

Budget Consultation 2018/19 Summary

Background

The Police and Crime Commissioner launched his precept consultation on 20th December 2017. The consultation ended at midnight on 19 January 2018. A precept proposal and a draft of the budget report were published as part of the consultation process, along with a short online survey to enable people to comment on the proposals being put forward.

Headline result

The majority of respondents, 61%, were in support of the precept proposal put forward by the Commissioner. 39% did not agree with the proposal.

Commissioner's response to the comments received

The majority of comments made by those objecting to the precept proposal centred around reduced officer numbers/service provision, political comments and financial burden on households. Rather than annotating each individual comment with the Commissioner's response, a response to each of these three themes is shown below.

Officer numbers / service provision – My budget plans protect our numbers of PCs, ensuring current numbers can be maintained. They ensure policing is visible and accessible to communities. I have started the long and complex, but necessary work of reforming our police force. We have seen some good progress in the last year, with all officers now able to work 'on the move', and equipped with body worn video.

Political comment – I consider that the Government has listened to our communities and the issues I have raised on their behalf. They have delivered a fair and stable financial base to build from in terms of central funding, with more money available to every police force nationwide. It ensures extra flexibility and accountability for PCCs around council tax, both of which are very welcome

Financial burden on households – I am conscious that money is still tight for our communities. I am not recommending the maximum possible council tax rise because I do not believe it is necessary. My proposal would add a modest 2p per day, the equivalent of £7.58 per annum to the council tax bill on a band D property. The vast majority of Commissioners across England and Wales are proposing the full £12 levy. That is not the case for West Mercia.

Summary

Outlined below is a summary of publicity undertaken, findings from the survey and a copy of the comments received along with the Commissioner'

Publicity and media coverage

A range of communication tools were used to promote the precept consultation to communities across West Mercia. These included:

- Posting full details, including the draft budget report on the Commissioner's website
- Media release - coverage in force area papers and interviews on local radio, including Worcester News, Shropshire Star, Hereford Times, Malvern Gazette, Evesham Journal, Kidderminster Shuttle, Express & Star, Bromsgrove Advertiser, BBC Hereford & Worcester, BBC Shropshire, BBC News Online, BBC Sunday Politics TV.
- Social media - numerous posts on Twitter and Facebook
- Commissioners newsletter
- Direct emails to associations of local councils for distribution via their networks across West Mercia
- Direct emails to local council leaders

The consultation survey

An online survey was used to ascertain views on the Commissioner's precept proposals. In addition, the draft budget report was clearly signposted and available to read for anyone requiring more detailed information prior to completing the survey.

The online survey asked 4 questions, including one open question enabling respondents to comment on their reasons for either supporting or opposing the proposals. The questions asked were:

Question 1 – Do you support these proposals?

Question 2 – Please state in which part of West Mercia area you pay your Council Tax.

Question 3 – Are you responding on behalf of a business?

Question 4 – Do you have any other comments?

Consultation findings

Overall response

86 respondents partially or fully completed the survey. Of these 80 respondents answered question one.

Question 1

- 49 (61%) respondents supported the Commissioner's proposals.
- 31 (39%) respondents were opposed to the Commissioner's proposals.

Question 2

A breakdown of respondents by council tax area is shown below (for those that answered this question)

53 (66.3%) Worcestershire
15 (18.8%) Shropshire
6 (7.5%) Herefordshire
5 (6.3%) Telford and Wrekin

Question 3

Two responses were received on behalf of a business.

Question 4

20 respondents chose to comment on their reasons for their answer to question one (18 online plus two by email / letter). A summary of all these comments is included with this report.

All social media platforms are monitored and where appropriate comments on the precept have been responded to, however the 'instant' nature of this media means it is not practical to include them in this report.

Budget consultation 2018 – summary of comments received

No	Comment	PCC response
1	The PCC is doing a great job	
2	Extra money to merge fire with police to make firefighters unemployed shameful	
3	The numbers continue to reduce. What number of PC's are you guaranteeing to protect. We pay more and more for a reducing level of service.	
4	Why should the PCC get more when all of us our being asked to do more for less????	
5	I'd happily pay more if it meant we saw police patrolling neighbourhoods rather than it being stripped back to responding to calls only. That's coming from an ex police officer, who is devastated at what the current service has been reduced to.	
6	Officer numbers are now dangerously low. The ability for the police to respond is diminished and the ability to prevent crime is non existent.	
7	4% is too modest Year on year real investment required You cannot fight 21st century crime with a 20th century budget	
8	My only, and main concern is that putting up the Council Tax precept year-on year will become common place; squeezing the lower middle class closer and closer to the bread line. A 2% rise is one thing; but 5% has to be a one off. Central Government freeing up the restrictions on Council Tax precept is helpful but CAN NOT BE ABUSED. Naturally our West Mercian PCC will see things totally different to the West Mids PCC who is without as much "precept pulling power".	
9	You are closing stations and not looking after the needs of the rural communities. STOP trying to take money from those who can least afford it!	
10	The government should not be making the cuts from current spending on policing and therefore they should e lobbied to stop the cuts they are already making this way there is no need for an increase in tax as in real terms earnings have decreased. Politicians should look at what they earn and have their allowances cut and these saving out back into policing and the nhs	
11	Support getting rid of some management but protect frontline police!	
12	Look at creating partnerships with different businesses and housing providers to look at how improving peoples welfare and social well-being.	
13	with only a 3% rise in my penttion plus the 3% rise in the council tax there is a bleak year ahead and I do not think it will give use any better policing here at monkhide	
14	I support but aghast at "sucking up" comments re Government. The starvation funds have lowered Police ability to respond to crime. Eg a hit and run car accident.no casualties, but a £500 excess, devalued car, next year's premium increased, no claims bonus reduced, but no police attendance or investigation. Not our area but typical of how law abiding people suffer from our useless, damaged, incompetent, Austerity Tory Government. Stand up to them and tell them how people are being let down!	
15	Your tenure is to manage for the benefit of the whole community which you seem to be doing well up to know, Merry Xmas.	
16	Give the police a proper pay rise.	
17	Stop persecuting motorists for speeding and crack down on aggression on the roads. Also, police unroadworthy and dangerously overloaded foreign trucks.	
18	Theresa May shouts jump - Champion jumps.	
19	We will see no benefits of this increase on our council tax. We need police on the street not sat behind desks!	
20	The obligation for this should be met through the government and not like everything else be devolved to the citizen	
21	The population of Evesham has DOUBLED over decades but policing of the	

<p>town has got POORER. We used to have a Superintendent who controlled 100 officers. The PCC should save money from his own budget. We were told recently that police visibility would be improved in the run up to Christmas, but I did not see ONE OFFICER on the streets. PCSOs are patrolling, but they have no powers of arrest. We are not getting value for money, so Mr Campion's request for more funding is NOT JUSTIFIED.</p>
