



## Precept consultation outcomes

### Purpose of report

This report is a summary of the results obtained from the public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to seek views on the amount of council tax the people of Staffordshire are willing to pay towards their Police and Fire & Rescue services.

### Background

Funding for police and fire & rescue services is made up of a mix of central government grants, combined with the 'precept' – the contribution residents make as part of their annual council tax.

The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for setting the budget for Staffordshire Police, and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, including the amount of council tax used for both services.

It is the Commissioner's responsibility to ensure policing, fire & rescue and community safety is properly funded in 2023/24 to provide the services expected by those who live, work and visit Staffordshire.

A formal consultation took place between 15 December and 16 January. A range of methods were used to encourage participation, resulting in responses from **1948** people from Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The views from this consultation will help the Commissioner arrive at his proposals for the setting of the 2023/24 budgets.

### How we did it

We used a range of methods to promote the consultation including:

- **Social media** – Multiple social media posts were issued from the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office (SCO), Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue and partners. Paid adverts also ran on facebook targeting residents of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- **Media** – A press release issued to inform local media of the importance of the consultation

- **Stakeholders** – Emails sent from the Commissioner requesting key partners' involvement including local Councillors, volunteers, business owners the voluntary sector.
- **Smart Alert** – Multiple messages issued to over 16,000 people via Staffordshire Smart Alert
- **Internal** – Internal message sent to police and fire staff to encourage participation
- **SCO Newsletter Subscribers** – Multiple messages issued via the SCO newsletter subscriber list of 1,336 people

### **Consultation foreword**

As your [Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner](#), I am elected to oversee the work of the Police and Fire & Rescue services for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and to commission services to support victims and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

I do this by setting out a strategic direction in Local Plans for [Staffordshire Police](#) and [Staffordshire Fire & Rescue](#). I am responsible for setting the budgets for both services and the contribution you make as part of your annual council tax precept.

We are making significant progress towards delivering the ambitions within the Local Plans – including recruiting more Police officers, improving 999 and 101 contact, supporting victims and witnesses, reducing crime and ASB and making our region's roads, homes and business premises safer.

Funding for your Police and Fire & Rescue services is made up of a mix of central government grants combined with the contribution that residents make as part of their annual council tax. I will always try to keep your council tax precept low, and will only ask for more if I believe it is necessary to maintain or improve your Police and Fire & Rescue Service.

Both services have faced significant uncertainties over recent years relating to the pandemic, inflation and additional unexpected costs linked to pay and pensions. Good progress has been made on making efficiencies, however, this year has exposed the volatility of global economies and our emergency services are not protected from that.

Locally, both the Police and Fire & Rescue Service face further challenges including rising pay and potential industrial action within the Fire & Rescue Service, which will increase the level of savings required.

In the current uncertain financial climate, the options are all below headline inflation rates but in all cases your council tax contribution will assist in protecting and improving your

services. I made the decision to keep precept below the trigger for a local referendum as this would prove expensive and delay budget setting decisions.

I would therefore welcome your thoughts on what you think is a fair contribution.

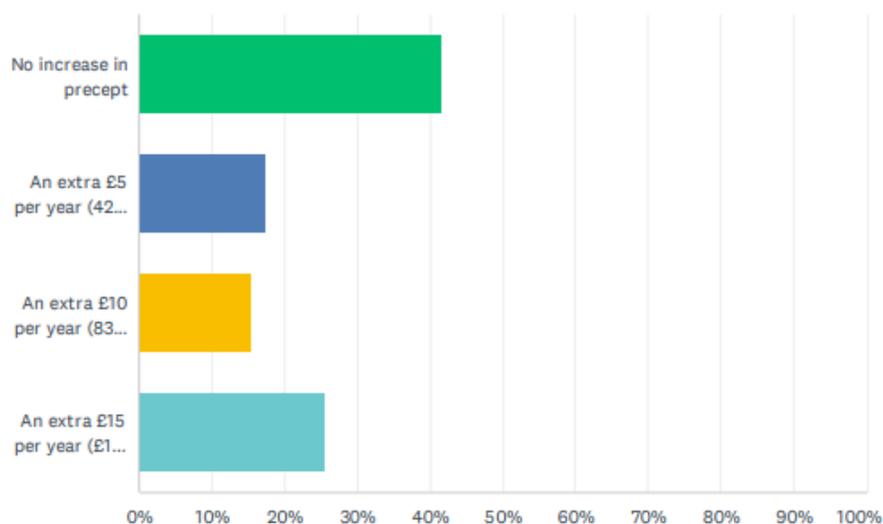
Ben Adams

Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire

## The results

Q2 The following options are based on a Band D property currently paying £248.57 each year for Police services. How much more would you be prepared to pay per year for your Police services?

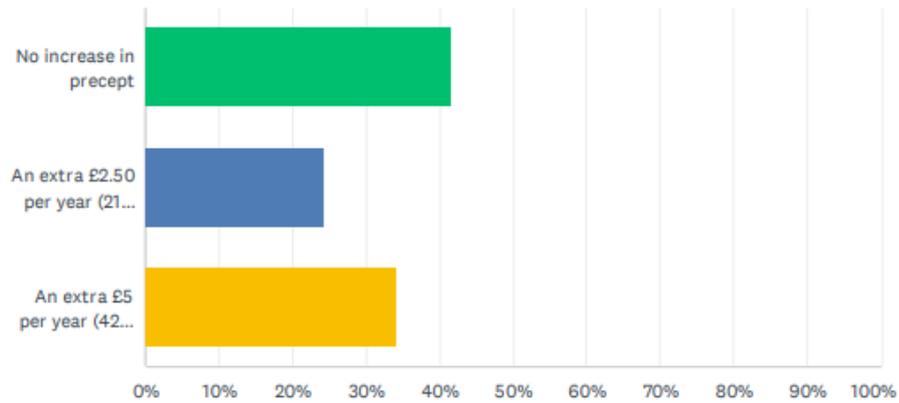
Answered: 1,925 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No increase in precept	41.51%	799
An extra £5 per year (42p extra a month) This is a 2.1% increase	17.56%	338
An extra £10 per year (83p extra a month) This is a 4.02% increase	15.43%	297
An extra £15 per year (£1.25 extra a month) This is a 6.03% increase	25.51%	491
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,925</b>

Q3 The following options are based on a Band D property currently paying £80.35 each year for Fire services. How much more would you be prepared to pay per year for your Fire & Rescue services?

Answered: 1,922 Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No increase in precept	41.68%	801
An extra £2.50 per year (21p extra a month) This is a 3.11% increase	24.30%	467
An extra £5 per year (42p extra a month) This is a 6.22% increase	34.03%	654
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,922</b>

## Common themes from the precept consultation

924 respondents provided comments in the question 4 free text box which asked 'If you have any additional comments, please include these in the box below'. The following sections include key themes from the responses.

### Police and Crime

**A number of comments were focused on the lack of visible policing with 'no bobbies on the beat'. The specific areas mentioned included Loggerheads, Perton, Newcastle, Lichfield, Stoke-on-Trent, Kidsgrove, Stafford, Burton. Respondents also criticised the number of high-paid officers/executive when their salary could be spent on officers.**

*'It goes up year after year but the service gets worse probably due to funds going elsewhere. It's time we got real police back on the streets. Enough is enough.'*

*'why should we pay more for an appalling service which stems from poor communication from first point of contact, even though you have made large investments in to communication and changes within your central control areas according to your press releases'*

*'Staffs Police are woefully inadequate. They have wasted public money yet fallen into special measures.'*

*'The police service is poor as recognised by watchdog. Impossible to contact; officers in cars mainly 2 at a time when Chief complains about insufficient staff; only PCSOs visible on foot. Time to rethink and SERVE the community not expect more and more income'*

*'Why should I pay more for a service that I don't receive, your communication via 101 is diabolical, if you had staff that's actually new the county they worked in would be a step in the right direction.'*

*'Staffordshire police are inadequate as judged by the hm inspector of constabulary. Until such time improvements are made no increase should be charged. Local policing is poor we never see the police on the beat.'*

*'Don't mind paying extra for police services, if the police cut back on the current woke culture and got back to old fashioned policing values.'*

*'Don't trust the police and I don't think they do a good job. My recent experience with them was not good. There seems to be a poor attitude and sense of urgency. You don't see a local policeman walking our street.'*

*'We have had a succession of precept and council tax increases over the last 2-3 yrs. I have not seen an increase in police presence. Communities were promised more police on our streets and on our roads, but I have not seen them.'*

*'The police do an underrated and excellent job. We need to pay them to do what they need to do'*

### **Fire and Rescue**

**Minimal feedback was received about the Staffordshire Fire & Rescue service but included questions around reduced demand and staffing levels.**

*'I cannot understand why funding for Fire and Rescue increases every year when their demand decreases every year'*

*'We never see the fire brigade checking fire hydrants which are potentially crucial in rural areas'*

*'The fire brigade represents excellent value for money in my opinion.'*

*'In the current climate the fire service should make savings like all other public sector groups'*

*'Why should we pay more for the Fire Service when they have even less operational staff than ever before. Crews are turning out/ riding with 4! This is massively dangerous to both FF and Public safety. The fire service throws money down the drain proping up a failing on call system and their new crewing policy for on call staff is set to cost over 1 million more. This is a complete waste of taxpayers money on a failing money pit system'*

*'Consideration for Fire to start supporting police workload, such as forcing doors on behalf of ambulance, help at minor road collisions etc As per "cops like us", local fireman just want to whinge about police not doing the dishes instead of earning their pay'*

### **Supporting an increase**

**A number of comments explained the reasons why they would support an increase in council tax as long as the money went to frontline services.**

*'I don't mind paying a little more as long as the service improves.'*

*'We would encourage you to do all you can to safeguard the service provided by our police staff and colleagues. In doing so we believe you will ensure there are sufficient numbers of skilled people in Staffordshire Police to keep the public and communities safe.'*

'As long as this increase goes directly to the Police and Fire and is not diverted I don't mind paying the increase'

'These key public services' need investment and support by the communities who benefit from them.'

'Unfortunately, to give the excellent service we wish to, we need to increase our precept, year on year by whatever is necessary'

'We need these services and they should be properly funded. The Police especially as they cannot do all they asked to do at present.'

'I am happy to pay as long as service levels improve.'

'Police and fire services are high on my list of must haves from our council tax and should not suffer any cutbacks'

'We cannot manage without emergency services. All costs are increasing and by paying a little more I would hope to see more coverage and better support for all.'

'If we want a decent service, we need to pay for it. The fuel bills and heating bills on their own would warrant increases in funding, let alone increase in calls for service and higher expectations'

### **Not supporting an increase**

#### **The majority of additional comments were against an increase in council tax with rising energy and other bills being a factor.**

'Difficult to justify any increase when Staffordshire Police is in special measures.'

'If we were getting a proper service now I would be willing to pay more but given the service is so poor in our area I do not have the confidence that more money at present would help'

'Can't afford to live as it is.'

'People cannot afford any rises with mortgages, energy bills, food prices and lack of pay rises.'

'We are pensioners and CANNOT AFFORD these rises ..insult to us struggling 😞'

'When I see that previous precept increases have resulted in an improved service I will be happy to reconsider my "no increase" option. As I see it now, we are just throwing money in the pot for no return on the investment.'

'Times are tough and money is short. I'm a pensioner and find it difficult to manage financially. Paying more is not an option especially as I've lost confidence in the police.'

*'I am a pensioner and can't even afford to heat my house properly. I cannot sustain any further increases.'*

*'Our Police/Fire service has not been what it should be for many years now. You cannot keep expecting people to lose money on their households to services. Its completely unfair and unjust.'*

*'In a cost of living crisis where people are having to use food banks and get to warm hubs to simply keep warm, it is immoral to ask for increase in tax to subsidize such services. Savings should be made elsewhere.'*

### **Commissioner's Office**

**A number of responses specifically mentioned the cost of the Commissioner and his office, feeling the money of salaries was better spent on frontline officers.**

*'Get rid of police commissioner and save money no more fat cat payments .need more front line police to have a successful service'*

*'More money for policing and fire and less spent on the commissioners office'*

*'Close your department to pay for increase'*

*'I'm happy that you and your colleagues are doing their level best to make the most of scarce resources to look after us and efficiently use all funding available'*

*'Instead of increasing the precept , remove the totally unnecessary commissioner and his dept and save money'*

*'Save over £3m by doing away with Commissioners Office. How much do you think a state pensioner can afford???'*

*'Disband The Office of Police-Fire Commissioner and spend the £million or more saved on frontline services.'*

*'Save money by reducing the number of top management why have a police chief and a fire chief if the PCC exists.'*

### **Additional comments**

*'You need to show results before you ask to increase for poor performance?'*

*'I'd like to know what savings have been made in the last year and particularly the savings made by doing things differently.'*

*'Are these services improving after being placed in special measures?'*

*'Just as important as an increase is an assurance that all money is spent wisely'*

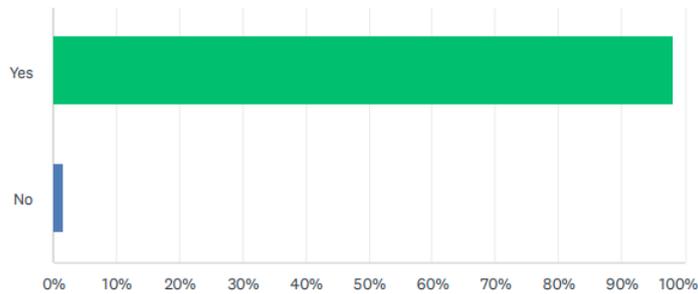
*'If we increase the council tax, will this extra funding, help get Staffordshire Police out of special measures?'*

*'I would ask that any WOKE policies be reversed and no budget spent on them just focus on law and order'*

**Demographic – Precept consultation**

**Q1 Are you responsible for paying council tax?**

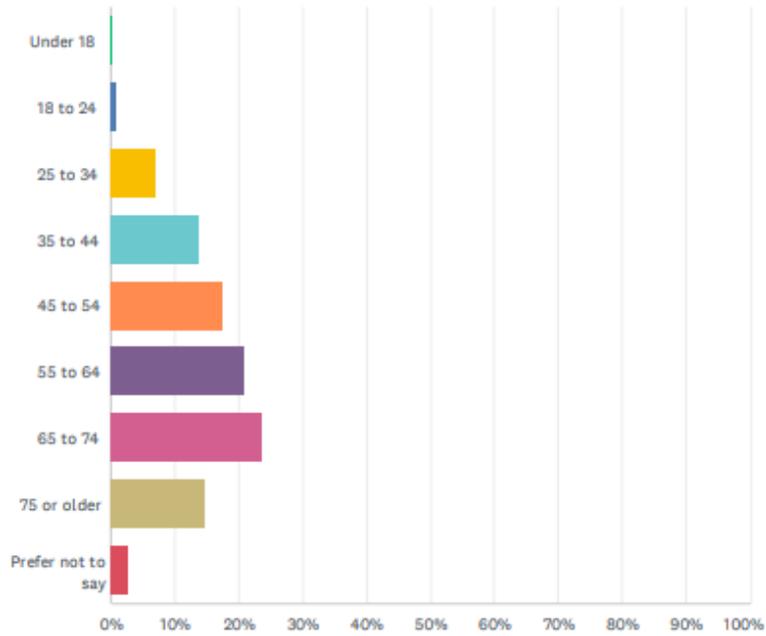
Answered: 1,900 Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.32%	1,868
No	1.68%	32
TOTAL		1,900

## Q5 What is your age?

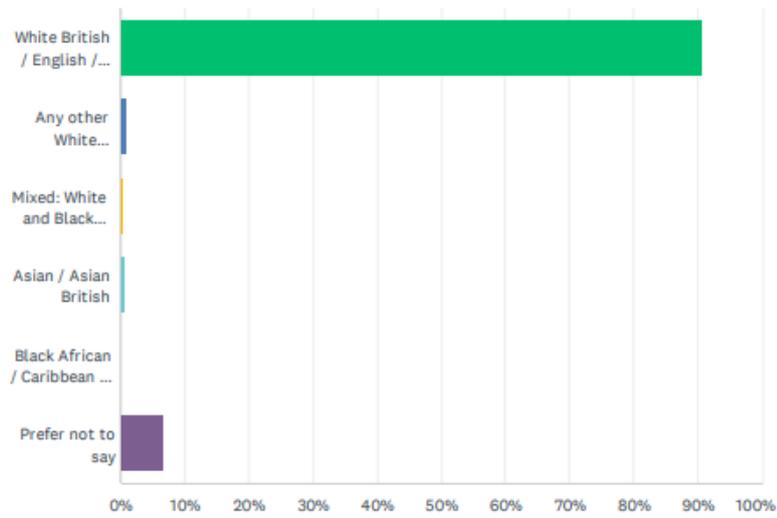
Answered: 1,768 Skipped: 177



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 18	0.17% 3
18 to 24	0.68% 12
25 to 34	6.73% 119
35 to 44	13.63% 241
45 to 54	17.53% 310
55 to 64	20.70% 366
65 to 74	23.42% 414
75 or older	14.48% 256
Prefer not to say	2.66% 47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,768</b>

## Q6 What is your ethnic origin?

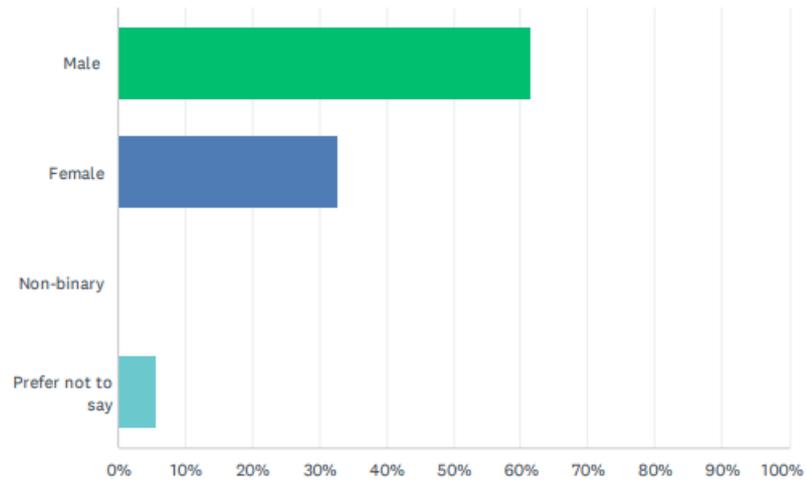
Answered: 1,747 Skipped: 198



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	90.90%	1,588
Any other White background	1.09%	19
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian	0.46%	8
Asian / Asian British	0.74%	13
Black African / Caribbean / Black British	0.29%	5
Prefer not to say	6.53%	114
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,747</b>

## Q7 Are you?

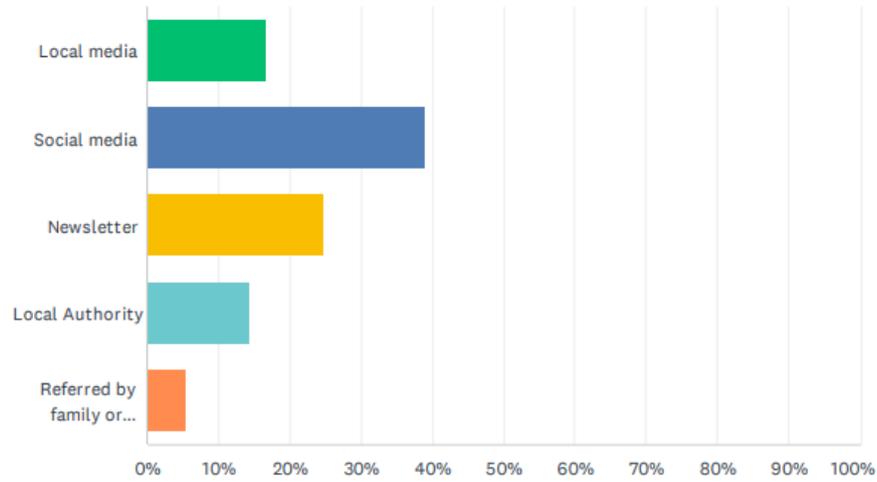
Answered: 1,758 Skipped: 187



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	61.43%	1,080
Female	32.82%	577
Non-binary	0.28%	5
Prefer not to say	5.46%	96
TOTAL		1,758

## Q8 Where did you hear about this consultation?

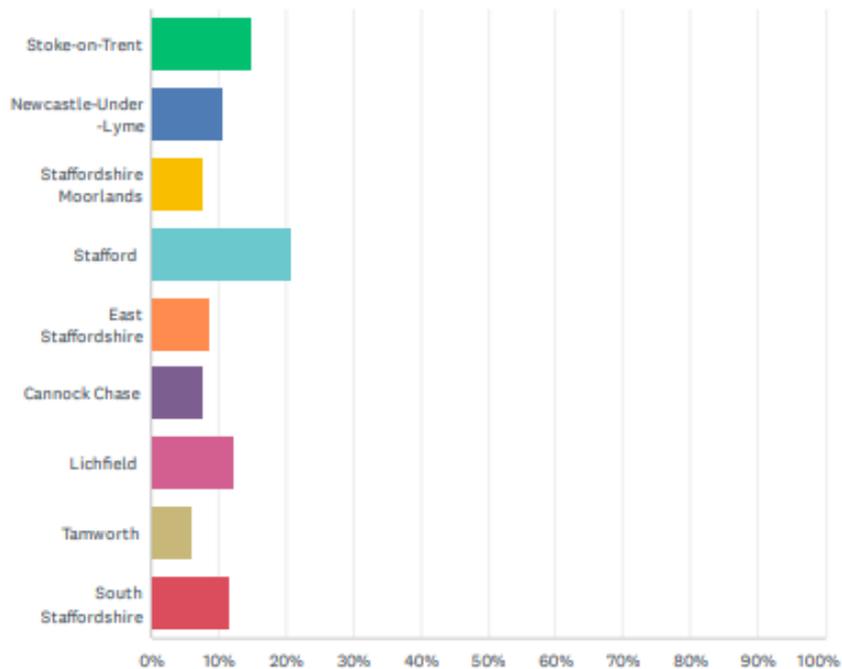
Answered: 1,494 Skipped: 451



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local media	16.67%	249
Social media	38.96%	582
Newsletter	24.83%	371
Local Authority	14.26%	213
Referred by family or friend	5.29%	79
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,494</b>

## Q9 Which area of Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent do you live in?

Answered: 1,767 Skipped: 178



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Stoke-on-Trent	14.94%	264
Newcastle-Under-Lyme	10.64%	188
Staffordshire Moorlands	7.64%	135
Stafford	20.71%	366
East Staffordshire	8.49%	150
Cannock Chase	7.70%	136
Lichfield	12.28%	217
Tamworth	5.94%	105
South Staffordshire	11.66%	206
TOTAL		1,767

## Q10 If you would like to receive updates about the work of the Commissioner, please enter your name and email address below:

Answered: 490 Skipped: 1,455

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	99.39%	487
Email address	98.16%	481