

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel
Date	15 Dec 2022
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.

## **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. It is the second precept consultation I have undertaken since taking office and it will utilise the established Use Your Voice branding, as per the previous year.

**2.2** I have always been extremely clear that residents should feel engaged and empowered to have their say on matters affecting their policing service. This is also another avenue for me to be able to hear from local communities.

**2.3** Using a short, online, survey, residents are being asked to consider supporting an increase in policing precept of £10 per year, per Band D property, which equates to 83p a month.

**2.4** Initial indications are that a 1% increase in central funding from Government for 2023/24 will be received, although that has yet to be formally notified and is expected later this month. If that assumption is correct, Wiltshire Police faces making £5.5m savings if there is not an increase made to the police precept part of the council tax.

**2.5** The survey further provides the information that, with an average £10 per year increase for a Band D property (83p a month), £3.1m savings and efficiencies would still have to be made but, with the precept increase, that figure is more manageable.

**2.6** The February report will cover the survey responses received and how I have considered this in my final precept proposals.

**2.7** Questions contained within the short precept survey ask whether residents would support an increase to fund more visible policing in their communities, alongside key demographic information – including their age and location - as well as which policing priority is the most important to them.

- 2.8** The survey, and its marketing and promotion, is being led by my OPCC Communications and Engagement team. The specific focus this year is to ensure increased awareness of the proposed police precept increase as well as improve upon the numbers of people responding to the survey following last year.
- 2.9** Using insight from the analysis of the previous consultation responses, we are seeking to increase responses from the 25–40-year-old age groups and encourage responses from communities where digital engagement is less and aim to encourage more representation from the diverse communities in Wiltshire and Swindon.
- 2.10** Feedback and engagement will be consistently encouraged via an online survey, with a comprehensive digital strategy to support. Sentiment of the responses received across the office, and my, digital channels to the proposed increase will be monitored and reported to the panel in February's paper.
- 2.11** To encourage increased reach and engagement with Wiltshire and Swindon's residents, we will be using targeted marketing of those demographic gaps mentioned above at around a cost of £500. This will be alongside the zero-cost communication and engagement activities, and in-person engagement through area boards and parish councils during January, to ensure residents feel consulted and empowered to respond to the survey.
- 2.12** My office will also be out in the communities across Wiltshire and Swindon directly canvassing people to encouraging survey responses – concentrated specifically on those identified demographic gaps above.
- 2.13** Core communication and engagement work will continue, using digital, broadcast and print mediums, placement of articles in parish magazines advising of the survey, utilising Community Messaging and its audience of 14,000 residents, alongside requests for responses from staff and officers via existing internal communications channels.
- 2.14** As last year, direct work engagement will continue with all councillors – unitary, borough, city, town and parish – to encourage responses. My communications team will also distribute the survey using stakeholder and partner authorities, charities and commissioned services to further extend the awareness of the proposed increase and to encourage participation in the survey.
- 2.15** A consistent and sustained social media campaign is now running across all digital channels and will continue throughout December and January.
- 2.16** We will publish the full results from the survey on my website during the spring in an easily accessible, and understandable, format.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Panel members are asked to note this report.