

OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

LEAD CHIEF OFFICER: Chief Executive

TITLE: Report on the consultation findings regarding the policing precept and the review of the police and crime plan priorities 2015/16.

DATE: 23rd December 2014

TIMING: Routine

PURPOSE: To report the findings of the 2014 consultation on the precept setting and police priorities.

1.	<p><u>RECOMMENDATION</u></p> <p>That the Strategy and Performance Board considers and notes the consultation findings with which to inform the precept setting and the review of the Police and Crime Plan priorities for 2015/16 and agrees the publication of the findings.</p>
2.	<p><u>INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND</u></p> <p>The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) published an E-consultation on the PCC website called 'Have Your Say' from 1st October 2014 to 30th November 2014, which asked the residents of Gwent for their views on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The acceptable level for the precept setting for 2015/16• A review of the Police and Crime Plan priorities• How much communities valued the reopening of a number of police stations. <p>The consultation asked 5 questions which included 2 free text options to garner public opinion plus the demographic profile questions. The 'Have Your Say' E-consultation was proactively promoted and circulated to a wide network of partner agencies including the third sector community consultation groups Engage and Valleys Voice. The E- Consultation was publicised on the Gwent PCC website, OWL (Online Watch Link), Facebook, Twitter and in the local press.</p> <p>This report puts forward the analysis of the findings of the E-consultation.</p>
3.	<p><u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u></p> <p>There were 1346 responses with 354 fully completed. This was a low response rate and is not therefore able to meet the confidence level that we would have liked to achieve. However, it did provide an indication of public feeling regarding the consultation questions. It was noted that there were a number of high profile budgetary consultations being run at the same time.</p> <p>The objectives of the consultation were threefold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the public understood the financial position of Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner;2. That the public were in a position to make an informed decision on the precept setting; and3. The public could feedback on the PCC's reopening of 7 police stations.

Question 1 asked: Do you pay council tax?

92% of respondents paid council tax, 2% did not pay council tax and 6% abstained from answering.

Question 2 asked: How much of an increase in your police and crime costs (per year) would you be willing to pay next year?

It was explained that 84% of the current force budget is spent on human resources and that the continued cuts to revenue are likely to impact on the number of police officers in the force. A range of precept increase options were scaled between 0% and 16.17%.

Interestingly, 49.71% stated they would accept a precept rise of 3.5% and above. In contrast 32.79% chose 0% as their preferred increase.

Question 3: If you have any other comments relating to the level of the police and crime part of council tax please enter them below.

Respondents feedback covered a wide range of balanced dialogue and included comments such as the following:

- "can't afford it" and "not fair to pass the funding shortfall onto the public"
- "crime is low – why more police?" and "too much spent on cars and helicopters"
- "effective policing is vital to safety and wellbeing of our region"
- "police funding should be paid by Government not the public"
- "an option to pay more, to enable Gwent Police to recruit more officers would be good"
- "we pay sufficient tax for the poor police presence that we receive"

Further comments covered areas such as not enough 'bobbies' on the beat; policing is poor in rural areas; concerns about current quality of service; effective policing is vital to the safety and wellbeing of our region; the number of public sector cuts; police mismanagement of funds with more efficiencies required to be made; cut PCSOs not officers; PCC to be made redundant with his salary used to pay for more officers; willing to pay more if it means more police officers.

Question 4: With reference to the police and crime priorities set in 2012, are they still relevant for the Gwent force area? (1 being low / 5 being high).

The combined high ratings of 4 and 5 provided evidence that the majority of respondents believed the Police and Crime Plan priorities continue to be relevant to the communities of Gwent. This applied at both the Local Authority and Gwent wide level.

- Deliver the best quality of service to the public – 75.5%
- Reduce and prevent crime – 82.9%
- Take more effective action to reduce anti-social behaviour – 72.9%
- Protect people from serious harm – 80.5%
- Make the best use of resources and provide value for money – 75.9%

	<p>Question 5: Is there another police and crime specific issue you feel should be the PCC's priority? <i>(A free text box was provided to capture resident's feedback.)</i></p> <p>30% of respondents put forward their thoughts on local policing needs with the main request being increased police visibility with 'more officers on the beat' (42%)¹. There was commentary regarding PCSOs being seen to be ineffective and questioning their value and that an increase in police officers would be more beneficial (31%). This same argument was also put forward for the role of the PCC (7%). The respondents also identified a need to improve force efficiency and quality of service (31%).</p> <p>The other most popular requests included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling anti-social use of off road bikes and cars and which included speeding, parking, youths congregating in cars and texting whilst driving (19%) • Improving 101 service (6%) • Reducing anti-social behaviour (9%) • Targeting drug and alcohol abuse (inclusive of growing cannabis & psychoactive substances) (8%) • Better provision for victims (9%) • Improved policing of rural areas (4%) • More fitting and effective punishments for offenders (10%) • Improved services and feedback for victims (9%). <p>A small number stated that the priorities were very high level and 'woolly' and that the priorities 'identified the expected core activities' required of a policing service.</p> <p>Question 6: Please indicate how much you value the Commissioner's reopening of a number of police stations across the Gwent area. <i>(Rated 1 being low / 5 being high.)</i></p> <p>59% of the respondents indicated the highest ratings of 4 and 5 highlighting that a significant majority of respondents viewed the reopening of stations as a positive outcome.</p>
4.	<p><u>NEXT STEPS</u></p> <p>The information gathered will be provided to the force for their consideration. The findings will inform any changes to the Police and Crime Plan and the budget deliberations of the PCC.</p>
5.	<p><u>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>Due to financial restraints the decision was taken to launch a web based E-consultation with the option for residents to request hard copies if required. The consultation was developed in house and therefore the cost would equate to officer's time spent. 6 hard copies were requested meaning the consultation was produced at a minimal cost.</p>
6.	<p><u>PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>There are no personnel considerations arising from this report.</p>

¹ Percentages are rounded up and therefore may not add up to 100% and some respondents listed more than one point.

7.	<p><u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent (PCC) has a number of statutory duties which include setting the annual budget and the formulation of a Police and Crime Plan to provide the strategic direction for Gwent Police. There is a government expectation that both of these duties are carried out in consultation with the public.</p>
8.	<p><u>EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>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. A number of engagement activities promoted the consultation to a number of key agencies who work with the seldom heard. 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>
9.	<p><u>RISK</u></p> <p>This low response rate is only able to provide indicative findings because of a lack of confidence in the robustness of the sample.</p>
10.	<p><u>PUBLIC INTEREST</u></p> <p>This document will be of public interest and a more detailed report will be published on the Gwent PCC website.</p>
11.	<p><u>CONTACT OFFICER</u></p> <p>Maria Chapman - Policy Officer (Engagement)</p>
12.	<p><u>ANNEXES</u></p> <p>The full analysis of the consultation can be accessed upon request.</p>

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Consultation:	Tick to confirm (if applicable)
Financial The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on this proposal.	✓
OPCC The HPPPO 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.	N/A
Equalities The Equalities Officer has been consulted on this proposal.	N/A

Chief Executive/ Deputy 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: S A B...
Date: 11/12/14
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: Ia John...
Date: 23.12.14

