

PRECEPT CONSULTATION EVALUATION – January 2016

Background

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent (PCC) has a duty to ensure that all the people who live in Gwent have an efficient and effective police service and has a legal requirement to set the police budget. With this in mind, the PCC launched an online 'Have Your Say' consultation on setting the precept level for 2016/17.

As a result of cuts to policing, between the period 2008/09 to 2020/21, Gwent Police would potentially face a deficit of £64 million. To date, the policing service in Gwent had delivered over £37 million of efficiency savings to address the gap. However, the efficiency savings identified in the budget report for 2016/17 would not fully close the funding gap.

Therefore, the PCC wished to ask the public in Gwent whether they were prepared to pay a little more for their policing service. The results of the consultation would inform his considerations when setting next year's budget (2016/17) and the level of his Precept, the proportion of the cost of policing paid from residents and businesses council tax (about 11% of total council tax).

For example, the average band D household in Gwent paid £211.62 per year in 2015/16 or £4.07 per week. A 0% increase to the precept next year would mean that Gwent Police would suffer a funding shortfall of over £1.8 million. However, an increase of 3.99% in the precept (£8.44 per year per band D household) would mean that Gwent Police retained the current budget.

Methodology

The aim of the consultation was to find out what the people, who live and work in Gwent, believed to be a fair and acceptable precept setting.

The consultation was run online from the 12th to the 19th January 2016. It contained 3 questions and provided a range of options for residents to indicate what level of precept setting they believed to be fair. The consultation was accompanied by the proposed budget report to inform respondents' deliberations, which can be accessed on: <http://www.gwent.pcc.police.uk/engagement/current-consultations/>

There was a restriction that stated only one response per household could be accepted and that respondent had to either live in, or own a business in the Gwent Police Force area.

All costs used in the consultation were based on the average Band D level for council tax, which was £211.62 for 2015/16.

A comprehensive communications programme was put in place to proactively promote the consultation and it was circulated to a wide network of partner agencies for further distribution. The consultation was effectively promoted via websites, OWL, Twitter, Facebook and the media which has been evidenced by over 600 responses in one week.

Evaluation of Responses

The total number of people accessing the consultation was 603. However, it must be noted that all 3 questions were answered by only 526 respondents which is 87.23% of the total.

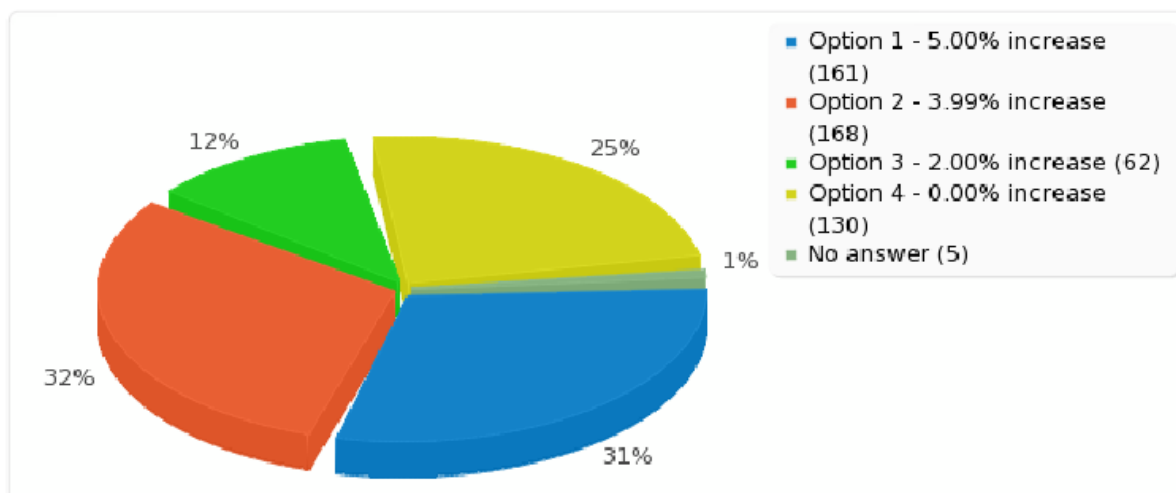
Therefore, the number of responses did not quite provide a representative sample of the population of Gwent. The recognised sample size of 600 has been worked out using a 4% standard error and a 95% confidence level for a 50:50 variability for the Gwent population of 576,000 (Census 2011).

Question 1 – Policing Precept

87.23% (526) of respondents answered question 1.

Option	% Increase	No of Votes	% of respondents
1	5%	161	30.61%
2	3.99%	168	31.94%
3	2 %	62	11.79%
4	0%	130	24.71%
No answer		5	0.95%

Pie chart of results for Q.1



The above figures clearly identify that the majority of respondents voted for the higher percentage increases for the precept setting:

- The highest number of respondents (31.94%) voted for option 2 - a 3.99% increase.
- The second highest number of votes (30.61%) voted for a 5% precept increase
- 24.71% of respondents did not want an increase at all voting for 0%
- 11.79% of respondents believe a 2%precept increase to be fair
- 0.95% of respondents did not answer the question.

Therefore 62.55%, nearly two third of respondents indicated that a precept increase of between 3.99% - 5% increase was fair and which they were willing to pay. This is in contrast to less than a quarter of respondents who did not want see any precept increase at all, and only 36.5% who wished to pay 2% or less.

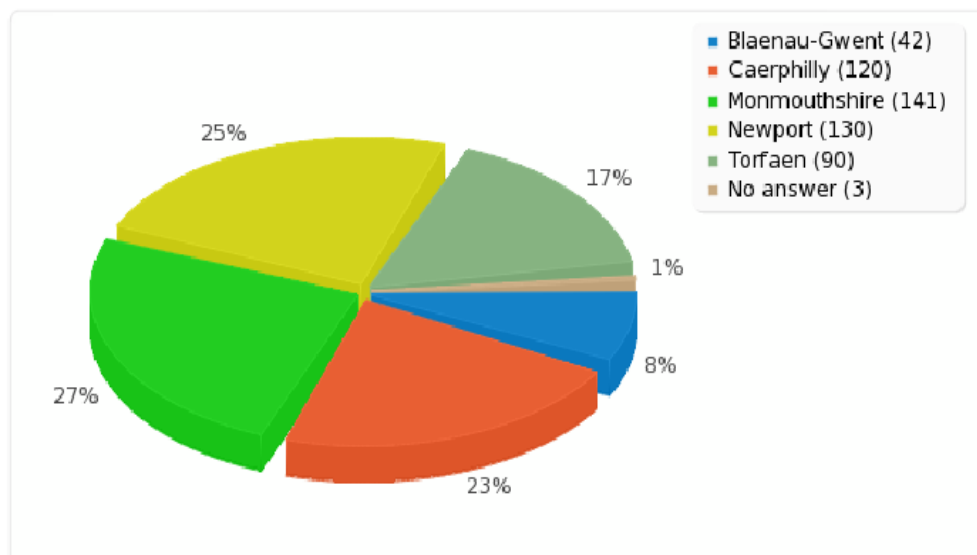
Question 2

87.23% (526) of respondents answered question 2

The respondents were spread over the 5 Local Authorities in the Gwent Police Force area as:

- 42 - Blaenau Gwent
- 120 - Caerphilly
- 141 - Monmouthshire
- 130 - Newport
- 90 - Torfaen
- 3 - No answer

Pie chart of results for Q.2



There appears to be a fairly even spread of respondents between Caerphilly (120), Monmouthshire (141) and Newport (130), this could also be said to reflect a higher number of population in Caerphilly and Newport. Monmouthshire is an affluent area with good participation levels. Torfaen was quite close with 90 respondents and can be accounted for by the lower number of residents in the county. The same can partially explain the low Blaenau Gwent responses (42). However, historically Blaenau Gwent is an area of high deprivation indicators which may inform a level of disaffection resulting in a pattern of low engagement in OPCC consultations.

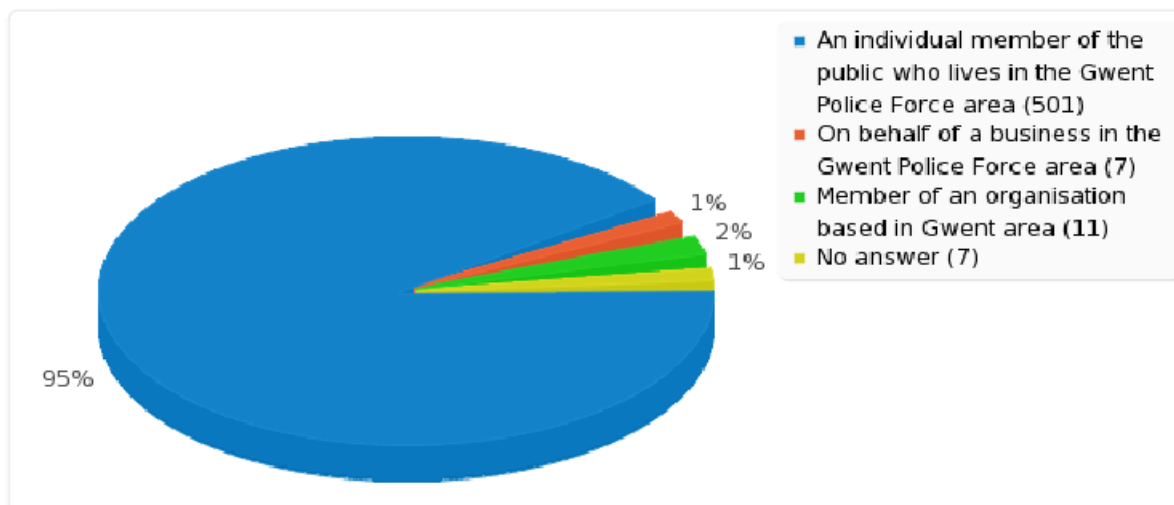
Question 3

87.23% (526) of respondents answered question 2

Respondents indicated how they were responding as:

- 501 - An individual who lived in the Gwent Force area.
- 7 - On behalf of a business in the Gwent Force area
- 11 - Member of an organisation based in the Gwent Force area
- 7 - No answer

Pie chart of results for Q.3



Conclusion

Considering that the consultation was open for one week, the number of respondents who completed the questionnaire was very good at 526 respondents. However, 526 respondents did not quite make the representative sample of 600 respondents.

All of the 526 respondents identified themselves as either living, owning a business or representing an organisation in the Gwent Police Force area.

The results were clearly in favour of paying the higher percentage increases of 3.99% and 5%, with 3.99% having 168 votes and 5% increase achieving 161 votes.