

## OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

**LEAD CHIEF OFFICER:** Chief Finance Officer

**TITLE:** Budget findings from the 'have your say on policing' public survey

**DATE:** January 2021

**TIMING:** Annual

**PURPOSE:** To report the findings of the survey to help inform the Commissioner's decision when setting the precept level for 2021/22

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION</u></b></p> <p>1.1 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) management board considers and notes the findings within this report and utilises them to inform the setting of the 2021/22 precept level.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>INTRODUCTION &amp; BACKGROUND</u></b></p> <p>2.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent has to 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.</p> <p>2.2 The OPCC launched its 'have your say on policing' survey on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020, which included a question on the precept. It closed on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 having run for a total of nine weeks. For comparison, last year's survey ran for 13 weeks, of which six were within the pre-election period which limited communications, and the previous year it also ran for nine weeks. Prior to these years, it ran for approximately four weeks.</p> <p>2.3 The two previous years saw a dual approach for engagement, with a series of face-to-face engagement events across all council areas being complemented with an online survey. This allowed the OPCC to increase visibility and opportunities for members of the public to engage with the OPCC in large-scale community settings, highlighting the core functions and purposes of the OPCC. This was a significantly more efficient, effective and holistic approach to engagement than in previous years, allowing the office to capture the views of a large number of people in the communities that they live and work.</p> <p>2.4 The original aim was to replicate this approach for the 2021/22 survey, building upon previous successes and continuing to evolve the face-to-face offer of the OPCC. Ultimately, however, this was not viable due to the continued impact of Covid-19. Therefore, the OPCC had to think differently as to how it would reach as wide a selection of residents as</p>

	<p>possible, while continuing the evolution of the way in which the office engages.</p> <p>2.5 A new approach was introduced that allowed the OPCC to pulse-test a variety of opinions on policing issues. This focused primarily on promoting the survey online, coupled with multiple opportunities for virtual face-to-face engagement and increased targeting of harder to reach communities. An in-person offer was available and promoted to organisations, so the OPCC did not have a broadcast-only approach.</p> <p>2.6 Expanding on last year’s survey, although there was a quantified objective of 600 surveys to be completed, there was a focus on the quality of the engagement and the amount of information available to people. To ensure the work was as efficient and holistic as possible, the survey also captured other aspects of public opinion, particularly Gwent Police’s response to Covid-19 and what the strategic priorities for the force should be in the future.</p> <p>2.7 This year’s survey had an expanded question set and more information about policing in Gwent. Before people could complete the survey, they were provided with information about the PCC, the role of the OPCC, the daily demands on policing in Gwent, police budgets and the medium-term financial plan. This information was more in-depth than in previous years, allowing people to have an even greater informed opinion when voicing their views on policing.</p> <p>2.8 Residents were asked for their views on a number of policing issues in Gwent, as well as the proposed level of increase for the precept in 2021/22. The key question for this report was: <b>“Would you support the principle of increasing the police part of council tax by up to £2 a month (based on a band D property) for 2021/22 to maintain policing at current levels?”</b></p> <p>2.9 The main survey was conducted bilingually and asked 12 questions (depending on answers). This is four more than last year and excludes demographic questions. Easy read versions were available on request from the OPCC.</p> <p>2.10 In total, <b>1,259 people</b> completed the survey.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b><u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u></b></p> <p>3.1. 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.</p> <p>3.2. Prior to two years ago, the OPCC had always struggled to achieve a representative sample for precept surveys. However, this year the</p>

OPCC again more than doubled the representative sample required, with 1,259 people completing the survey. This was despite considerable logistical challenges caused by Covid-19. To achieve this, multiple channels and approaches were utilised over a sustained nine week period, as set out below.

3.3. The survey was the main news item on the OPCC website throughout the nine weeks, meaning it was the first thing visitors would see when visiting the home page. The online survey was proactively and repeatedly publicised via social media and the local press, as well as shared with community groups, partner organisations, the third sector and local authorities to use internally and externally.

3.4. Three press releases and Commissioner newspaper columns were issued, with nine articles appearing in print and online on news outlets. This led to an estimated reach of 170,577 people, and advertising value of £4,388.61. There were seven Facebook and Instagram posts, 10 Twitter posts (including two fleets to help draw attention to the survey in the final week of it running) and it was emailed twice to residents via Gwent Now. The survey featured prominently in the OPCC weekly ebulletin to residents five times, with a bespoke call to action also emailed to subscribers.

3.5. All Gwent councils were provided with bespoke social media content, which they then tweeted and shared on Facebook, while Torfaen council also included information in its ebulletin to 20,000 residents. Key social media influencers were contacted and tagged into social media content to enhance reach, while content was also posted on several online local groups.

3.6. Creating ready-to-use bespoke content for partners and organisations significantly increased use and sharing, which played a critical role in doubling the online response to this year's survey. It ensured that the key messages and calls to action were amplified on trusted sources, allowing the OPCC to engage with people outside of its usual core audience.

3.7. This custom content wasn't limited to different partners, but also different audiences. In addition to general promotion of the survey, a concerted effort was made to ensure the voices of people with protected characteristics were heard. To do this, an easy read version was produced, while communications were also cascaded to partners working with elderly residents (e.g. Age Cymru Gwent) and LGBT residents (e.g. Umbrella Cymru). Communications were shared with local registered social landlords and organisations working with Gypsy Travellers.

3.8. Multi-dialect communications were used to promote the survey for the first time. Posts were translated into Arabic, Bengali, Punjabi Indian, Polish and Urdu and shared with council community cohesion officers. This meant communications went out in seven languages in total. Information was also shared and participants encouraged to voice their views at the weekly community conference calls with representatives from a wide range of organisations that work with people with protected characteristics. Stamped addressed envelopes with paper copies of the survey were also included in information packs distributed to partners.

3.9. All town, community and county councillors were sent information on the survey with an offer for the OPCC to attend any forthcoming meetings and discuss the survey virtually, as well asking them to share details locally in their role as community leaders. This approach was part of an ongoing wider drive by the OPCC to establish and grow effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders, complemented by the bespoke content for their channels. Twelve groups and councils took up this offer.

3.10. When attending these virtual meetings, the OPCC used a different link to the website to allow it to record how many completed a survey as a result of these virtual meetings. Although a click on the link does not automatically mean a survey was completed, it is reasonable to believe that 121 surveys were completed as a direct result of this virtual engagement, due to the amount of hits via this URL. This replaced the community-based face-to-face engagement of the last two years. Covid-19 permitting, it is expected that next year's surveying will incorporate all three approaches, i.e. community face-to-face engagement, attendance at virtual meetings and online promotion.

3.11. In addition to the above, every MS and MP who attended the Chief Constable's meeting in December had an update on the financial picture facing Gwent. All Gwent AMs and MPs also received information and a request to share with constituents.

3.12. The survey was conducted bilingually, with 1,242 received through the medium of English and 17 in Welsh. Last year there were 37 Welsh language submissions; however, this was significantly higher than in previous years, with returns typically in single figures. The survey was proactively promoted through the same Welsh language networks in Gwent as the previous two years.

3.13. 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, 70 people (5.6%) stated another

ethnicity. Furthermore, in total, 11% of all respondents stated that they considered themselves to have a disability.

3.14. When completing the survey, residents indicated that they live in the following local authority areas:

- Blaenau Gwent 17.79%
- Caerphilly 19.14%
- Monmouthshire 25.73%
- Newport 19.14%
- Torfaen 18.19%

The response rate was therefore consistent across Gwent, with the higher rate in Monmouthshire likely to be due to the take-up of the virtual face-to-face engagement, the location of where channel users live, and some of the cascading of information by partners based in this area.

3.15. The detailed findings from each question can be found in annexes A, B and C. There are two reports for Welsh language responses, as the survey was stopped briefly to correct a typo which automatically generated a new link and therefore report.

3.16. As stated above, a total of 1,259 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.

3.17. Of the 1,259 survey respondents:

- 1,128 completed it online;
- 121 completed it as part of virtual face-to-face engagement; and
- 10 completed paper copies of the survey.




3.18. When collated, the total responses were:

- **689 (54.7%)** of respondents **supported** the principle of up to a £2 per month increase;
- **411 (32.6%)** of respondents **did not support** the principle of up to a £2 per month increase; and
- **159 (12.6%)** of respondents were **unsure**.

3.19 This demonstrates that 55% of respondents supported the principle of up to £2 a month increase. It should be noted that although this is a majority of respondents, this does represent a significant move from yes to no compared to last year, with unsure remaining static.

3.20. The response rate across areas and demographics was consistent, with only three areas where support for the principle of support dropped below 50%. These were in Blaenau Gwent (45.5%), 25-40 year olds (48.6%) and respondents aged 41-55 (48.5%).

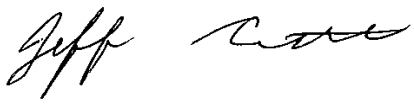
	<p>3.21. Throughout the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide extra comments in relation to policing issues. Most of the feedback around policing in Gwent, both verbally and in writing, focused on police visibility and Covid-19 enforcement.</p> <p>The most popular comments received focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of visibility of police;</li> <li>• Covid enforcement being too lenient;</li> <li>• Affordability; and</li> <li>• Praise and criticism of individual incidents.</li> </ul> <p>The other questions from the survey will be analysed separately and will inform discussions around the next Police and Crime Plan and how the OPCC continues to support and scrutinise Gwent Police’s response to Covid-19.</p> <p>In addition to the above, this year’s survey saw 429 of respondents sign-up to the OPCC weekly ebulletin to residents, including eight in Welsh.</p>
4.	<p><b><u>NEXT STEPS</u></b></p> <p>4.1. 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 2021/22 precept level.</p> <p>4.2. Once the precept has been approved, this will be communicated across OPCC channels.</p>
5.	<p><b><u>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</u></b></p> <p>5.1. Apart from staff time, the only financial implication from this engagement work was the cost of translating communications into six languages. There was no paid advertising or social media content, while newspaper coverage had advertising value of £4,388.61.</p> <p>5.2. Due to changes in OPCC working policies, there could be financial considerations for future precept engagement, as the aim will be to mix community face-to-face and digital engagement.</p>
6.	<p><b><u>PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS</u></b></p> <p>6.1. 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.</p>
7.	<p><b><u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u></b></p>

	7.1. The Commissioner has a duty under Section 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to obtain the views of the people of Gwent and ratepayer's representatives on the budget.
<b>8.</b>	<p><b><u>EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS</u></b></p> <p>8.1. 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.</p> <p>8.2. 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.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b><u>RISK</u></b></p> <p>9.1. The risk identified in this report is low as the Commissioner is discharging his statutory duties in carrying out this survey.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b><u>PUBLIC INTEREST</u></b></p> <p>10.1. This report will be available to the public on the OPCC website.</p>
<b>11.</b>	<p><b><u>CONTACT OFFICER</u></b></p> <p>11.1. Rhodri Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement  <a href="mailto:rhodri.guest@gwent.pnn.police.uk">rhodri.guest@gwent.pnn.police.uk</a></p>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b><u>ANNEXES</u></b></p> <p><b>Annex A – English language responses report</b></p> <p><b>Annex B – Welsh language responses report 1</b></p> <p><b>Annex C – Welsh language responses report 2</b></p> <div style="text-align: right;">         Adobe Acrobat Document          Adobe Acrobat Document          Adobe Acrobat Document     </div>

**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.

<b>Signature:</b> 
<b>Date:</b> 05.05.2021