respondents would prioritise a funding increase are:
 - investment in crime prevention (45%)
 - tackling violent crimes (42%)
 - addressing anti-social behaviour (37%)

Face to Face Consultation Events

The independently facilitated face to face consultation events were held on Saturday 12 January 2019 in Basingstoke and Netley. In total 94 people attended the consultation events.

Attendees were a randomly recruited to be a representative cross-section of the general public. This was done by post and with follow-up random-digit telephone dialling from a Social Research Call Centre. A cross-section of participants were selected by gender, age, working status, ethnic group, limiting illness or disability, household composition and geographical area.

These events allowed residents to be briefed by both the PCC and the Chief Constable on:

- the increasing and changing nature of the crimes the Constabulary has to deal with
- how the existing budget is spent
- the rationale behind the proposal to increase the Band D precept by £24, including setting out the consequences of setting a lower precept increase
- the investment in Policing which the £24 will allow

From the feedback responses (based on 83 responses using interactive voting) more than half (58%) were in favour of a precept increase.

In terms of the level of precept increase, 56% (from 80 responses) supported a precept of £24 per annum. The presentations were followed by independently facilitated focus groups, to allow attendees to give more detailed thoughts on the proposals.

Focus Groups

All four discussion groups at Basingstoke accepted the need for a £24 (Band D) council tax increase in the coming financial year. Participants' main reasons for doing so were that:

- The police service is under pressure in the context of: reduced central government funding; an unfair allocations formula; a lower than average precept in Hampshire; rising crime; public expectations for a highly responsive service; and its own ambitions to improve;
- The efficiencies already achieved mean they are paying for a service that is cost-effective and good value for money and they would be prepared to pay more to maintain it.

Nonetheless, there was a strong sense that the increase is justified if (and *only if*) it leads to genuine improvement in crime detection, prosecution, deterrence and service to the public - in other words, if it succeeds in making people safer. Moreover, participants argued that the OPCC must take account of the fact even this increase will adversely affect many household incomes and budgets in the context of wage freezes, cost of living increases and especially any increases to other council tax precepts (i.e. for councils and the fire and rescue service).

Acceptance of the proposed £24 Band D precept increase was not as pronounced in Southampton, with only one of the five discussion groups expressing significant support for it (eight of the ten participants were in favour for the reasons outlined above, with two 'don't knows'). In the other four groups, people generally accepted the increase 'will happen' and they would 'have to' pay more.

Many participants' reluctance to endorse the proposed increase stemmed from two main worries: concern about the likely total council tax increases (by all authorities) and their dislike of the shift from central government funding to local taxation. Indeed, a few participants said that if residents continue to accept council tax rises, they are essentially sanctioning this shift.

Focus Groups - Policing Priorities

As the most visible and frequently accessed aspects of policing in general, it is perhaps unsurprising that response policing and neighbourhood policing were considered among the top priority spending areas at Basingstoke. There was also, though, strong support for the prevention agenda among participants, and especially for preventing re-offending by encouraging offenders to change their behaviour. Conversely, the least support was for those policing areas (specialist functions) and crimes (so-called 'hidden crimes') that are least visible to people on a day-to-day basis, though a slightly higher number gave priority to tackling domestic abuse, perhaps as the better known 'hidden crime'.

	Number of times raised
<u>Response Policing</u> - officers responding to immediate, emergency and priority incidents via 999 calls	25
<u>Neighbourhood Policing</u> - local police officers and PCSOs	25
<u>Preventing re-offending</u> - by encouraging offenders to change their behaviour (through programmes by agencies such the Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams)	25
<u>Criminal Justice</u> - police custody, managing case files, bringing offenders to justice, victim and witness care, managing offenders	13
<u>Crime prevention</u> - providing crime/safety advice and information, like marking valuable property and advice on securing property	10
<u>Roads policing</u> - investigating serious road traffic incidents, speed enforcement, patrolling motorways and key trunk roads	10
<u>Domestic abuse</u> – violence, abuse, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation etc.	8
<u>Specialist Operations</u> (dogs, firearms and marine unit) - to counter organised crime and terrorism, police major events etc.	4
<u>Hate crime</u> – against LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual) people, people with disabilities, people of different races/religions	4
<u>Cyber-crime and fraud</u>	2
<u>Human trafficking/modern slavery</u>	0

Neighbourhood policing, response policing and preventing re-offending were again the top three priority spending areas at Southampton, though in a slightly different order, with the former coming top and preventing reoffending placing above response policing (though the differences in the number of times all three were raised are marginal, so they can be treated as being of more or less equal importance to participants). The prevention agenda was even more keenly supported in the south, with crime prevention placing fourth in the list of priorities, followed by criminal justice and tackling domestic abuse. The latter especially was given much more priority than in the north.

	Number of times raised
<u>Neighbourhood Policing</u> - local police officers and PCSOs	32
<u>Preventing re-offending</u> - encouraging offenders to change their behaviour (through programmes by agencies such the Probation	31
<u>Response Policing</u> - officers responding to emergency and priority incidents via 999	30
<u>Crime prevention</u> - providing crime/safety advice and information, like marking valuable property and advice on securing property	23
<u>Domestic abuse</u> – violence, abuse, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation etc	15
<u>Criminal Justice</u> - police custody, managing case files, bringing offenders to justice, victim and witness care, managing offenders	15
<u>Roads policing</u> - investigating serious road traffic incidents, speed enforcement, patrolling motorways and key trunk roads	13
<u>Cyber-crime and fraud</u>	7
<u>Specialist Operations</u> (dogs, firearms and marine unit) - to counter organised crime and terrorism, police major events etc.	4
<u>Hate crime</u> – against LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual) people, people with disabilities, people of different races/religions	3
<u>Human trafficking/modern slavery</u>	3

Focus Groups- Local Crime and Policing Trends

When asked to record the three main types of crime that make them feel unsafe in their local areas, the table below shows that participants at the Basingstoke event most commonly cited theft (including burglary and vehicle crime), followed by road safety, drug and alcohol problems and rural crime.

Some interesting points to note were that four of the five people who considered sexual assault/abuse to be an issue were from Andover; and drug and alcohol problems were raised chiefly by those from Basingstoke, Andover and Farnborough.

	Number of times raised
Theft (including burglary and vehicle crime)	21
Road safety (e.g. speeding)	14
Drug and alcohol problems	12
Rural crime (i.e. incidents that occur in rural areas, e.g. affecting farmhouses, agriculture machinery/ tools, livestock,	11
Noise and disturbance (ASB)	9
Financial crime (e.g. fraud, theft, scams, etc.)	7

Violent crimes (including assault and robbery)	7
Cyber crime (i.e. crimes carried out online)	6
Sexual assault/abuse	5
Crimes against vulnerable people (including physical, coercive and exploitative crimes)	4
Vandalism and graffiti (ASB)	3
Hate crime (i.e. a crime motivated by racial, sexual, or other	3
Business crime (i.e. any crime affecting businesses, including cybercrime)	2
Child sexual exploitation	2
No crime in particular makes me feel unsafe in my local neighbourhood	2
Domestic abuse	1
Modern slavery/human trafficking	1
Marine crime (e.g. criminal damage, theft from or of marine vessels etc.)	0
Knife crime	0

The types of crime that most make people feel unsafe in their local areas were the same in the Southampton meeting as in Basingstoke, though drug and alcohol problems were placed above road safety. There were some notable differences among the other crime types, though: violent crime was placed higher, as were vandalism and graffiti, domestic abuse and business crime.

Some interesting points were that violent crime (including knife crime) was considered an issue mostly by residents of Southampton and its suburbs; vandalism and graffiti were cited mainly by residents of Southampton, Portsmouth and Fareham; and domestic abuse and sexual abuse/assault were noted most frequently by residents of the two cities. Moreover, most of those who said no crime in particular makes them feel unsafe in their local neighbourhood live on the Isle of Wight.

	Number of times raised
Theft (including burglary and vehicle crime)	30
Drug and alcohol problems	26
Road safety (e.g. speeding)	24
Violent crimes (including assault and robbery)	11
No crime in particular makes me feel unsafe in my local neighbourhood	10
Rural crime (i.e. incidents that occur in rural areas, e.g. affecting farmhouses, agriculture machinery/ tools, livestock, etc.)	9
Noise and disturbance (ASB)	9
Vandalism and graffiti (ASB)	8
Domestic abuse	6
Business crime (i.e. any crime affecting businesses, including cybercrime)	5
Sexual assault/abuse	4
Hate crime (i.e. a crime motivated by racial, sexual, or other prejudice)	4
Financial crime (e.g. fraud, theft, scams, etc.)	3
Cyber crime (i.e. crimes carried out online)	3
Crimes against vulnerable people (including physical, coercive and exploitative crimes)	3
Knife crime	2
Child sexual exploitation	1
Modern slavery/human trafficking	1
Marine crime (e.g. criminal damage, theft from or of marine vessels etc.)	0

End of report

If you have any questions on the council tax precept consultation, please email us at opcc.comms@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

If you would like to be kept up to date and alerted to future consultations, please register your details at: <http://eepurl.com/dxAwkn>