

OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

LEAD CHIEF OFFICER: Chief Finance Officer

TITLE: Findings from the public survey on the precept for 2020/21

DATE: January 2020

TIMING: Annual

PURPOSE: To report the findings of the survey to help inform the Commissioner's decision when setting the precept level for 2020/21

1.	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u> 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 2020/21 precept level.
2.	<u>INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND</u> 2.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent has to engage with ratepayers on the precept, which is the part of the council tax that is allocated to the Commissioner. It is the responsibility of every Commissioner to set the level of the precept for their area annually. 2.2 The OPCC launched this year's precept survey on Monday 14 October 2019. It closed on Sunday 12 January 2020 having run for a total of 13 weeks. However, due to the general election in December, six of these weeks occurred during the pre-election period. This limited communications throughout this period. 2.3 In addition to this, the OPCC attended more than 20 community engagement events over the summer period. The purpose of attending these was 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. However, at eight of the events, the OPCC also utilised these opportunities to survey people on a number of topics, including the precept. 2.4 Through both surveys, residents of Gwent were asked for their views on the proposed level of increase for the precept in 2020/21. The key question asked was: "Would you support the principle of a £2 a month increase on your council tax (based on a band D property) to maintain policing provision at current levels?" 2.5 The main survey was conducted bilingually in both electronic and paper formats, asking up to eight questions (depending on answers). This excludes demographic questions. Easy read versions were available on request from the OPCC.

2.6 The online survey was proactively and repeatedly publicised via social media, local press and the Commissioner’s website, as well as shared with community groups, partner organisations, the third sector and local authorities.

2.7 However, the main focus of this year’s surveying was face-to-face engagement. This approach is part of a wider drive by the OPCC to increase public awareness and understanding of the Commissioner’s role and responsibilities, encourage people to give their views on policing, and establish and grow effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders.

2.8 The approach of sustained face-to-face engagement, starting at Maindee Festival on 6 July 2019 and ending in Usk on 8 January 2020, allowed consistent pulse-testing of public opinion on the subject matter. It also allowed greater visibility and opportunities to engage with people about their police and crime priorities. This is a significantly more efficient and holistic approach to engagement than in previous years.

2.9 The venues for all the face-to-face engagements were chosen as areas of high footfall for their area, with good accessibility.

2.10 In terms of the engagement work specifically arranged around precept surveying, the OPCC attended **25 events** across Gwent between **October 2019 and January 2020**. Of these, four dedicated events were delivered in each local authority area (20 in total). The office also attended five additional events to which it was invited (for example, the Gwent BAME regional forum event).

2.11 This planned precept engagement saw the OPCC carry out **seven engagement events on Saturdays** – one in each local authority area, plus attendance at two additional events organised by public sector partners.

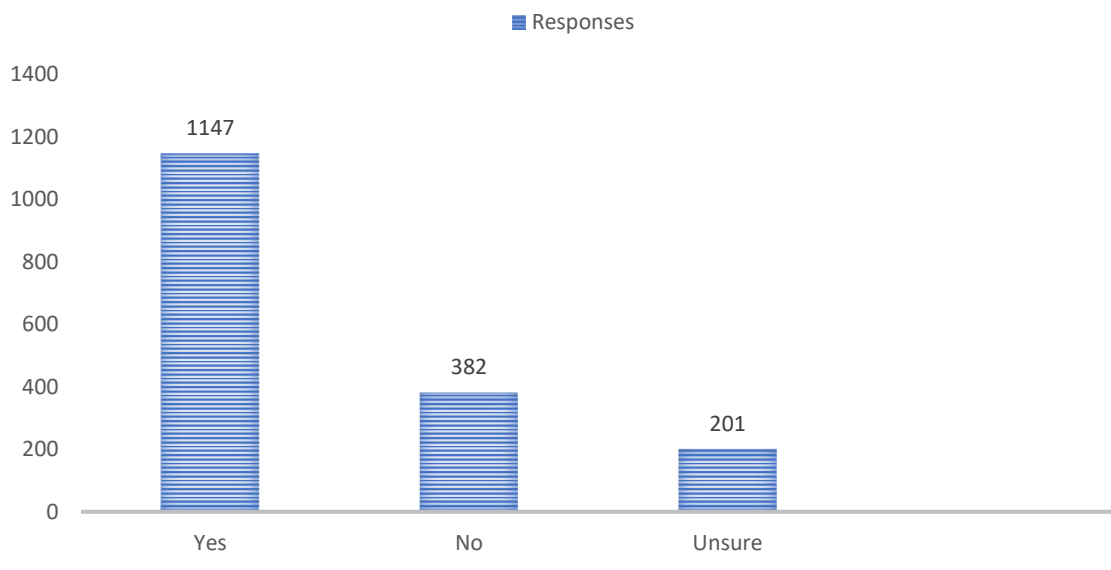
2.12 In total, this saw the OPCC carry out **145 hours of engagement** as part of the precept surveying. In addition to this, surveys were undertaken at **eight summer events**, meaning an **additional 40 hours of engagement**.

2.13 Combined, this resulted in **1,730 people** answering the precept question, “Would you support the principle of a £2 a month increase on your council tax (based on a band D property) to maintain policing provision at current levels?”.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 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.
- 3.2. Prior to last year, the OPCC had always struggled to achieve a representative sample for precept surveys and only achieved the representative sample in the last two years (606 in 2018/19 and 1,875 in 2019/20).
- 3.3. Of the 1,730 respondents, **1,086 people** completed the survey at one of the public engagement events, with **644 people** choosing to complete the survey online.
- 3.4. This means that this year's precept survey not only achieved a representative sample of respondents, but it had more than the required number of respondents both online and a significantly more face-to-face.
- 3.5. The survey was repeatedly promoted online and via the OPCC's ebulletin to residents and this gave a combined reach of almost **38,000**. It was also sent out to **58,037** people via Gwent Now.
- 3.6. The majority of responses received were through the medium of English, with 37 received through the medium of Welsh. Last year there were 21 responses in Welsh and the previous year only one. This increase was due to proactively promoting the survey through Welsh language networks in Gwent.
- 3.7. Of the people who chose to complete the equalities questions, 77 said they were BAME (4.63%). The average BAME population of Gwent is 4.57% ([ONS, September 2019](#)). In addition to this, 37 people (2.2%) described themselves as White Irish or White Any Other Background. In total, 17.5% of all respondents stated that they considered themselves to have a disability.
- 3.8. The detailed findings from each question can be found in annexes A, B and C. Three separate surveys were created, so the results from the different types of engagement could be analysed. The overall results for the precept question were:

COLLATED PRECEPT RESPONSES



When collated, the total responses were 1,147 yes, 382 no and 201 unsure. This demonstrates that **66%** of respondents were in favour of up to £2 a month increase.

3.9. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide extra comments in relation to this question. The most popular comments received are below:

- Lack of visibility of police in their area;
- Pay too much council tax already;
- Can't afford it;
- Already pay enough in tax to the Government;
- Support the principle if more police officers on the streets;
- Would be willing to pay more than £2 per month; and
- The money should come from UK Government and not from local council tax payers.




4. **NEXT STEPS**

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 2020/21 precept level.

4.2. Once the precept has been approved, this will be communicated across OPCC channels.

5. **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1. Apart from staff time, there were no financial implications from this engagement work carried for the precept engagement events. In addition, there was no paid advertising.

	5.2. Due to changes in OPCC working policies, there could be financial considerations for future precept engagement.
6.	<u>PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS</u> 6.1. A significant amount of face-to-face engagement was conducted, totalling 145 hours and including seven Saturday events. In addition, some of the surveying was carried out as part of the summer engagement programme, which totalled more than 170 hours (of which 40 hours were spent surveying).
7.	<u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u> 7.1. The Commissioner has a duty under Section 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to engage with ratepayers on precept proposals.
8.	<u>EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS</u> 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. 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.
9.	<u>RISK</u> 9.1. The risk identified in this report is low as the Commissioner is discharging his statutory duties in carrying out this survey.
10	<u>PUBLIC INTEREST</u> 10.1. This report will be available to the public on the OPCC website.
11	<u>CONTACT OFFICER</u> 11.1. Rhodri Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement rhodri.guest@gwent.pnn.police.uk
12	<u>ANNEXES</u> Annex A – Face-to-face precept survey report Annex B – Online precept survey report Annex C – Summer engagement 2019 report <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Face-to-face precept survey </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Online precept survey </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Summer precept engagement </div> </div>

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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.	