

OFFICE OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

LEAD CHIEF OFFICER: Chief Finance Officer

TITLE: Findings from the public engagement exercise on the proposed precept level 2019/20

DATE: January 2019

TIMING: Annual

PURPOSE: To report the findings of the engagement exercise on the proposed precept level for 2019/20

1.	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>
1.1	That the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) considers the findings within this report and utilises them to inform the setting of the 2019/20 precept level.
2.	<u>INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND</u>
2.1	The current Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Gwent was elected in May 2016 and is required under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to engage with ratepayers on budget and precept proposals.
2.2	The precept is the part of the council tax that is allocated to the PCC. It is the responsibility of every local PCC to set the level of the precept for their area annually.
2.3	The OPCC ran an engagement exercise regarding the proposed council tax precept increase from 12 November 2018 to 13 January 2019. This was a total of nine weeks compared to five weeks for the equivalent exercise last year.
2.4	The engagement exercise had a dual approach: a series of 19 face-to-face engagement events across all local authority areas, complemented with an online survey. This approach was necessary to engage with a sufficient number of people and provide the maximum available window for people to voice their views.
2.5	When the online survey was launched, it was based upon estimated financial projections and assumed a council tax precept increase of 4.99% for a Band D property. This equated to an additional £12 per annum, which was in-line with the UK Government's precept flexibility for 2018/19.
2.6	The online survey was proactively publicised via social media, local press and the OPCC website. In addition to this, public partner and third sector organisations shared the posts with their audiences via their social media channels, websites, internal staff bulletins and external e-newsletters. Key local influencers, particularly 'hyper-local' websites and community groups,

<p>2.7</p> <p>2.8</p>	<p>were also targeted.</p> <p>Once the Chief Constable’s budget bid and provisional settlement were received, a series of face-to-face engagement events were held to allow more meaningful and in-depth conversations with residents. This way of ‘pulse-testing’ public opinion allowed greater visibility once the clarity of police funding was known and the proposed increase in council tax precept had emerged.</p> <p>It was agreed, prior to the launch of the engagement exercise that a representative sample size of 600 would be used. This provided a confidence level of 95%, including a +/- 4 margin of error.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<p><u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u></p> <p>In previous years, the OPCC has struggled to achieve a representative sample. In order to try and resolve this issue, the OPCC instigated a more proactive approach to community engagement and less reliance on social media.</p> <p>The total online reach of posts about the proposed council tax precept increase totalled more than 100,000, compared to just 10,500 people last year.</p> <p>In total, 19 engagement events were held in Gwent, compared to none last year. Of these engagement events, five were held on Saturdays to increase opportunities to engage with a wider selection of people. At the face-to-face events, residents were briefed on the emergent financial picture.</p> <p>In total, the OPCC conducted 81 hours (which equates to 11 working days) of face-to-face community engagement and this resulted in 1,085 people being engaged with in-person about the proposal. Of these 616 completed the survey – 518 completed a paper survey, with 98 opting to complete an online version.</p> <p>Coupled with the online responses, a grand total (excluding the Newport Bus Wi-Fi) of 1,918 responses were received.</p> <p>Of the responses received, all responses received were through the medium of English, with the exception of 21 which were received through the medium of Welsh. There was one Welsh language submission last year.</p> <p>The detailed findings from each question can be found in Annex A.</p> <p>Overall 67% of respondents were in favour of supporting the principle of a £1 a month increase.</p> <p>However, there was much greater support from the face-to-face engagement</p>

	<p>events where of all the Gwent residents who took part:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 396 (79.5%) supported the proposal • 68 (13.7%) didn't the support the principle of any increase; and • 34 (6.8%) were unsure.
4.	<u>NEXT STEPS</u>
4.1	The findings within this report along with feedback received via comments made on social media demonstrates the significant obstacles faced in showing the public the 'real' policing picture in Gwent.
4.2	This report will not only be used by the PCC to inform the 2019/20 precept level, but also to initiate discussions as to the perceptions of residents in Gwent.
4.3	As part of its holistic approach to engagement, the OPCC also used this opportunity to engage with people about their Police and Crime priorities, as the current Police and Crime Plan is being updated. This information will be fed back to the OPCC management board in February.
5.	<u>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</u>
5.1	Apart from staff time, there were no financial implications from this exercise.
6.	<u>PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS</u>
6.1	As mentioned in paragraph 2.6, a large amount of face-to-face engagement was conducted, totalling 81 hours and including five Saturday events.
7.	<u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u>
7.1	The PCC has a duty under Section 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to engage with ratepayers on budget and precept proposals.
8.	<u>EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS</u>
8.1	This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group. As the survey was open to all it has supported the equality requirements.
8.2	Consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 in preparing this report.
9.	<u>RISK</u>
9.1	The risk identified in this report is low as the Commissioner is discharging his statutory duties in carrying out this survey.

<p>10. 10.1</p>	<p><u>PUBLIC INTEREST</u> This report will be available to the public on the OPCC website.</p>
<p>11. 11.1</p>	<p><u>CONTACT OFFICER</u> Rhodri Guest – Head of Communications and Engagement</p>
<p>12. 12.1</p>	<p><u>ANNEXES</u> Annex A – Detailed Findings Report</p> <div data-bbox="360 495 411 555" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Adobe Acrobat Document</p>