

## 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**

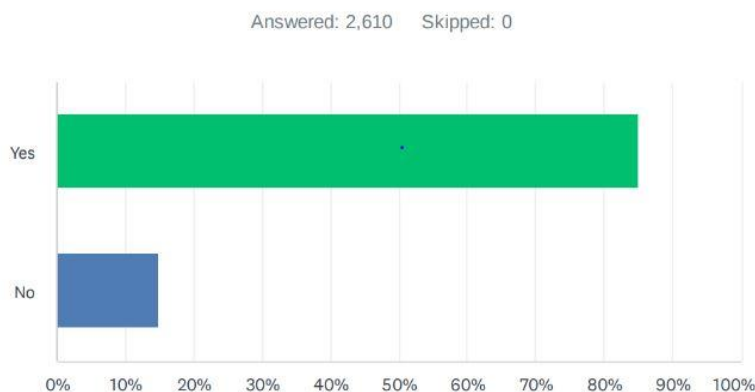
4.1 This year, the OPCC ran a more broadened survey which asked questions around possible precept increase, budget questions and feelings of safety and crime perception.

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.

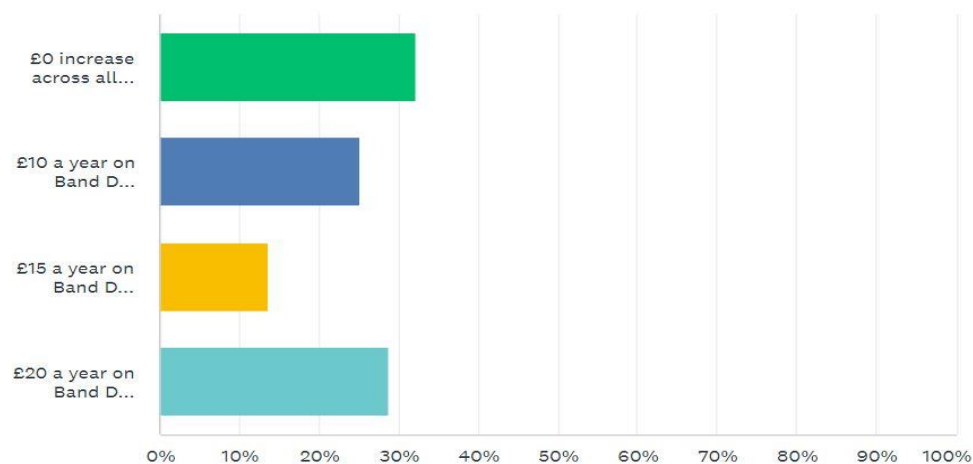
4.6 Through out the campaign information on the budget contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategy was clearly communicated. Details of what the precept had delivered in

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?

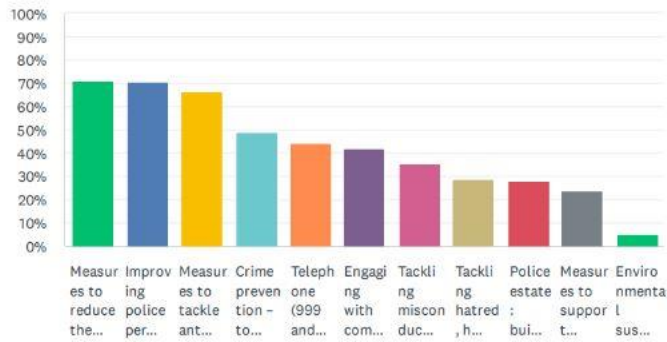
Answered: 2,146 Skipped: 464



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

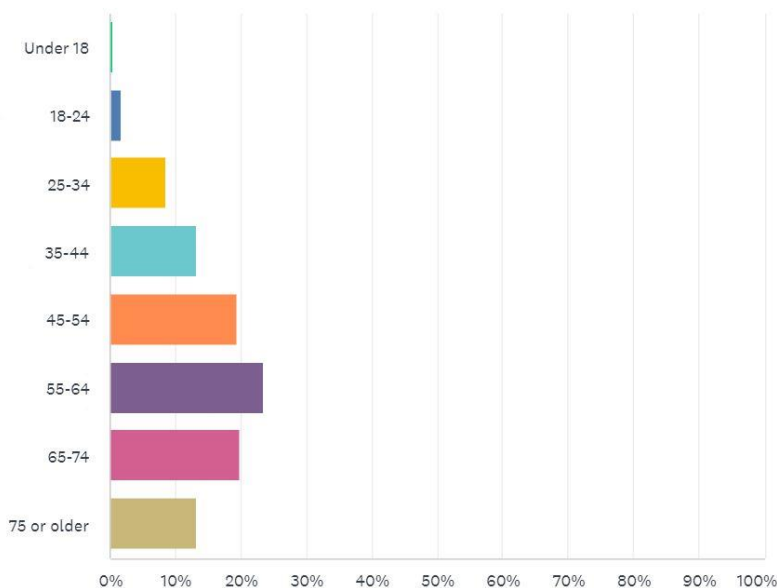


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Measures to reduce the number of people who commit crime repeatedly	71.02%	1,524
Improving police performance, more crimes detected and outcomes increased	70.36%	1,510
Measures to tackle anti-social behaviour	66.31%	1,423
Crime prevention – to stop people becoming victims of 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.