**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**LEAD CHIEF OFFICER:**Chief Finance Officer

**TITLE:** Findings from the ‘Have your say on police funding’ public survey

**DATE:** January 2023

**TIMING:** Annual

**PURPOSE:**To report the findings of the survey to help inform the Commissioner’s decision when setting the precept level for 2023/24

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1.** | **RECOMMENDATION**   * 1. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) executive team considers and notes the findings within this report and utilises them to inform the setting of the 2023/24 precept level. |
| **2.** | **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**   * 1. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent must engage with ratepayers on the police budget, which includes the part of the council tax that is allocated to the Commissioner known as the precept. It is the responsibility of every Commissioner to set the level of the precept for their area annually.   2. The OPCC launched this year’s precept survey on Monday 24 October 2022. It closed on Sunday 8 January 2023 having run for a total of 11 weeks. For comparison, previous surveys ran for 12 weeks, nine weeks, 13 weeks, and nine weeks. In prior years, it ran for approximately four weeks.   3. With no Covid restrictions in place this year, the OPCC returned to a dual approach for engagement, with a major focus on face-to-face engagement in communities. In total, 23 face-to-face events were held across all local authorities, which were complemented by an online survey. This allowed the OPCC to engage with enough people to provide a representative sample of the population of Gwent.   4. This approach was part of a wider OPCC drive over the last few years to deliver more efficient, effective and holistic engagement. Engaging with people in the communities in which they live and work increases visibility of the office and opportunities for members of the public to have their say. This also helps ensure that the office isn’t overly reliant on digital feedback from people who follow its channels and captures opinions from a wider selection of people.   5. Residents of Gwent were asked:   ***Would you support the principle of increasing the council tax precept by:***   * ***£15 per year / £1.25 per month (This would leave Gwent Police with a funding shortfall of £14.4 million in 2023/24)*** * ***£20 per year / £1.67 per month (This would leave Gwent Police with a funding shortfall of £13.2 million in 2023/24)*** * ***£25 per year / £2.08 per month (This would leave Gwent Police with a funding shortfall of £12.1 million in 2023/24)*** * ***None of the above***   1. The main survey was conducted bilingually and asked up to nine questions including demographic questions. Easy read versions were available on request from the OPCC.   2. The online survey was proactively and repeatedly publicised via social media, local press and the OPCC website, as well as shared with community groups, partner organisations, the third sector and local authorities. In addition to this, public partners, community groups and third sector organisations shared posts with their audiences via their channels. The survey was the main news item on the OPCC website throughout the 11 weeks, meaning it was the first thing visitors would see when visiting the home page.   3. To complement this, the OPCC carried out **23 public events** totalling **144 hours of engagement** in communities. The office spoke with more than **1,300 people** at these events. In total, the office gave out more than 1,200 crime prevention items and advice to residents during these sessions.   4. Overall, **1,167 people** completed the survey, with 806 completing it online and **361 people** at face-to-face engagements. |
| **3.** | **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**   * 1. It was agreed, prior to the launch of the survey that a representative sample size of 600 would be used. This provided a confidence level of 95%, including a +/- 4 margin of error. This was in line with targets for previous surveys.   2. This year the OPCC almost doubled the representative sample required, despite planned engagement work being heavily affected by the visit of the Knife Angel throughout November and the considerable amount of planning and delivery work this required.   3. There was again a great emphasis on the quality of the engagement, with more detailed conversations taking precedent over the volume of face-to-face interactions. This furthered the approach of the OPCC in recent years to focus on meaningful conversations when carrying out engagement work, while also accurately capturing people’s feedback and comments about policing in Gwent.   4. The survey was promoted in three releases to the press and appeared five times in print and online on news outlets. This totalled a reach of 160,734 and an advertising value equivalent of £3,981. There were 15 Facebook posts, 15 Twitter posts, seven Instagram posts, and it was emailed to residents on seven occasions as part of the office’s ebulletin. In total, the survey promoted across the OPCC and Gwent Police’s social media channels reached 49,500 people on Facebook and 8,921 on Twitter. All Gwent councils were provided with bespoke social media content to share on their channels.   5. In addition to general promotion of the survey, a concerted effort was made to ensure the voices of people with protected characteristics were heard. Communications were cascaded to partners working with elderly residents (Age Connect Cymru) and LGBT residents (Umbrella Cymru). All town, community and county councillors, plus public and third sector partners, were sent information on the survey to share in their role as community leaders.   6. Equality information was also collected and, of the people who chose to complete the equalities questions, the majority of people stated their ethnicity as White British. However, 68 people (6.15%) stated another ethnicity, which is representative of the Gwent population percentage for Black, Asian and minority ethic residents. Furthermore, in total, 15% of all respondents stated that they considered themselves to have a disability.   7. Residents who responded live in the following areas: * Blaenau Gwent 16.20% * Caerphilly 19.28% * Monmouthshire 18.68% * Newport 19.62% * Torfaen 26.22%      * 1. As stated above, a total of 1,167 responses were received by the closing date. Due to the high level of response, the survey achieved a 99% confidence level that the answers received would be within +/- 4% margin of error on the actual results.   2. **In total, 20% of respondents answered £15 per year, 12% answered £20 per year, 29% answered £25 per year, and 39% said none of the above. Therefore, 61% of respondents were in favour of one of the proposed increases.**   3. A comment box was available for residents to provide extra comments in relation to policing issues. In total, 454 responders took advantage of this. This is in addition to the 1,300+ people with whom the office engaged in communities. When completing the survey and engaging face-to-face, both for the budget setting survey and more generally, residents were given the opportunity to provide extra comments in relation to policing issues. As with previous years, there was a lot of feedback focused on police visibility and the impact of the cost of living crisis. Approximately 20 per cent of all comments on the online survey indicated that they would support an increase in the precept in some form.   4. Whilst the findings of the engagement exercise are instrumental in assisting the Commissioner in setting his Council Tax Precept for 2023/24, the comments provided in the comment box also contain invaluable feedback to both the Commissioner and Chief Constable.   5. In addition to this budget survey, it is important to note that the OPCC also asked a budget question as part of its Estate Strategy review in the summer. This was based on financial predictions at that time and therefore only asked about £15 per year. This was open for 13 weeks and was completed by 1,010 people. This asked the following question: ***Would you support the principle of increasing the police part of council tax (known as precept) by about £1.25 a month (based on a band D property) for 2023/24 to maintain policing at current levels?***   6. **In total, 54% of responders said yes, 30% no and 16% were unsure.**   7. When combined, this means that, over the two surveys, there were 2,177 responses to questions about Gwent Police’s budget this year.   8. The detailed findings can be found in annexes A and B. |
| **4.** | **NEXT STEPS**   * 1. The findings within this report, along with feedback received both face-to-face and in the comment boxes, will be used by the Commissioner to inform the 2023/24 precept level.   2. Once the precept has been approved, this will be communicated across OPCC channels. |
| **5.** | **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**   * 1. None. |
| **6.** | **PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS**   * 1. No personnel considerations for this year’s survey; however, there is expected to be a significant amount of face-to-face engagement for future surveys, including weekend working. |
| **7.** | **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**   * 1. The Commissioner has a duty under Section 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to engage with ratepayers on the budget. |
| **8.** | **EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS**   * 1. This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group. As the survey was open to all it has supported the equality requirements.   2. Consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 in preparing this report*.* |
| **9.** | **RISK**   * 1. The risk identified in this report is low as the Commissioner is discharging his statutory duties in carrying out this survey. |
| **10.** | **PUBLIC INTEREST**   * 1. This report will be available to the public on the OPCC website. |
| **11.** | **CONTACT OFFICER**   * 1. Rhodri Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement   [rhodri.guest@gwent.police.uk](mailto:rhodri.guest@gwent.police.uk) |
| **12.** | **ANNEXES**  **Annex A –** ‘Have your say on police funding’ report  **Annex B –** ‘Estate Strategy review’ report |

**For OPCC use only**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Consultation:** | **Tick to confirm (if applicable)** |
| **Financial**  The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on this proposal. |  |
| **OPCC**  The Head of Performance, Planning and Partnerships has reviewed the request and is satisfied that it is correct and consistent with the PCC’s plans and priorities. |  |
| **Legal**  The legal team have been consulted on this proposal. |  |
| **Equalities**  The Equalities Officer has been consulted on this proposal. |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Chief Executive:**  I have been consulted about the proposal and can confirm that financial, legal, equalities etc… advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report.  I am satisfied that this is an appropriate report to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent. |
| **Signature:** |
| **Date:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent:**  I confirm that I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct.  The above request has my approval. |
| **Signature:** |
| **Date:** |

**Public Access to Information**

Information in this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and other legislation. This submission will be made available on the OPCC website following consideration by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are you satisfied that the contents and observations made are necessary and suitable for the public domain? |  |
| In producing this submission, has consideration been given to ‘public confidence’? |  |
| If you consider that this submission should be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons. |  |