

Police and Crime Panel

3rd February 2022

Precept Consultation

Report of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner



Purpose

1. To update the Panel on the process for setting the Policing precept for 2022/23 and to seek the Panel's support for an increase of £10 per household per year for properties in Band D, and commensurate increases for other properties.

Background

2. In December every year, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is informed by the Home Secretary of the amount of Government grant that will be provided for policing during the following financial year. That enables the PCC to formulate plans for the level of precept that she will need to ask Council Taxpayers to contribute, in order to deliver policing in County Durham and Darlington in line with the new Police and Crime Plan. The Government normally puts a cap on the level of precept increase. The Government announced the funding settlement for 2022/23 on the 16th December 2021. From this the Force and PCC office has been making the calculations in relation to the effect of the settlement on the overall budgets, along with the priorities for its use.
3. In addition to local taxation and central government grant the Durham Office of the PCC generates and manages additional funding streams. These include from the Ministry of Justice and also grants dependent on bids submitted by the PCC. In the last 12 months this has resulted in total additional funding to the value of £2,523,432 to benefit communities of County Durham and Darlington.

Funding in 2022/23

4. Government funding for policing in Durham and Darlington in 2022/23 includes the following:
 - The Police Grant will increase by 5.7% to £106.1m. This comprises the 'Operation Uplift' funding for 90 extra Police Officers in Durham and Darlington plus monies for the increased Employers National Insurance increase.
 - Capital funding will remain at £0.13m which is no change and will be incorporated into revenue grant .
 - The PCC is enabled to increase funding from the precept for the council taxpayer by 4.3% or £10 for a Band D property as a maximum.

- The total potential revenue funding, assuming maximum precept, increases from £139.4m to £146.8m, an increase of £7.4m or 5.3%.

5. To achieve the £146.8m, it will be necessary to increase precept by the maximum permitted, i.e. £10 per household per year, for properties in Council Tax Band D. If this happens, the implications for each Council Tax Band would be as follows:

Council Tax Band	Police Precept 2021/22	Proposed Annual increase for 2022/23	Proposed Police Precept for 2022/23
	£	£	£
Band A	153.49	6.67	160.16
Band B	179.08	7.78	186.85
Band C	204.66	8.89	213.55
Band D	230.24	10.00	240.24
Band E	281.40	12.23	293.63
Band F	332.57	14.44	347.01
Band G	383.73	16.67	400.40
Band H	460.48	20.00	480.48

Consultation

6. The PCC launched an on-line survey on the 3rd January 2022. This which remained live for 3 weeks closing at midnight on the 24th January 2022. It was publicised using social media, releases to all local media outlets and the PCC website, along with some face to face meetings (but these have been restricted due to Covid), email signatures and use of the force keep in the know database.
7. The survey asks respondents about how much they would accept to pay extra for the provision of its policing service. The survey and the results are attached to this report. In addition to questions relating to precept tax levels, the survey also asks respondents for their views on priorities within the Police and Crime plan. The PCC in consulting on the £10 for a band D property rise, has asked the Force to prioritise funding in relation to call handling performance, improvements in online reporting, recruitment of PCSO's and the instigation of Operation Snap (allowing the upload of dashcam evidence in relation to poor road safety issues).

The on-line survey has generated 658 responses in total.

The main findings are:

- 52% of respondents were prepared to accept an increase as proposed (£10 for a band D property)
- 40% were against contributing more.
- 8% were neutral

In response to the question of whether the respondent saw ASB as a priority 91% agreed.

In relation to questions relating to priorities against the 12 key areas the top 3 responses were:

- More police officers, maintain PCSO numbers, increase uniformed visibility and reduce neighbourhood crime
- Drug Offences – disrupt drug markets and county lines
- Response times – Improve response times and meet increased demand for policing service

8. In addition, respondents were able to provide additional comments. A summary of typical comments is listed below:

- You are doing a good Job lets keep it up
- I think the Police and other emergency services do an excellent job with the present limitations they have
- More and quicker response to complaints, especially complaints of harassment of single young women.
- I would like to ensure and see that any increase in my precept would have a direct impact in my local neighbourhood and not spent elsewhere such as Bishop or Durham
- Definitely need to see more and regular policing in villages.

Summary

9. Given the overall support for an increase, and the clear need to support Policing beyond the constraints of Uplift funding, the Panel is recommended to support an increase in precept of £10 per household per year for Band D properties.
10. As agreed with the Force this will enable in particular:
- Officer numbers increased from 1,275 to 1,365 by 31 March 2023
 - PCSO levels recruited for and maintained at 146
 - Additional call handlers recruited
 - Operation Snap enabled (dashcam footage uploads)
 - Additional IT staff
 - Continued IT technology improvements including online reporting
11. Under Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Police and Crime Panel is required to review the proposed precept, and to make a report on it (the Panel are to determine the manner of this report). The report can include recommendations on the level of the

precept. The panel has the power to veto the proposed precept, which requires a two-thirds majority in favour of a veto.

Recommendation

The Panel is recommended to:

- a) Note the current position of the consultation and the outcome;
- b) Consider my proposal for a £10 precept increase at Band D;
- c) Decide whether to veto my proposal; and,
- d) Produce a report.

Joy Allen
Police and Crime Commissioner

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

The outcome of consultation will influence the size of the PCC's, and the Constabulary's, budget in 2022/23

Staffing

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Children's Act 2004

None

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

A consultation exercise has taken place as set out in the report

Environment

None

Collaboration and Partnerships

None

Value for Money and Productivity

None

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Size of budget will influence delivery of priorities

Commissioning

None

Other risks

None

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