

Police and Crime Panel

1st February 2015
(produced 21st January 2016)



Consultation on Council Tax Police Precept 2016-17

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Police and Crime Panel of my proposal for the policing element of the Council Tax Precept 2016 -17. 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.
2. This report provides an update in relation to the consultation on my proposal, presents a summary of responses received so far and the expected outcome based on the feedback received. The papers for this meeting have been issued prior to the end of the consultation period but final results will be given at the meeting itself.

Background

3. I set out my proposals for the consultation on the policing element of Council Tax Precept for 2016-17 to members of the Police and Crime Panel at their meeting on 8th January 2016.

Precept Proposal

4. Subject to the conclusion of the consultation, I propose a precept increase of 1.98%.
5. A 1.98% increase will cost a Band D¹ property an additional 6p per week, which is £3.22 a year². However across County Durham and Darlington approximately 55% of households are categorised as 'Band A'. For a property in Band A the increase will cost an additional 4p per week, which is £2.15 per year². A full breakdown of what the increase means for each Council Tax Band is included in Appendix 2. This in turn will generate circa £520,000 for Durham Constabulary, which equates to the approximate annual cost of 11 police officers.
6. An increase of less than 1.98%, or keeping the precept at the current level, would result in a lower baseline going forward, meaning it would not be possible to recoup this money without a referendum. Each subsequent year's budget would be lower than it otherwise would be with the increase.

¹ Nationally, a typical Property in is classed as 'Band D'

² Does not equal 4 x 52 because figures are rounded.

7. An increase of 2% or more would require a referendum, costing around £750,000. Therefore I would need to increase it by more than 5% to recoup the costs in the first year. And if such a referendum was lost, then that £750,000 would be irrecoverable.
8. Durham Constabulary works hard to provide value for money for the people it serves. Delivering an efficient policing service is one of the four key objectives in my Police and Crime Plan. In the recent HMIC PEEL Efficiency inspection, Durham Constabulary was the only force in the country to be graded as outstanding for all three questions.

Consultation

9. As set out in my last report to the Police and Crime Panel the consultation went live on the 11th January 2016 and will close at 11.59pm on Wednesday 27th January 2016.
10. The consultation is running online, however hard copies are available from my office. It has been promoted by email, website, press release and through social media. The online survey sets out my proposal, details on what it would cost, and then asks respondents if they agree. Respondents are also given the chance to enter any additional comments that they may have. There is also the opportunity to download the detailed consultation document.
11. Details of the precept consultation have been widely circulated including to Elected Members, the County Durham Partnership, the Darlington Partnership, the Community Safety Partnerships, Town and Parish Councils, Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), the Voluntary and Community Sector, etc. for onward cascade and circulation. I am grateful to both Darlington Borough Council and Durham County Council as they have kindly included details of the consultation on their websites.
12. I have undertaken consultation with the public as part of my 'Community Day' programme. The Community Day programme includes street walkabouts and drop ins, attendance at several Area Action Partnership meetings in County Durham, and planned activity in Darlington. Where Area Action Partnership meetings did not fall within the consultation period the Coordinators have kindly shared details of the consultation with their Board and Forum Members. At all of the these events, members of the public have been invited to complete hard copies of the survey and signposted to my website to encourage them to share details of the consultation with colleagues

Responses

13. At the time of writing, the consultation is still live, therefore the information that follows is just a snap shot of the responses as of noon on 21 January 2016 and I will provide full details to the Police and Crime Panel at the meeting.
14. There have been 167 valid responses to the consultation. There have been 104 completed online and 63 hard copies. They have spanned across all twelve neighbourhood policing teams and all age groups from 18 – 75+ years.
15. The responses received to date are strongly in support of my proposed increase to the policing element of Council Tax Precept for 2016-17. **77.8%** (130 responses) agree that the precept should be increased by 1.98% and 22.2% (37 responses) believe that

it should remain at its current level. The summary of consultation results and a breakdown of respondents' demographics are show in Appendix 3.

16. The majority of free text comments as part of the consultation convey a belief that the increase is justified and respondents are happy to pay slightly more to ensure County Durham and Darlington remains a safe place.

Recommendations

17. The Panel is recommended to:
 - a. Note the current position of the consultation and the expected outcome;
 - b. Consider my proposal for a 1.98% precept increase;
 - c. Decide whether to veto my proposal.
18. This is with the understanding that the consultation is not yet complete, however, the consultation and responses will be finalised by the time of the panel meeting and I will be able to present the results in full at the meeting.
19. I intend to bring a report on the police budget to the next meeting of the panel on 3rd March 2015.

Ron Hogg
Police and Crime Commissioner

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance: The Council Tax Precept 2015-16 is to rise by 1.98% (as per main body of the report).

Staffing: No specific implications.

Equality and Diversity: No specific implications.

Accommodation: No specific implications

Crime and Disorder: The money received through the increase will be put towards reducing crime and disorder and ensuring matters are dealt with as efficiently as possible.

Children's Act 2004: No specific implications

Stakeholder/Community Engagement: Feedback on the proposed increase has been sought from the community.

Environment: No specific implications

Collaboration and Partnerships: No specific implications

Value for Money and Productivity: The precept increase proposed is the largest it can be without holding a costly referendum.

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities: No specific implications

Commissioning: No specific implications

Other risks: No specific implications

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Appendix 2: Table Showing the Impact of the 1.98% Precept Increase by Council Tax Band

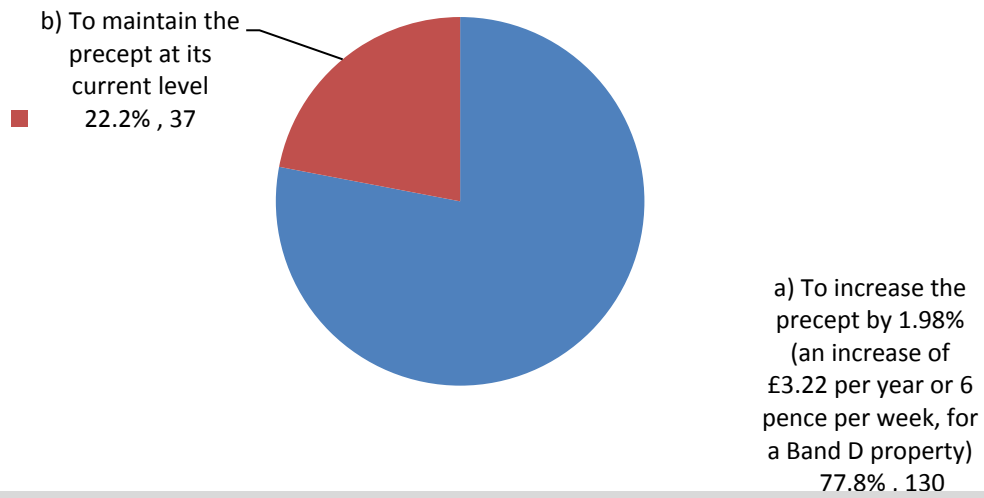
	Council Tax 2015-16	Council Tax 2016-17	Increase per Year	Increase per Week
Band A*	£108.49	£110.64	£2.15	£0.04
Band B	£126.57	£129.08	£2.51	£0.05
Band C	£144.65	£147.51	£2.86	£0.06
Band D**	£162.73	£165.95	£3.22	£0.06
Band E	£198.89	£202.83	£3.94	£0.08
Band F	£235.05	£239.70	£4.65	£0.09
Band G	£271.22	£276.59	£5.37	£0.10
Band H	£325.46	£331.90	£6.44	£0.12

*55% of households in County Durham and Darlington are classed as Band A.

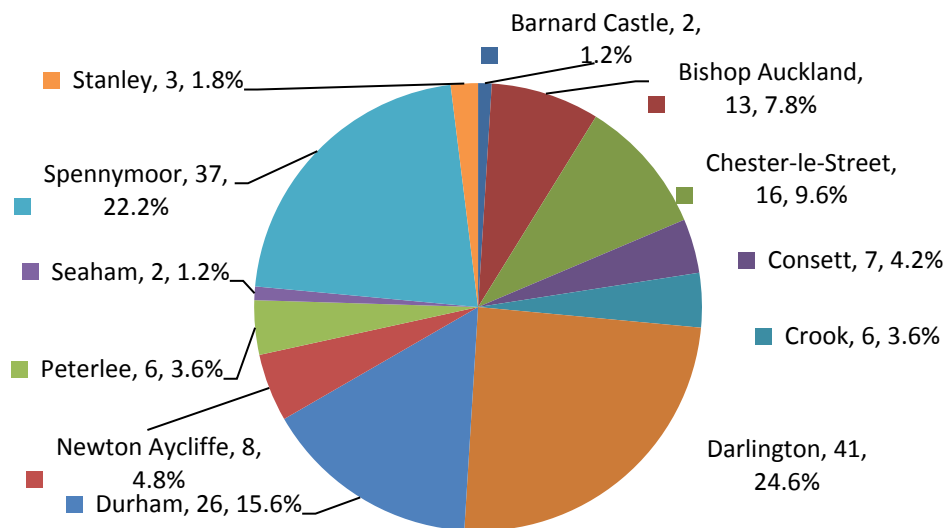
** Nationally, a typical Property in is classed as 'Band D'

Appendix 3: Summary of Consultation Results & Respondents' Demographics

Which of these statements best describes your opinion?



Which area do you live in or closest to?



Age group (years)

