

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel
Date	16 Jan 2025
Report Title	Use Your Voice: Precept and Budget consultation
Report presented by	Philip Wilkinson, PCC

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This paper provides the panel with a summary of the public consultation process and engagement currently being undertaken on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on the proposed budget for Wiltshire Police, including a proposed policing precept increase for 2025/26.

1.2 Further top-line analysis of the full engagement and feedback received from Wiltshire and Swindon's residents will be available at the next Panel meeting in February.

2. PRECEPT AND BUDGET CONSULTATION (2025/26)

2.1 The public survey reference next year's (2025/26) policing budget and precept element of the council tax started on 6 January 2025 and will end at midnight on 31 January 2025.

2.2 There are minimal insights to capture for this paper (written on 7 Jan 25) but there have been more than 400 responses, both internal and external, since the launch. A verbal update on the current position will be given in person.

2.3 The survey is now open for the next four weeks and aims to collate as much feedback, from as many residents, as possible. As further top-line analysis will be available for the next panel meeting in February, with full survey analysis carried out and published by the beginning of April 2025 on the PCC's website.

2.4 This is the fourth budget consultation undertaken by my team and the approach combines a communications and public engagement plan, using both offline and online communication tools, and informed by learning from previous iterations.

2.5 I believe in the value of residents feeling 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 has a voice, which is actively listened to, and is another avenue for me to be able to hear from local communities.

2.6 We have continued to give space for feedback from residents who wanted more space to voice their opinion on several aspects of policing. The survey was also broadened, as a result, to include safety perception questions, and public confidence points of view.

2.7 In order to enable as many people across Wiltshire and Swindon to be aware of the police precept, and to give their feedback about the proposed increase alongside the

police budget, the team is using a combined approach of online, digital, presence but are also carrying out targeted in-person, face-to-face engagement sessions across the county, to increase engagement where residents' response is traditionally lower.

2.8 Last year's precept and budget survey collected 2,610 responses, just over 100 responses short of the previous year. This approach utilised a combination of newspaper and radio adverts, digital marketing and in-person engagements. My team have since analysed which avenue gave the best response rate and have adjusted their approach to concentrate on these areas.

2.9 The focus of this year's consultation will be 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. As ever, the aim to gather more responses than previous years, and across the demographic areas which have traditionally not engaged with my office, is prevalent.

3. APPROACH

3.1 Using our online survey, which is open to Wiltshire police officers, staff and volunteers as well as the public, we are asking a variety of questions relating to precept increases, free text to gather feedback as well as safety perception and public confidence questions. As the Police and Crime Plan has been recently refreshed, questions about policing priorities were removed – making this survey short and less time intensive.

3.2 Using information gathered regarding best response rates, we have concentrated our approach by using targeted digital advertising and organic social media, as well as frequent use of Community Messaging, in-person engagements across Wiltshire and Swindon, as well as direct correspondence with stakeholders and key community charities, organisations etc.

3.3 The OPCC and PCC Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn channels were used to engage with the different audiences of each platform.

3.4 The OPCC's in-person engagements cover high footfall shopping areas, with harder to reach groups with specific effort made to secure presence within the Hindu, Sikh and Nepalese communities within Swindon and the Muslim communities in Wiltshire and Swindon.

3.5 The team will also utilise traditional media coverage, at zero cost, to secure sustained, media coverage across Wiltshire's radio stations and traditional print media throughout January.

3.6 A digital toolkit comprising of social media and web graphics, Meta story videos, suggested copy and survey links will also be distributed to contacts among Parish and town councils, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police and other OPCC stakeholders and partners, including all local MPs and councillors. ^[OBJ]

4. RECOMENDATION

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