

AGENDA

Meeting:	Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel
Place:	Council Chamber - Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15 1ER
Date:	Thursday 8 February 2024
Time:	<u>10.30 am</u>

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Matt Hitch of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, email matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk

Membership:

Cllr Steve Bucknell, Wiltshire Council (Chairman)
Cllr Stanka Adamcova, Swindon Borough Council (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Sudha Sri Nukana, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Vijay Manro, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Abdul Amin, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Ross Henning, Wiltshire Council
Cllr George Jeans, Wiltshire Council
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Wiltshire Council
Cllr Tony Pickernell, Wiltshire Council
Cllr James Sheppard, Wiltshire Council
Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall, Wiltshire Council
Denisa Ahmeti (Co-opted Member)
Louise Williams (Co-opted Member)

Substitutes:

Cllr Adrian Foster, Wiltshire Council	Cllr Caroline Thomas, Wiltshire Council
Cllr Ernie Clark, Wiltshire Council	Cllr Graham Wright, Wiltshire Council
Cllr Sarah Gibson, Wiltshire Council	Cllr Matthew Vallender, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Jon Hubbard, Wiltshire Council	Cllr Claire Crilly, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Gordon King, Wiltshire Council	Cllr Jo Morris, Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Dominic Muns, Wiltshire Council	
Cllr Dr Nick Murry, Wiltshire Council	
Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney, Wiltshire Council	

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Public Participation

Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Protocol 12 of Wiltshire Council's Constitution](#)

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

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AGENDA

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **Minutes and Matters Arising** (*Pages 5 - 12*)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 as a true and correct record.

3 **Declarations of interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive announcements through the Chairman.

5 **Public Participation**

The Panel welcomes contributions from members of the public.

Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public received in accordance with the Panel's constitution.

Please note that questions must relate to the [responsibilities and functions](#) of the Panel and must not relate directly to operational policing matters.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Thursday 1 February** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response, questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Monday 5 February**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on Wiltshire Council's website.

6 **Precept Public Consultation Report** (*Pages 13 - 18*)

To consider the report on the findings of the public consultation.

7 **Police and Crime Commissioner's Budget and Precept Proposals 2024/25**
(*Pages 19 - 24*)

The Panel will be asked to approve the Police and Crime Commissioner's Precept proposals for the forthcoming financial year.

8 **Communications**

To receive an update on how the Police and Crime Panel can improve its communications with the wider public.

9 **Forward Work Plan** (*Pages 25 - 26*)

To note the forward work plan.

10 **Any Other Business**

An opportunity for members to raise any other matters, or questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner.

11 **Future Meeting Dates**

To note the future meeting dates below:

- Thursday 7 March 2024, 10:30am, Council Chamber, County Hall
- Thursday 27 June 2024, 10:30am, The Enterprise Network, Salisbury
- Thursday 26 September 2024, 1:30pm
- Thursday 14 November 2024, 10:30am

Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel

MINUTES OF THE WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2024 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Steve Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Stanka Adamcova (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Sudha Sri Nukana, Cllr Vijay Manro, Cllr Abdul Amin, Cllr Ross Henning, Cllr George Jeans, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tony Pickernell and Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall

Also Present:

Philip Wilkinson OBE, MPhil – Police and Crime Commissioner
Naji Darwish – Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, OPCC
Clive Barker – Chief Financial Officer, OPCC
Matt Hitch – Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

- Louise Williams
- Denisa Ahmeti

It was noted that Swindon Borough Council would be appointing substitute members at their Full Council meeting later in the day.

2 Minutes and Matters Arising

On the proposal of Cllr Tony Pickernell, seconded by Cllr Vijay Manro, it was resolved to make the:

Decision:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that, on 10 January, the Home Affairs Select Committee had heard further evidence for their inquiry reviewing the impact of

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) over the past decade. He reminded the Panel that a [link](#) to watch the hearing had been circulated to them. He reported that the Home Affairs Select Committee would aim to produce its report in advance of the PCC elections in May 2024.

Cllr Ross Henning stated that he had watched the hearing and was interested to note the discussions relating to whether there would be a benefit in expanding the PCC's role to include fire, probation and youth services.

For the benefit of members not able to attend the previous meeting, the Chairman reminded the Panel that the PCC's Chief Financial Officer, Clive Barker, would be retiring. Clive's role would be filled on an interim basis until such time that a permanent appointment could be made. It was not the intention to hold a hearing to confirm the interim appointment. However, it was noted that when the Panel was informed of the PCC's preferred candidate to fill the role on a permanent basis, then they would hold a confirmation hearing. The Chairman reiterated that the Panel did not have the ability to veto the appointment but would be invited to make a recommendation.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman then wished Clive a very happy retirement.

5 **Public Participation**

The Chairman referred the Panel to the questions submitted by Mr Chris Caswill and the written responses provided in Agenda Supplement 2.

6 **Proposed PCC Budget 2024/25 and Mid Term Financial Strategy**

Clive Barker, the Chief Financial Officer in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office (OPCC) delivered a presentation about the proposed budget for the forthcoming financial year as well as the mid-term financial strategy. The Chief Financial Officer gave an overview of the national and local context in which the proposals had been made, before outlining the different areas of expenditure and some of the key pressures facing the budget. He gave details about the different sources of revenue available to Wiltshire Police and identified a number of efficiency savings that had been proposed. The implications of adopting alternative financial strategies on Wiltshire Police were also highlighted to give the Panel an informed view about the choices available and why they were advocating a £13 increase in the precept on the average Band D property in 2024/25. During the presentation, key points included:

- Funding came primarily through a central grant from the Home Office and the local council tax precept.
- Whilst there had been a significant increase in the central grant from the Home Office, the majority of the uplift was to fund the nationally agreed seven percent pay rise as well as a 3.2 percent increase in police officer pension costs. The real increase after these costs was 1.9 percent, approximately £1.5 million.

- Increasing the precept on the average Band D property would raise an additional £3.5 million in funding for the OPCC.
- Outside London, police forces in England and Wales were expected to each achieve between £2 million and £7 million in efficiency savings.
- Wiltshire had the second worst funded PCC per head of population, £203.45 per person compared to an average of £230.68. If funded at the average rate, Wiltshire would have an additional £20.3 million in funding.
- Wiltshire had a lower rate of council tax than other regional forces and, even with a £13 increase on the average Band D property, it would still be the lowest in South West England. All other forces in the region were expecting to advocate a £13 increase, with the possible exceptions of Avon & Somerset and Devon & Cornwall.
- There was predicted to be a lower than expected council tax base increase in 2024/25 which would impact on the medium term financial strategy. However, it was possible that this would be revised up from 0.6 percent.
- The government's comprehensive spending review for 2025/26 was 'cash flat' suggesting a requirement to achieve 2.3 percent in efficiency savings for non-protected departments, such as the Home Office. Therefore, the medium-term financial strategy anticipated that there would be a greater reliance on precept increases to meet cost pressures.
- The removal of the capital grant in 2023/23 meant that there would be a need to transfer some revenue spending to spend on capital projects.
- The PCC was prioritising funding areas that make essential improvements to the force, such as performance management. Emphasis was being put on making the most of equipment available to improve efficiency, including by employing three new digital advisers.
- To fund these improvements, as well as capital costs and unavoidable costs, such as inflation, there would be a need to make £2.462 million in efficiencies in 2024/25.
- The Chief Constable had asked her staff to identify medium and low risk areas to make efficiency savings of around five percent in her budget. In addition, around £1.309 million in savings had been identified in corporate services, including lower than predicted fuel costs.
- The budget proposals would not see a reduction in the number of police officers or police community support officers.
- If the precept for the average Band D property were to increase by £10, rather than £13, the force would have to find £3.245 million in efficiency savings rather than £2.462 million. If there was no increase in the precept, then the Chief Constable would have to find savings of just under £6 million.
- The OPCC would receive a series of grants, totalling £3.712 million in 2024/25, which would present a good opportunity to proactively tackle underlying issues. Examples included the £500,000 Immediate Justice Fund and £1 million from the Hot Spot Policing Fund. Clarity was still being sought from the Home Office about what some of the funding could be targeted towards.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The Panel thanks the Chief Financial Officer for his detailed report and wished him well for his retirement.
- In relation to the efficiency savings, it was confirmed that approximately £700,000 in low risk non-corporate savings had been identified.
- It was noted that the majority of low risk savings identified, as shown in paragraph 35 of the budget report, were from ACC Crime. It was clarified that ACC Crime excluded the neighbourhood and response police teams but included other investigative work and other areas such as public protection and criminal justice. Although he did not have the exact figures to hand, the Chief Financial Officer believed that the proposed savings in ACC Crime equated to approximately two percent of the total ACC Crime budget.
- When pressed about how concerned the OPCC were about the savings, the Chief Financial Officer reassured that Panel that no single area had been singled out and the available options had been carefully considered by the Chief Officer team. Some planned increases in expenditure had been withdrawn. Whilst there were risks in implementing some of the planned savings, there was less concern about the low risk areas.
- The PCC spoke about the importance of adopting a contextual approach to policing. He emphasised that investment in neighbourhood policing was a form of early intervention. Neighbourhood teams could often stop issues escalating and negate the requirement for more costly investigations downstream.
- The Panel welcomed the that a clear process had been utilised to identify savings and that they were linked to a risk assessment. They sought details on how the impact on Wiltshire Police as a whole, as well as individual departments had been considered. In response, the PCC explained that those considerations had been made and the Chief Constable had reformed the management in Wiltshire Police to make it more joined up and to improve accountability.
- It was acknowledged that the prescriptive nature of the grant funding model did make it difficult to commit to long term projects when there were conditions that the money had to be spent on specific priorities within certain timeframes. However, the PCC stated that he was committed to making the most of the grant funding and it had empowered his office. The OPCC had played a convening role with partners to make sure that grants were spent cost effectively.
- It was asked whether certain grants were so prescriptive that they could end up creating additional costs in setting up new systems. The PCC stated that he had built up the capacity of the OPCC in order to minimise that risk.
- When asked what he was doing to apply pressure on the government to revise the police funding formula, the PCC noted that he had lobbied local MPs including the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury, John

Glen. Changes to funding were being considered by the government but it was not possible to put any timescales on changes.

- The Panel stressed that cost-of-living challenges of residents needed to be taken into account when setting the precept. It was highlighted that a higher proportion of residents in the Wiltshire Council area were receiving a council tax rebate, due to rising costs, than in previous years. In reply, the PCC emphasised that he recognised the economic hardship faced by many residents and was sympathetic to cost pressures. He noted that the increase would equate to £1.09 per month for a Band D property.
- As the PCC was asking for additional funding, the Panel asked for an update on when Wiltshire Police would get out of special measures. The PCC reported that the next PEEL inspection was due in March 2024 and he was confident that Wiltshire Police had made tangible improvements across all four priority areas in his Crime Plan, so would come out of special measures.
- It was confirmed that capital receipts from the sale of property would go back to the OPCC through the Capital Financing Strategy.
- Details were sought about the interest rates that the OPCC would pay on borrowing for long term capital investment, including projects such as the southern policing hub. The Chief Financial Officer reported that they needed to borrow approximately £3 million to balance the capital budget for the current financial year. As interest rates were projected to fall later in the year, to reduce interest costs, a process of internal borrowing was employed, where general reserve funds were used on a short-term basis until interest rates fell. It was emphasised that interest rates were projected to fall to four percent by December 2024 and internal borrowing would only be used on a limited basis.
- Asked about when the additional funding would lead to the public feeling safer, the PCC spoke about the need to sustain improvements to build trust in the longer term.
- When queried about whether he had concerns about the withdrawal of Capital Grant funding by the Home Office and whether he had lobbied government about the issue, the PCC confirmed that he had held discussions with the Home Office and Treasury. He had written a joint letter alongside other PCCs representing rural areas about the police funding formula.
- It was observed that Wiltshire had the second lowest crime rate in the country and was also the second worst funded force in the country. The PCC was then asked for his views on the balance between funding and the level of crime committed. In response, the PCC stressed that crime figures should be treated with caution and believed that an increase in confidence in the force would lead to an increase in crime reporting in rural areas. He observed that if he could demonstrate that improved performance was contributing to better reporting of crime then it may strengthen his case for better funding from central government.
- When pressed about the impact that a reduction in backroom staff would have on frontline policing and what the timeline was for neighbourhood policing to improve, the PCC emphasised that he was pushing more

neighbourhood officers on the frontline. A new operating model had been introduced the previous week to create better accountability.

- It was confirmed that the response times to both 999 and 111 calls had improved significantly over the past three months.
- Details were sought about the increase in precept across different council tax bands of property. It was confirmed that the increase would be £8.67 for a Band A property and £26 for a Band H property.

Cllr Abdul Amin left the meeting at 12:00pm.

On the proposal of Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, seconded by Cllr Vijay Manro, it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To note the reports on the draft budget settlement and mid term financial strategy.

7 The Police and Crime Commissioner's Precept Consultation Process

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Philip Wilkinson, OBE, MPhil, referred the Panel to the report on pages 53 to 56 of Agenda Supplement 1. He explained that his office had been conducting a consultation on the proposed budget for Wiltshire Police, including the proposed precept increase in 2024/25. As of the previous day, 2,254 responses to the consultation had been received. 86 percent of those that took part stated that they would welcome more investment into Wiltshire Police and 69 percent said they that they would support an increase in the precept of between £10 and £20. The PCC felt that the statistics showed widespread support for the police and emphasised the need to continue to build trust with the public. During the discussion, points included:

- The Panel welcomed the report on the consultation so far.
- The consultation would be open until 29 January.
- The survey had included responses from a wide cross section of society, with questionnaires given out at supermarkets, Swindon Football Club and Bath Rugby.
- A number of free social media posts had reached around 2,500 people each.
- Some members of the Panel suggested that the high level of support for increased funding reflected the need for improved policing.
- The PCC welcomed suggestions about how the consultation could be improved.

On the proposal of Cllr Sudha Sri Nukana, seconded by Cllr Vijay Manro, it was resolved to make the:

Decision

To note the report on the consultation process with Wiltshire and Swindon residents so far.

8 Communications

The Chairman reported that the recording of the Panel's previous meeting had been viewed on [YouTube](#) around 50 times and encouraged members to share their videos.

Reflecting on public feedback about the publication of the Panel's agendas, the Panel requested that they be published as soon as possible.

The Democratic Services Officer explained that Wiltshire Council would work together with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to try to ensure that agendas were published in a timely manner. He also noted that public participation deadlines had recently been extended and explained the statutory requirements for agenda publication outlined in Protocol 12 and Part 5 of Wiltshire Council's constitution.

The Chief Executive of the Office of the OPCC, Naji Darwish, emphasised that it was important for the papers to contain as up to date as possible and that papers were almost always provided in line with the processes agreed between Wiltshire Council and the OPCC. He also noted that the information contained in the reports was often compiled from multiple sources, including the constabulary and partner agencies, so it would be very difficult for them to be published earlier given their governance cycle.

When asked for an update on the progress made towards improving the part of the Wiltshire Council's website about the Panel, the Chairman noted that the text had been reviewed to make sure that it was up to date and all of the Panel's agendas and minutes were listed.

9 Forward Work Plan

The Panel noted the forward work plan. They asked to be kept updated on the improvements being put in place following historic failures relating to Clare's Law disclosures.

10 Any Other Business

In response to a query about how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was liaising with the Criminal Prosecution Service to reduce delays, the PCC stated that he chaired the Criminal Justice Board and they were working to identify disconnects in the system to reduce delays.

When asked whether it might be possible for members of the Panel to go out on patrol with the police, to get a greater insight into their work, the PCC noted that this could potentially be arranged.

The PCC provided an update on the investigation into historic failures relating to the Clare's Law disclosure scheme, which allows individuals to request information about their partner's history of abusive behaviour. The PCC stressed the importance of ensuring that the public had the confidence to come forward. He noted that domestic abuse awareness training was taking place and that historic incidents were being investigated by the Independent Office of Police Conduct. He also underlined that the Chief Constable and he were taking the situation extremely seriously and were determined to ensure that failures were not repeated.

11 **Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel will be on Thursday 8 February 2024 at 10:30am in the Council Chamber at Monkton Park.

Future meeting dates were confirmed as:

- Thursday 8 February 2024, 10:30am – Council Chamber, Monkton Park
- Thursday 7 March 2024, 10:30am – Council Chamber, County Hall
- Thursday 27 June 2024, 10:30am – The Enterprise Network, Salisbury
- Thursday 26 September 2024, 1:30pm
- Thursday 14 November 2024, 10:30am

(Duration of meeting: 10.35 am - 12.35 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Matt Hitch of Democratic Services, direct line , e-mail matthew.hitch@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk



Agenda Item 6

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel
Date	8 February 2024
Report Title	PCC consultation on the policing precept 2024/25
Report presented by	Philip Wilkinson, Police and Crime Commissioner
Author	Emma Morton, Head of Communications and Engagement

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This paper provides the panel with a top-line summary of survey responses gathered via the 2024/25 budget consultation process, including a proposed precept increase, undertaken on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). It also provides a top-line analysis of the engagement received from Wiltshire and Swindon’s residents. Full survey analysis will now be carried out and published by the beginning of April 24 on my website.

2. Precept 2024/25 consultation and engagement

2.1 Consultation with the public on next year’s (2024/25) policing precept started on 5 Dec 2023 and ended at 3pm on 29 January 2024. The main mechanism was by using an online survey: Policing, Priorities and £s.

2.2 This is the third budget consultation undertaken since I became PCC with the approach taken by my office based around a considered communications and engagement plan, using in person engagement and online communication tools and channels to encourage as wide a response as possible.

2.3 I have always been extremely clear that residents should feel empowered to have their say on matters affecting their policing service. Setting the police precept and the police budget is one area where the public is able to have a voice which is actively listened to and is another avenue for me to be able to hear from local communities around issues they are facing and perceptions of policing.

2.4 In order to enable as many people as possible to be aware of the police budget and precept, and for the public to be able to give feedback on the proposed increase, the team used in-person consultation and engagement alongside a comprehensive digital and print plan of activity.

2.5 The main focus of this year’s consultation was to ensure as wide an awareness of the police budget-setting process, and precept increase, as well as obtaining statistical significance numbers of respondents to the survey.

3. Budget and Precept Survey

3.1 The survey was adapted this year in response to feedback from residents who wanted more space to voice their opinion on several aspects of policing. The survey was broadened as a result to include safety perception questions as well as open text boxes so that detailed feedback on aspects of police service could be included.

3.2 By using an online survey, we were able to create 'collector links' to be able to have key insights to which route was the most successful in terms of survey responses.

These included: staff / internal, Media, Web landing page, Social media – organic and paid, Community Messaging (community email system), Councillor Direct Mail Councillors and MP digital tool kit, Offline (events), OPCC Stakeholders and Commissioning Partners and Wiltshire Police social media and website.

3.3 An extensive social media campaign was active during the time the survey was live. The OPCC and PCC X, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn channels were used to engage with the different audiences of each platform. Static graphic posts were published and supported by short videos published as Meta stories. Each had a CTA (Call To Action) and linked to the survey for people to complete.

3.4 Other optimisation functions that were used to reach more local people were done including sharing the posts in high membership local community Facebook groups and replying to post messages where possible (this extends the reach of the post).

3.5 This year a combination of organic and paid-for social media advertising was carried out across Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and LinkedIn. Meta advertising was carried out generally for Wiltshire residents but with targeted posts for Swindon and South of County residents. This meant the budget survey had a total reach of 293,700 with 8,408 engagements: this includes reactions, comments, shares and clicks on the post.

3.6 Using the Community Messaging email system allowed us to reach an audience that may not be using social media, as well as an audience more likely to not only see our Precept 'content' but also are more likely to respond to the survey as they have voluntarily signed-up to receive emails from us. Six messages, tailored with different conversation points connected with budget and precept, were sent with roughly 6,000 per message opening the email.

3.7 In-person community engagements ensured visibility across Wiltshire and Swindon and allowed direct canvassing of people about the policing precept and encouraging survey responses. Schools, high footfall shopping centres and community groups were visited, including within the Swindon Hindu community and the Wiltshire Muslim community, to try and ensure as representative response as possible.

3.8 A total of 20 community engagements were carried out during December and January in places where the OPCC/ PCC may not have had a physical presence in the past. More than 1,500 people were reached in this way. Feedback from these engagements provided qualitative feedback for the OPCC and Wiltshire Police and clearly showed members of the public wanted to have a chance to participate but may not have been aware of how to engage in the past. More consideration to this type of engagement will be given for the next precept survey. Two further engagements at high footfall sporting events (Swindon Town FC home match and Bath Rugby home match) – circa 10k footfall – were also

attended by the OPCC engagement team. These provided high visibility for the survey.

3.9 The team also utilised traditional media coverage to secure 15 online or in print articles within all major Wiltshire and Swindon newspapers including: the Gazette and Herald, Salisbury Journal, Swindon Advertiser, White Horse News, Swindon Link, Wiltshire Times and Warminster Journal. Additional segments on BBC Radio Wiltshire, Greatest Hits Wiltshire and Heart were also broadcast.

3.10 A digital toolkit comprising of social media and web graphics, suggested copy and survey links were distributed to 450 contacts among Parish and town councils, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police and other OPCC stakeholders and partners.

4. Survey responses and results

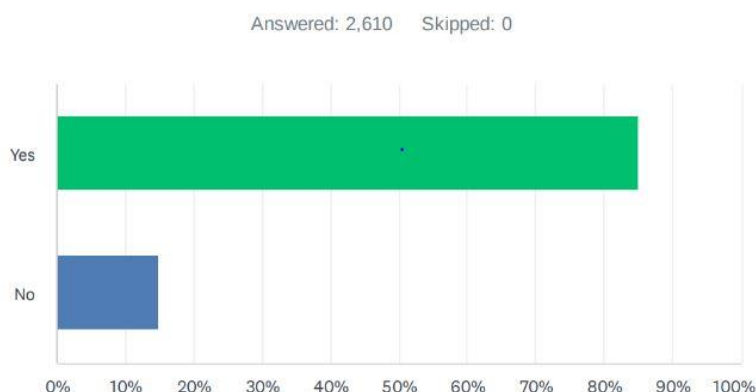
4.1 This year, the OPCC ran a more broadened survey which asked questions around possible precept increase, budget questions and feelings of safety and crime perception.

4.2 To encourage more people to take part in the survey this year, there was an option for people to skip through some of the more detailed questions. While this was the agreed approach taken this year, it has proved problematic ensuring statistical significance across all answers.

4.3 The 2024/25 budget survey: Policing, Priorities and £s recorded 2,610 responses during the period the survey was live and its campaign was active. This is a slight decrease of just over 100 response compared to numbers gathered last year.

4.3 Some of the top-line responses from the survey are below:

Would you like to see more investment to increase policing in your community?



4.5 Results clearly show a positive response from the public when asked if they would like to see more investment to increase policing in the community (85%). With 92% of respondents supporting this investment from government and 59% of people supporting the increase from taxpayers as part of the policing element of council tax.

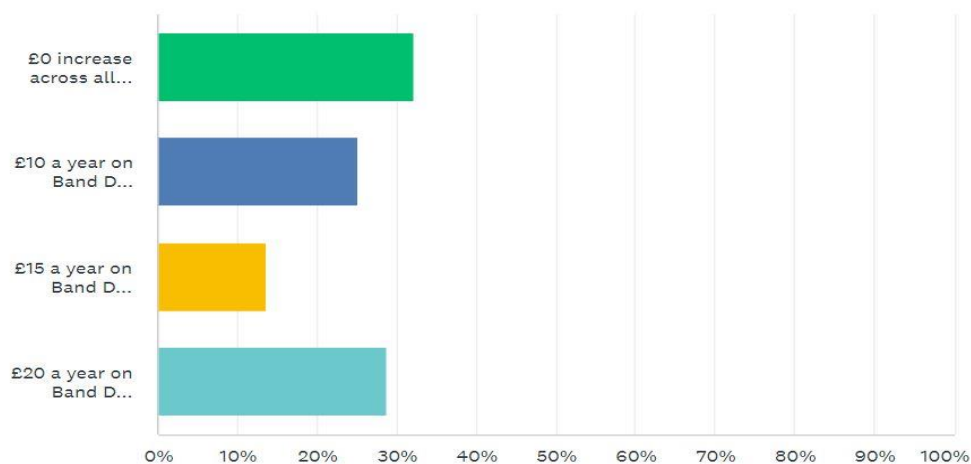
4.6 Through out the campaign information on the budget contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategy was clearly communicated. Details of what the precept had delivered in

the previous years formed part of the information package alongside a proposed increase of £13 per year, per Band D household, once this was available.

4.7 As show in the graph below, residents were specifically asked how much their household would be prepared to pay, per year, to invest in Wiltshire Police. 32% of people did not support any increase to the police element of council tax with 68% of respondents supporting an increase of between £10 and £20 per year, per Band D household: 29% supporting a £20 per year increase, 25% supporting a £10 per year increase and 14% supporting a £15 per year increase.

What would your household be prepared to pay?

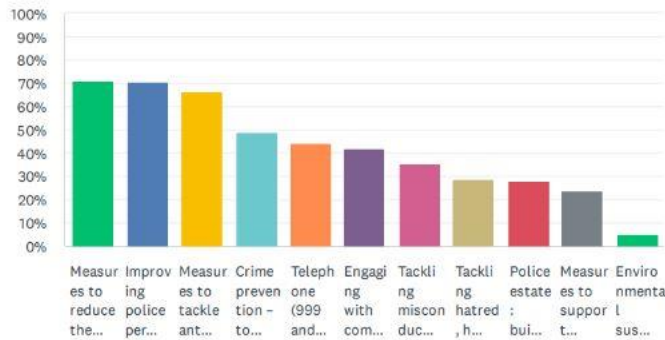
Answered: 2,146 Skipped: 464



4.8 Respondents were asked where future investment for policing in their communities should be prioritised. Measures to tackle repeat offenders and improving police performance gained the most traction, with reducing anti-social behaviour, and crime prevention, closely followed by investment in public contact facilities and community engagement.

Q5 Please select the areas you think you should have the most priority for future investment. Select a maximum of six from the list

Answered: 2,146 Skipped: 464

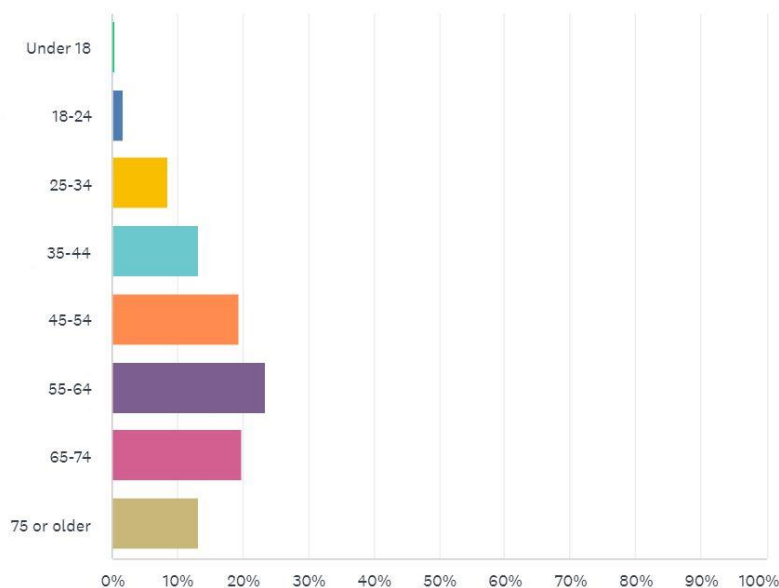


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Measures to reduce the number of people who commit crime repeatedly	71.02%	1,524
Improving police performance, more crimes detected and outcomes increased	70.36%	1,510
Measures to tackle anti-social behaviour	66.31%	1,423
Crime prevention – to stop people becoming victims of crime	48.93%	1,050
Telephone (999 and 101) online, police station and public contact facilities	44.22%	949
Engaging with communities	42.31%	908
Tackling misconduct and corruption in the police service	35.32%	758
Tackling hatred, hate crimes and misogyny	28.75%	617
Police estate: buildings, equipment and vehicles	27.87%	598
Measures to support victims of crime to cope and recover	23.67%	508
Environmental sustainability measures	5.27%	113
Total Respondents: 2,146		

4.9 From the graph below, you can see that 24% of respondents were aged under 44, 43% were aged 45-64, and 33% 65 and older – and 605 people chose to not answer the question.

What is your age?

Answered: 2,005 Skipped: 605



4.10 Of those people who completed the survey, 29% said they lived in the Swindon local authority level, with 71% attributing themselves to the Wiltshire local authority area. Of those respondents who answered: 54% were male, 44% were female and 2% preferred to self describe. From the graph below, you can see how respondents identified their ethnicity – despite actively targeting more diverse communities, numbers responding remained low, although visibility of the OPCC within different communities was welcomed.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	89.74%	1,784
White Irish	0.86%	17
White Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
Any other white background	2.31%	46
White and Black Caribbean	0.30%	6
White and Black African	0.15%	3
White and Asian	0.35%	7
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	0.50%	10
Indian	0.45%	9
Pakistani	0.10%	2
Bangladeshi	0.05%	1
Chinese	0.10%	2
Any other Asian background	0.10%	2
African	0.10%	2
Caribbean	0.10%	2
Any other Black /African / Caribbean background	0.00%	0
Arab	0.10%	2
Any other ethnic group	0.10%	2
Prefer not to say	3.62%	72
Any other background not covered (please specify)	0.96%	19

4.11 The survey also gave residents a chance to provide comments and feedback around policing experiences, community safety issues and crime perception. These have provided free text, qualitative, feedback from between 1,000 and 1,500 responses per question. These will now be fully assessed and fed back to the OPCC, and Wiltshire Police where necessary.

4.12 We will have a fuller analysis of the results, presented in an engaging manner, ready to be published on the PCC website by the beginning of April.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Panel members are asked to note the report and consultation process with Wiltshire and Swindon residents.

Agenda Item 7

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel
Date	8 February 2024
Report Title	Proposed Precept for 2024-25
Report presented by	Philip Wilkinson, Police and Crime Commissioner
Author	Clive Barker, Chief Finance Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This paper notifies the Panel of the precept I am proposing for 2024-25.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In January 2024 I presented to the Panel a paper which identified my initial thinking on the 2024-25 budget and my draft MTFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy). This paper identified that whilst central funding has increased by 1.9% (excluding Pension and Pay Award Grant) significant pressures exist on producing a balanced budget, with pay awards of 2.5% budgeted for and the full impact of the inflation which has occurred in the last year. This paper assumes the provisional settlement is confirmed without any changes.

CENTRAL GRANT

3. As detailed in the January paper the core grant announced for Wiltshire is an increase of £8.3m (10.5%). When the pay award and pension grant increase are removed this reduces to £1.5m (a 1.9% increase). Due to some grants being Specific Grants it is difficult to show this in a tabular format.
4. Part of the increase is provided via the Specific Police Officer Uplift grant and will only be received if police officer headcount is maintained to the government figure of 1,194. The Central Grant increase is expected to fund the 7% pay award set nationally in September 2023, however it has been identified that the cost of this is higher than the funding provided.

THE PRECEPT

5. Local funding is the sum of the precept plus collection funds. Collection funds hold any variances on precept collection in both collecting authorities (Wiltshire Council (WC) and Swindon Borough Council (SBC)). The collecting authorities must estimate the number of equivalent Band D properties, consider their local support scheme and the collection rate to arrive at a council tax base.
6. The figures provided by SBC have not changed since the MTFS. WC's base has marginally increased (by 235) and they have decided to delay changes to the Council Tax Reduction scheme which was going to have a negative impact of £0.123m to Wiltshire Police.

7. SBC are reporting a collection fund deficit of £0.229m. This is cancelled out by the surplus of £0.308m reported by WC leaving a net surplus of £0.079m. It is intended to use reserves of £0.216m to increase funding to £0.295m which is the standard amount allowed for in the MTFS.
8. The council tax base estimated by the councils is a consolidated increase of 0.7% leading to a total base of 272,769. This is lower than recent years and previous MTFS forecasts which allow for a 1% increase.
9. My initial paper identified that I was considering a £13 increase in precept. This is a 5.1% precept increase and would partially resolve issues arising from the limited grant settlement.
10. I am considering the whole funding position. Wiltshire has the 2nd lowest total funded area per head of population in the country (considering central grant, uplift grant and precept income). At £256.27 It has the lowest council tax in the South West (the 2023-24 regional average excluding Wiltshire is £275.87 for a Band D property). Based on this low funding position I am minded to increase the precept by £13 for a Band D property to £269.27.
11. This increase will assist in the long term funding of Wiltshire Police as it will impact the base for which all future precepts start from. I am campaigning for fairer funding for Wiltshire. To not increase the precept when the government has specifically given me the option to do this would be a missed opportunity. I have taken into consideration the feedback from the public consultation and I intend explaining to them the benefits that a £13 increase will deliver.

THE FUNDING AVAILABLE

12. The table below outlines the funding available with a £13 increase.

	2023-24	2024-25
Central Grant	£70.675m	£74.910m
Legacy Council Tax Grants	£5.235m	£5.235m
Core Grant	£75.910m	£80.145m
Uplift Specific Grant	£2.265m	£3.741m
Total Central Funding	£78.175m	£83.886m
Precept Income	£69.428m	£73.448m
Council Tax Collection Fund	£0.713m	£0.295m
Total Funding Received	£148.316m	£157.629m
Investment Income	£0.500m	£1.197m
Total Funding Available	£148.816m	£158.826m
<i>Exc. Specific Uplift Grant</i>	<i>£146.551m</i>	<i>£155.085m</i>

13. The investment income return shows an increase from 2023-24. The new forecast uses information from our Treasury advisors, Link. The calculation expects interest rates to reduce from 5.25% to 4.00% by March 2025.
14. Since 2021 the provision of specific grants to the PCC to commission services has increased. This trend continues and in 2024-25, the PCC is expected to receive the following funds. As these are specific grants with specific purpose and conditions, they are not included in the main funding reported. As they are time limited or are reviewed annually, we need to balance the risk of withdrawal, ensuring any long-term commitments are effectively managed to balance risk.

Ministry of Justice	Victims fund	£1.428m
Home Office	Serious Violence Duty	£0.249m
Home Office	Safer Streets Fund	£0.355m
Home Office	Hot Spot Policing Fund	£1.000m
Home Office	Immediate Justice Fund	£0.500m
Total		£3.532m

15. Since the MTFS the Home Office have reduced the grant for Safer Streets by £0.180m. This has occurred across all PCC's and is due to budget pressure with ministers reprioritising some spending decisions

FUNDING ALLOCATION

16. I am expected to meet my statutory responsibilities and commission services from the funding available. The table below identifies how I intend using these resources.

	2023-24	2024-25
OPCC Office Costs	£3.450m	£3.643m
OPCC Commissioning Costs	£1.805m	£1.906m
OPCC Capital Contribution	£2.437m	£2.730m
Corporate Services Costs	£34.828m	£36.881m
Chief Constable Allocation	£104.031m	£109.925m
	£146.551m	£155.085m

17. The 2024-25 allocation will allow for Police Staff and Police Officer Pay increases of 2.5%. When compared to the draft MTFS £0.100m additional has been allowed in Corporate Services for increased Estates running costs and £0.087m additional in the Chief Constable allocation for pay allowance increases impacted by the 7% pay award in September 2024.

CAPITAL

18. The Capital Financing Strategy is essential in helping me plan future investments in a viable manner. With depleting capital reserves and the removal of capital grants it is essential that I increase the revenue funding in this area (by direct revenue contributions or funding debt).

19. Within the draft MTFS a revised Capital Financing Strategy was reported. This shows a need to increase the revenue funding of capital spend from £2.4m to £9.7m by 2029-30 (this is dependent on the capital plans over the next 8 years). This will enable funding for a £19.5m Southern Policing Hub and £38.6m for Phase 1 of the HQ redevelopment in the future. This budget is in line with the strategy and is the next step in making capital plans viable into the future with the approach of smoothing the increase over the life of the assets.

IMPACT ON THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S BUDGET

20. The draft MTFS showed the budget requirement increase by a net £7.222m. Inflationary increases within this total £6.149m. This leaves £1.073m net other cost increases

21. The most significant increases surround improving the command structure. The budget allows for 2 Chief Superintendents, a Chief of Corporate Services, a Chief Inspector in the staff office

and a new Custody Inspector. All these posts are focused on improving outcomes and ensuring an appropriate performance culture is implemented in Wiltshire. The cost of this increase in command structure is £0.714m. As well as improving performance these posts will also be focused on delivering cost savings in the short to medium term in excess of this to help balance estimated funding gaps in the future.

22. The budget requirement is driven by risk (using the Organisation Risk Assessment (ORA) process) and unavoidable cost impacts. The largest investments are detailed below and have been considered as part of the new 3 to 5 year strategy for Wiltshire Police being developed under the Chief Constable.
23. £0.238m is included for the introduction of Targeted Variable Payments (TVPs) to Neighbourhood roles. These roles are considered essential in providing our communities with good quality services however the officers were paid less than many other officer roles, the use of TVPs will stop this imbalance.
24. Wiltshire are part of the South West Forensics Collaboration. With ISO standards requirements and the need to invest in ICT the costs are rising in this, to fund this £0.300m has been aside. A further £0.274m has been included for outsourcing forensics works where demand is exceeding capacity. With the investments in the unit it is expected that this requirement will be short to medium term.
25. Details of the other cost increases forecast for the Chief Constable are included in Appendix Bi of the MTFS
26. In the 2024-25 settlement the Home Office announced that there would be, up to, an extra 625 nationally funded officers. Wiltshire have expressed an interest in this however no guidance on how to apply has been received to date. Specific Uplift Grant will be paid of £3.741m if we have 1,194 headcount on the payroll at the 31 September 2024 and 31 March 2025, any shortfall will lead to a reduction in the grant received.
27. The plan is to employ 1,193 FTE. When considering part time staff, maternity, secondments, etc this should result in circa 1,240 headcount and ensure we receive the full grant.
28. The table below shows the changes on the budgeted Police Officer numbers. The directive from the Chief Constable and the PCC is that budgeted FTE should be maintained.

	Officers
Starting Position (Budget BFWD)	1,193
Budget finalisation	-5
Chief Superintendents	+2
Firearms Officers	+2
Custody Inspector	+1
Chief Inspector Staff Office	+1
Volume Crime Team Inspectors	+2
PC Posts realigned	-3
Total Officers Budgeted	1,193

SAVINGS

29. The MTFS work identified that across the group savings of £2.426m were required to balance the budget with a £13 increase.

30. The Chief Constable has requested all Directorate holders to review their areas and develop options for savings, prioritising them (low, medium, and high risk). The settlement has required the Chief Constable to accept all the low-risk options provided and a number of the medium risk options. The current position shown in the table below, provides £0.132m excess, this allows a small amount of flexibility which is welcomed noting the inflationary increases which have to be funded.

Directorate	Low risk	Medium Risk	Total
CC	£0.024m	£0.015m	£0.039m
Deputy CC	-	£0.074m	£0.074m
Corp Comm	£0.009m	£0.043m	£0.052m
ACC Local	£0.038m	£0.179m	£0.217m
ACC Crime	£0.522m	£0.020m	£0.542m
ACO Finance & Fac	£0.121m	£0.144m	£0.265m
ACO People	£0.046m	£0.014m	£0.060m
Corporate Savings			£1.309m
Total Savings			£2.558m
Requirement			£2.426m
Excess			£0.132m

31. This will result in the removal of 19 Police Staff posts. The growth recommended will see 21 new posts so there is little change in total Police staff posts with a budget of 1084 FTE.

RISK

32. The proposed budget shows a significant increase in funding. The increase has been provided to fund nationally agreed pay and pension costs. This could lead to an expectation of increased services and low precept increases, this however is not possible when the cost increases are taken into account.

33. It should be noted that if the opportunity to increase the base budget is not taken it can never be recovered and will impact the base budget for the long term. A below £13 increase is likely to widen the funding gap between Wiltshire and other South West Forces.

34. The need to invest via the ORA and the agreement on which savings should be accepted all consider risk. This approach should minimise risk to communities.

35. It should be noted that at the time of writing this is a provisional central grant settlement and could change.

36. Reserves exist to help manage risk. The review of reserves, as part of the MTFS, provides me assurance that overall these are adequate.

LEGAL

37. I am required to receive advice from my Chief Financial Officer surrounding the budget and my reserves. The Chief Financial Officer is content that with a £13 increase that my budget and the Chief Constable's budget are sound and deliverable. The Chief Financial Officer has also confirmed to me that he believes my reserves are adequate to manage risk.

RECOMMENDATION

38. After carrying out the necessary consultation I am minded to set a precept of £73.448m. This will require council tax to be set on all property bands based at £269.27 for a Band D property. This represents a £13 (5.1%) increase on the 2023-24 level.



Police and Crime Panel Forward Work Plan – 2024

Please note: this is a working document which is subject to change

Date	Location	Provisional Agenda Items
Thursday 7 March 2024 10:30am-1pm	Council Chamber, County Hall, Trowbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCC Update • Quarterly Plan Delivery Update • Non-Police Commissioned Services • Communications



<p>Thursday 27 June 2024, 10:30am</p>	<p>Pump Room, The Enterprise Network, Salisbury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCC Update • Quarterly Plan Delivery Update • Communications
<p>Thursday 26 September 2024, 1:30pm</p>	<p>Venue TBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCC Update • Quarterly Plan Delivery Update • Communications