

Police and Crime Commissioner asks for public support to increase precept

A survey to gauge public reaction to a proposal which could see the average police precept rise by up to £15 a year has been launched by Wiltshire's Police and Crime Commissioner.

Residents from across the county are being encouraged to take part in a short survey where PCC Philip Wilkinson explains the current financial situation being faced.

Mr Wilkinson is responsible for ensuring Wiltshire Police has the necessary resources to fight and prevent crime. He holds the entire budget for policing in the county - made up of a grant from government and from the policing part of the precept contained within council tax.

An early indication of a 1% increase in the Government's grant means that if the police precept stays at the current rate of £241.27 for a Band D property, Wiltshire Police would have to make £5.5m worth of savings.

"As with everyone's finances during this time, Wiltshire Police is facing increased financial pressures too," Mr Wilkinson said. "This comes at a time when we really need to be investing in our policing service to keep people safe and prevent crime but also ensure the necessary changes and improvements to bring the Force out of the HMIC Engage process.

"During the last year, communities have reinforced the need for more frontline police officers – and I agree with them. Using your precept support, we will have more visible policing.

"Working with the Chief Constable, and on his operational advice, we are aiming to deliver 40 additional police officers for neighbourhood and volume crime teams by the annual review of the current workforce mix. This means Wiltshire Police will better meet the needs of our communities.

"These additional officers will bolster the Force's work in the community and in crime investigation and are in addition to the Uplift officers who are also coming through the recruitment and training pipeline into our communities, as well as those assigned to specialist roles and the rural crime team for example."

Partner Update – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Yesterday afternoon (12 Dec), the Government increased the cap on police precept, without local referendum, so that PCCs can now potentially increase by up to £15 a year for a Band D household.

Originally, Mr Wilkinson could only increase the precept by 4.1% - through the police part of the council tax - and meant an average Band D household would pay an extra £10 a year, 83p a month or £251.47 annually.

Today's announcement means Mr Wilkinson could now increase by up to 6.2% and an average Band D household would be looking at an extra £1.25 a month, or £15 per year, with the total amount being £256.47 annually.

Mr Wilkinson said implications on finances if an average £15 precept increase per Band D household are now being worked upon and will be communicated to the public as soon as he is able.

"I understand any proposed increase, no matter how small, will be felt keenly," Mr Wilkinson added. "And the decision to ask residents for support for an increase has been difficult and one that I would not make if there was an alternative.

"Wiltshire is currently one of the lowest-funded police forces in the UK and the county's residents pay one of the lowest police precepts out of all the south west police forces - even with the proposed increases, this will remain.

"To ensure Wiltshire Police has the best possible financial position we have to consider utilising the increase in precept cap announced today, up to a maximum £15 a year and I will add this information in to my survey for residents to consider too. My financial team is currently working through this scenario and we have more information to support this in January."

More details on what savings and efficiencies will be made and where any precept increase would be invested will be available in the new year once confirmation of the central grant from government is received.

[Residents can access the survey here which is open until the end of January 2023](#)