

## Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel – 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

### Police and Crime Budget Report for 2026/27

### (Including Medium Term Financial Strategy)

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

#### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed budget and precept proposal for the police and crime element of the Staffordshire Commissioner's portfolio for 2026/27. This is the Commissioner's fifth budget in office and delivers one of his key responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the following:

- Net police and crime budget requirement for 2026/27
- Proposed precept for the police and crime element of the council tax 2026/27
- Proposed policing Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Outline policing capital budget

The report should be read in conjunction with the accompanying:

- Treasury Management Strategy
- Reserves Strategy
- Capital Strategy

#### Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to:

- Examine the information presented in this report, including:
  - The total 2026/27 net revenue budget requirement of £287.810m (**see Appendix 1**), including
  - A council tax requirement for 206/27 of £112.705m before the collection fund surplus is considered (**see Appendix 5**)

- Support the proposal to increase the 2026/27 precept for the policing element of the council tax bill by **29 pence per week** (£15 per annum for a Band D property), increasing the council tax to £302.57 for a band D property, an increase of 5.22%.
- Note that the council tax base has increased to 372,491 Band D equivalent properties, equivalent to an increase of 0.79% (**see Appendix 4**).
- The council tax collection fund has also been finalised delivering a surplus of £0.683m (**see Appendix 3**).
- Note the use of £1.488m of revenue reserves to balance the 2026/27 budget (this is in addition to use of other earmarked reserves to support identified purposes).
- Note the MTFS summary financials (**Appendix 6**) and MTFS assumptions (**see paragraph 6.5**)
- Note that the settlement received at the point of submitting this report is partial. Representations on this have been made by both the Commissioner and the Chief Constable to the Home Office on the inadequacy of this.
- Support the delegation to the Director of Finance for the Staffordshire Commissioners Office and the Director of Resources of Staffordshire Police to make any necessary adjustments to the budget as a result of late changes to central government funding (including changes due to the final funding settlement being announced) via an appropriation to or from the budget support reserve.
- Support the proposed four-year Capital Investment Programme (**see Section 9**) totalling £108.615m and the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme paper.
- Note the outcome of the Staffordshire Commissioner's budget consultation within the Commissioner's foreword which included a survey regarding the proposed level of precept for 2026/27 (**see Appendix 9**).

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## Commissioner's Foreword



This is my fifth budget and council tax precept proposal as Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. I am pleased with the progress Staffordshire Police has made, with improvements across almost all HMICFRS inspection areas reflecting the commitment of all the officers, staff and volunteers. I thank them for their continued dedication to Staffordshire's communities.

Staffordshire Police continues to deliver tangible results for residents. Neighbourhood crime fell by 13% between October 2024 and September 2025, with home burglaries down by 24%. Targeted summer patrols across 19 hotspot locations led to over 90 arrests and a 26% reduction in knife crime in those areas.

Investment in victim care has also paid off. A new victims' portal has helped deliver an 11% increase in positive victim feedback and improved service.

This 2026/27 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy is set against significant financial uncertainty following the new Fair Funding Review. While the Government has offered PCCs the option to raise council tax above £15 we will not be doing this. I do not believe local taxpayers should be expected to plug gaps created by national funding decisions, particularly given the force's strong financial management.

Even with an above inflation increase of £15, reductions in central government funding are only partly offset, and future pay awards remain a concern.

Despite these pressures, Staffordshire Police is well placed to tackle organised crime and domestic abuse while the recruitment of 100 additional detectives into the Public Protection Unit means better safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults.

Additional officers are improving response times and enforcement, particularly in domestic abuse cases. Specialist teams are making a real difference — from safer roads through the Road Crime Team, to the Proactive and Rural protecting communities from burglary, rural crime and vehicle theft.

Over the past three years, my office and Staffordshire Police have met demanding savings targets through a robust transformation programme. While the force already delivers strong value for money, further efficiencies are needed. A renewed programme will deliver £15m of additional savings next year to protect frontline services.

Taking all of this into account, I propose increasing the 2026/27 police council tax precept by 5.2% — £15 per year, or 29p per week for a Band D property — in line with the referendum limit.

I recognise the pressures facing households and remain committed to keeping council tax as low as possible. However, failing to act now would risk service reductions and higher costs in the future. This budget and MTFS provide the best possible foundation for Staffordshire Police to continue keeping our communities safe.

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report, and the council tax precept proposal within it, considers public and stakeholder consultation, demand for policing services as well as key government announcements.
- 1.2 Following the announcement of the council tax referendum levels and police grant settlement by government, the Commissioner has considered; current and future funding requirements, together with the factors included within his Police and Crime Plan, the results of the survey with local residents, as well as actual and expected cost pressures and efficiency savings from the force and his own office.
- 1.3 Staffordshire Police continues to deliver Value for Money. In the latest HMICFRS Value for Money profiles, Staffordshire Police is one of the lowest funded forces in England and Wales on a per head of population basis but has a level of calls for service significantly above its relative funding level. Staffordshire however continues to be one of the safest places to live, work and visit in the United Kingdom.
- 1.4 The financial landscape in which the decision on the level of precept sits can be characterised by four key themes:
  - Funding uncertainty - The 2026/27 provisional grant settlement was published on 18th December but unusually with no policy information, as the Police Reform white paper is due to be published in January 2026. The settlement outlines Staffordshire will receive the joint 5<sup>th</sup> lowest percentage grant increase in the country and will receive £0.9m less than had it received the average percentage increase.
  - Underfunding of pay awards and new burdens such as changes to the dangerous dogs legislation leading to accumulated pressures. The CSR was known to be difficult for policing and is based on Commissioners taking the full increase in precept each year. This overall allowed for a 2.3% increase in funding (compared to councils who have a 5.2% increase in funding).
  - Historic protection of Police Officer numbers, leading to a materially smaller area of expenditure from which savings can be made. Flexibility on workforce composition was announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, however the funding received to grow Neighbourhood Policing numbers in 2026/27 only covers c.40% of the employment cost leaving the local taxpayer to fund the balance of the governments policy initiative (or accept service reductions elsewhere).
  - A lack of capital grant which leads to significantly increased borrowing costs being a feature of current and future years' budgets. These financial pressures, expanded upon below, sit alongside the operational pressures on the policing service.
- 1.5 The Government has acknowledged the impact of their funding decision by allowing PCCs to apply to the Home Office for permission to raise precept above the £15 announced in the settlement if they feel a balanced budget cannot be met without significant operational impact. The Commissioner, taking consideration of the response from residents during the

annual Precept Consultation, the views of the Chief Constable and recognising the effective financial management of the service has not applied for further precept flexibility. The Commissioner does not feel that government should expect the local taxpayer to fill gaps created by national policy choices and decisions.

- 1.6 After consideration of all these aspects, the Commissioner is proposing a precept **increase of 29 pence per week** from April 2026. Panel should note the settlement assumes PCCs increase funding by the maximum allowed. This increase supports the budget as the cash increase in grant is lower than the cost of pay awards and NI increases imposed on Policing by the Government since the last MTFS.
- 1.7 The government expects Staffordshire to add an additional 26 officers into Neighbourhood Policing roles in 2026/27. To fund this, they have given a specific grant which covers c.40% of the cost of employment per officer. The additional cost is to either come from further efficiencies, the local taxpayer or from redeploying officers from other functions - redeploying officers from other functions is not favoured due to the impact on those functions and service delivery in the round. This will mean difficult choices going forward around workforce composition.
- 1.8 Despite the difficult funding position from Central Government, with the savings plan developed, continual prudent financial management as well as the precept increase investment will continue to be made in Policing locally. It remains important that investment continues to be made in maintaining a safe and confident Staffordshire. The Commissioner and Chief Constable will make the following headline investments into Policing and Crime since the last MTFS in:
  - The budget protects the growth in police officer numbers, setting an establishment of 2,083 fte, a growth of 71 fte since the last budget. This is the highest number since 2010 and the highest under the Police and Crime Commissioner model and supports the Force in its workforce planning objectives of increasing Police Officer numbers.
  - Investments into Artificial Intelligence around public contact, redaction, statement writing, translation and forensics analysis to improve productivity and thus service to the public.
  - EV infrastructure and sustainability schemes to meet unfunded obligations placed on policing by the government.
  - Recruitment of transferees, bringing experience at pace into Staffordshire Police to complement our existing recruitment of student officers.
  - A capital programme that continues to modernise estate, drive digital improvement as well as continuing our fleet replacement program.
  - Cutting edge equipment for frontline staff including the latest Body Worn Video technology, increasing vehicle based ANPR coverage alongside the latest Taser

technology.

Further detail is contained in **Section 5**.

- 1.9 In addition, rates are forecast to gradually fall over the MTFS period but currently remain above an optimum level to be borrowing at. Strategically the capital programme has been constructed to take account of this, with no new long-term borrowing taking place in 2025/26 or 2026/27 and existing loans being repaid. This, alongside a desire to reduce the investment backlog in IT and Estates, sees an increase in capital financing charges into the revenue budget over the life of the MTFS. The Force and Commissioner remain committed to investing in the capital programme.
- 1.10 Panel should note that over the last 4 years the Commissioner has repaid £12.8m of loans (c.17% of the total loans) and taken no new loans out since 2018/19. No new long term loans are required to be taken out to fund capital expenditure in 2026/27 with repayment of maturing loans being made from cash balances in year.
- 1.11 The Commissioner will continue to support the Chief Constable's transformation programme and has committed to providing a capital funding envelope which includes a significant operational investment programme for estates. This paper is accompanied by a Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy which explain how this investment will be afforded. Further detail on the proposed capital investment is contained in **Section 9**.
- 1.12 If the proposals in this document are supported then the Staffordshire Commissioner will have the following funding available in 2026/27:

Table 1 Net Budget Requirement Comparison 2025/26 to 2026/27

	2025/26	2026/27	Change
Funding	£'000	£'000	£'000
Home Office Funding (Non-ringfenced) (a)	166,350	174,423	8,073
Precept	106,274	112,705	6,431
Council Tax Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	(259)	683	942
<b>Total funding for the year</b>	<b>272,364</b>	<b>287,810</b>	<b>15,446</b>
Officer Maintenance Ringfenced Grant (b)	5,275	0	(5,275)
Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (ring-fenced) (c)	3,014	5,513	2,498
<b>Total funding including specific grants</b>	<b>280,654</b>	<b>293,323</b>	<b>12,669</b>
<b>Total Home Office funding per Settlement (a + b + c)</b>	<b>174,640</b>	<b>179,936</b>	<b>5,296</b>

	2025/26	2026/27	Change
Spend	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staffordshire Commissioner	7,563	7,109	(454)*
Staffordshire Police	260,487	273,691	13,204
Capital Financing & Revenue Contribution to Capital	8,647	9,218	571
Investment Income	(688)	(720)	(32)
Use of Budget Support Reserve for underlying gap	(3,645)	(1,488)	2,157
<b>Total spend (agree to total funding)</b>	<b>272,364</b>	<b>287,810</b>	<b>15,446</b>

\*includes an adjustment for the transfer of £0.132m of contracts from PCC to Force

The detailed budgets are shown in **Appendix 1**

## 2. Funding Settlement and Financial Context

- 2.1 The 3 year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) earlier in the year set out dedicated allocations for Policing. This was welcomed as it allows for more developed medium term planning. The CSR was known to be difficult for policing and based on commissioners taking the full increase in precept each year allowed for a 2.3% increase in funding (compared to councils who have a 5.2% increase in funding).
- 2.2 The settlement received on the 18<sup>th</sup> December is for one year only and does not allocate out the full Comprehensive Spending Review settlement allocation leaving an estimated £196m that has been retained by the Home Office. This has been 'top sliced' and retained within the Home Office for purposes which at the point of preparing our budget is unknown. In addition, it is understood that certain grants have been reallocated on a different methodology. The total estimated impact of this has been to drive a further budget gap of £4.3m.
- 2.3 As a result of this the Commissioner and Force have moved from having a balanced position, based on the CSR assumptions, that allowed for investment into the Police and Crime plan, maintenance of headcount and was based on an increase in precept of 3.8% in line with inflation to one with a £4.3m deficit. Given the partial and late nature of the settlement, alongside the fact that this reduction was not trailed has led to all Forces reconsidering their budget positions.
- 2.4 The Government has acknowledged the impact of their funding decision by allowing PCCs to apply to the Home Office for permission to raise precept above the £15 announced in the settlement if they feel a balanced budget cannot be met without significant operational impact. The Commissioner, taking consideration of the response from residents during the annual Precept Consultation, the views of the Chief Constable and recognising the effective financial management of the service has not applied for further precept flexibility. The Commissioner does not feel that government should expect the Local Taxpayer to fill gaps created by national policy choices and decisions.
- 2.5 However, this leaves difficult choices to be made locally. These choices will still ensure that Police Officer numbers are maintained and are 79 higher than they were for the 2024/25 budget, contact service headcount is maintained and crucial investments into Policing locally are maintained.
- 2.6 Even though rates of inflation have continued to reduce this financial year from the peak of 2022 they are still above the Bank of England target of 2% and there remains the legacy impact of the previously high rates of inflation. As a result, pay settlements have remained higher than otherwise expected for both police officers and police staff. This is compounded by the fact that pay settlements are only partially funded by central government. This has put police budgets under significant strain and will continue to impact over the period of the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS)

- 2.7 Pay and inflationary pressures were higher in 2025/26 than forecast in the MTFS with the average pay award of 4.2% being announced (2.8% was budgeted for in line with recommendations from Government). Funding was received on a one-off basis in year to cover the differential with Force expected to pick up the difference on an ongoing basis.
- 2.8 In addition, the increase on employers' national insurance charges from April 2025 has increased inflationary pressure into 2025/26 which suppliers have passed on to Policing. These significant inflationary pressures on both pay and prices have been captured in the 2026/27 MTFS, however have necessitated difficult choices on both precept and also savings.
- 2.9 These inflationary increases, alongside a settlement that did not fully cover centrally imposed costs and have made setting the 2026/27 MTFS challenging. The current external environment, seen through inflationary pressures and a move towards above inflation pay awards, remains volatile, increasing the likelihood of budget assumptions being materially challenged in year.
- 2.10 The table below demonstrates the impact of central government decisions on the 2026/27 budget since the MTFS was set in February 2025. This does not account for general inflation or incremental drift on pay which are pressures in addition.

	£m
<b>Headline cash increase in Govt funding (excluding precept increase)</b>	4.5
<i>Minus: Pay Pressures from pay award 2025/26 pay award (4.2% vs 2.8% budgeted)</i>	(3.2)
<i>Minus: Pay award proposal 2026/27 vs MTFS assumption (3% vs 2% budgeted for)</i>	(2.3)
<i>Minus: unfunded Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee costs (c.£4.5m cost vs £3m grant)</i>	(1.5)
<i>Minus: Above budgeted inflation increase in Home Office central IT charges</i>	(0.2)
<i>Minus: New Burdens (XL bully legislation funding one off, fire investigation standards)</i>	(0.4)
<b>Underlying government policy impact on funding (decrease)</b>	<b>(3.1)</b>

- 2.11 The table demonstrates that government policy decisions are increasingly reliant on local funding via above inflation precept increases or by making additional reductions in non ringfenced pay and non pay budgets.
- 2.12 With such a deficient funding settlement the Force's transformation programme will require a number of non police officer posts to be deleted from the establishment. All but 5 of these are currently vacant posts that have been held vacant in anticipation of being deleted from the establishment. This remains in stark contrast to other Policing areas which have seen significant redundancy programmes, asks for additional precept flexibility or reductions in officer numbers

- 2.13 Despite these challenges the Commissioner is using a smaller amount from the budget support reserve in 2026/27 than in 2025/26. The use of reserves needs to be balanced between the ability of the Force to identify savings at pace given the late and incomplete settlement and the ongoing sustainability of reserve draws.
- 2.14 As at Quarter 3, the forecast outturn for 2025/26 is a £1.310m underspend. Discussions are ongoing as to the use of this underspend with one of the options being to earmark this to support future years budgets.
- 2.15 The MTFS assumptions for future years funding are that core funding will increase by the percentage growth amounts set out in the CSR. The Home Office has provided a one-year local settlement only. This makes future budget estimates and assumptions inherently risky.
- 2.16 Given the inherent risk of a partial settlement a contingency of £0.250m has been included in the budget.

### 3. The Budget Process

- 3.1 The 2026/27 budgeting round continues to use a risk-based approach to budget setting which has sought to align the budget process with identified strategic operational priorities and risks, making strategic investments where funding allows in line with the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan.
- 3.2 The budget protects the growth in police officer numbers, setting an establishment of 2,083. This is the highest number since 2010 and the highest under the Police and Crime Commissioner model and supports the Force in its workforce planning objectives of increasing Police Officer numbers.
- 3.3 Underpinning the budget and MTFS process are the principles of setting a good and balanced budget. Whilst setting a balanced budget is a legal requirement, significant focus is spent on ensuring it is a ‘good budget’.

A **Balanced Budget** means that:

- Income equals expenditure
- Cost reduction targets and investment proposals are credible and achievable, and:
- Key assumptions are ‘stress tested’



A **Good Budget** means that:

- It has a medium term focus, supporting the Policing Plan
- Resources are focused on our priority outcomes
- It is not driven by short term fixes
- It demonstrates how we have listened to our communities through consultation
- It is transparent and well scrutinised
- It is integrated with the capital programme; and
- It maintains financial stability

- 3.4 The Commissioner and Staffordshire Police have considered key corporate risks when setting the budget. Essentially these risks are operational and organisational around managing people, infrastructure assets, information, commissioning etc.
- 3.5 The force continues to identify its strategic operational risks as part of the Force Management Statement (a requirement of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service). This has been used to inform resourcing strategies at both command and departmental level.
- 3.6 The latest MTFS and, in particular, the 2026/27 budget contained within this report aligns financial resources to areas of greatest risk and therefore is fundamental to the performance management of Staffordshire Police and the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office. It should be noted however that the lateness and deficiency within the funding settlement compared to government costs imposed has meant accelerating areas of savings that, whilst are those believed to have minimal impact on performance, will have an impact on capacity and individuals.
- 3.7 Both Section 151 Officers have worked closely with the wider finance team throughout the year during the budget monitoring process and in preparation of the revenue and capital budgets for 2026/27. In respect of the budget, this has included (but was not limited to), the identification and agreement of assumptions and methodology and challenge and scrutiny of

the budget workings across both the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) and Staffordshire Police.

- 3.8 The Commissioner and his management team have held regular discussions with the Chief Constable and the Chief Officers throughout the year on the MTFs. These discussions have culminated in a number of full and robust discussions of the budget requirement, the right sizing and funding of the capital programme, national and local operational and financial challenges, the precept options available to the Commissioner and a review of the MTFs and associated risks.
- 3.9 Furthermore, there has been a significant degree of scrutiny and challenge undertaken by the Commissioner and his team, prior to, during and post the January Strategic Governance Board, culminating in final discussions on the policing budget and decision on precept by the Commissioner. The decision around precept is taken by the Commissioner applying his judgement based upon the above budget process.
- 3.10 The approach taken to the MTFs is one where we continually seek to be a well-run organisation, scrutinising areas of spend as well as containing pressures. The overall approach to the MTFs process, in the order below, is:
- 1. Well run**
    - Containment of pressures,
    - Identifying and achieving savings which involve no change to the operating model or incurring redundancy costs,
    - Spending every £ wisely
  - 2. Commercially astute**
    - Income generation
    - Asset sales
    - Balance sheet management
    - Procurement and purchasing efficiencies
  - 3. Transformation**
    - Changing the way we do things
    - Leveraging capital investment to support changes to our staffing model
    - Right sourcing of services and support
- 3.11 In relation to efficiency Staffordshire Police continues to be both one of the most financially stable Police Forces in the United Kingdom despite being poorly funded by Government compared to calls for service.
- 3.12 In terms of resource allocation, based on current Home Office statistics, Staffordshire has one of the highest percentage of officers in front line roles. In short this means Police Officers are in roles that require warranted powers, are relatively more visible and can deliver the impact their powers allow.

- 3.13 Staffordshire is also in the top quartile of reported procurement efficiency savings nationally to date in 2025/26. This follows a trend of continual strong performance of driving efficiencies from third party spend and is a theme continued in the MTFs.
- 3.14 Spend on support services is in the bottom quartile. Whilst significant investment has been made in Digital Services, overall support services have been a focus of and will continue to be a focus of efficiency programmes. To support this an investment in systems replacement (ERP) is included in the capital programme.

#### 4. Precept Strategy and 2026/27 Proposal

- 4.1 The 2026/27 proposed precept increase is 5.22%. This increase is 29 pence per week for a Band D property (equivalent to 19 pence per week for the lowest banded property – Band A).
- 4.2 The Council Tax Referendum Principles for 2026/27 state that PCCs can increase the policing element of council tax by £15 per annum before triggering a referendum. This assumption of a maximum increase was made by the Government as part of its decisions on funding Policing nationally for cost pressures imposed on it.
- 4.3 The Commissioner has engaged with local residents and stakeholders on a wide range of matters. In relation to the precept, the recent consultation showed that the majority of respondents support an increase in the police and crime precept.
- 4.4 The Commissioner has listened to this feedback and his intention to increase funding in the coming year by £6.431m (excluding the collection fund positions) from the precept, which will provide additional investment to policing as well as ensuring that material cost pressures are met for the budget year 2026/27. Importantly this increase provides additional protection to services in the medium term.
- 4.5 The table below illustrates the financial impact of the precept changes on the council Band D rate and increase in funding for Police and Crime in Staffordshire.

Table 2: Precept changes

Council Tax (Police & Crime Element)	2025/26	2026/27
Band D Council Tax Proposed	£287.57	£302.57
Increase on Prior Year (Band D)	£14.00	£15.00
Percentage increase on Prior Year	5.12%	5.22%
Total Precept Levied*	£106.274m	£112.705m
<b>Weekly Increase (Band D)</b>	<b>£0.27</b>	<b>£0.29</b>

\*This includes changes in the tax base as well as precept rate changes

- 4.6 The increase in council tax funding also takes in to account the actual tax base increase for 2026/27 (0.79%) when calculating the financial impact of the precept flexibility. The proposed council tax increase by banding is shown in **Appendix 5**.

## 5. Investments in Policing

- 5.1 The Commissioner, in reaching a decision to increase the policing precept, has considered the need to balance increases in local taxation against the investments required in local policing to continue building back in capability and capacity, as well as enabling Staffordshire Police to respond to new and emerging threats.
- 5.2 The Commissioner has supported the recruitment of 53 fte additional Police Officers during 2025/26 as a result of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. However, whilst a grant of £3m was received to fund these the actual cost of employment totals c.£4.5m including ancillary costs. Given the increase is mandated the Commissioner and Force are required to offset the additional costs that are not funded. Further to this the additional 26 growth in 26/27 is funded at c.40% if these are new officers.
- 5.3 Recruitment of transferees, bringing experience at pace into Staffordshire Police to complement our existing recruitment of student officers. Bringing in experienced officers has been key to injecting experience into the Force, a Force that has proportionately one of the most inexperienced front lines in the country.
- 5.4 Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure and sustainability schemes to meet unfunded obligations placed on policing by the government. In Staffordshire this will mean significant amounts are required to be spent on both buying EV vehicles as well as installing charging points. In addition, certain policing tactics and vehicle uses are currently not tenable with Electric Vehicles.
- 5.5 Funding to invest into Artificial Intelligence (AI) around public contact, redaction, statement writing, translation and forensics analysis to improve productivity and thus service to the public. Investing in AI remains central to both improving policing productivity, and the governments ambitions for driving efficiency in the public sector.
- 5.6 Cutting edge equipment for frontline staff including the latest Body Worn Video technology, increasing vehicle based ANPR coverage alongside the latest Taser technology. This will support crime detection, deterrence and officer safety.
- 5.7 Within the wider capital programme there remains a commitment to complete the firearms training facility and re-provision of the public order training facility. Upgrades to both custody facilities to ensure safe detention and upgrades to operational police stations are to be considered as part of the operational investment programme for estates.

## 6. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- 6.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been updated as follows and is shown in detail in Appendix 6.
- 6.2 The MTFS is an important document in the overall financial framework of the group's planning. It builds on the budget for 2025/26 and incorporates plans to meet changes in available financing with the need to meet current and future commitments.
- 6.3 It is a requirement that the Police and Crime Plan must cover the period until the end of the financial year however it is prudent to prepare a medium-term financial strategy over a longer period than this and therefore the report focusses on a four-year timeline.
- 6.4 The MTFS is based on full delivery of a number of savings arising through Resource Allocation Challenge panels as included in **Appendix 8**.
- 6.5 The MTFS includes a number of key assumptions covering likely funding levels, inflationary increases and expenditure items. A summary of the main MTFS assumptions are shown below for consideration:

Table 3: Assumptions

Description	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Estimate	2028/29 Estimate	2029/30 Estimate
<b><u>Police Officers</u></b>				
Pay Award	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%
<b><u>Police Staff</u></b>				
Pay Award	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	17.0%	17.0%	17.0%	17.0%
<b><u>Non Pay Inflation</u></b>				
General	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Utilities & Fuel	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<b><u>Funding &amp; Income</u></b>				
Government Funding	3.03%	3.26%	1.71%	1.96%
Council Tax Base Increase	0.79%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Variable Income Charges	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Council Tax Precept Increase %	5.22%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%
Council Tax Precept Increase £	£15.00	£9.05	£9.32	£9.60

- 6.6 All assumptions in the MTFS are subject to change however they are useful in establishing the general size of the underlying pressures in the budget.
- 6.7 Assumptions on inflation have been cross-referenced with other policing and local public sector organisations and believe they are consistent. Panel should note however that in relation to inflation this is continues to be significantly more difficult to forecast.
- 6.8 The CSR likely assumes a mixture of above inflation increases in precept to achieve the spending totals set out over the three years. This is assumed to be a £14 (4.63%) increase in 2027/28 and a £14 (4.42%) increase in 2028/29. The MTFS is modelled on increases of 2.99%.
- 6.9 There remains a significant risk in relation to future pay awards across the public sector. The Commissioner's view is that any nationally agreed pay awards over inflation should be covered by national government funding.
- 6.10 Based on forecast energy usage, targeted investment to reduce consumption and the proposed energy prices from our energy advisors we have seen a reduction of this budget for 2026/27. However, this remains an area of volatility that underpins the need to hold sufficient general fund reserves.
- 6.11 The tax base forecasts are based upon economic growth forecasts from the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) blended with local insight and knowledge from billing authorities.
- 6.12 The triannual revaluation of the police staff Local Government Pension Scheme has occurred. Due to the overall health of the Police LGPS fund there has been the ability to reduce employer contributions by 4.5% from 21.5% to 17%. This results in c.£3m of reduced employer contributions and is one of the main reason the Commissioner is able to protect front line policing in what has been a constrained and difficult funding settlement.
- 6.13 The Force has articulated a strategic ambition to the Commissioner to increase Police Officer numbers over the life of the MTFS from the 2024/25 base of 2,002 fte to 2,100. This budget allows for 2,083 fte Officers. However, the MTFS contains no further allowance for the remaining 17fte growth as a consequence of the limited nature of the one year settlement received.

## 7. Risks and Sensitivity Analysis

7.1 The table below sets out a sensitivity analysis on key assumptions within the 2026/27 budget.

Table 4: Sensitivity Analysis on Assumptions

Cost Area	Change	£'000
Police Pay	1%	1,517
PCSO/Police Staff	1%	891
Utilities	1%	20
Vehicle costs	1%	33
Supplies & Services	1%	107
Police Pension Contribution	1%	988
Police Core Grant Funding	1%	1,515
Precept	£1	372
Precept	1%	1,127

7.2 Inflationary pressures remain a significant concern both over the short term and are more likely than not to present a significant challenge around non-pay spend.

7.3 Pay budgeting has increasingly become more volatile over the last few years. Whilst welcome from an employee perspective and has contributed to increasing candidate pools for hard to fill staff roles, it has placed significant strain on budgets. To fund each 1% increase in pay is the equivalent to a c.2.5% rise in precept for no additionality to the local taxpayer – there is a stark reality that continual large pay awards which are set by the Government, that are materially underfunded by central government, place the financial burden on either the local taxpayer, reductions in headcount or both.

7.4 Given the inherent risk of a partial settlement a contingency of £0.250m has been included in the budget.

## 8. Reserves Position

- 8.1 The Commissioner's Reserve Strategy sets this out the minimum general fund reserve to be 3% of the net revenue budget, with the general fund reserve currently at 3.59% of the 2025/26 net revenue budget.
- 8.2 A number of earmarked reserves are included within the overall reserves position; these reserves exist to cover increased risks in the external environment such as pay and pension changes.
- 8.3 The 2026/27 MTFS includes the use of £1.488m from the budget support reserve to balance the underlying gap, with a further balance to be allocated in future years of the MTFS dependent upon future need.
- 8.4 In 2026/27, in addition to the unwinding of the budget support reserve, other material movements include the further use of the budget support reserve (£0.4m) to support the budget on a one-off basis due to additional bank holidays in 2026/27 compared to the standard financial year, planned use of the IT transformation reserve (£0.400m) to support the Digital, Data and Technology department as set out in the 2024/25 MTFS, and PCC ring-fenced reserves to support commissioned services.
- 8.5 Should a pay award be higher than budgeted (as was the case in 2025/26), this may necessitate the use of the pay and pensions reserve, if this is not fully-funded. This reserve would cover on a one-off basis an unfunded element of c.1.5%.
- 8.6 If the proposals in this report are adopted then the reserves position will be as shown in **Appendix 2**.

## 9. Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30

- 9.1 The Capital Programme and Capital Strategy for 2026/27 to 2029/30 has been developed and is reviewed within the Capital Strategy. The Capital Programme has been developed by the operational budget holders in discussion with the Head of Financial Accounting and the Director of Resources.
- 9.2 The revenue consequences of the proposed programme have been considered in the development of the revenue budget and the required prudential indicators are set out in the accompanying Treasury Management Strategy.
- 9.3 Panel should note that over the last 4 years the Force and Commissioner have repaid £12.8m of loans (c.17% of the total loans) and taken no new loans out since 2018/19. No new long term loans are required to be taken out to fund capital expenditure in 2026/27 with repayment of maturing loans being made from cash balances in year.
- 9.4 Whilst this is a sign of prudent financial management over the long term this direction of travel cannot be maintained without incurring further significant backlog maintenance and driving in inefficiency by not exploiting technology.
- 9.5 The Force has carried out a comprehensive review of the capital programme for the 2026/27 MTFS, re-baselining the programme and ensuring greater congruence between corporate change programmes and the capital programme.

Table 5 – Changes to Capital Financing Costs

	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Capital Financing Cost MTFS 2026/27	9,218	11,678	13,169	14,419
Capital Financing Cost MTFS 2025/26	11,047	12,240	13,342	14,278
<b>(Reduction)/ Increase</b>	<b>(1,829)</b>	<b>(562)</b>	<b>(173)</b>	<b>141</b>

- 9.6 In the short term the reduction in capital financing costs has been driven in part by a number of planned interventions including reducing the in year (2025/26) programme, reduction in revenue contribution to capital, and a review of borrowing requirements.
- 9.7 The table below details the Capital Programme projects and spend over the MTFS period with the expected funding of the programme. The detailed programme for 2026/27 is shown within Appendix 7 – Capital Programme.

Table 6: Capital Programme Spending

Programme	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Estates	20,110	12,316	20,700	21,970
Digital, Data and Technology	5,791	5,640	5,850	6,498
Transport	1,900	2,200	2,250	2,300
Operational Equipment	290	100	100	600
<b>Total Capital Programme</b>	<b>28,091</b>	<b>20,256</b>	<b>28,900</b>	<b>31,368</b>

Funding	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0
Capital Grants	(232)	(331)	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	(2,007)	(2,257)	(2,257)	(2,300)
Earmarked Reserves	0	(469)	(2,322)	(703)
Internal Borrowing Requirement	(25,852)	(17,199)	(24,321)	(28,365)
<b>Total Capital Programme Funding</b>	<b>(28,091)</b>	<b>(20,256)</b>	<b>(28,900)</b>	<b>(31,368)</b>

- 9.8 Whilst the capital programme has been constrained by affordability the Commissioner will continue to seek opportunity to reduce cost and seek alternative funding as well as making additional revenue contributions should the opportunity arise in year to keep down long-term debt
- 9.9 There remains a desire to address backlog maintenance. This will address areas such as custody, local policing bases as well as specialist headquarters functions and covers a 10 year period.
- 9.10 The capital programme also includes provision for the replacement of Southern Area Custody Facility (SACF). Whilst a business case has not yet been presented or approved, the most prudent position of providing for the replacement of SACF has been included given the material nature of the expenditure.
- 9.11 The Commissioner will continue to support the Chief Constable's transformation programme and has committed to providing a capital funding envelope which includes a £5.767m investment programme for the redevelopment and modernisation of operational policing sites.
- 9.12 This paper is accompanied by a Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy which explain how this investment will be afforded.

## 10. Statement of the Commissioner CFO on the robustness of the Budget and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves

10.1 The Local Government Act 2003, Part 2, Section 25, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2013, requires the Commissioner's CFO to report on the robustness of the estimates used for the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The Commissioner is required to have regard to the report of the CFO and the report must be given to the Police and Crime Panel.

10.2 It is noted that the budget years 2026/27 onwards are planned with more un-certainty than has been the case in recent years. The external environment continues to be volatile, with significant inflationary pressures and significant uncertainties, including an upcoming spending review. Whilst there remains some uncertainty with regard to future settlement funding, increased pay awards and inflation, estimates have been included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and appropriate provision within Earmarked Reserves.

I conclude, therefore, that the budget for 2026/27:

- Is balanced and has been prepared on a robust basis,
- Is accompanied by a Capital, Treasury Management and Reserves Strategy

**Sarah Wilkes**

**Director of Finance / S151 Officer for the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office**

## Appendix 1

### Revenue Budget 2026/27

	Original Budget 2025/26	Restated Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Year on Year Change
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Pay</b>				
Police Officer Pay Costs	141,663	142,458	151,663	9,205
PCSO Pay Costs	8,073	8,077	7,867	(210)
Police Staff Pay Costs	80,763	80,938	81,185	247
Other Employee Costs	4,020	3,950	4,020	70
Police Officer Pensions	4,403	4,403	4,535	132
<b>Total Pay</b>	<b>238,922</b>	<b>239,826</b>	<b>249,271</b>	<b>9,444</b>
<b>Non Pay</b>				
Repairs & Maintenance	32	32	48	16
Other Premises Costs	6,771	6,538	6,442	(96)
Vehicle Costs	3,988	3,133	4,056	923
Other Travel Costs	802	748	668	(80)
Operational Supplies & Service	7,619	7,409	7,802	393
Communications & Computers	13,138	13,211	14,367	1,156
Administration	1,630	1,639	1,847	209
Other Supplies & Services	988	1,344	1,090	(253)
<b>Total Non Pay</b>	<b>34,968</b>	<b>34,052</b>	<b>36,320</b>	<b>2,267</b>
<b>Contracted</b>				
Third Party Payments	18,127	18,772	18,456	(317)
<b>Total Contracted</b>	<b>18,127</b>	<b>18,772</b>	<b>18,456</b>	<b>(317)</b>
<b>Capital Financing Cost</b>				
Capital Financing Costs	8,647	6,404	7,211	807
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	2,257	2,007	(250)
<b>Total Capital Financing Cost</b>	<b>8,647</b>	<b>8,661</b>	<b>9,218</b>	<b>557</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Grants & Contributions	(8,789)	(17,157)	(14,211)	2,946
Reimbursements	(5,943)	(5,929)	(5,997)	(68)
Sales, Fees & Charges	(1,527)	(1,617)	(2,094)	(477)
Recharge Direct to Capital	0	(126)	(126)	0
Other Income	(750)	(750)	(685)	65
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>(17,009)</b>	<b>(25,579)</b>	<b>(23,112)</b>	<b>2,466</b>
<b>Unallocated Savings</b>				
Unallocated Savings	(873)	(133)	(133)	0
<b>Total Unallocated Savings</b>	<b>(873)</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Revenue Budget before Reserves</b>	<b>282,781</b>	<b>275,601</b>	<b>290,019</b>	<b>14,418</b>
Transfers to/(from) Reserves	(5,141)	(3,236)	(2,209)	1,029
<b>Total Revenue Budget</b>	<b>277,640</b>	<b>272,364</b>	<b>287,810</b>	<b>15,446</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>				
Home Office Funding	171,625	166,350	174,423	8,073
Council Tax Funding	106,014	106,014	113,387	7,373
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>277,640</b>	<b>272,364</b>	<b>287,810</b>	<b>15,446</b>

## Appendix 2

### Useable Reserves Forecast

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>11,094</b>	<b>11,094</b>	<b>11,094</b>	<b>11,094</b>	<b>11,094</b>
<b>Capital Receipts Reserve</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Capital Grants Unapplied</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>331</b>
Budget Support Reserve	4,783	2,882	2,882	2,882	2,882
Capital Reserve	947	1,313	1,679	2,045	2,410
Collaboration Reserve	691	691	691	691	691
ESN Reserve	2,422	2,422	1,953	0	0
Insurance Reserve	1,621	1,621	1,621	1,621	1,621
IT Transformation Reserve	2,243	1,843	1,443	1,443	1,443
Major Events Policing Reserve	104	104	104	104	104
Operational Reserves	12,784	12,510	12,347	12,184	12,020
Pay and Pension Reserve	3,836	3,836	3,836	3,836	3,836
Reshaping the Future Reserve	1,246	1,246	1,246	1,246	1,246
Uplift Reserve	1,610	1,610	1,610	1,610	1,610
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>32,287</b>	<b>30,078</b>	<b>29,412</b>	<b>27,662</b>	<b>27,863</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>43,712</b>	<b>41,503</b>	<b>40,506</b>	<b>38,756</b>	<b>38,957</b>

## Appendix 3

### Council Tax Report 2026/27

#### Council Tax Surplus / (Deficit) by Billing Authority

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Change £000
Cannock Chase	(152)	85	237
East Staffordshire	99	(26)	(125)
Lichfield	2	128	127
Newcastle	0	(80)	(81)
South Staffordshire	142	76	(66)
Stafford	(138)	245	383
Staffordshire Moorlands	116	(30)	(146)
Tamworth	45	89	44
Stoke City Council	(374)	195	570
<b>Total</b>	<b>(259)</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>942</b>

## Appendix 4

#### Council Tax Base by Billing Authority

	2025/26 (Band D Equivalent)	2026/27 (Band D Equivalent)	Change (Band D Equivalent)
Cannock Chase	29,999	29,863	(136)
East Staffordshire	41,575	41,513	(62)
Lichfield	41,523	42,132	610
Newcastle	39,807	40,258	451
South Staffordshire	40,191	40,492	301
Stafford	49,634	50,296	662
Staffordshire Moorlands	34,382	34,455	73
Tamworth	23,596	24,073	477
Stoke City Council	68,851	69,408	557
<b>Total</b>	<b>369,558</b>	<b>372,491</b>	<b>2,933</b>

*\*n.b. figures are rounded to the nearest whole Band D equivalent*

## Appendix 5

### Council Tax Report 2026/27

#### Council Bands for Each Band and Billing Authority Precepts

#### Based upon a Band D increase of 5.22%

Band	2025/26	2026/27	Annual Increase	Increase per week
	£	£	£	£
A	191.71	201.71	10.00	0.19
B	223.67	235.33	11.67	0.22
C	255.62	268.95	13.33	0.26
D	287.57	302.57	15.00	0.29
E	351.47	369.81	18.33	0.35
F	415.38	437.05	21.67	0.42
G	479.28	504.28	25.00	0.48
H	575.14	605.14	30.00	0.58

	2025/26	2026/27	Change
	£	£	£
Cannock Chase	8,626,833	9,035,636	408,803
East Staffordshire	11,955,780	12,560,649	604,869
Lichfield	11,940,683	12,748,000	807,317
Newcastle	11,447,299	12,180,863	733,564
South Staffordshire	11,557,726	12,251,664	693,939
Stafford	14,273,293	15,218,155	944,862
Staffordshire Moorlands	9,887,232	10,425,049	537,818
Tamworth	6,785,502	7,283,768	498,266
Stoke City Council	19,799,425	21,000,839	1,201,415
<b>Total</b>	<b>106,273,771</b>	<b>112,704,623</b>	<b>6,430,852</b>

## Appendix 6

### MTFS Summary Financials 2026/27 to 2029/30

	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Pay</b>				
Police Officer Pay Costs	151,663	159,221	166,311	173,721
PCSO Pay Costs	7,867	8,679	9,080	9,500
Police Staff Pay Costs	81,185	85,258	89,049	93,093
Other Employee Costs	4,020	4,086	4,173	4,259
Police Officer Pensions	4,535	4,610	4,687	4,764
<b>Total Pay</b>	<b>249,271</b>	<b>261,854</b>	<b>273,301</b>	<b>285,337</b>
<b>Non Pay</b>				
Repairs & Maintenance	48	48	49	50
Other Premises Costs	6,442	6,569	6,706	6,844
Vehicle Costs	4,056	4,254	4,313	4,372
Other Travel Costs	668	684	699	715
Operational Supplies & Service	7,802	7,903	8,003	8,158
Communications & Computers	14,367	15,362	15,621	15,892
Administration	1,847	1,881	1,918	1,952
Other Supplies & Services	1,090	1,100	1,108	1,113
<b>Total Non Pay</b>	<b>36,320</b>	<b>37,801</b>	<b>38,418</b>	<b>39,095</b>
<b>Contracted</b>				
Third Party Payments	18,456	18,421	18,340	18,479
<b>Total Contracted</b>	<b>18,456</b>	<b>18,421</b>	<b>18,340</b>	<b>18,479</b>
<b>Capital Financing Cost</b>				
Capital Financing Costs	7,211	9,420	10,912	12,119
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,007	2,257	2,257	2,300
<b>Total Capital Financing Cost</b>	<b>9,218</b>	<b>11,677</b>	<b>13,169</b>	<b>14,419</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Grants & Contributions	(14,211)	(14,260)	(13,996)	(13,996)
Reimbursements	(5,997)	(6,007)	(6,012)	(6,012)
Sales, Fees & Charges	(2,094)	(2,015)	(1,903)	(1,894)
Recharge Direct to Capital	(126)	(126)	(126)	(126)
Other Income	(685)	(365)	(240)	(165)
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>(23,112)</b>	<b>(22,773)</b>	<b>(22,277)</b>	<b>(22,193)</b>
<b>Unallocated Savings</b>				
Unallocated Savings	(133)	(133)	(133)	(133)
<b>Total Unallocated Savings</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>(133)</b>
<b>Total Revenue before Reserves</b>	<b>290,019</b>	<b>306,848</b>	<b>320,818</b>	<b>335,004</b>
Net use of Reserves	(2,209)	(197)	203	203
Transformation Requirement	0	(9,308)	(15,881)	(21,982)
<b>Total Revenue Budget</b>	<b>287,810</b>	<b>297,342</b>	<b>305,139</b>	<b>313,225</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>				
<b>Settlement Funding</b>				
Home Office Funding (non-ringfenced)	174,423	180,106	183,189	186,371
<b>Total Settlement Funding</b>	<b>174,423</b>	<b>180,106</b>	<b>183,189</b>	<b>186,371</b>
Council Tax	113,387	117,236	121,950	126,854
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>287,810</b>	<b>297,342</b>	<b>305,139</b>	<b>313,225</b>

## Appendix 7 – Capital Programme

### Estates Capital Programme

Package	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
<b>Investment Programme</b>						
<b>Weston Road Headquarters</b>						
Armed Police Training Facility	The continued construction of the armed policing training facility, including professional fees. Whilst the scheme has yet to be approved this forecast represents the latest estimated cost.	10,335	0	0	0	<b>10,335</b>
HQ Block 1	A minor improvement scheme to include roof repairs and automated door replacement.	45	0	400	0	<b>445</b>
HQ Block 5	Upgrade to the windows and doors from the stock condition surveys.	18	0	0	0	<b>18</b>
HQ Block 7	An upgrade to the Heating, Ventilation and Cooling system within the main conference and visitor block at HQ is required to replace a failing end of life system.	95	300	0	0	<b>395</b>
HQ Block 8	Upgrade to the windows and doors from the stock condition surveys.	25	0	0	0	<b>25</b>
HQ Block 9	Minor improvement scheme to address elements of backlog maintenance. Investment required to maintain HQ estates.	250	45	50	1,670	<b>2,015</b>
HQ External and M&E Works	Mechanical and Engineering works to improve/ replace gates, generators, lifts and Dog Training Facilities.	349	160	0	0	<b>509</b>
<b>Custody Facilities</b>						

Package	Description	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
Northern Area Custody	Investment required to maintain the facility, and to deliver safer detention standards. This site has seen minimal investment since it was built in the late 1990's.	3,079	4,781	0	0	<b>7,860</b>
Watling Custody	Mechanical and Engineering works to replace generator	140	0	0	0	<b>140</b>
Custody	A review of custody facilities to ensure they meet the longer-term requirements of modern policing.	300	4,200	18,000	18,000	<b>40,500</b>
<b>Driver Training</b>						
Driver Training Site	As a result of changes to College of Policing licensing requirements, there is a requirement to relocate the driver training team.	200	0	0	0	<b>200</b>
<b>Operational Sites</b>						
Operational Investment Programme	Investment required to maintain and refurbishment of operational policing site, to meet the needs of modern policing.	2,717	1,000	1,000	1,050	<b>5,767</b>
Sensitive Interview and Clinical Suites	Investment required to maintain sensitive policing sites	200	540	0	0	<b>740</b>
Various Sites	Replacement of CCTV	80	40	0	0	<b>120</b>
Burslem Police Station	Replacement of roof	160	0	0	0	<b>160</b>
<b>Other Sites</b>						
Lindum House	In the short-term minor improvement scheme to address elements of backlog maintenance.	115	0	0	0	<b>115</b>
Ranleigh Street- Forensics	Investment into Forensic stores	150	0	0	0	<b>150</b>
<b>Other Activities</b>						
Government Environmental Obligations	Investment for decarbonisation & EV points. Local cost due to lack of Central Government funding to support policy decisions.	1,352	750	750	750	<b>3,602</b>

Package	Description	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
Capitalised Maintenance Programmes	UPS, Fire Safety and Emergency Repairs	500	500	500	500	2,000

<b>Total Estates Capital Programme</b>		<b>20,110</b>	<b>12,316</b>	<b>20,700</b>	<b>21,970</b>	<b>75,096</b>
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#### Digital Data and Technology Capital programme

Package	Description	Budget 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Investment Programme						
Network Improvement Programme	Improvements to the networks – ISE, Wifi and core network	285	150	150	0	585
Business Systems						
New ERP System	Replacing outdated systems with a modern, integrated ERP platform. This will streamline processes across finance, HR, and operations, improve data accuracy, and provide real-time insights. The investment supports transparency, compliance, and long-term cost savings, aligning with our digital transformation strategy.	0	2,750	2,750	0	5,500
Digital Asset Management						
Digital Interview Recording	Rolling replacement programme	0	0	0	359	0
Body Worn Video	Rolling replacement programme	0	0	0	2,259	0

Package	Description	Budget 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30	Total
<b>Force Contact Centre (FCC)</b>						
Storm	Migrate to the new system, STORM. This is essential as STORM MA is end-of life from December 2026	180	0	0	0	180
FCC Delivery	External resources that have detailed, niche, technical experience to support the specific technical programme deliverables	935	0	0	0	935
CRM Call Assist	Improvements in customer contact and service including introducing automated updates to individuals around ongoing crime matters	390	0	0	0	390
Gazetteer	System upgrade	60	0	0	0	60
ICCS Hardware	The project involves the acquisition of essential hardware from ICCS to support the organization's IT infrastructure upgrade and ensure compliance with security and performance standards.	0	0	0	600	600
ISDN to SIP Migration Programme	IT infrastructure upgrade and ensure compliance with security and performance standards.	550	0	0	0	550
Redbox	Procure and implement Redbox to modernize IT infrastructure, improve system resilience, and support strategic digital initiatives.	200	0	0	0	200
<b>Device Replacement</b>						
Mobile device refresh	Rolling replacement programme	280	290	50	50	670
Laptops & Desktops refresh	Rolling replacement programme	600	600	600	600	2,400
ANPR Static Cameras	Replacing the existing cameras to new ANPR cameras.	261	0	0	380	641
Audio Visual Conferencing	Rolling replacement programme	50	50	50	0	150
DDaT Infrastructure refresh	To replace end of life IT infrastructure.	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000

Package	Description	Budget 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30	Total
<b>National Systems</b>						
ESN Programme	Nationally mandated scheme to replace airwave.	0	800	1,250	1,250	<b>3,300</b>
AI Transformation/ Development Fund	strategic investment in advanced technologies to enhance operational efficiency, decision-making, and service delivery across the organization	1,000	0	0	0	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Total Digital Data and Technology Capital Programme</b>		<b>5,791</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>5,850</b>	<b>6,498</b>	<b>23,779</b>

#### Fleet Capital Programme

Package	Description	Budget 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Forecast 2028/29	Forecast 2029/30	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Fleet Refresh Programme</b>						
Vehicle Replacement Programme	The replacement of vehicles selected through a process of evaluation, considering the age, mileage and condition of every vehicle. These have been identified as critical for replacement due to either excessive mileage, age or being no longer operationally fit.	1,900	2,200	2,250	2,300	<b>8,650</b>
<b>Total Fleet Programme</b>		<b>1,900</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>8,650</b>

**Operational Equipment Capital Programme**

Package	Description	Budget 2026/27 £'000	Forecast 2027/28 £'000	Forecast 2028/29 £'000	Forecast 2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
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**Investment Programme**

Replacement Programme	Ensuring that Staffordshire Police has a modern & fit for purpose equipment provision. This provision includes tactical body armour and specialist forensics and investigative equipment and ANPR	290	100	100	600	900
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<b>Total Operational Equipment Programme</b>		<b>290</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>1,090</b>
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## Appendix 8 – Savings Proposals

Savings Theme	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
<b>Corporate Savings</b>						
Capital Financing	Reduction in capital financing cost compared to 2025/26 budget as a result of capital programme review. This incorporates the benefit from having no need to borrow in 2026/27	(1,579)	1,316	390	314	<b>441</b>
Capital Financing	Reduction in Revenue Contribution to Capital financing on a one off basis and a corresponding reduction in the Vehicle Replacement Programme. Vehicle telematics investment in previous years have enabled decisions to be taken around replacing general purpose vehicles of low use	(250)	250			<b>0</b>
Interest Receivable	As a result of the capital programme review, higher cash balances are forecast in 2026/26 and available for investment. In addition interest rates have been marginally higher than forecast	(324)	240	65	75	<b>56</b>
Rank Mix	A review of the levels of command in Force with a view to increasing spans of control where appropriate.	(100)	(100)			<b>(200)</b>
Police Staff Vacancy Factor	For the purposes of budgeting a historic 5% vacancy factor is included on non ringfenced areas of business (Police Officers, contact staff, Digital services and SCO). Given the current vacancy rate is running at 7% (before deleting vacant posts) the vacancy factor will be increased to 6% on an ongoing basis.	(715)				<b>(715)</b>

Savings Theme	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
Absorption of Neighbourhood Policing costs	The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee allowed for a contribution towards corporate costs. These corporate costs have been subsumed in existing budget as part of wider efficiency reviews and as such the specific budget line will be removed. Noting overall NPG is a pay pressure on Officer pay	(464)				<b>(464)</b>
National Insurance contingency	The 2025/26 MTFS included an allowance for third party NI increases passed on to Policing. These have now been captured in the wider MTFS and thus the specific residual budget line is being released	(71)				<b>(71)</b>
Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Contribution Rate	Following a revaluation exercise, the employer contribution rate has reduced from 21.5% to 17%	(3,109)	(140)	(146)	(153)	<b>(3,548)</b>
<b>Total Corporate Savings</b>		<b>(6,613)</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>(4,502)</b>

Enabling Services						
Gas and Electricity	Reduction in budget required as a result of price stabilisation and reduced usage vs budget	(200)				<b>(200)</b>
Gas and Electricity	Sustainability savings from installing solar panels and more energy efficient lighting	(63)				<b>(63)</b>

<b>Savings Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>2027/28 £'000</b>	<b>2028/29 £'000</b>	<b>2029/30 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
Procurement savings	As a result of national work on procurement there is an expectation that this delivers savings for Forces. This will be in conjunction with local work. Based on historic trends a saving has been included beyond savings already identified at the point of budget setting	(250)				<b>(250)</b>
Procurement savings - Software	Saving as a result of reduced scope and volume on IT licenses	(115)				<b>(115)</b>
Fleet running costs	Reduction in fuel and oil spend as a result of lower prices and more fuel efficient vehicles. More efficient vehicle use from telematics	(90)				<b>(90)</b>
Estates rationalisation	Estates consolidation programme savings from collaboration, reduced third party costs and proposed sale of Hearn Court	(163)				<b>(163)</b>
Facilities Management contract	Saving as a result of changes to Facilities Management provision from contract renegotiation	(280)				<b>(280)</b>
Firearms Range	Reduction in estimated running costs vs budgeted allocation, including the impact of solar panel instillation, changes to range heating temperatures alongside stabilisation in electricity prices	(400)				<b>(400)</b>
Driver training income generation	Additional income receivable from selling driver training courses to a number of other Forces	(100)				<b>(100)</b>
University subcontracting	Additional income form the renegotiation of subcontracting arrangements for the PCER programme	(43)				<b>(43)</b>
Training Costs	Reduction in training costs	(109)				<b>(109)</b>

<b>Savings Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>2027/28 £'000</b>	<b>2028/29 £'000</b>	<b>2029/30 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
Secondary Data Centre Relocation	Relocation of the secondary data centre	(101)	(5)			<b>(106)</b>
IT provided services	Reduction in third party costs based on previous assumptions. Home Office central IT charges continue to run ahead of inflation however will increase by less than initially notified 12 months ago alongside requirement for Forces to fund Home Office dual running costs	(791)				<b>(791)</b>
IT Peripherals	Reduction in the spend on IT peripherals	(25)				<b>(25)</b>
Collaboration Overheads	Recharge of collaboration overheads to partner agencies to reflect the true cost of service delivery	(42)				<b>(42)</b>
Fleet Services	Removal of role	(43)				<b>(43)</b>
Commercial Services	Removal of vacant role from within structure	(43)				<b>(43)</b>
Commercial Services non pay	Reduction in various non pay budgets as a result of efficiency review	(44)				<b>(44)</b>
Income generation	Income from collaborated posts being recharged to partner agencies above budgeted changes	(22)				<b>(22)</b>
People & Organisational Development non pay	Reduction in various non pay budgets as a result of efficiency review	(53)				<b>(53)</b>

Savings Theme	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
People & Organisational Development	Removal of vacant role from within structure	(36)				<b>(36)</b>
<b>Total Enabling Services Savings</b>		<b>(3,014)</b>	<b>(5)</b>			<b>(3,019)</b>

Deputy Chief Constables Command						
Professional Standards	Changes to supervision and removal of vacant grade H role	(69)				<b>(69)</b>
Income generation	One off income generation from documentary	(5)	5			<b>(0)</b>
Non pay review	Reduction in various non pay budgets as a result of efficiency review	(106)				<b>(106)</b>
Staffing Review	Removal of 2 vacant E grade posts	(70)				<b>(70)</b>
<b>Deputy Chief Constables Command Total</b>		<b>(249)</b>	<b>5</b>			<b>(244)</b>

Savings Theme	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
<b>Force Contact and Operations Command</b>						
Non pay review	Reduction in various non pay budgets as a result of efficiency review	(202)				(202)
Staff payments	Review of one off payments made to staff and officers in line with regulations and terms and conditions	(5)				(5)
Staffing Review	Removal of vacant post following service redesign and upskilling. CDO's now complete ID capture in custody as part of their role. Vacant ID staff role removed	(46)				(46)
Income Generation	Disposal of small scale items via e-bay account	(20)				(20)
Staffing Review	Review of vacant posts within command – removal of E grade vacant post	(37)				(37)
Staffing Review	Review of vacant posts within command – removal of F grade vacant post	(45)				(45)
Staffing Review	Review of vacant posts within command – removal of D 0.75fte grade vacant post	(24)				(24)
Income Generation	Additional income as a result of cabling cars at the roadside	(30)				(30)
Income Generation	Provision of dog training to third parties	(44)				(44)

<b>Savings Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>2027/28 £'000</b>	<b>2028/29 £'000</b>	<b>2029/30 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
Staffing payments	Removal of on call payments above police regulations	(13)				(13)
Criminal Justice	Removal of two vacant posts within criminal justice	(66)				(66)
Income Generation	Salary costs reimbursed from partnerships	(353)				(353)
Income Generation	Increased income generation from wide loads following upskilling and additional investment into function	(120)				(120)
Income Generation	Secondment income from National Police Air Service	(9)				(9)
Income Generation	Increase in immigration detainees funded by UK Border Agency	(20)				(20)
Income Generation	Firearms licensing collaboration income growth	(12)				(12)
Cost Reduction	Reduction in budget required to support intoxiliser replacement programme	(48)				(48)
Firearms licensing renewals	Increase in income target based on Home Office data for the next 4 years	(116)				(116)
<b>Force Contact and Operations Command Total</b>		<b>(1,251)</b>				<b>(1,251)</b>

Savings Theme	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
<b>Local Policing Command</b>						
Rank Mix review	Reduction in 3 Chief Inspector Posts and 1 Chief Supt post and replacement with PC posts	(209)				(209)
Bank Holiday Reduction	Reduction in bank holiday shifts from 9 hours to 8 hours removing shift overlaps	(75)				(75)
PCSO Allowances	Full-year effect of allowances review		(270)			(270)
PCSO recruitment timeline	One off saving on PCSO recruitment intake dates vs budget driven by need to prioritise L&OD capacity to support Officer Uplift	(667)	667			0
<b>Local Policing Command Total</b>		<b>(950)</b>	<b>397</b>			<b>(554)</b>

<b>Public Protection Command</b>						
Robotic Process Automation	Removal of 2 IFD research posts as a result of RPA	(74)				(74)
External funding	One off external funding secured from Department for Education to support post within PPU Child	(70)	70			0
Contribution to Partnerships	Removal of partnership contribution due to changes in agreed structure	(37)				(37)
Procurement saving	New contract agreed for TechSafe SkyGuard – saving vs budget	(4)				(4)

Savings Theme	Description	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
Staffing Review	Review of staff roles within PPU including removing vacant posts	(128)				(128)
<b>Public Protection Unit Total</b>		<b>(313)</b>	<b>70</b>			<b>(243)</b>

Specialist Crime Command						
Non pay review	Reduction in various non pay budgets as a result of efficiency review	(11)				(11)
Covert	Non pay	(9)				(9)
Forensics Outsourcing	Reduction in forensics outsourcing following underspend achieved in 2025/26 as a result of process improvement and internal investments	(300)				(300)
Digital Forensics Programme	Resulting savings from transformation business case	(170)				(170)
Contribution to Partnerships	Reduction in the cost of NABIS as a result of review. NABIS is hosted by West Midlands Police on behalf of all Forces	(22)				(22)
Pathology	Forensic Post-Mortem – reduction in spend vs budget. Note charges are nationally set by Home Office	(8)				(8)
Allowances	Review of allowances paid within directorate	(20)				(20)
Investigative Officers	One off saving on IO recruitment intake dates vs budget driven by need to prioritise L&OD capacity to support Officer Uplift	(193)	193			0

<b>Savings Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>2027/28 £'000</b>	<b>2028/29 £'000</b>	<b>2029/30 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
Staffing Review	Review of staff roles within SCC including removing vacant posts	(228)				(228)
ROCU	Removal of vacant staff role from ROCU establishment as a result of ROCU efficiency programme	(52)				(52)
<b>Specialist Crime Command Total</b>		<b>(1,012)</b>	<b>193</b>			<b>(819)</b>

<b>Staffordshire Commissioner's Office</b>						
Removal of Council Tax Leaflet Distribution		(28)				<b>(28)</b>
Reduction of Custody Visitor Costs		(7)				<b>(7)</b>
Reduction in Audit Committee Allowances		(17)				<b>(17)</b>
Removal of IT Software Purchase		(70)				<b>(70)</b>
Reduction of Office Equipment		(3)				<b>(3)</b>
Triage		(22)				<b>(22)</b>
Buddi Tags		(16)				<b>(16)</b>

<b>Savings Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>2027/28 £'000</b>	<b>2028/29 £'000</b>	<b>2029/30 £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
Navigators		(14)				<b>(14)</b>
Reduction in Commissioning work		(169)				<b>(169)</b>
<b>Staffordshire Commissioner's Office Total</b>		<b>(345)</b>				<b>(345)</b>

<b>Total Force &amp; Corporate Savings</b>		<b>(13,402)</b>	<b>2,226</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>(10,631)</b>
<b>Total Staffordshire Commissioner's Office</b>		<b>(345)</b>				<b>(345)</b>
<b>Total Group Savings</b>		<b>(13,747)</b>	<b>2,226</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>(10,976)</b>

## Appendix 9 Survey

### Precept consultation outcomes 2026/27

#### 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 and Stoke-on-Trent 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 2026/27 to provide the services expected by those who live, work and visit Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

A formal consultation took place between 18 December and 19 January. A range of methods were used to encourage participation, resulting in responses from **2,370** 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 2026/27 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 and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service. Platforms include Facebook, Instagram, X, Nextdoor and Tik Tok) Paid adverts also ran on Nextdoor and Tik Tok 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 MPs, Councillors, volunteers, community groups and business owners
- **Smart Alert** – Multiple messages issued to over 24,000 residents via Staffordshire Smart Alert
- **Internal** – Internal message sent to Police and Fire & Rescue staff to encourage participation

## Commissioner's Consultation foreword

Dear resident, this is proving to be another challenging year for setting the budgets for our local Police and Fire & Rescue services. Once again government grant funding does not fully cover the increased cost of inflation, pay rises, or national policy decisions. The government talks publicly about increased 'spending power' for our emergency services but unfortunately this relies on above inflation increases in local council tax.

In recent years, you have supported small council tax increases. These increases amount to only a few pounds extra a year, but I remain very aware that everyday life is becoming more expensive.

I would like to understand whether you would support a small increase – just a few pounds above inflation – to allow these investments in your community safety to continue.

My preference would be not to raise council tax at all. However, this would lead to real cuts in your services and a reduction in their capability to keep you safe, and I do not believe that is what any of us want. You have my assurance that every penny raised will be focused on strengthening both services so they are fit for the future. I expect this approach, coupled with robust savings will mean we are all better off and safer. It will allow us to continue investing in police officers and staff, to maintain our fire-fighter numbers, and ensure they have the equipment and skills required to keep themselves – and you – safe.

All comments submitted as part of this consultation will be carefully considered before I set the budget in the New Year. Please do let me know your views on your local Police and Fire & Rescue services.

Here is a snapshot of what your council tax is already helping to deliver:

### Staffordshire Police

- **13%** reduction in neighbourhood crime (burglary, robbery, theft from a person and theft of and from a vehicle) from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, compared to the same period last year. Home burglaries dropped by **24%** in the same period
- Extra pro-active patrols over the summer, targeting 19 different hotspot locations as part of a strategy to reduce serious violence, knife crime and anti-social behaviour. The additional patrols saw at least **90** people arrested and a **26%** reduction in knife crime in targeted areas
- A dedicated victims' portal, giving regular updates on the progress of their investigation, has contributed to an **11%** increase in victims' positive opinion after contact with Staffordshire Police
- **100** more detectives in Staffordshire Police's Public Protection Unit which focuses on protecting vulnerable children and adults

### Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

- Attended **5,409** incidents between April and September 2025 (an increase of 21.93% on the same period last year) as a result of summer's hot, dry weather and a significant rise in smaller 'secondary' fires

- **7,665** Safe and Well Visits were completed between April and September 2025, helping to ensure vulnerable residents remain safe at home
- Continued work with the NHS. Since the falls response service went live in December 2022, there have been **2,802** mobilisations, responding to vulnerable people falling in their homes. A scheme helping vulnerable discharged patients return safely home from hospital supported **3,433** people between its launch in December 2023 and September 2025

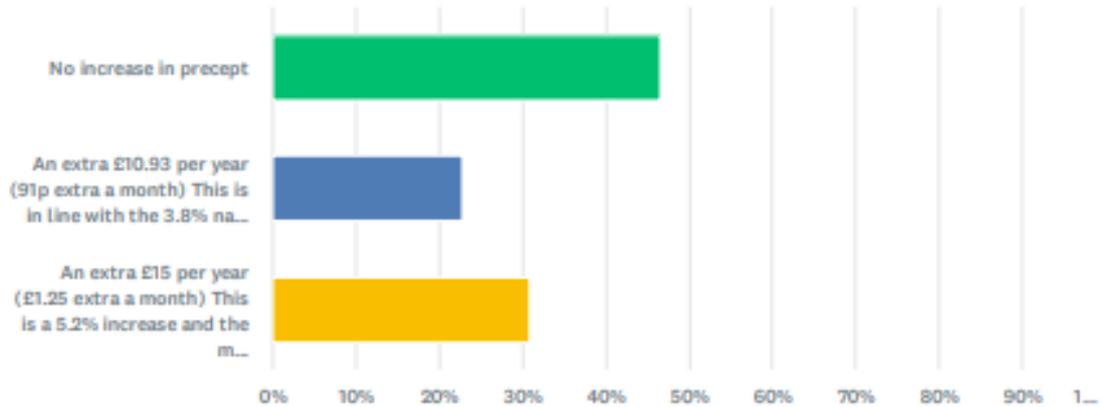
**Ben Adams**

**Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime**

## The results

Q2 The following options are based on a Band D property currently paying £287.57 each year for Police services. How much more would you be prepared to pay per year for your Police services?

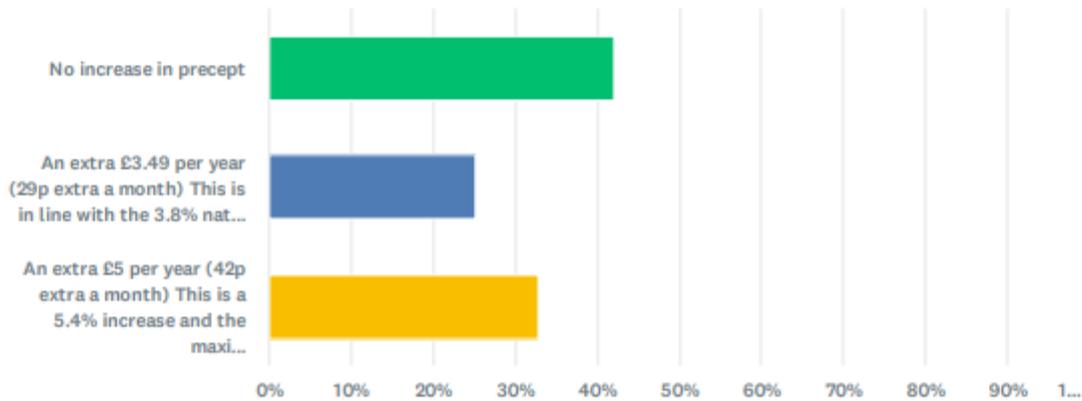
Answered: 2,341 Skipped: 29



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
<span style="color: green;">●</span> No increase in precept	46.48%	1088
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> An extra £10.93 per year (91p extra a month) This is in line with the 3.8% national inflation rate	22.73%	532
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> An extra £15 per year (£1.25 extra a month) This is a 5.2% increase and the maximum precept limit set by government	30.80%	721
<b>Total</b>		<b>2341</b>

**Q3 The following options are based on a Band D property currently paying £91.77 each year for Fire services. How much more would you be prepared to pay per year for your Fire & Rescue services?**

Answered: 2,328 Skipped: 42



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
<span style="color: green;">●</span> No increase in precept	42.01%	978
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> An extra £3.49 per year (29p extra a month) This is in line with the 3.8% national inflation rate	25.21%	587
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> An extra £5 per year (42p extra a month) This is a 5.4% increase and the maximum precept limit set by government	32.77%	763
<b>Total</b>		<b>2328</b>

## Trends over the last 5 years

Year	Number of respondents	Percentage not supporting an increase for Police	Percentage supporting an increase for Police
2026/27	2370	46.48%	53.52%
2025/26	2345	45.56%	54.44%
2024/25	1985	37.90%	62.10%
2023/24	1945	41.50%	58.50%
2022/23	964	31.99%	68.01%

Year	Number of respondents	Percentage not supporting an increase for Fire	Percentage supporting an increase for Fire
2026/27	2370	42.01%	57.99%
2025/26	2345	46.50%	53.50%
2024/25	1985	39.88%	60.12%
2023/24	1945	41.68%	58.32%
2022/23	964	30.11%	69.89%

## Common themes from the precept consultation

**1036** 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 & Crime

**A number of comments were locally focused and expressed concerns about the lack of visible policing in their communities. A number of respondents also expressed concerns over efficiency, issues with contact, not dealing with the issues that matter to people, and distractions from national issues.**

"Given the volume of new houses in the area, this additional council tax should support the increased budgets. I'm not aware of either the police or fire department recruiting more staff or buying more fire engines for the increase in houses so will not be happy with any increases. Especially given prior year increases."

"The police need fundamental reform, to turn them back into a service, rather than an entitled institution, shifting the culture and attitude from authority to servant."

“We never see any police walking or driving around our area, getting through on a phone call is nigh on impossible.”

“I keep paying more and more tax and I keep getting less and less of a service. The government should be funding the emergency services correctly not expecting to keep raising council taxes again and again to fund them.”

“Both services are corrupted by political activism and lack of impartiality. They are both putting the public at risk by employing unsuitable people.”

“When the police start doing their jobs properly, stop pandering to the Palestinian groups, being antisemitic and look after locals when protests are taking place, then an increase would be fine. Two-tier policing is not what we pay for. The police have become a laughing stock.”

“Police should be wholly funded centrally and deal with theft and cybercrime properly.”

“I would be inclined to pay more if the services save money on spending in diversity managers and diversity initiatives. The fire service would have my support, but it’s hard to support police who don't come out to crime but will arrest people for social media posts.”

“Getting through to police is harder and harder. I tried to report issues in the past and after waiting for over 30 mins I gave up. If we can't get through, the crimes logged are not a true reflection of the numbers. I had a case previously that I needed to chase up progress. I couldn't get through, officer was always on leave or a different shift and no-one else could update on their behalf. When I got through to the officer the case had been handed to, they were in the wrong area and it would have to be handed to another officer in the correct area. The most frustrating issue is that I couldn't pop into the police station in Codsall to chase progress or speak to someone.”

“Start dealing with crimes like money laundering (nail bars, "Turkish" barbers, car washes), E-Scooters on pavements and I might think about paying more.”

“No additional funding for police until personal freedoms are restored and the two-tier justice system is fixed.”

“I would only be in flavour of these increases if my area was policed properly (which it is not at the moment)”

“Council tax has already increased each year with wages unfortunately reflecting this increase, we already go without holidays.”

“If these services were private, we would get better value for money. I would support increases if we had a breakdown of where the money is being spent. All we see is this going on pay rises and wasted.”

“The police haven't helped with anti-social behaviour or kept me informed. I’m a nurse so a professional also but do not get wage rises. At least I keep patients informed though.”

“The approach to efficiency savings needs to be more aggressive. You only have to look at the number of police cars/vans that are sitting idle every single day in the compound suggests that assets are not being used as efficiently as possible. Same applies to the property portfolio, etc.”

“The spending needs to be reviewed based on what the government sets out as part of their policies. We are paying too much on council tax as it stands.”

“We have seen the improvements from the police and fire departments over the year and realise the increases in crime and accidents plus weather change etc are seriously affecting our county and country. Sadly, years of underfunding by governments in recent years have led to inevitable cuts in resources and jobs in particular. This has to be corrected and even though we are all under financial pressures with the "cost of living" and inflation we will support paying more for our safety services whomever they are. Please keep your promise that all money will go to the two services and carry on the improvements in all services to improve our lives.”

“I would like to see better, more effective use of the resources we already have. To prioritise important crimes and redistribute officers spending time on following up drop social media posts.”

“I do not believe that the money paid for council tax is being spent wisely. I have never seen a police patrol where I live, despite their claims that they are regular. The police are practically uncontactable with hour-long waits if you call them.”

“The current budget should be used more efficiently. With regard to the Police, there should be a review into unnecessary paperwork/red tape, that prevents officers from completing their duties efficiently.”

“The idea of putting up council tax year on year to address funding does not show any proactive approach to address funding. It is in bad taste whilst building a multimillion-pound firearms facility in which a small percentage of people will have use to then suggest to others to fund the core principles of policing. I am reticent to agree to any increase when it appears year on year without forethought to look to avoid this issue.”

“Police presence has dropped, and they still do not take minor issues like theft (which are still serious) seriously.”

## **Fire & Rescue**

**Fewer responses were received about Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, but those that did included comments around demand, the role Fire & Rescue could play in supporting other emergency services and the importance of engagement with communities.**

“I live in Uttoxeter and know that the fire engine in Uttoxeter is hardly ever on the run due to manning problems.”

“Fire Service drastically underfunded. I could easily foresee a scenario in which the service has to deal with two mass casualty incidents that require fire service (low-rise or high-rise fires) that occur at the same time, SFRS does NOT have the resources to deal with both and delay in getting other counties assistance would be too long and would cause unnecessary delay and loss of life I believe. Stop cutting the fire brigade. SFRS has had enough cuts. Just cut the amount of PCSOs by 50%.”

“Just ensure fire engines are crewed properly with five on a fire engine instead of running on bare minimum.”

“Would only be willing to pay more for the fire service if they did more. Fire are sat around at a fire station for a job to come in, whereas police are out all day dealing with historic incidents and incoming demand; seems very unfair.”

“The fire service is in desperate need of funding we can’t take any more cuts these cost lives.”

“Staffordshire Fire already have an unworkable on-call model which needs a full review! The false facade adding Police to on-call Fire stations, when in reality there are no additional or deployed Police is absolutely ridiculous.”

“The fire services do a lot more in the community than I realised and I would be happy to support them.”

“Our fire officers are a visible community asset, who already work as another branch of the NHS. I don't believe that they get the recognition they deserve.”

“Gone are the days of lots of house fires etc. The fire brigade should now be supporting the roles of the ambulance service as they do in the USA. There is a lot of down time in the fire force.”

“Fire service has been already stripped down to the bone. I'm not sure that right now if there were two big fires somewhere in a short timeframe that the current fire service here could handle it without committing pretty much all its resources. That's not acceptable for a county this size.”

“I have had personal experience of the Fire and Rescue Service on the recent past and cannot talk too highly of what they did for me.”

“Fire demand is still not high enough to justify an increase in funding. I believe serious decisions should be made about how fire resources are available as I don't think you can justify whole time watches that spend most of their time with their feet up.”

“The Fire and Rescue Service offers good value for money.”

“I feel that further cuts could be made to make the fire service more efficient. They run very well in many areas on a 'retained' basis, which avoids paying for staff to be on a standby basis on night shifts, they also have numerous, expensive stations in each area which must be costing the public purse a huge amount. They are often seen driving through town centres on Saturday nights, using expensive fuel for what appears to be their own entertainment!”

### **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 and more visible policing to keep communities safe.**

“Happy to pay more but PLEASE can we have greater visibility of officers. We NEVER see a PCSO or Police Officer in Meir Heath – you have to go down to Longton Tesco where they are all dealing with the shoplifters. Law-abiding citizens would like to see them patrolling our streets.”

“The fire and rescue service is a successful and high performing organisation and could do more with additional monies. The £5 is a small sum but could really help them to do more.”

“Fire desperately need that extra £5 if they are to continue to provide the excellent service they do to the communities of Staffordshire. With the impact of central government cuts in funding to cut any more from the fire would have a significant detrimental impact on the safety of the people of Staffordshire and the firefighters too.”

“The Police need more money so we can have more PCSOs and PCs in Local neighbourhoods and patrolling the streets. This will help to reduce crime. I’m happy to pay more money if this will increase front line offices (PCSO and PC).”

“You only get what you pay for I believe.”

“All emergency services should have their pay increased by at the minimum 20%. They are always there to protect, save, help. Not enough credit and respect is shown to these wonderful human beings.”

“I would pay the extra if it was spent on increasing police on the street. The police are invisible at the moment. Closed police stations is not acceptable.”

“Prepared to pay even more to see police on the streets at night in Leek.”

“Policing needs significantly more investment, event beyond the £15/year suggested.”

“We can't afford to be without our emergency services! They do an amazing job.”

“I think both services need the investment and resources to do the job. As long as waste is avoided and there is efficiency, prudence in the costs and demonstration of service improvements I would be happy to pay more.”

“Would be happy to pay extra but only if it actually does go into policing! We didn't have a reduction in what we pay when we had a massive reduction in services from the police.”

“I'd be happy to pay a lot more towards the police in particular if they continue the visibility (bobbies on the beat) that I've noticed recently! As a single female, I've felt so much safer when I'm out on my own seeing officers on walkabouts. Also happy paying more towards FRS, as they are worth their weight in gold.”

“My agreement to paying the maximum precept limit of an additional £15 is subject to the Staffordshire Police becoming more visible and more responsive, particularly in rural areas.”

“You can have what you like, but stop wasting it. I don't want money for the police force wasted an useless non-crime rubbish. Use the police force to enforce the law and give those who don't wish to follow it a problem. Likewise, you can have what you want for the fire service, but use it to make

the service the best it can be, not waste it by making sure time is wasted interviewing and appointing all and sundry because they happen to tick a box.”

“I feel we should support the emergency services especially as people and the government expect more but as usual, the government refuses to fund the ‘improvements’ they demand.”

“I would be happy to pay extra for our valuable police, but only if there was more of them to deal with the area. It is very rare I see any police on the beat, or when I had a problem, someone stealing parcel off my doorstep in a cul-de-sac, it had been dealt with properly and not by myself doing all the work and still nothing had been done. I know in this day and age that is minor with what goes on but it matters to me that the area I live in is monitored more closely.”

### **Not supporting an increase**

**The majority of additional comments were against an increase in council tax, with rising household bills and national issues outside Policing and Fire & Rescue’s remit being a factor. There were also concerns about performance in particular, and a number of responses calling for greater efficiencies rather than increased taxation. There were also a significant number of negative comments made in the comment section on a facebook post.**

“I considered the higher increase for police. However, I am very concerned at police actions regarding the unacceptable crack down on free speech. I accept this is political and hope that future governments will leave the police to tackle real crime and not become involved in ‘hurty words’.

“No increase for police. I have been injured twice by mobile e scooters and when I reported this to the police was told not to get involved and let them continue and I should be more aware of my surroundings.”

“Don't see any value as never see any Police presence in our area. Even when calling can never get through... the speeding up of answering calls is a con... you get answered quickly by Triage - if they agree you have a valid call you are then put on hold for another call taker for at the very least 45 mins to an hour... but sometimes longer. Most give up... why pay for this service?”

“I haven't seen any police patrols in my locality for many years now, so I don't feel any increase will help this situation at all.”

2Why should we pay more when the government are putting illegal people in Tamworth and we have paid more and more year on year and got less and less , so no more Tax and the commissioner should be ashamed of himself for even suggesting it.”

“We keep throwing money at the police and we have seen no difference, all you see is police officers being suspended or sacked for misconduct on a full pension that's paid for by the taxpayer, and to be quite honest the money gets stopped weather we agree or not!!!! get the government to take it out of the asylum seekers budget!!!!”

“I pay enough for all of these services and get nothing back. No police available when needed. No police help provided at crucial times. Police show no interest in anything that means they have to work for!”

“I do not see any evidence of police in this locality, so why should there be any increase?”

“I would not consider an increase in police services. There are next to no Police Stations left and you never see any actual policeman/woman/person in the local area outside of the occasional vehicle. The lack of visibility is contributing to an unsafe feeling. Why would I want to pay extra for what seems to be a poorer service.”

“I feel these increases need to be made from central government and not the household taxpayer.”

“As a pensioner we pay enough council tax and it’s getting to the stage where we will not be able to afford to live with everything going up. What do the police do about all shops being robbed of goods? Most shopkeepers say they don’t attend as not interested in petty theft.”

“Can’t get police to attend so deduct from police and give to fire service until police can provide the service they are paid to provide.”

“I would not be prepared to pay any more than currently until the current services, particularly police, provide a service worthy of what is currently being paid. It seems like every year there is an increase for a decreased service. In the current economic climate with cost of living, utility costs etc increasing at phenomenal rates, it is unrealistic and unfair to expect people to pay more for a sub-standard service.”

“I would rather pay less than currently, same applies to council tax. Too much money is wasted.”

“We want the precept reduced. We don’t get value from our council tax as it is, so any additional police and fire funding should come from the council tax, not via an additional precept.”

“We are already overtaxed. I object to paying even more for services that continue to get worse due to wasteful spending by the council.”

“We are already charged enough every month as it is. This is a government-level issue as to your lack of funding, not the public.”

“I pay the most ridiculous amount as a single occupant. I get absolutely nothing for my money. The only thing I am entitled to is a police service, which is appalling in the rural community that I live in, and the fire service in case I need it. Why on earth should I be made to pay anymore? I have no streetlights, no public transport and I have no children! So please tell me what I actually get for my money?”

“Council tax is already way too high, and too much taxpayer’s money is wasted on trivia instead of concentrating totally on essential services.”

“No increases as the government has already made an increase in significant costs in all households through stealth taxes and this would just be a further burden on the people of Staffordshire.”

“No increase as service non-existent. Loads of e-scooters on roads going 35mph. Driving using mobile phones. Nothing done to stop these law breakers.”

“This is an unreasonable ask, when households are faced with Council Tax reviews and increases. We also see and hear little from Police or Fire to suggest we currently get value for money.”

### Commissioner’s Office

**A number of responses specifically mentioned the role and cost of the Commissioner and his office, feeling the money would be better spent on frontline services – particularly since the Government announcement that the role would be abolished.**

“Shut your office before 2028 as is planned and give us two years of savings that can be used without asking council taxpayers to pay. It will put over £500,000 back into services instead of coming cap in hand to sustain your ineffective office for two years. That would be selfless public service.”

“I believe you are soon to lose your office, this cannot come into force soon enough. I am sure your wage and that of your team would be better distributed between the services you speak of.”

“I fundamentally disagree with the Commissioner position and have done since its inception. I believe that national government has withdrawn funding for various public bodies over the last 15-20 years and funding needs to be re-instated. It should not be the public, as part of their council tax, to pay for services that the national government should fund. We should tax the ultra-rich to fund these services rather than charge the general public, who are experiencing a cost of living crisis.”

“Get rid of the commissioner office and staff. Give the Chief Constable more beat officers and fewer civilians to help run the Police.”

“Don’t wait until 2028 to rid of PCC office , do it now and save that unnecessary cost.”

“Once the commissioner’s role has gone, can we please make sure that money goes to operational policing and not admin?”

“Get rid of commissioners and their support staff and associated expenses and reinvest that for a start.”

“Let some of your own office staff go to recover any increases. You can’t keep pushing your extravagant costs onto the general public.”

“I don’t agree with the commissioner post. I would prefer that the money paid to the commissioner and support staff go directly to services. We need more frontline not managers.”

“The money squandered on the position of Commissioner and the associated framework of extra jobs , offices and infra structure is a national disgrace. I suggest that when these positions no longer exist, that saving goes into the pot instantly.”

“I have only approached the Commissioner on one occasion and that resulted in a very unsatisfactory response.”

“Get rid of the Police Crime Commissioner role now not in two years and his support staff and put money into more police on the streets, NHS, Fire Service, Doctors surgeries etc instead of penpushers making poor decisions.”

“I was wondering in the interest in transparency would you be willing to put an email out of the amount of funds your department is allocated and a breakdown of where the funds are spent, including staff salary including any pay rises over the past 12 months?”

“I’m not prepared to pay any more precept until the office of the crime commissioner is gone! Bring policing back into the control of the chief constable. As a retired officer since Commissioners there has been a downward spiral in quality of policing and accountability. Waste of public money! Just think of how many officers that could of been recruited instead of funding an office that’s not required.”

“This is the reason you are leaving in 2028 as you cannot manage a budget. When you are gone there will be a whole load of extra money – so won’t have to always ask for more.”

“As per most recent announcement, the office of crime commissioner is being dissolved to be replaced by locally elected Mayors. Would it not be better to generate the extra income by commencing now the streaming of the commissioner’s office and staff? This could be reviewed on an annual basis until the dissolution is complete.”

#### **Additional comments**

“This is going to trigger so many people. There IS money in England and also Stoke, it’s just the government and local council haven’t got a clue what they’re doing and throwing the money anywhere. The environment is so toxic within most areas of the council that staff are leaving hand over fist. In one department 6 or 7 staff left or transferred to a different dept having 25-30 years EACH experience. Total bullying environment now with inexperienced staff and managers so will only go further downhill.”

“Why is this consultation not considering health and welfare for those in society who need extra help, ie those with genuine disabilities and elderly care requirements – perhaps a fund separated for this would be a good option so the funds can be managed and channelled by a group specifically formed to do so.”

“I live in band F, and I know I am not getting value for money from SSC & SSSDC. However, we do need good policing and fire protection. Kick Highways, we need potholes and drains rectified and made good, plus roads put back in order.”

“We pay all this and only get our bins emptied. Nobody can afford higher payments and it’s not a quality service.”

“I think the council need to look at their budgeting skills. I do not currently see any benefit to the tax I pay. Roads are poor around Tamworth. Green areas are unkempt. Litter everywhere. I have to pay an additional £45 to have my green bin emptied. Where is the money going?”

“Please make it clear to whoever will listen that I am happy to pay whatever it costs to provide all the necessary services which are controlled by local government – health, education, environmental

improvements etc. I am not, however, happy to pay the large salaries of senior local government officials!”

“If residents want a service they should pay for it. We can’t expect to manage increases in pay without expecting increase in overall costs. Personally, if we could guarantee great health, social care, education, law and order, and emergency services, I'd pay 40% tax on all earnings.”

“There are more and more houses and business units being built, every single patch of green in our towns and villages is being developed. Use the extra council tax income from these additional dwellings and business premises rather than continuing to increase your precept on existing residents. Particularly as every year you reduce the ‘service’ you provide in exchange for your funding.”

“I am a single income household. I have a well-paid job, work exceptionally hard and I am a single parent to two children, one in university and one hoping to attend in 2026. My water bill increased by 71% in the autumn and my gas and electricity has just increased by 25%. My pay rise this year was 2%. The cost of living crisis continues and is absolutely destroying me. Any additional increases in council tax will result in some very difficult decisions for me. I urge you not to put any further tax burden on your residents.”

“The council need to use council tax money properly! Sort potholes... stop wasting the money on rubbish (eg poor ‘murals’ painted in Cannock; additional cost to empty brown bins). Use the money where it is needed to support communities...”

“We have lived in the Moorlands since 1985 and having worked for the same local company since 1980 have seen quite a few changes. The only one we are not in favour of is being dragged into Stoke!”

“This is a horrible and divisive newsletter, you should be asking are people willing to pay more for better services. It is wrong to ignore education ,health, public transport, youth services etc. To highlight two services is totally wrong.”

“As a pensioner, not on pension credit, with a small private pension, I can't really afford to pay more council tax but if it's necessary to keep up standards of care, that's OK. What I would like to see is less freeloading by subsidising government officials, eg councillors, council staff and especially at MP & Lords level. So much wasted money that could be diverted back into services.”

“I believe it is a mistake to consult the public. We do not have the data available to us to form any sort of informed opinion. You are specifically paid, or have taken on the mantle to all intents and purposes, to make those decisions and now you will not be campaigning for re-election you should feel empowered to do what you feel is right.”

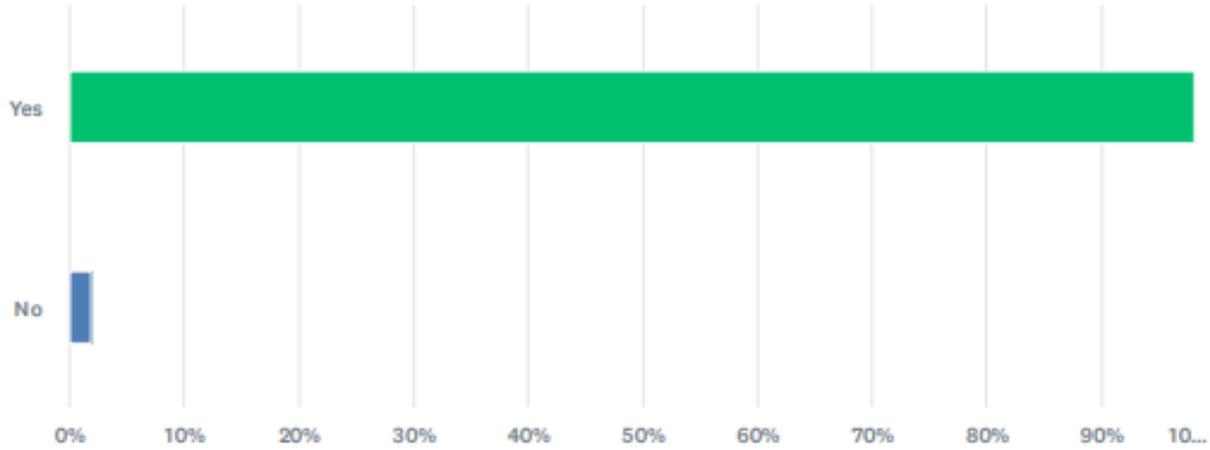
“Vast majority of taxpayers do not use any of these services. The current cost is excessive before increases hit. Why not reduce annual salaries of the 100s of politicians, councillors and vanity expenditure? There is no meaningful data to measure performance of these agencies, just the reporting criteria to fit the current narrative.”

“The problem is we are all paying high enough rates and taxes, the highest in the G7, however the social welfare budget is out of control and taking money for police, services, defence and roads and transport, and the councils and government seem to have lost control.”

## Additional Questions

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

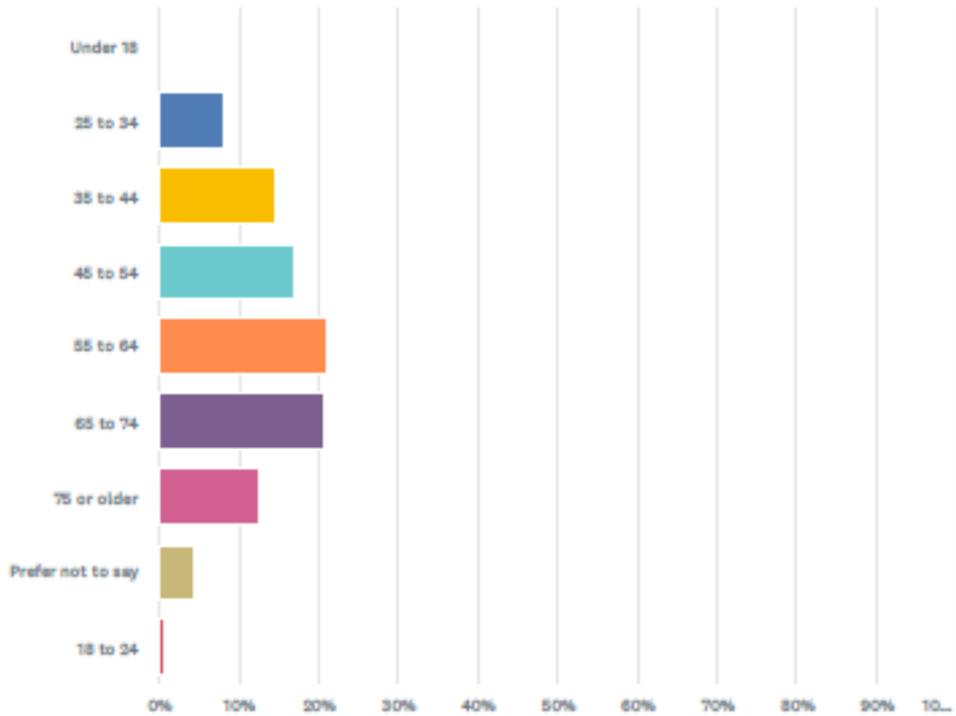
Answered: 2,280 Skipped: 90



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Yes	98.11%	2237
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> No	1.89%	43
<b>Total</b>		<b>2280</b>

## Q5 What is your age?

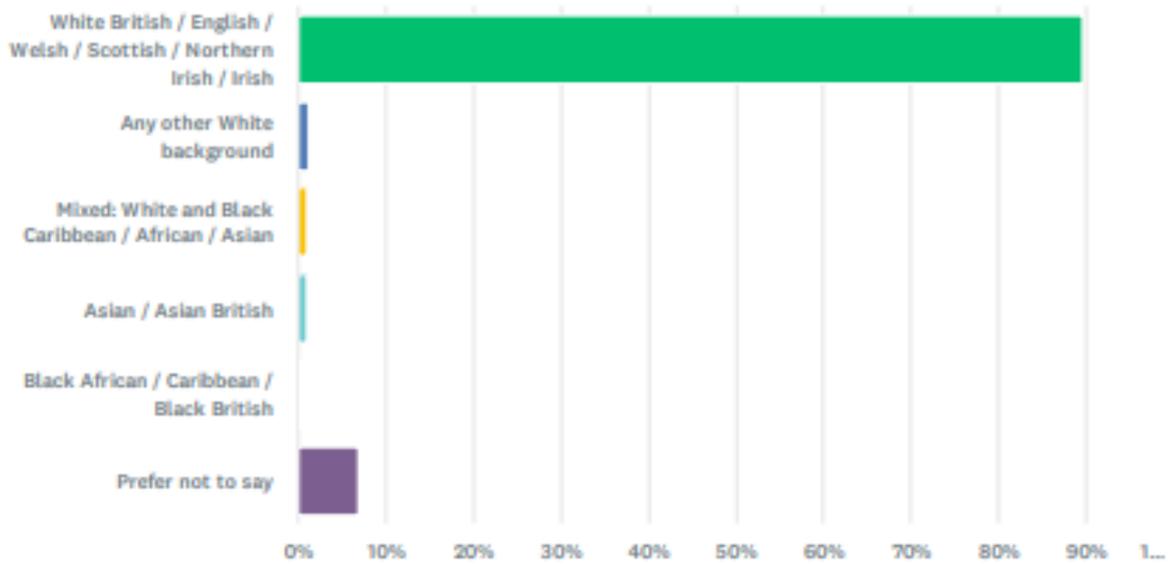
Answered: 1,592 Skipped: 778



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
● Under 18	0%	0
● 25 to 34	8.29%	132
● 35 to 44	12.75%	203
● 45 to 54	12.75%	203
● 55 to 64	21.04%	335
● 65 to 74	20.85%	332
● 75 or older	12.75%	203
● Prefer not to say	4.46%	71
● 18 to 24	0.94%	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>1592</b>

## Q6 What is your ethnic origin?

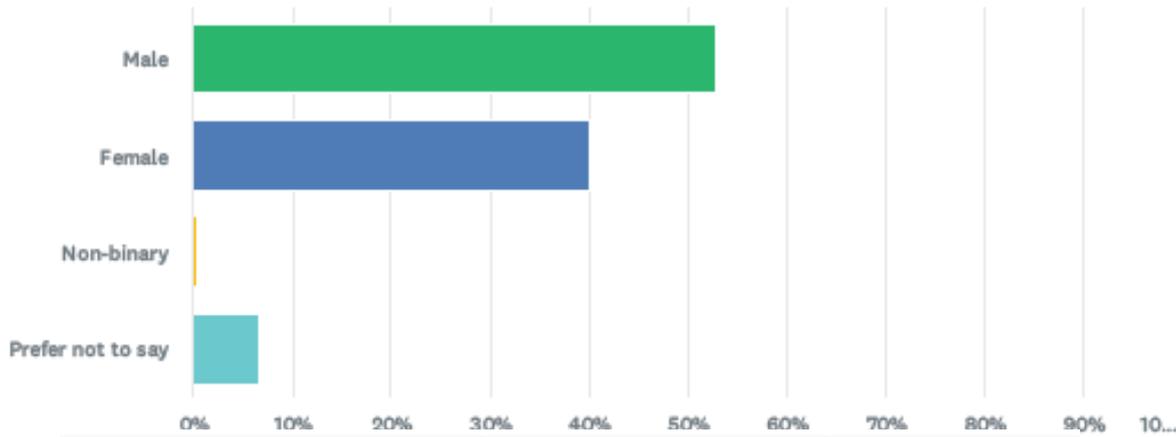
Answered: 1,580 Skipped: 790



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
<span style="color: green;">●</span> White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	89.68%	1417
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Any other White background	1.27%	20
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian	0.89%	14
<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Asian / Asian British	1.01%	16
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Black African / Caribbean / Black British	0.25%	4
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Prefer not to say	6.90%	109
<a href="#">Show comments</a>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>1580</b>

## Q7 Are you?

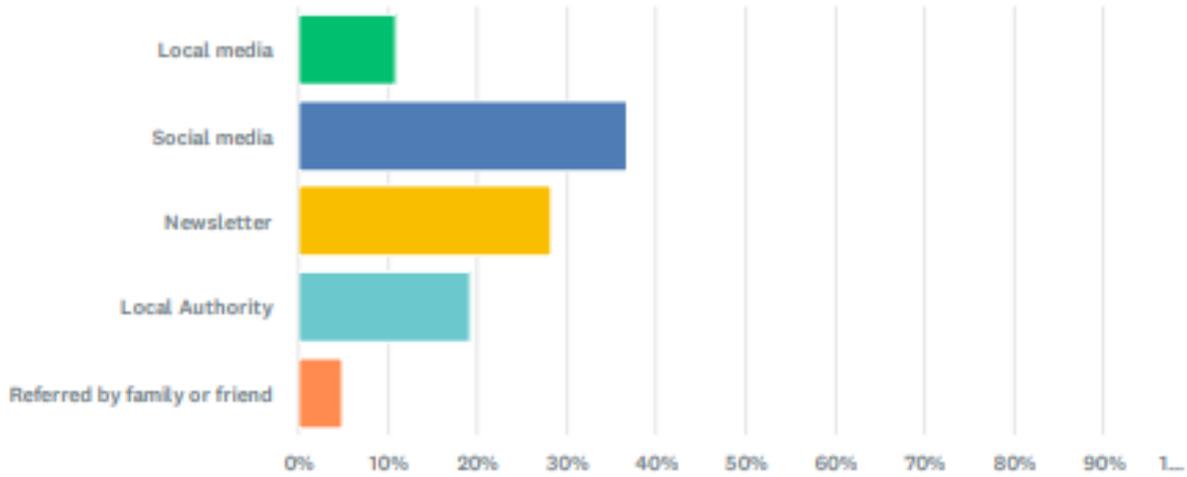
Answered: 1,583 Skipped: 787



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
● Male	53.00%	839
● Female	40.05%	634
● Non-binary	0.38%	6
● Prefer not to say	6.57%	104
<b>Total</b>		<b>1583</b>

## Q8 Where did you hear about this consultation?

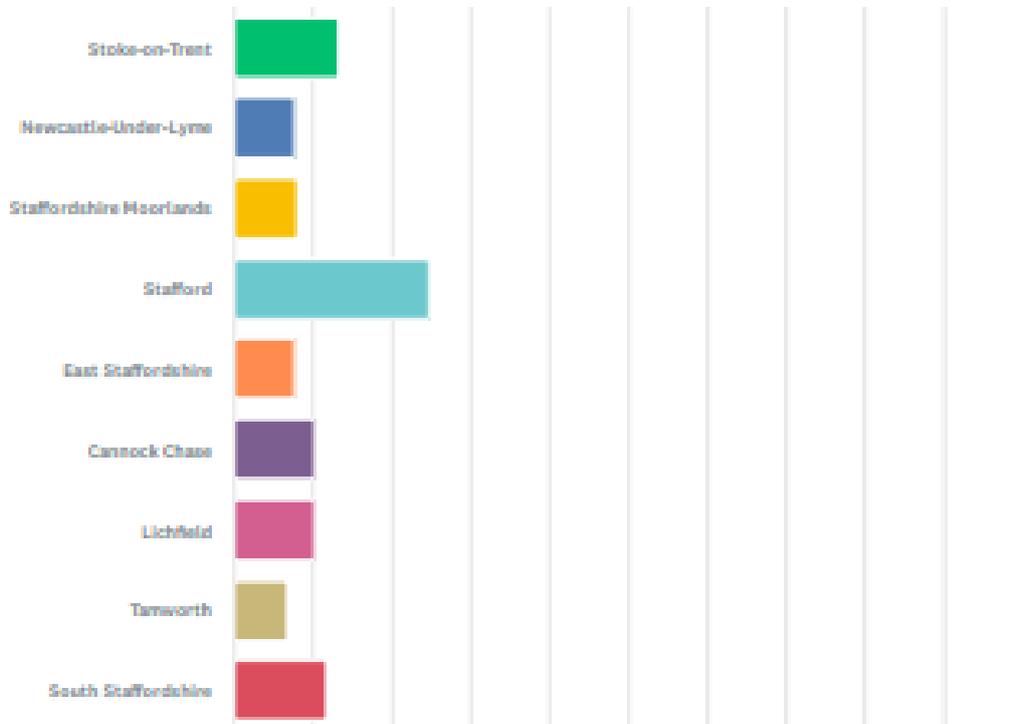
Answered: 1,321 Skipped: 1,049



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Local media	10.83%	143
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Social media	36.79%	486
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Newsletter	28.31%	374
<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Local Authority	19.15%	253
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Referred by family or friend	4.92%	65
<b>Total</b>		<b>1321</b>

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

Answered: 1,751 Skipped: 619



Answer Choices ↓	Percentage ↓	Responses ↓
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Stoke-on-Trent	13.19%	231
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Newcastle-Under-Lyme	7.60%	133
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Staffordshire Moorlands	8.05%	141
<span style="color: teal;">●</span> Stafford	24.67%	432
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> East Staffordshire	7.65%	134
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Cannock Chase	10.17%	178
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Lichfield	10.02%	179
<span style="color: olive;">●</span> Tamworth	6.74%	118
<span style="color: red;">●</span> South Staffordshire	11.71%	205
<b>Total</b>		<b>1751</b>

