



Philip Secombe
**Police and Crime
Commissioner**
for Warwickshire

2017/18 Precept Consultation Summary

**Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for
Warwickshire**

Precept Consultation 2017/18 Summary

The Police and Crime Commissioner launched his precept consultation on Thursday, 5 January. The consultation ended at 5.30pm on Tuesday, 31 January. A precept proposal summary, explanatory info about Council Tax and the budget report were published on the OPCC website, alongside a short online survey enabling people to comment on the proposals being put forward. Consultation meetings were also held with key partners and local authorities, while comments were also received via email, post and through social media.

Headline result

Of the respondent who indicated they were residents of Warwickshire, a small majority – 208 (51.36%) – were in favour of the proposed 0% increase or precept freeze. 197 (48.64%) disagreed with the proposal and indicated that the Commissioner should look at options to increase the precept up to a maximum of 1.99%.

Commissioner's response to the consultation

The consultation showed that there was no clear majority in favour either option, although marginally more people supported a precept freeze than an increase. I am mindful that the survey response was smaller than in the previous year when an increase was proposed by my predecessor. I therefore must weigh up whether the simple fact that a freeze was being proposed for 2017/18 meant that fewer people felt the need to respond as they implicitly supported the proposal.

Overall, I must consider what the overall population of Warwickshire would be supportive of and, given the closeness of the survey result, make an 'umpire's call.'

In addition to the survey, I received a number of pieces of additional feedback to my proposals by email, by post and through social media. These can broadly be categorised as people who objected to a freeze and believed an increase should be imposed; people who suggested I should not make use of reserves and a third category of people who suggested I should look to decrease the police precept.

A summary of the comments received can be found in the table at the end of this document and, rather than respond to each one individually, I will respond thematically:

Objecting to a freeze/wanting to increase the precept: In recent years, Warwickshire Police has consistently delivered earlier-than-anticipated savings or underspends on projects, which has resulted in a steady increase of reserves. These reserves, while they can only be used once, are in my view currently larger than they need to be. I do not therefore believe that it is right or fair to the taxpayers of Warwickshire to ask them to pay more through the precept when the reserves are at their current levels.

Use of reserves: It is prudent financial planning to maintain a level of reserves to allow the force to deal with unexpected events or changes in circumstances that cannot be planned. However, when reserves have accumulated to large levels through underspending, using a portion of them to offset a need to increase the precept on a one-off basis is entirely legitimate. I will be cautious in their use,

however, and will ensure that sensible levels of reserves are maintained for unforeseen events through prudent financial planning and management.

Decreasing the precept: The Government's funding award assumes that Police and Crime Commissioners will increase the precept by the maximum of 1.99% in order that funding is maintained in real terms. With the force still being required to make future budget savings, the need to invest in services and the cumulative impact a precept reduction would have on future budgets, I do not believe this is a sensible proposition.

I am therefore continuing to recommend a freeze in the Police Precept for 2017/18.

Summary of publicity

A range of communication tools were used to promote the precept consultation to communities across Warwickshire. These included:

- Posting full details of the consultation on the OPCC website, including prominent links from the home page.
- Media releases at the start and end of the consultation. These achieved coverage in newspapers across the force area and interviews with the Commissioner on local radio.
- Social media – regular postings were made throughout the consultation to encourage residents to take part. Paid advertising was also placed on Facebook and Twitter to increase the reach of these social media messages.
- The Commissioner's newsletter featured the consultation prominently in its January issue. A separate newsletter was sent to elected members and partner organisations to further promote the consultation.
- Warwickshire Police's Community Messaging System was used to promote the consultation to subscribers.
- Internal force communications

The consultation survey

An online survey was used to ascertain views on the Commissioner's precept proposals. This asked respondents to indicate whether they:

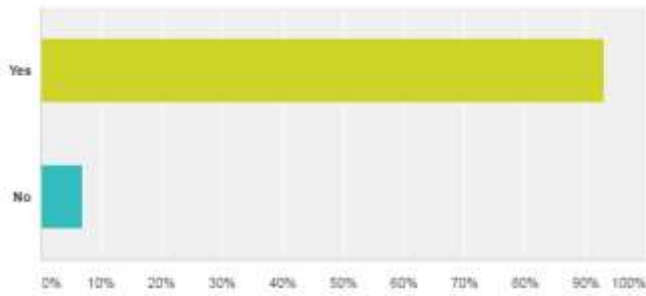
- Agree - the 2017/18 Police Precept should be frozen/kept at the same level (a 0% increase)
- Disagree - the Commissioner should look at alternative options to increase the Police Precept (up to a maximum of 1.99%)

The survey also asked them to indicate whether they were Warwickshire residents and, if so, in which district they lived.

Results were as follows:

Are you a resident of Warwickshire?

Answered: 447 Skipped: 0

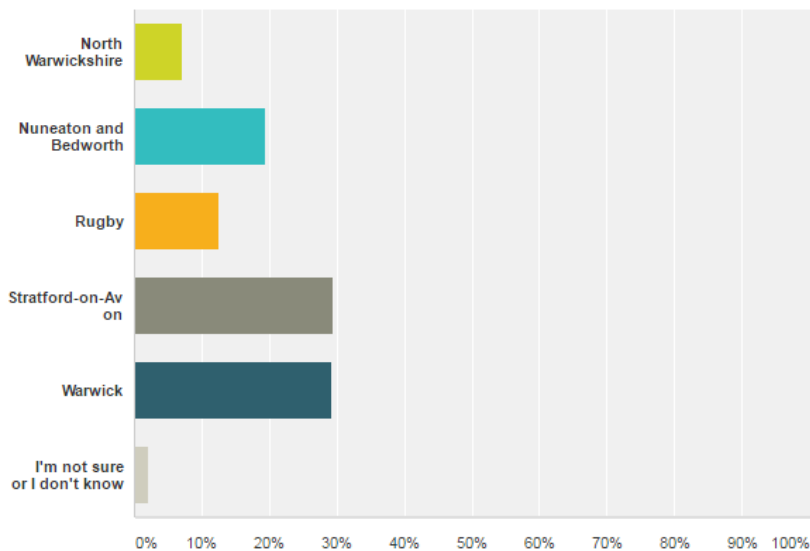


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	93.06% 416
No	6.94% 31
Total	447

Of those answering 'yes':

Which district do you live in?

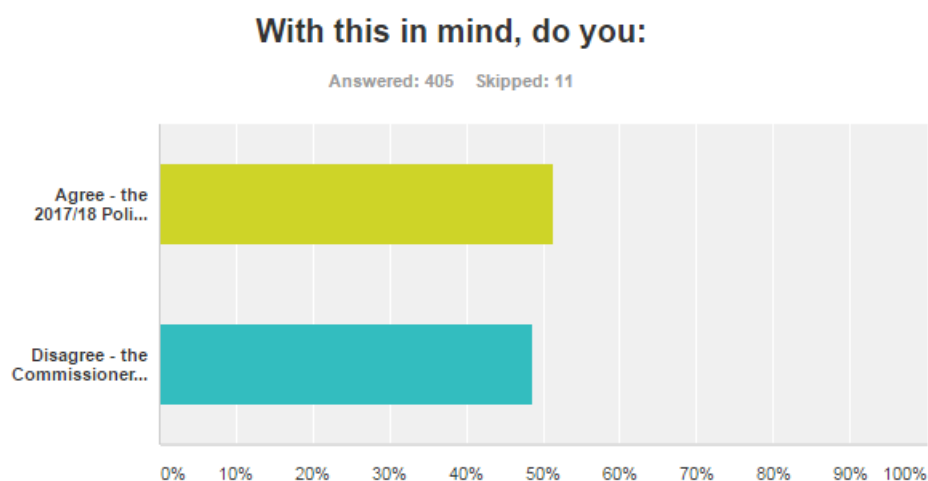
Answered: 413 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
North Warwickshire	7.02% 29
Nuneaton and Bedworth	19.37% 80
Rugby	12.59% 52
Stratford-on-Avon	29.54% 122

Answer Choices –	Responses –
– Warwick	29.30% 121
– I'm not sure or I don't know	2.18% 9
Total	413

These respondents were asked whether they supported the Commissioner’s proposal to freeze the precept.



Answer Choices –	Responses –
– Agree - the 2017/18 Police Precept should be frozen/kept at the same level (a 0% increase)	51.36% 208
– Disagree - the Commissioner should look at alternative options to increase the Police Precept (up to a maximum of 1.99%)	48.64% 197
Total	405

Email/postal comments

A number of additional comments were received by post and email. They are listed below:

1. In my opinion the additional increment is relatively insignificant in the total council tax charge – very few people seem to object to it. In political terms the very action of reducing a tax, however slightly, is a popular measure. On the other hand the Police sometimes tend to blame inadequate funding when challenged to account for inadequate service such as slow responses to incidents or a general lack of visibility (shortage of Specials etc.) So long as we can provide faultless service and not jeopardise our performance in future years we will certainly receive some credit for ‘freezing’ the precept. Hoping this is helpful

2. I broadly support your proposals.
3. I have just filled in the consultation to say that I do not support the freeze but feel that I should explain why. I am not in favour of spending down reserves. In general a modest rise in line with or less than inflation is the way to protect services in my view.
4. Phillip, whilst fully appreciating the desire to reduce the burden on the taxpayer at a time when there is great uncertainty over the economy, my personal view is to allow an increase in precept. My reasoning is as follows. If you have reserves then by all means use them judiciously but not deplete them. A small precept increase (say 1%) will generally be tolerated but not a large one. This shows good fiscal management and means you have money for other projects that may spring up.
5. Support the freeze on precept with reserves making up any shortfall.
6. I would support an increase in the police precept payable by all council tax payers. I think it is time council tax payers stepped up to help finance more of the local services that we need, including an effective police force that is not strapped by finance.
7. The police commissioners statement included 'continue to invest 0.5 million to address business,rural,cyber crime.....review and reconfiguring the existing programme to deliver improved outcomes'. My feedback on rural crime - since Carol Cotterill came to post our community feels that we are being heard and rural concerns are being addressed. Long may this continue.

Social media comments

Not all comments received via social media were directly relevant to the consultation and some were relating to other matters, were more generally opinions about policing or were in response to other people's comments. These have been excluded from this report, although all social media platforms are monitored and, where appropriate, comments are responded to.

A number were clearly relating to other matters beyond the scope of the consultation and have not been included in this report.

1. For what good they are doing because of the cuts this so called government are making we might as well not pay. Let's see what happens then lol
2. A good service would be a bonus
3. While the population of the county goes up the policing numbers go down. Make sense of that the closing of police stations and the selling of police houses was a big big mistake. The police force should run itself and not be ordered to be political pawns. Police commissioners are not the answer with no knowledge of how police forces run

4. So he will provide extra funding without increasing council tax? So which area is he going to screw over and underfund to get that then?
5. While a balance is the desired outcome a measure of criminality on which budgets need to follow. I do not understand why government persist in wanting to limit services in all areas when their borrowing in the last 6 years has exceeded the sum total of the 13 years before this one was elected. Where is the money going and what are we getting in return.
6. I also want to freeze the amount I pay whilst receiving more services.
7. I'd pay more if you will sort the a46 out! Its lawless currently. Accidents every week. Not a police car or camera Van in sight. I've only been talking to your office about it for 3 years!
8. I would advocate an increase and spend it on some visible policing and more response officers in Nuneaton and Bedworth so you don't wait three hours when the victim of a violent assault by a known assailant!
9. How about scrapping the office of the PCC which would save about £1m to spend on direct policing. Maybe cutting the chief constables £180k salary might also help. Maybe scrapping the £123k Director of Enabling Services would be a good saving.
10. Speaking personally, I would be happy to pay more council tax for policing costs if it meant that wildlife crime and in particular the law pertaining to hunting with hounds was enforced vigourously within the county.
11. The Police need more, stop the council, wasting money on many things. If you need a meeting to show you how much the councils,could save, just ask, as someone with a lot of ideas not to mention experience. Let's just start getting sensible.
12. Sorry but on 2 different occasions I called the police, one due to boy racers doing donuts in a car park right next to my home, dangerous as they will no doubt drive stupid on the roads (result nothing) second I called as I was following a drunk driver (result he got away with it as I lost him and because he crossed jurisdictions they kept passing the buck!! Maybe if they stopped wasting money on BMW x5s and merc m classes they might have more funds!! Maybe if they turned up more fines could be Imposed!!
13. They are a joke, promise to help you, then throw you to the wolves and leave you exposed to harrassment threats and daily abuse.
Guess tjej don't get enough credits for community policing compared to chasing motorists
14. If they spent more on policing and less on council jollies . The last time I seen a police person in Hurley Nelson still had his eye . You haven't got Real police today the kids abuse them and

no one has any respect for them .

15. There are less police officers working now than there were 5 years ago approximately 200. That's roughly 20% yet there hasn't been a reduction in what we the council tax payers pay.. As far as I'm concerned there wouldn't be an increase in the police precept for at least 5 years. If only the general public really knew how many police officers there are working on each shift on a daily basis, it would frighten them..
16. The Police must be the only public service that tell us what they want, instead us telling them what they'll be getting. I'm thinking...that with cuts being the norm, they shouldn't be overlooked.
17. Well the police and council have done nothing to prevent habitual heroin use where my son and his friends play, for two years! It was only after four weeks of me emailing the MP, that forced the issue. Blatant prejudice against a low socioeconomic area..... Remind me why the poor pay council tax again?
18. I sympathise with the Junior Police. The Senior Police sit with their Gold Plated final Salary Pensions. There are no intermediate Police as all those who have 'retired' are called back in. (No chance for progression) So what do they do? Appoint more qualified Pcspos to do the foot work. Who have better all training. Fancy uniforms and Shock .Drive round in fancy cars. Tell u what Govt.Can you stop screwing around and let us have a proper Police Force before it is too late.Precepts ? increase.
19. I'm prepared to withdraw my part of my council tax for police. They didn't help Me one bit. They didn't wanna know.
20. Have our say on how the money is spent when the greater percentage is given to the south of the county get a grip, we in the north have been thrown to the wolves
21. More money for police you have got to be joking there's none about Sort out this upsurge in thefts and burglaries then look at more money
22. Would like to see the costs on what is paid in terms of equipment and salaries and performance levels before opinions though you never see a fall in council tax or police just a freeze so be careful out there lol
23. How about local councils stop running a surplus on council tax, only to invest that surplus in foreign business and industry for a potential return, and instead, use that surplus to fix problems at a local level and/or invest the rest in a visible police force. It's public money, yet we don't get a say on this foreign investment, whilst communities and the policing of said communities continues to fall in standards
24. Not so much about the funding but how the money is spent and what crimes get prioritised because they're the buzzword but not what concerns the community.

25. Should not have to pay nothing to police or councils we pay enough in taxes to fund all these
26. Waste of good money let's get back to old days of an eye for an eye
27. Policing in Nuneaton is not value for money .
28. Councils need to stop sitting on their arses spending our money on humps in the road and take them off go fill the pot holes they should have filled! Years ago?you never see the police as even they avoid using the roads with them now , the emergency services cant get round and is a night,mare fire disabled eith joint problems ? There is too man council workers getting paid for doing absolutely nothing they could be halved?
29. Need more police on the streets