

Agenda Item

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel
Date	2 February 2023
Report Title	PCC consultation on the policing precept 2023/24
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 summary of the public consultation process and engagement about to be undertaken by the OPCC Communications and Engagement Team on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on a proposed policing precept increase for 2023/24. It also provides a top-line analysis of the engagement and feedback received from Wiltshire and Swindon's residents.

2. Precept 2023/24 consultation and engagement

2.1 Consultation with the public on next year's (2023/24) policing precept started on 9 Dec 2022 and ended at midnight on 23 January 2023.

2.2 While all insights from the survey have been captured from this point, the survey remains open and collecting data. If there has been a significant change to any of the information presented, further in-person updates will be given.

2.3 This second budget consultation I have undertaken since taking office and the approach utilised by my office included a considered communications and engagement plan, using both offline and online communication tools.

2.4 I have always been extremely clear that residents should feel engaged and 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.

2.5 In order to enable as many people as possible to be aware of the police precept, and to give their feedback about the proposed increase, and police budget spending, the team utilised not only online platforms but targeted outreach to increase engagement with residents where engagement is lower.

2.6 The main focus of this year's consultation was to ensure as wide an awareness of the proposed increase to this year's policing precept as possible, as well as obtaining statistical significance numbers of respondents to the survey.

3. The consultation

3.1 Using a short online survey, residents were simply being asked to consider supporting an increase in policing precept of either:

£10 per year, per Band D property, which equates to 83p a month.

£15 per year, per Band D property, which equates to £1.25 a month.

3.2 By using this 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.

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

3.4 An extensive social media campaign was active during the time the six weeks that the survey was live. The OPCC and PCC Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn channels were used to engage with the different audiences of each platform.

3.5 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.

3.6 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).

3.7 The highest performing organic (not paid for) social media post was on Facebook. It reached 40,000 organically and had 5,900 link clicks.

3.8 A paid social media campaign was also successfully completed on Meta (Facebook and Instagram). Two ads ran the duration of the survey and reached in total just over 131k people in Wiltshire and Swindon, with 10.4k engagements (comments, likes, link clicks) recorded on from 28 Dec to 24 Jan 23. This was at a cost-effective total of £500.

3.9 Utilising the Community Messaging email system, allowed us to reach an audience that may not be using social media, as well as an audience that are 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. This was received and opened by 5,000 individual users.

3.10 The Communications and Engagement team were active and visible across Wiltshire and Swindon directly canvassing people, speaking to them about the policing precept and encouraging survey responses. Schools, shopping centres and community groups were visited to fill the demographic gaps that the last precept survey highlighted.

3.11 A total of 17 community engagements were carried out during January in places where the OPCC/ PCC may not have had a physical presence in the past. Feedback from these engagements 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.

3.12 The team also utilised traditional media coverage to secure sustained, and wide-ranging, media coverage across Wiltshire's radio stations, television news, including a

chunky segment on BBC Radio Wiltshire, traditional print media, and their online editions, of all major Wiltshire and Swindon newspapers, and coverage in parish magazines throughout January, including the Gazette and Herald, Salisbury Journal, Swindon Advertiser, White Horse News, The Swindonian, Wiltshire Times and Warminster Journal.

3.13 A digital toolkit comprising of social media and web graphics, Meta story videos, 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.

3.14 This encouraged support from partners such as digital communications products being published on Malmesbury.gov.uk, Chiseldon parish council website and Tidworth website, as well as inclusion in SBC’s residents’ newsletters, sharing by councillors and promotion via Victim Support and Fearless among others.

3.14 Myself, or an OPCC representative, was also available at nine public meetings, parish meetings, Area Boards etc, in December and January to discuss the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the precept – further widening public awareness and debate on both subjects. I also briefed our county’s MPs and council leaders on the precept and MTFS.

4. Survey responses

4.1 Last year (2022/23 precept), the OPCC ran two surveys in parallel which asked questions about the precept. Responses from my Use Your Voice survey totalled 2,600 respondents who particularly answered the question: *would you support an increase in precept?* We also received 1,200 responses to the specific survey about raising the precept.

4.2 The 2023/24 precept survey has recorded 2,715 survey responses collected during the six-week period that the survey was live and its campaign was active. This is an increase on the numbers gathered last year.

4.3 Topline results from the survey

- **78%** of people would like to see more investment to increase policing in their communities.
- **80%** of people would like to see Wiltshire Police receive more funding to continue investment in getting crime down, preventing crime, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county.
- **66%** of people would be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided.
- **65%** said yes and **35%** said no to whether they’d support an 83p per month increased (average Band D household) to invest in Wiltshire’s policing.
- **54%** said yes and **46%** said no to supporting a £1.25 per month increase (average Band D household) to invest in Wiltshire’s policing.
- Which areas would you like to see more investment in?

	Area	Score
1	Tackling gangs and drug related violence	10.82
2	Local neighbourhood policing	9.81

3	Crime prevention	9.71
4	Serious and organised crime	8.90
5	Tackling anti-social behaviour	8.49
6	Domestic abuse	8.27
7	Tackling violence against women and girls	7.80
8	Cyber / online crime	7.66
9	Engaging with the public	6.59
10	Protecting the vulnerable	6.46
11	Road safety	6.19
12	Counter terrorism	5.68
13	Supporting victims	4.96
14	Promoting volunteering	3.76

- Which of the current Making Wiltshire Safer: Police and Crime Plan 2022 - 25 is most important to you?

Priority	Percentage of people put in first place
A police service that meets the needs of its communities	39%
Reduce violence and serious harm	27%
Tackle crimes that matter most to local communities	28%
Improve the experience of victims and deliver justice	7%

Of those people who completed the survey:

- 8% were aged 18 – 24
31% were aged 25 - 44
43% were aged 45 – 64
35% were aged 65 - 75
- 28% of them live in Swindon, 72% live in Wiltshire.
- 56% were male, 39% female and 41% preferred not to say or prefer to self-describe.
- 73% are white, 50% are English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British, 6% preferred not to say and approximately 5% made up the other 18 options of ethnic groups (responders were able to choose more than one response).
- 72% have no impairment, 6% a hearing impairment, 1% a visual impairment, 3% have mental health needs, 10% a physical impairment, 2% have autism spectrum disorder and 11% have 'other' or preferred not to say.
- When asked how they heard about the survey, 36% said Facebook, 33% Community Messaging (email system), 12% the OPCC website 9% their local authority.

4.4. 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