

**Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Budget Consultation 2018/19**

Summary

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a statutory duty to consult Norfolk people on his proposals ahead of setting the policing budget and, with it, how much they will contribute through council tax.
2. The Panel received a report at its November meeting outlining the method and timescales for the 2018/19 police budget consultation.
3. The budget consultation was launched on 29 November, and closed on 22 December.
4. This report provides members with an update on the consultation, including its results.

1. Background

- 1.1 Ahead of setting the annual policing budget, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a statutory duty to consult Norfolk people on his proposals, including whether the amount they contribute to funding their policing service through council tax should be increased, as per the following requirements.

1.2 Police Act 1996, Section 96
Arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing:

- (1) Arrangements shall be made for each police area for obtaining—
 - (a) the views of people in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area, and
 - (b) their co-operation with the police in preventing crime in that area.
- (2) Except as provided by subsections (3) to (6), arrangements for each police area shall be made by the police authority after consulting the chief constable as to the arrangements that would be appropriate.
- (7) A body or person whose duty it is to make arrangements under this section shall review the arrangements so made from time to time.
- (8) If it appears to the Secretary of State that arrangements for a police area are not adequate for the purposes set out in subsection (1), he may require the body or person whose duty it is to make arrangements for that area to submit a report to him concerning the arrangements.
- (9) After considering a report submitted under subsection (8), the Secretary of State may require the body or person who submitted it to review the arrangements and submit a further report to him concerning them.

(10) A body or person whose duty it is to make arrangements shall be under the same duties to consult when reviewing arrangements as when making them.

Amended by Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Section 14:

(1B) Those arrangements must include, in the case of a police area listed in Schedule 1, arrangements for obtaining, before the first precept for a financial year is issued by the police and crime commissioner under section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the views of—

(a) the people in that police area, and

(b) the relevant ratepayers' representatives, on the proposals of the police and crime commissioner for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in that financial year.

(2) Arrangements under this section are to be made by the local policing body for the police area, after consulting the chief officer of police for that area.

1.3 Consultation guidance

The Consultation Code of Practice 2008 was abolished in 2012 and, with it, the minimum consultation timescale of 12 weeks. The Code was replaced by a list of consultation principles adopted in 2016 by Government departments.

Those principles make reference to consultations lasting for a 'proportionate amount of time...taking into account the nature and impact of the proposal', tailoring consultation 'to the needs and preferences of particular groups that may not respond to traditional consultation methods, and when consultation spans all or part of a holiday period, considering 'how this may affect consultation and take appropriate mitigating action.'

2. Approach to consultation

- 2.1 There is a duty on the PCC to consult with members of the public, including victims of crime and business rates payers, ahead of setting the policing budget and council tax precept. Consultation can be undertaken in whatever format the PCC considers appropriate.
- 2.2 The two primary options upon which the PCC consulted this year were a policing precept freeze at last year's level or an increase of up to 2%, which was the maximum increase permitted under the central government cap in place at the time of consultation launch. That 2% increase equates to an extra 8 pence per week or £4.23 per year for a household in a Band D property.
- 2.3 The PCC had been lobbying the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and Policing Minister over a number of months for central government to look again at police funding and allow PCCs more flexibility to set budgets in response to financial challenges and local policing need. One of the options he had asked to be considered was raising the cap on council tax increases above 2%.

- 2.4 With that in mind, the PCC took the decision to consult on a number of supplementary options in order to gather public opinion and help inform his budget decision should that maximum cap be increased.
- 2.5 Having responded whether they would support a council tax freeze or an increase up to 2%, survey respondents who opted for an increase were asked to indicate how much more they would be prepared to pay:
- No more than an extra 8p per week (a 2% increase)
 - Up to an extra 19p per week (a 4.5% increase)
 - Up to an extra 25p per week (a 6% increase)
 - Up to an extra 50p per week (a 12% increase).
- 2.6 Respondents to the survey were also given the opportunity to provide an open text response to share in more detail their views on the consultation questions, or wider concerns, observations or experiences of crime and policing in their area
- 2.7 The 2018/19 police budget consultation was launched on 29 November, and ran until 22 December 2017.
- 2.8 The consultation took the form of an online and hard copy survey and an intensive programme of media, communications and engagement activity. The hard copy consultation document is provided at appendix A.
- 2.9 The consultation was widely promoted through the media, local, parish and community publications, PCC and partner websites and social media channels.
- 2.10 Norfolk's parish, town, district and county councillors were contacted, as well as our MPs, and asked to raise awareness of the consultation within their local areas.
- 2.11 Partners working in the policing, community safety, criminal justice, victim support and rehabilitation arenas were provided with details of the consultation and their assistance requested in encouraging people to take part. Norfolk Constabulary's district-based Community Engagement Officers also helped promote the consultation in their policing areas.
- 2.12 The consultation was promoted to local businesses through the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to ensure their members were aware and had the opportunity to respond.
- 2.13 Among others, the PCC and OPCCN utilised the following channels to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation:
- Eastern Daily Press coverage
 - PCC's regular Great Yarmouth Mercury column
 - Lynn News coverage
 - BBC Radio Norfolk coverage
 - BBC Look East coverage
 - PCC engagement in Norwich, King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Thetford
 - Circulation of consultation details to all parish councils

- OPCCN and Norfolk Constabulary websites
- Norfolk Constabulary Intranet
- Police Connect external messaging service
- Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel meetings
- Survey information in libraries
- OPCCN monthly newsletter and OPCCN e-mail signatures
- Partner newsletters, websites and social media
- Local, parish and community publications
- Volunteers (custody visitors, independent advisory group, youth commission)
- Social media
- Elected members
- Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses members
- Norfolk County Council 'Your Voice' consultation platform.

2.14 As with previous consultations carried out by the OPCCN, the results indicate that the online survey was the favoured response method among participants. More than 2,000 people chose to have their say in that way.

2.15 The OPCCN is, however, committed to ensuring that people without internet access or who would prefer to give their views in another way do not face barriers to doing so. Hard copies of the consultation information pack and survey were sent out on request and made available via libraries. As well as directing people to the website and highlighting when and where the PCC would be gathering views in their area, communications for the consultation invited people to have their say by writing to the PCC, sending an email to the dedicated consultation inbox at TellLorne@norfolk.pnn.police.uk or telephoning the OPCCN on 01953 424455.

Note: Three days before the PCC's consultation closed, the Policing Minister stated in his provisional police settlement announcement that the cap on policing council tax increases would be raised. The maximum amount by which PCCs will be permitted to increase the policing element of council tax in 2018/19 will be £12 per household. That equates to a maximum 5.5% increase in Norfolk.

3. Results of the public consultation

3.1 2,088 people responded to the 2017/18 police budget and council tax survey, either online or in hard copy.

3.2 For other forms of contact (where the survey was not completed), if a clear preference for either a freeze or increase was expressed, this information has been included in the figures at 3.9 below.

3.3 The OPCCN received 35 responses to the consultation via email to the dedicated consultation inbox, 17 of which explicitly supported either an increase or freeze.

- 3.4 Two letters were received – one explicitly showing support for the option of paying an extra 6%, the other expressing concern about how an increase might affect individuals who have low household income. We also received a press cutting of the EDP news article asking ‘Are you prepared to pay more council tax to help fund policing in Norfolk?’ to which the sender had responded ‘yes’.
- 3.5 The office also took a number of consultation-related phone calls from members of the public. The majority of people telephoning the OPCCN were happy to be directed to the website to complete the online survey, to email their views or to have a hard copy survey sent to them to complete. Two people chose to give their views over the telephone, both stating a preference for either a precept freeze or increase.
- 3.6 A number of people commented on the consultation via Twitter or Facebook; 26 such comments stated support for either a freeze or increase.
- 3.7 All comments received to the consultation by whatever means of communication were provided to the PCC to help inform his 2018/19 policing budget decisions.
- 3.8 Recurring themes/messages within the comments included:
- A willingness to pay more as long as the funds raised are used to facilitate more visible policing.
 - A willingness to pay more if the role of the PCSO was saved.
 - Concern for the loss of the PCSO role, suggesting that a PCSO was the only visible police presence in certain areas of the county.
 - Concern about lack of police visibility and engagement, especially in rural areas.
 - An unwillingness to pay more, because of financial difficulty, wages not increasing and not wanting/being able to contribute more.
 - Calls for efficiency savings, better use of resources and changes to management structures, alongside reduction in police retirement ages and pension pay.
 - Calls for central Government to give more money to the police and not for the local tax payer to pay to fill the funding gap, and for the PCC to lobby harder for this to happen.

3.9

Responses to 2018/19 police budget consultation				
	Total	Number answering survey Q1	Preference for 0%	Prepared to pay up to 2% increase
Survey (online/ hard copy)	2,088	2,088	863	1,225
Email	35	17	9	8
Letter	2	1	0	1
Telephone	2	2	1	1
Social media comments	47	26	22	4
Total	2174	2134	895	1239
%			41%	59%

	Number answering survey Q2	No more than a 2% increase	Prepared to pay up to 4.5%	Prepared to pay up to 6%	Prepared to pay up to 12%
Survey (online/ hard copy)	1,186	239	170	270	507
Email	8	3	1	1	3
Letter	1	0	0	1	0
Telephone	0	0	0	0	0
Social media comments	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1195	242	171	272	510
%		20%	14%	23%	43%

3.10 In the interests of being open and transparent, a complete list of consultation responses will be published on the Norfolk PCC website. As part of the OPCCN's analysis of responses, any identifying information within comments (such as names, email addresses etc.), as well as any abusive language or anything which could be potentially libellous will have been removed.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The results of the police budget 2018/19 consultation show that 59% of those who took part said they would be prepared to pay an extra 2% through the policing element of their council tax.
- 4.2 Of those who showed a preference for an increase, 20% stated that they would not be willing to pay more than 2%, 14% stated that they would pay up to an extra 19p per week (4.5%), 23% said that they would pay an extra 25p per week (6%) and 43% said they would be prepared to pay an extra 50p per week (12%).
- 4.3 Panel members are asked to note the results of the public consultation.

5. Appendices

A 2018/19 police budget and council tax consultation document

A full copy of all responses received will be made available in the members' room at County Hall.



Dear Norfolk resident

As your Police and Crime Commissioner, it's my job to set the policing budget for Norfolk and, with it, how much you contribute through council tax.

58% of Norfolk's policing budget is funded by central government; your council tax makes up the rest. With such a significant contribution coming from your pocket, I want all Norfolk residents to have a say on how that funding is used.

Please spare a few minutes to take the survey within this information pack. You can also share your views online at www.norfolk-pcc.gov.uk, by telephone on 01953 424455, by email to TellLorne@norfolk.pnn.police.uk, or by writing to me at OPCCN, Building 8, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, NR18 0WW.

A message from your PCC

I am now 18 months into my work as your Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and, during my time in office, I have become increasingly aware of just how challenging the financial situation is for policing in our county.

Grant funding from central government continues to reduce year on year but policing costs are increasing, along with demands for service. If austerity continues, Norfolk Constabulary will need to make cuts of between £2m and £3m every year just to cover inflation. The Government has made it clear that it expects me to increase the policing element of council tax by the maximum I can to help bridge the gap.

Norfolk Constabulary's budget gap for next year is estimated to be £5.6m; if there is no council tax increase, that gap widens to £6.8m. The Chief Constable has told me that, in the ninth year of austerity, this is going to make for difficult choices and will lead to further police officer and staff reductions.

At the moment, the maximum policing council tax increase I can consider for 2018/19 is 1.99%, which amounts to 8 pence per week or £4.32 a year extra for a household in a Band D property. In Norfolk, 75% of properties are below Band D so would pay less.

I, along with other PCCs, have been lobbying central government to look again at police funding and lift the council tax limit above the current 1.99% maximum. This would allow





PCCs more flexibility to set council tax levels in response to financial challenges and local policing needs.

To help inform my budget decision, I would like to know what you would be prepared to pay next year for policing in Norfolk.



So, what I am asking is...

Do you support a council tax increase or do you support a freeze, keeping the policing element of council tax at last year's level?

And, if you would support an increase, please tell me the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay if central government were to lift the maximum 1.99% cap.



Before you take the survey at the back of this information pack, please read the update from the Chief Constable which outlines the current situation for Norfolk Constabulary and what the council tax options mean for your policing service.

Your views are important to me and will help inform my budget decisions for 2018/19, so please take the time to have your say between now and Friday 22 December.



A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Lorne Green', written over a light blue background.

Lorne Green

Police and Crime Commissioner
for Norfolk



From the Chief Constable

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Recently we launched our proposals for a policing model designed not only to be fit for the future but also evidence-based, fully costed and scalable. We knew that crime had changed and will continue to change, and we faced severe and ongoing budget reductions. Through consultation, research, pilots and analysis, our Norfolk 2020 team carried out one of the most thorough reviews in the Force's history. Our proposals are

“Our proposals are bold and innovative and also, unfortunately, have a human impact that is regrettable but unavoidable.”

bold and innovative and also, unfortunately, have a human impact that is regrettable but unavoidable. A key fact we uncovered is the organisational cost of a PCSO is no longer significantly different to a PC. The average annual cost for a PCSO is £39,800, for a PC it is £41,620. With such a small difference

we then considered the additional powers and flexibility which warranted officers who have full powers bring. Considering we have reduced the annual budget by £30m since 2010 and with a further £10m still to save, we have had no choice but to look at the 80% of our budget which we spend on people. With fewer employees, you need maximum flexibility and powers.

CHANGING FACE OF CRIME

The changing face of crime means we continue to see an unprecedented increase in demand in some of the most complex and challenging areas of policing. Rising reports of adult abuse, child abuse, serious sexual offences and serious violence have led to a need for more detectives - detectives with a warrant and, therefore, the right powers, training and equipment to face up to these threats. To provide the best service to victims of such serious crimes we needed to consolidate and enhance facilities for these specially trained officers.

“The changing face of crime means we continue to see an unprecedented increase in demand in some of the most complex and challenging areas of policing.”

We also needed to increase our own exploitation of technology. This led to our proposals for two new state-of-the-art facilities, in east and west Norfolk, giving us the right people in the right locations and enabling our frontline officers to focus on neighbourhood policing. Our analysis showed that an increase of 25 detectives was needed, at a cost of around £1.25m a year. However, the centralising of investigations means we can reduce this cost to only £300,000 a year.

AUSTERITY

The majority of our income comes from two main sources - 58% comes from the Home Office and 42% comes from your council tax. We also get a small amount from other things such as charging for the policing of football matches or specific grants such as counter terrorism. In 2010, with the introduction of austerity, the Government reduced the money available to us by over 25%. As a result, we had to make savings of over £30m. In 2015, the Government slowed the rate of savings they required and PCCs were guided to raise local council tax by the maximum amount (1.99%) on an annual basis to maintain police budgets at 2015 levels. This approach means that we have a similar amount of money available to us each year.

But our 'cost of living', like yours, is rising. Inflation is climbing; the pay of our police officers and staff, which is nationally set, rises every year. We also have to pay other statutory costs which are beyond our control. In the last two years alone, there have been increases in employer's national insurance and employer's pension costs of £3m.

"But our 'cost of living', like yours, is rising. Inflation is climbing; the pay of our police officers and staff, which is nationally set, rises every year."

PROTECTING THE FRONTLINE

If the money we ask for in your council tax did not go up each year, the savings we would need to make would be even greater. Without a precept rise the reductions in policing resource would be even deeper. The council tax rises you pay are helping us to protect the frontline. Our collaboration with our preferred partner Suffolk Constabulary continues to save us millions of pounds while not adversely affecting our service but these savings opportunities are becoming harder to find. To balance our books, we need to develop our budgets and our financial plans in such a way that it takes into account our reserves and our need to spend money on capital assets. Capital assets

can be anything from our buildings or our information technology to our police vehicles.



21st CENTURY POLICING

Our reserves currently total £25m, yet we will see them fall to £11m (7% of our £150m budget) by 31 March 2021. In financial terms, this is close to our minimum and it is important to remember that reserves can only be spent once. For example, within this amount we hold £4.5m for exceptional operational policing demand (such as a complex murder case) and some reserves are held to meet other costs that might arise such as a significant increase in insurance claims. We also use reserves to support our future budget, improve our efficiency and, in particular, help us introduce new technology such as body worn video or drones which help support frontline officers. But again, as with all technology, these things

will need to be replaced after a few years leading to future costs.



Our police estate is under continuous review and we have invested a lot in our estate over the last 10 years including our Police Investigation Centres. To be more efficient and effective, we needed to refurbish our old police stations, such as King's Lynn. We are also discussing plans for Bethel Street and Great Yarmouth. This will help us make significant savings on running costs as well as repairs and maintenance. In addition, by the end of 2020/21, we will have stopped leasing any properties, saving another £500,000, while making sure we relocate affected staff. We are also working closely with Norfolk's Fire and Rescue Service to increase the number of joint police and fire stations and exploring the possibilities of sharing buildings or other

facilities with other public sector partners.

WISE INVESTMENT

Using our reserves wisely and investing for the future is always our focus when making any medium or long-term financial plans. This does not mean we will avoid having to make more difficult choices ahead as we balance the budget for 2018/19 and, even if you decide that you support a council tax increase by the current maximum amount (1.99%), unfortunately it will not protect us from having to reduce further our officers and staff in the future. However, we do not anticipate any changes to the new policing model announced in October; rather, any reductions will be in operational support and back office functions. We would like to see central government raise the cap on council tax increases to give the PCC the opportunity to protect the current establishment or invest in additional officers.

Simon Bailey

Chief Constable, Norfolk Constabulary

Having considered the information provided by the Chief Constable, which of the following would you support?

OPTION 1: NO INCREASE IN THE POLICING ELEMENT OF COUNCIL TAX

A freeze on the policing element of council tax would mean a funding gap for the Constabulary in 2018/19 of £6.8m. Some £4m of savings have been identified at this stage, including £2m from the frontline local policing model (Norfolk 2020) announced by the Chief Constable in October. This leaves £2.8m still to find. Further savings of this magnitude would mean some very difficult choices about even deeper reductions in frontline operational and support functions, mindful that 80% of the budget is staff costs.

OPTION 2: INCREASE THE POLICING ELEMENT OF COUNCIL TAX BY JUST UNDER 2%

A council tax increase of just under 2% (the maximum amount currently permitted by central government) is equivalent to 8 pence extra per week (at Band D) and would raise £1.2m. This is not 'additional money'; it will simply offset an expected £1.2m reduction in our central government grant. This would leave the Constabulary with £1.6m of savings to find, in addition to the £4m already identified. The recently announced local policing model would be protected but this £1.6m would need to come from other operational and support areas of the budget. This would also mean some difficult decisions for the Constabulary.

Would you support a policing council tax increase higher than 2%?

Central government places a cap on the maximum council tax increase allowed, and that cap has been around the 2% mark for the last few years. The PCC and Chief Constable have called for that maximum cap to be removed to allow more flexibility in setting council tax levels in response to financial challenges and local policing needs. While this is not something the PCC has consulted on in the past, a number of respondents to previous budget surveys have questioned the cap and said they would support an increase higher than 2%.

If the maximum cap on council tax were to be raised by central government, would you be prepared to pay a higher amount? And if you would, based on the information which follows, what is the maximum amount you would be willing to pay?

UP TO AN EXTRA 19 PENCE PER WEEK (a 4.5% increase)

This would raise £2.8m which, alongside the £4m of savings already identified would, on present projections, balance the budget for next year. This would mean that the frontline local policing model announced in October would be protected.

UP TO AN EXTRA 25 PENCE PER WEEK (a 6% increase)

This would raise £3.6m and, alongside the £4m of savings already identified, this would enable the budget to be balanced. This option would provide an opportunity, on present projections, to make some modest increases in local policing.

UP TO AN EXTRA 50 PENCE PER WEEK (a 12% increase)

This would raise £7.2m and enable significant additional investment in frontline local and operational policing.

You can have your say using the survey form at the back of this information pack or online at www.norfolk-pcc.gov.uk

You can also share your views by post, telephone or email using the following contact details:

Post: OPCCN, Building 8, Jubilee House, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0WW

Telephone: 01953 424455

Email: TellLorne@norfolk.pnn.police.uk