

POLICE & CRIME PANEL

Date: 3 February 2023

Report of the Communications & Engagement Manager

CONSULTATION ON THE SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT 2023/24

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides details of the consultation carried out with the public of South Yorkshire around the raising of the council tax precept for 2023/24.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a statutory duty to consult with the public and with rate payers to obtain their views before the precept is set.
- 2.2 The Government Spending Review and Autumn Statement, released in December 2022, announced that South Yorkshire Police will receive central grant funding of £238.1m in 2023/24, an overall increase of 3.4%. This comprises £228.6m core grant plus £9.5m for pensions and ringfenced uplift grants.
- 2.3 This central grant funding makes up 74% of the police budget. The other 26% (£88m) is expected to be funded by the council tax precept.
- 2.4 However, the £88m funded by the council tax precept will only be available if the PCC raises the precept by the full amount the government is allowing - £15pa based on a Band D property equivalent to a 6.73% rise for all households. If the precept is not raised by this amount, funding will be less.
- 2.5 Most households (around 75%) in South Yorkshire are Band A & B properties. The proposed 6.73% increase will equate to a rise precept rise of 19 pence per week (£10.00 p.a.) on a Band A property and 22 pence per week (£11.66 p.a.) on a Band B property.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 In a change to previous years the statutory consultation around the setting of the policing precept has been undertaken as one exercise rather than two separate consultations.
- 3.2 This allowed us to encourage participants to think about what they want their police force to focus on and then indicate if that was something they were willing to pay a little more for, through their council tax.
- 3.3 The consultation ran from 18 November 2022 until 5 January 2023 (seven weeks).

4. CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND FINDINGS

- 4.1 The consultation was conducted mainly online and was promoted through a range of promotions including repeatedly sharing across the PCC's social media sites and those of our partners (including SYP and local authorities). It was also sent direct to over 55,000 individuals who are signed up to the SYP Alerts system, to over 2,000 recipients of the PCC's weekly Blog, the OPCC's engagement contacts database and to the local media.
- 4.2 It was promoted at all of our face-to-face engagements and meetings during the consultation period, and we distributed contact cards with a QR code linking direct to the survey at all of these events and to many of our engagement contact groups and organisations. The QR code enabled the survey to be easily accessed from smart phones. Hard copies were also taken on meetings and events for those people who could not access it electronically.
- 4.2 A total of 2,870 residents responded to the survey – which is considerably higher than last year. (In 2022 1,042 people responded to the precept survey and 791 responded to the policing priorities survey. In previous years both consultations averaged around 2,000 responses).
- 4.3 Of those responses there was a good spread across all four districts of South Yorkshire Sheffield (38% of respondents, Doncaster 26%, Rotherham 20% and Barnsley (16%). The majority of responses were from residents living in properties in bands A-E. The largest responses came from bands A (22% and band D 23%).
- 4.4 Overwhelmingly the respondents were in favour of paying a little more for policing in the coming year. Residents were asked to choose how much more they would be willing to pay.
- 1,618 (57%) said they would be willing to pay £10 more per year.
 - 740 (26%) said they would be willing to pay a rise in line with inflation
 - 498 (17.44%) said they would not want to pay any more.
- 4.5 These results contrast to last year when 54% said they would not be willing to pay more.
- 4.6 The areas of policing that residents would like to see prioritised are:
- Dealing with neighbourhood crime (ASB, burglary, car theft and robbery)
 - Visible patrolling and engaging with communities
 - Tackling child sexual exploitation
- 4.7 The areas where the public placed least priority were:
- Crowd control at football matches
 - Providing police enquiry desks
 - Dealing with off-road bikes

4.8 A further piece of work to analyse the responses in more detail, including over 1,000 free text comments is currently taking place and the results will be used to help shape the Police and Crime Plan for the coming year.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That views of the public are noted in the decision to set the Council Tax Precept at the recommended level.

Fiona Topliss
Communications & Engagement Manager
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner