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2019/20 Precept Consultation Summary

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire

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Precept Consultation 2019/20 Summary

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Introduction

POLICE PRECEPT 2019/20

**HOW MUCH EXTRA ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY
TO SUPPORT POLICING IN WARWICKSHIRE?**

The Police and Crime Commissioner launched his precept consultation on Tuesday 18 December 2018 following receipt of the Government's police funding settlement on 13 December. The consultation ended on Thursday 24 January 2018 – a total time of five weeks and two days. A precept proposal and explanatory infographic was published on the OPCC website alongside a short online survey, enabling people to comment on the proposals being put forward.

Four options were presented for public feedback:

- Option 1 – a rise of £1 per month (equivalent to £12 per year on a Band D property)
- Option 2 – a rise of £1.50 per month (equivalent to £18 per year on a Band D property)
- Option 3 – a rise of £2 per month (equivalent to £24 per year on a Band D property)
- Option 4 – more than £2 per month (accepting that this was beyond what was being proposed but allowing the PCC to gauge the true extent of the public appetite for an increase)

The online survey also allowed respondents to suggest an alternative 'other' precept change, which gave those who wished to oppose an increase or suggest a lower amount a chance to put forward their views.

Consultation meetings were also held with key partners, local authorities, Members of Parliament and the business community, while comments and feedback were also received via email and through social media.

The consultation gathered the largest number of responses to date for the OPCC, an increase of more than 1,100 on last year.

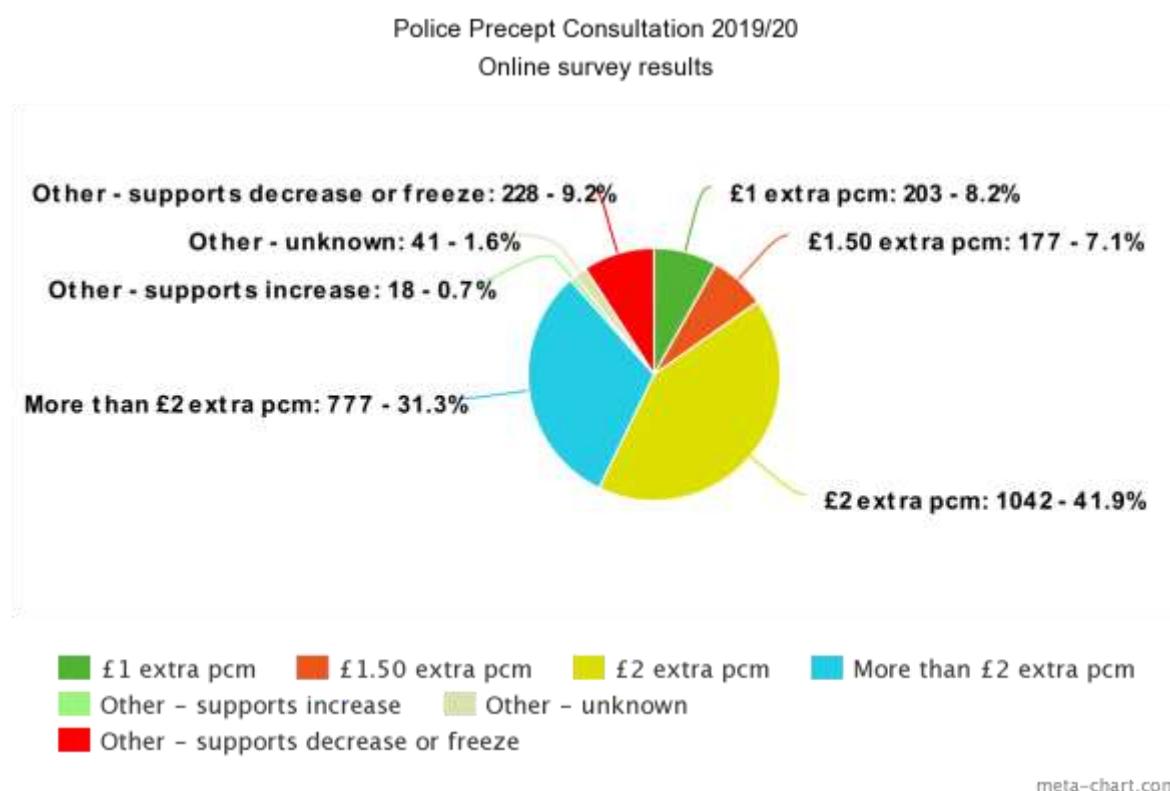
Infographics used during the consultation can be found in Appendix A.

1.0 Headline result

At its close on Thursday 24 January, the online survey had received 2,693 responses, with 2,490 of those responding identifying as being residents of Warwickshire.

This is the highest return for a precept consultation undertaken the OPCC (previous high marks were 1,026 in 2016 and 1,501 in 2018).

182 people began the survey but did not complete it, meaning that views on the precept proposals were obtained from 2,511 individuals. Of those responding, 96.71% indicated they were council tax payers.



Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	8.1%	203
£1.50 extra per month*	7.0%	177
£2 extra per month*	41.5%	1,042
More than £2 extra per month*	30.9%	777
Some other form of increase	0.7%	18
Supported a freeze or precept decrease	9.2%	228
Other – views unknown	1.2%	41
	Total: 2,511	

* For an average Band 'D' property.

Figures are broken down separately by area, police employee vs general public and by Warwickshire vs non-Warwickshire resident in Appendix B but show support for an increase of at least £2 per month in the range of 65%-75%.

2.0 Summary of publicity

The survey was published on the OPCC website and featured prominently on the front page, public consultation and new pages. The following promotional activities were undertaken:

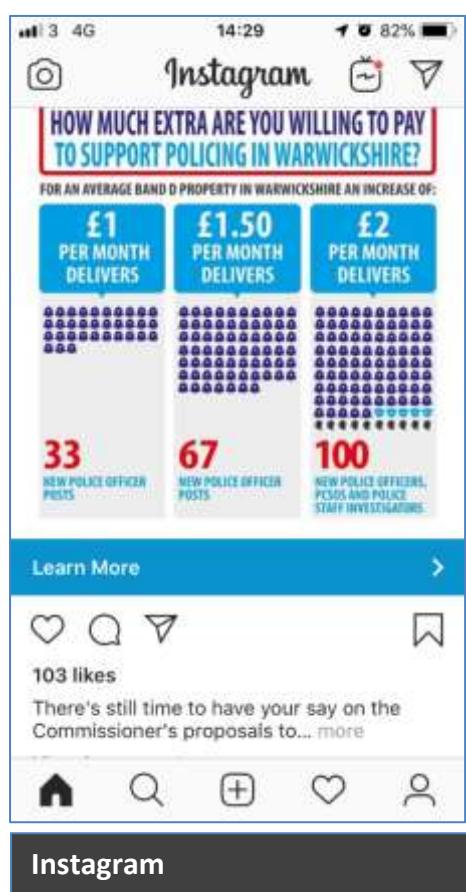
2.1 Media coverage

A launch press release was issued on December 18 and this was promoted on the website and OPCC social media channels. Coverage was received in:-

- Stratford Herald (Print edition, December 20)
- Leamington Observer (Online, December 21)
- Rugby Observer (Online, December 21)
- Stratford Herald (Online, December 21)
- Leamington Observer (Print, January 3)
- Stratford Observer (Print, January 4)
- Redditch & Alcester Standard (Print, January 4)

2.2 Social Media Promotion

Posts were placed on OPCC Twitter and Facebook accounts and a promotional campaign was paid for on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, encouraging people to complete the online survey. The following example from Instagram shows how infographics were used to convey the main messages of the proposal:



The following results were achieved :

2.2.1 Facebook/Instagram

Tranche 1

Ran for 14 days from December 20 over two ad sets, targeted at audiences in Warwickshire aged 17 and over, with results paid on click through to the survey.

A combined audience of 37,181 users was reached, resulting in 752 click-throughs to the survey, 129 comments and 32 shares. The post was liked 61 times, with 1 ‘sad’ and 4 ‘angry’ reactions. A further 51 comments were made on sharings of the posts.

Tranche 2

A second group of ads ran on Facebook and Instagram in the final week of the consultation, targeted at audiences in Warwickshire aged 17 and over. This was designed to encourage engagement and reached 5,170 users and resulted in 351 separate pieces of engagement.

2.2.2 Twitter

Tranche 1

A promoted tweet ran from December 20 to January 1 targeted at audiences in Warwickshire postcodes and followers of the OPCC account.

An audience of 12,981 was reached, generating 86 click-throughs to the survey and 26 likes.

An unpaid tweet on December 20 at the launch of the consultation reached a further 2,824 users, generating 16 click-throughs to the survey and 5 likes.

Tranche 2

To promote the survey in January, a tweet was promoted on January 17 to audiences in Warwickshire, reaching 35,317 users and resulting in 1,216 link clicks. An unpaid tweet, on the final day of the consultation reached another 1,582 users but generated just 8 click-throughs to the survey.

2.3 Elected members

A letter explaining the launch of the consultation and encouraging participation and requesting help in promoting the survey was shared with the Police and Crime Panel and elected members at County, District and Borough levels. Notifications that the letter had been circulated to councillors was received from Warwickshire County Council, Nuneaton & Bedworth District Council and Warwick District Council, though the democratic services departments of other authorities may have circulated to members without reply.

A similar circulation was made via WALC (Warwickshire & West Midlands Association of Local Councils) at parish and town council levels.

The offices of all five county MPs were similarly written to and encouraged to help with publicity of the survey.

2.4 Partner organisations

A number of partner organisations were contacted and asked to help promote the consultation widely among the community:

- Warwickshire Youth Parliament – details circulated to members
- Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board - an update on the consultation was added to the ‘Safe in Warwickshire’ website.
- National Farmers’ Union – newsletter information for onward distribution to members was sent to the Warwickshire County Advisor, who was also briefed personally during a visit to the OPCC.
- Business Watch – the Business Crime Advisor circulated details to contacts and included updates on the Business Watch website.
- Rural Watch – promoted the OPCC post on social media and also posted on the Rural Watch website.
- Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action – suggested newsletter content circulated to each WCAVA office.
- Warwickshire Neighbourhood Watch – information cascaded to NHW groups via the County Chair.
- EquIP – information cascaded via the Chief Executive to county contacts
- Hate Incident Partnership Panel – information circulated to members via Warwickshire County Council Community Safety

2.5 Community contacts

To encourage participation in the survey by members of Warwickshire’s minority ethnic groups, details were circulated to the following organisations:

- Gurdwara Sahib Leamington & Warwick
- Nuneaton Muslim Society
- Rugby Sikh Temple and Community Centre
- Shri Guru Teg Bahadar Gurdwara, Nuneaton
- Nuneaton Khalifa Muslim Society
- Local Polish Catholic Mission, Leamington Spa
- Leamington Spa Masjid and Muslim Community Centre
- Gurdwara Babe Ke, Leamington Spa
- Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Nuneaton
- Shree Krishna Mandir, Leamington Spa

2.6 Warwickshire Police

All police officers, staff and volunteers within Warwickshire were emailed by the Chief Constable to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation.

In addition, further tailored messages were sent to the Police Cadets and to members of the force's Independent Advisory Groups.

The force's online Community Messaging Service was also used to promote the consultation, to both general subscribers and those from the business community.

A number of the force social media accounts re-posted the OPCC's tweets/posts.

2.7 Commissioner's Monthly Newsletter

A promotional article was included in the December 2018 newsletter, generating 17 direct click-throughs to the survey.

We are grateful to all those who helped to publicise the precept consultation and encourage people to respond.

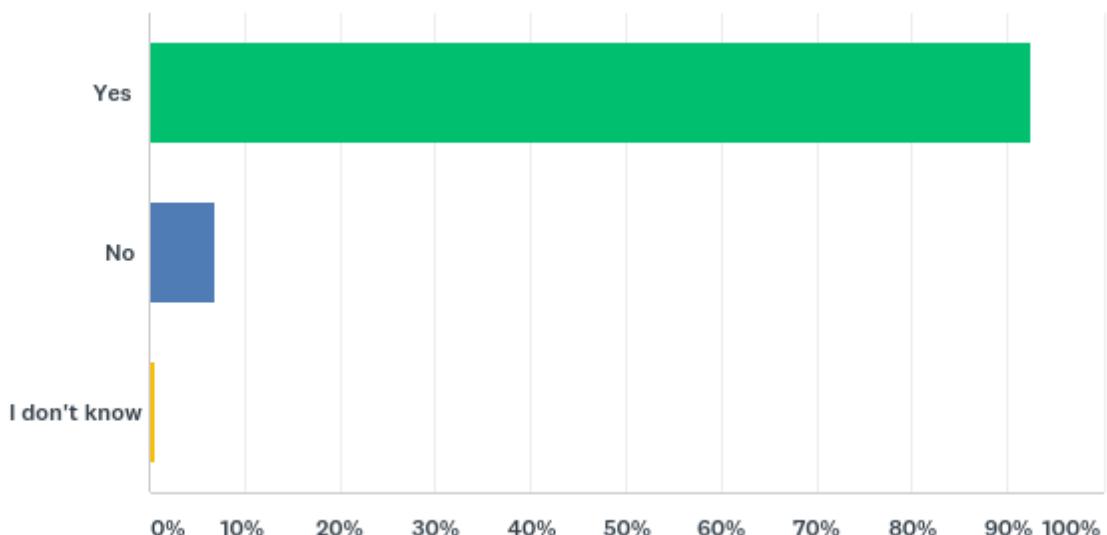
3.0 Online consultation survey results in detail

Data below is for all responses – figures broken down by district area, resident vs non-resident etc can be found in Appendix B.

3.1 Survey responses

Q1 – Are you a resident of Warwickshire?

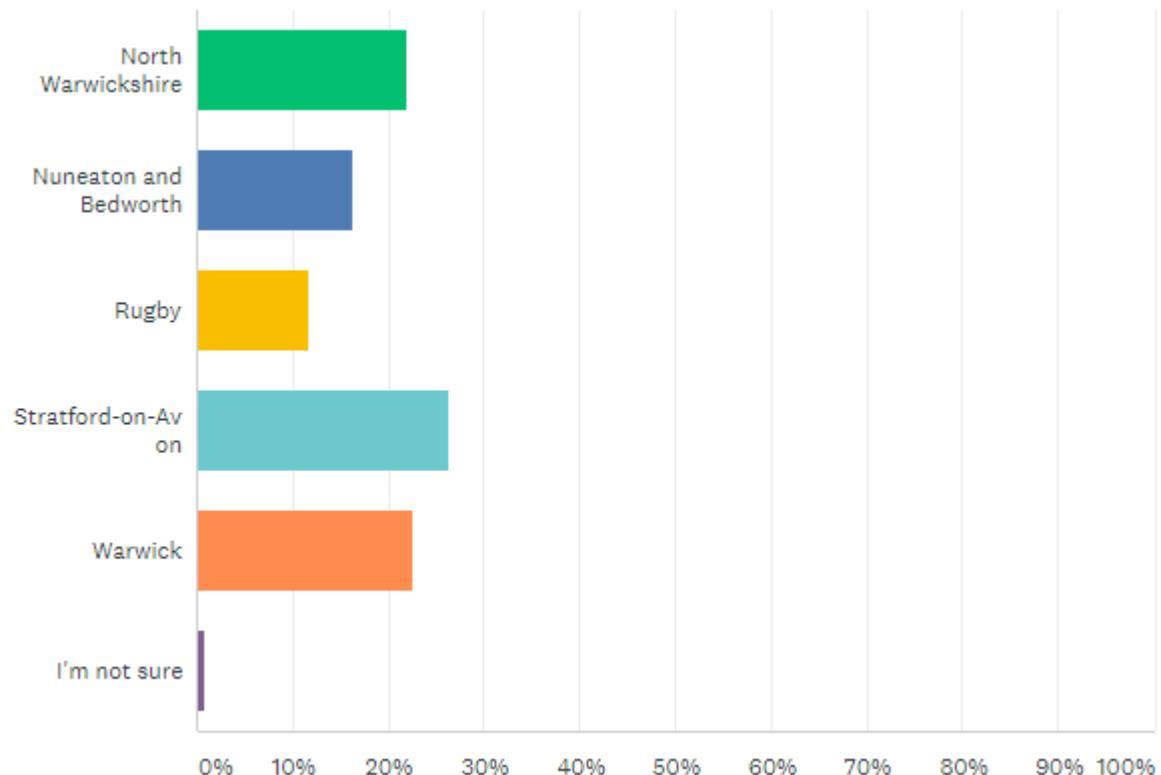
Answered: 2,693 Skipped: 0



Those answering 'yes' proceeded to Q2, those answering 'no' skipped to Q3.

Q2 – Which district do you live in?

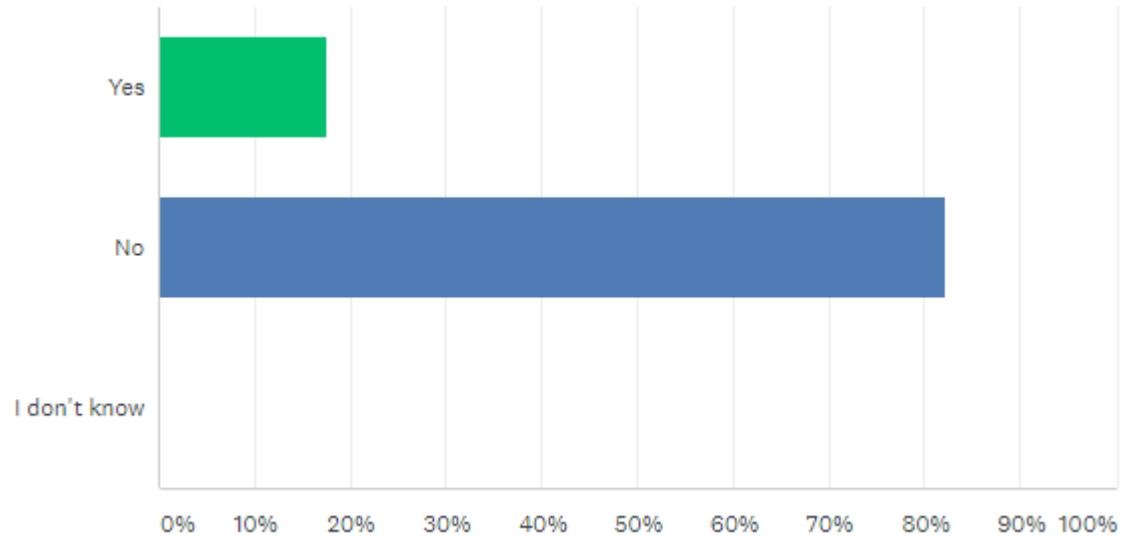
Answered: 2,485 Skipped: 208



Answer	Result
North Warwickshire	22.05%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	16.22%
Rugby	11.79%
Stratford-on-Avon	26.32%
Warwick	22.70%
I'm not sure	0.93%
Total: 2,485	

Q3 - Do you work for Warwickshire Police?

Answered: 2,682 Skipped: 11

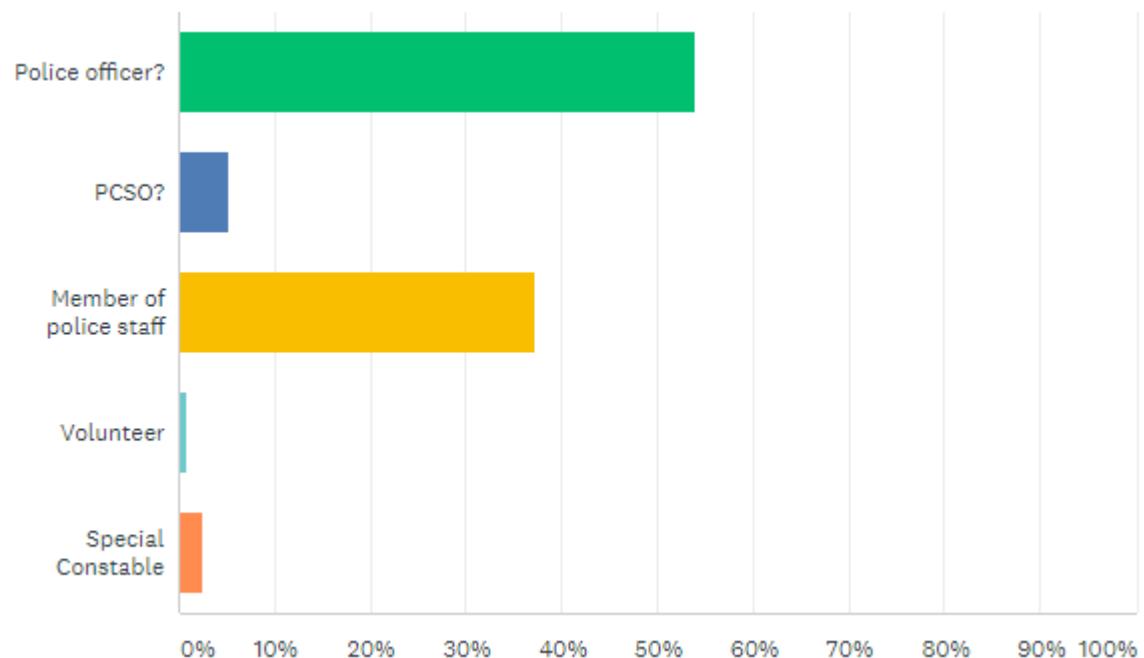


Answer choice	Result	
Yes	17.64%	473
No	82.14%	2,203
I don't know	0.22%	6
Total : 2,682		

Those answering 'yes' proceeded to Q3, those answering 'no' skipped to Q5.

Q3 - Are you a:

Answered: 474 Skipped: 2,219

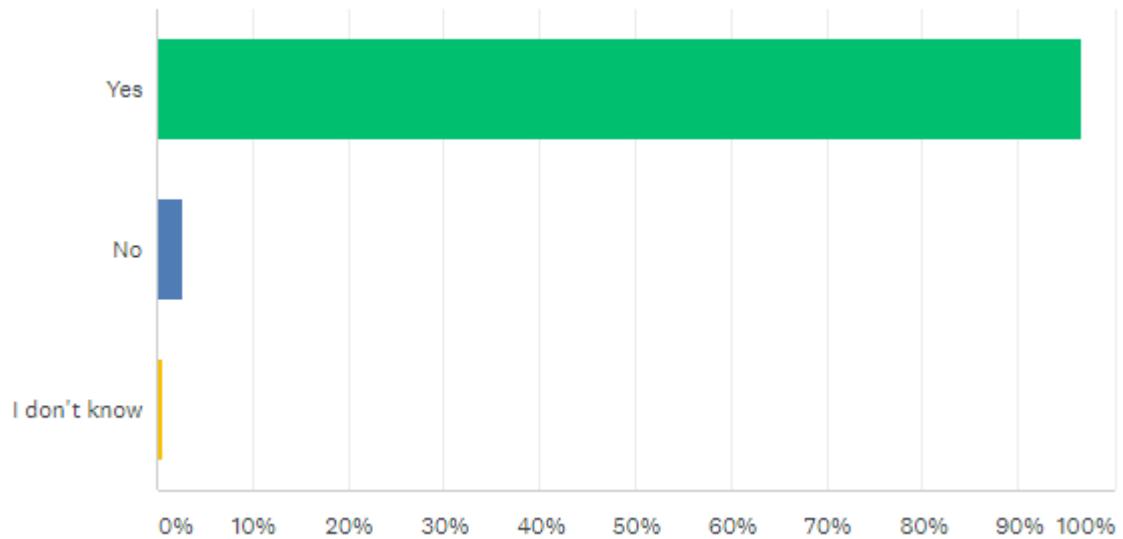


Answer	Result	
Police officer	54.01%	256
PCSO	5.27%	25
Member of police staff	37.34%	177
Volunteer	0.84%	4
Special Constable	2.53%	12
Total: 474		

A comments field was also provided in this question, allowing people to provide additional information to describe their role. The majority were people who had answered as police staff indicating that they were also Special Constables, though one respondent indicated they were a retired officer, now working as police staff, another worked as a detention officer and another as a police staff investigator.

Q4 - Are you a Council Tax payer?

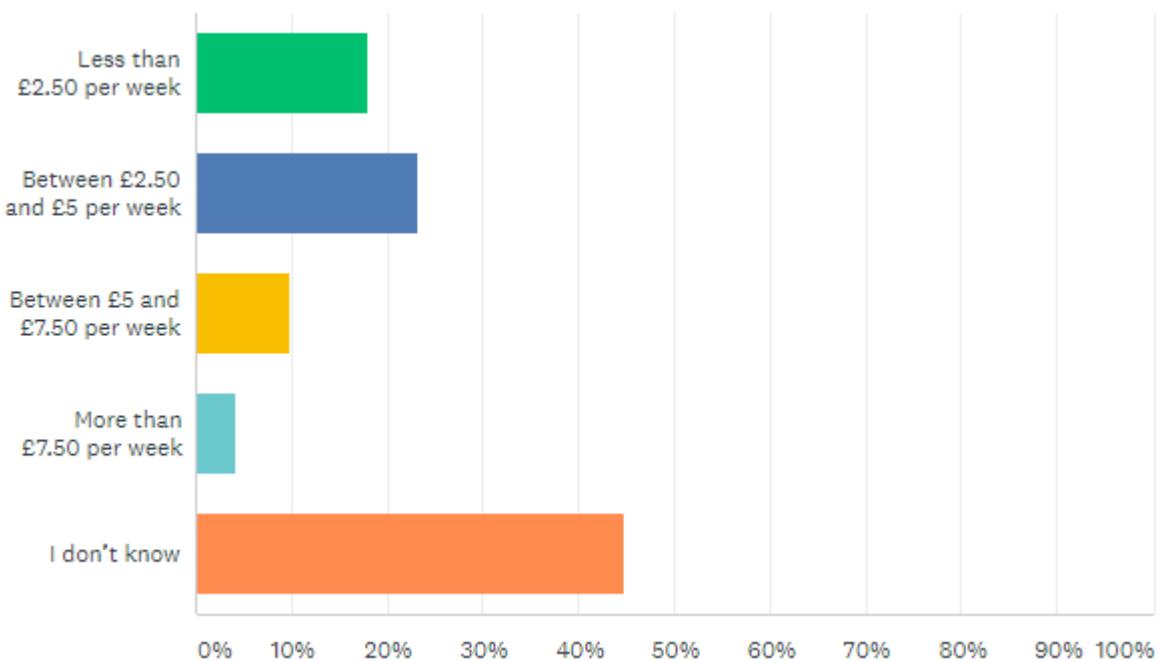
Answered: 2,643 Skipped: 50



Answer choice	Result	
Yes	96.71%	2.556
No	2.65%	70
I don't know	0.64%	17
Total : 2,643		

Q6 - How much do you think the current Police Precept is each week?

Answered: 2,643 Skipped: 50

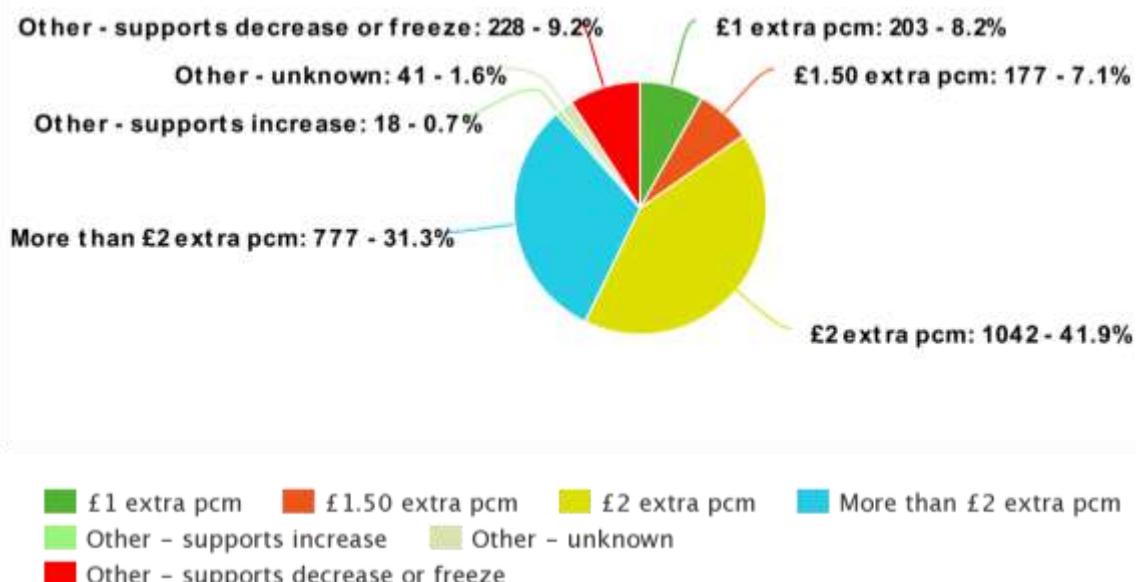


Answer	Result
Less than £2.50 per week	18.09%
Between £2.50 and £5 per week	23.12%
Between £5 and £7.50 per week	9.88%
More than £7.50 per week	4.12%
I don't know	44.80%
Total: 2,643	

N.B. Current Council Tax bands are all between £2.60 and £7.84 per week, suggesting that the majority of taxpayers are either incorrect or do not know how much they currently pay for policing.

Q7 - Which level of precept increase would you be willing to support in 2019/20?

Answered: 2,511 Skipped: 182



meta-chart.com

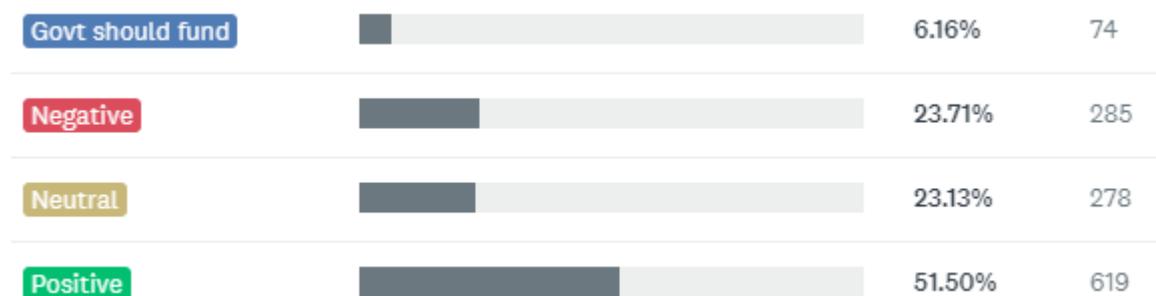
Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	8.1%	203
£1.50 extra per month*	7.0%	177
£2 extra per month*	41.5%	1,042
More than £2 extra per month*	30.9%	777
Some other form of increase	0.7%	18
Supported a freeze or precept decrease	9.2%	228
Other – views unknown	1.2%	41
Total: 2,511		

* For an average Band 'D' property.

Q8 - Would you like to provide more information about your answer?

Answered: 1,202 Skipped: 1,491

A total of 1,202 individual comments were made, which can broadly be broken down into the following categories:



There were a total of 619 comments (51.50%) which were showed favouritism towards a precept rise, with 285 (23.71%) expressing the view that there should not be a rise. A smaller number of people (74 or 6.16%) expressed the view that the Government should provide further enhanced funding, rather than local taxpayers. The latter group also included a small handful who still believed it was right to increase the precept even without further central funding.

The vast majority of those supporting a rise in the precept to pay for additional officers expressed the desire to see a subsequent uplift in visible policing, particularly in rural areas. There were significant numbers of comments expressing a wish that police numbers should be boosted in Coleshill, Atherstone and Shipston areas in particular.

A significant number of the comments (278 or 23.23%) were of a more generic or neutral nature, often making more general statements about crime or policing and, as such, it was not possible to determine whether they were expressing support or opposition for a precept rise.

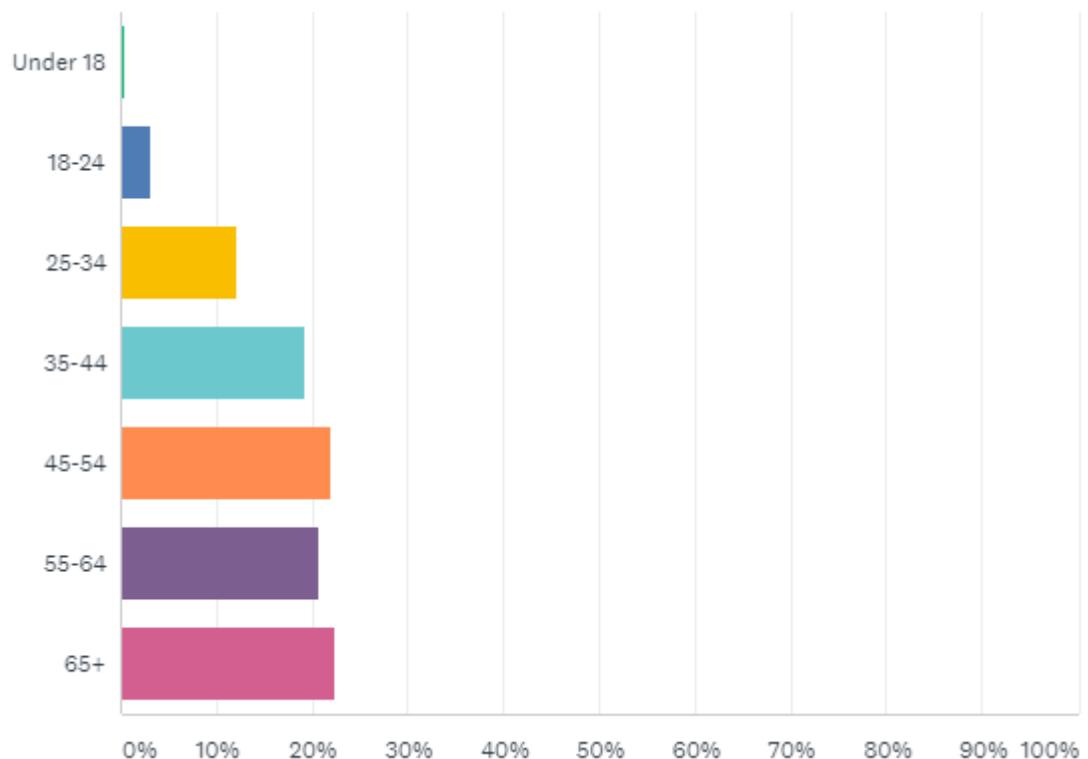
Of those who expressed a preference for no rise, concerns were expressed about the ability of some taxpayers to afford an increase, especially in light of other potential increases from the other precepting authorities - particular reference being made to charges levied on green bin collections on a number of occasions. Another viewpoint expressed on a number of occasions was the perceived need for the police to make greater efficiency savings before asking taxpayers for more money. Others still expressed a view that local councils should be asked to contribute or to transfer money from their own efficiency savings – this appears to stem from a misunderstanding of the nature of Council Tax and an assumption that, due to its title, local authorities are involved in the precept setting for the police.

3.2 Demographic questions

In order to assess the reach of the consultation survey, the following demographic questions were included, on an optional basis. There was no penalty for not completing any of the questions and respondents could give as little or as much information without affecting their ability to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. Note should be taken therefore of the numbers of skipped responses before extrapolating across the whole of the dataset.

Q-9 What is your age?

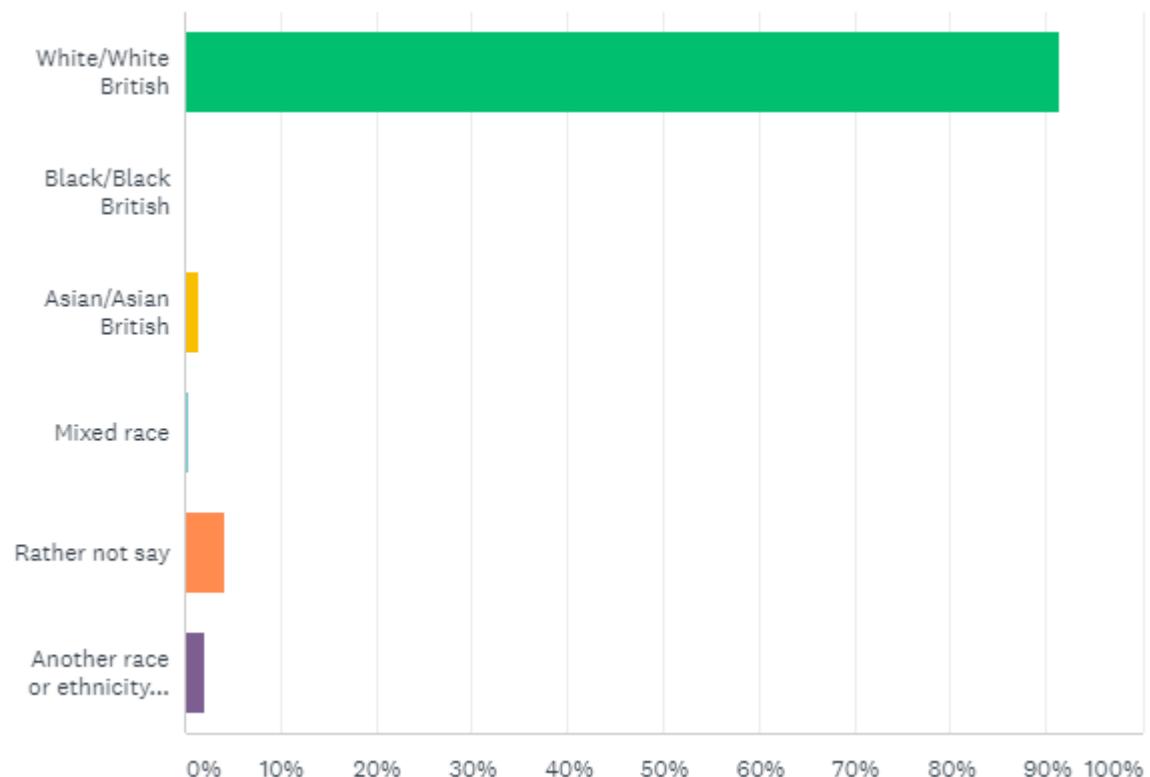
Answered: 2,454 Skipped: 239



Answer choice	Results	
Under 18	0.49%	12
18-24	3.14%	77
25-34	12.10%	297
35-44	19.23%	472
45-54	21.96%	539
55-64	20.74%	509
65+	22.33%	548
Total: 2,454		

Q10 - Which race/ethnicity best describes you?

Answered: 2,451 Skipped: 242



Answer choice	Results	
White / White British	91.39%	2,240
Black / Black British	0.29%	7
Asian / Asian British	1.55%	38
Mixed race	0.49%	12
Rather not say	4.20%	103
Another race or ethnicity*	2.08%	51
Total: 2,451		

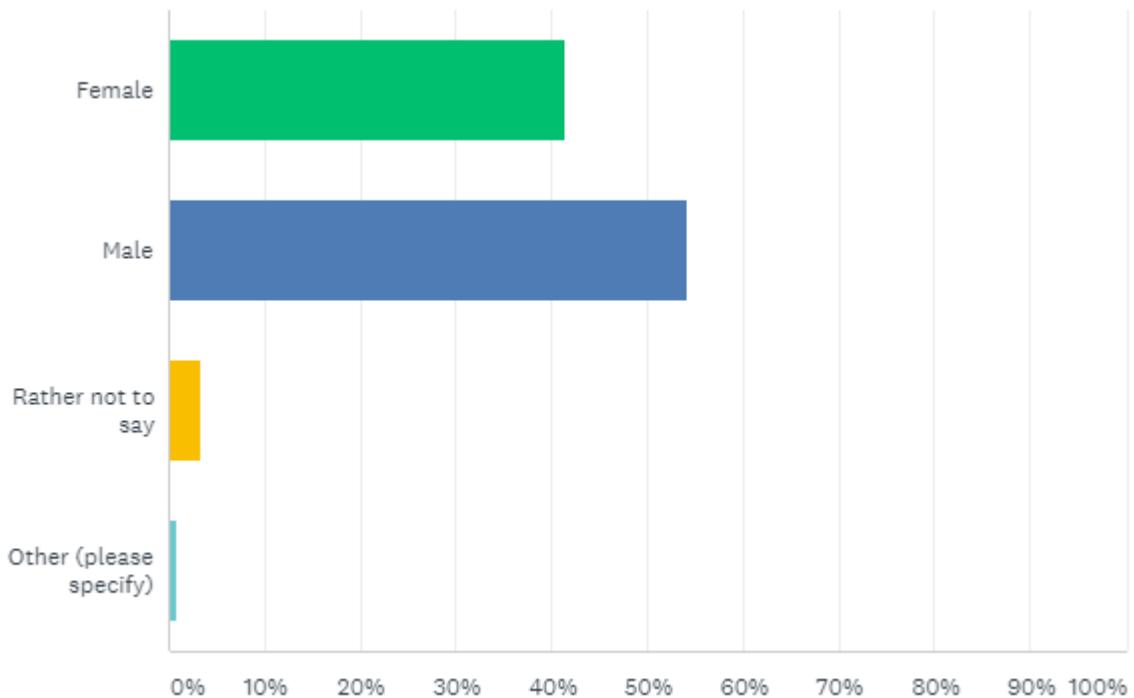
*Other stated race or ethnicities stated by respondents included: White English, Sikh, White/Irish, English, British, Egyptian, Peruvian, Indian and a number indicating they did not feel this information was relevant to the survey.

For comparison purposes, the ONS lists the following ethnic breakdown for the Warwickshire population (2011 Census):

- 92.8% White
- 4.6% Asian
- 1.5% Mixed
- 0.8% Black
- 0.4% Other

Q11 - What gender do you identify as?

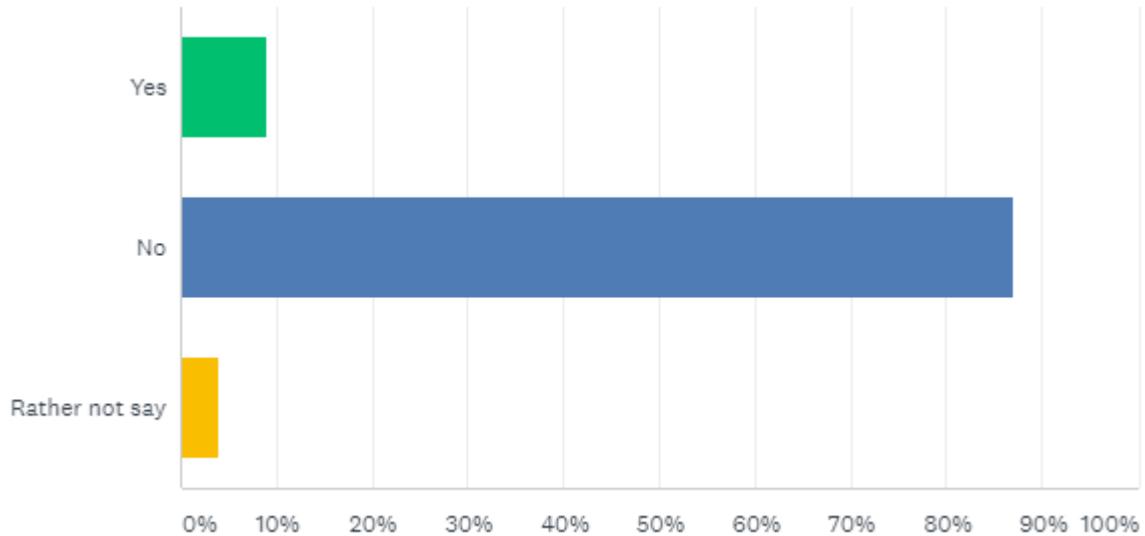
Answered: 2,437 Skipped: 256



* One respondent identified as transgender, however the majority of responses to this question were either questioning the relevance to the survey, or questioning the choices available.

Q12 - Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

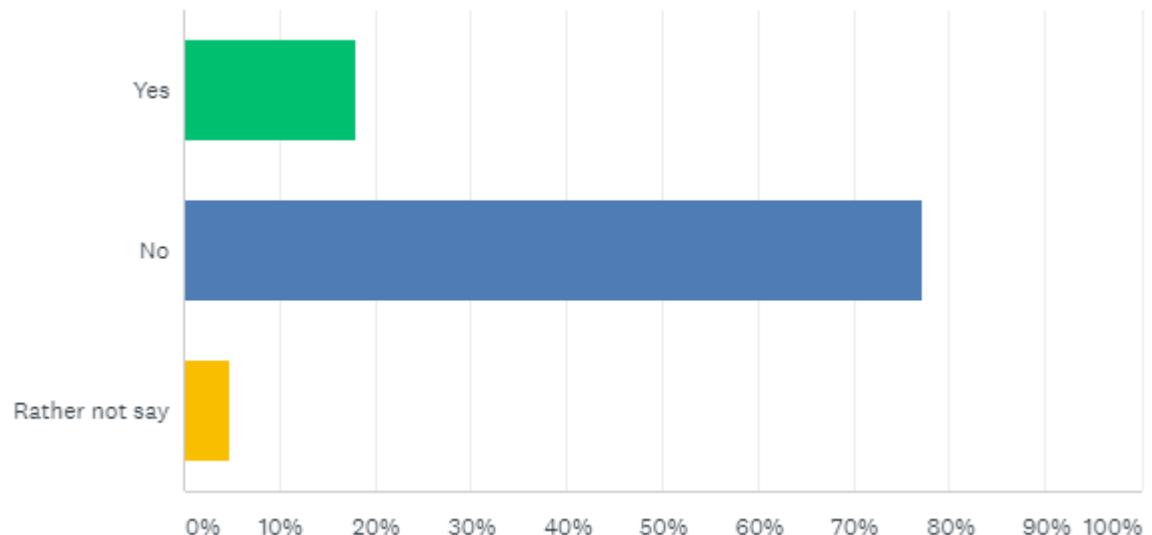
Answered: 2,428 Skipped: 265



Answer choice	Results	
Yes	8.98%	218
No	86.94%	2,111
Rather not say	4.08%	99
Total: 2,428		

Q13 - Have you been a victim of crime in the last 12 months?

Answered: 2,448 Skipped: 245



Answer choice	Results	
Yes	17.97%	440
No	77.25%	1,891
Rather not say	4.78%	117
Total: 2,448		

4.0 Additional responses

4.1 Social media comments

A number of additional comments were received by email and social media.

Not all comments received via social media were directly relevant to the consultation. Some related to other matters, were more general 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.

Through Facebook, a total of 139 comments were received across the various postings, though some of these were duplicates for the same user. Analysis found that there were 19 messages in support of a precept rise, 83 negative posts which did not favour a rise and 17 neutral posts. A total of 20 users commented that the Government should provide additional funding rather than asking local taxpayers to fund through a precept rise.

On Twitter, there were fewer comments – a total of 13 being received in response to the various tweets issued. Of these, 3 were positive towards a raise, 6 were negative, three were neutral and one thought greater Government funding was required.

4.2 Face-to-face consultation

In addition to the online survey, the Commissioner and Treasurer offered to consult formally with county MPs, local authorities and key partners across the county to discuss the precept and the overall budget for Warwickshire Police.

4.2.1 Local Authorities

A budget consultation meeting for local authorities was held on 17 December, with attendance from county, district and borough council's senior staff and elected leadership. There was general support for increasing the precept if it could be demonstrated that this would result in higher numbers of officers being recruited, though there was some questioning of the level of the rise and the burden on local taxpayers, given similar anticipated increases from the majority of the other precepting authorities.

4.2.2 Police employee associations

A similar consultation exercise was conducted with police employee representatives on 9 January, 2019, namely:

- Warwickshire Police Federation
- Warwickshire Police Superintendents' Association

- Warwickshire Police Unison

4.2.3 The Business Community

On 10 January, a precept consultation meeting was held in Warwick for members of the business community. In attendance were representatives of:

- Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
- Warwickshire National Farmers Union
- Warwickshire Business Centres
- Warwickshire County Council Town Centres
- Head of Town Centres and Marketing Manager for Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Invest in Warwickshire

The Commissioner gave a presentation of precept proposals and outlined how the Chief Constable had indicated the additional officers would be allocated. Questions from the forum included:

- The cost to council tax payers in higher bands than a D and what percentage of people are within bands A-D.
- How the additional funds would be used to deal with cyber crime, particularly for small businesses.
- The resources that would go in to the Harm Hub and how these would be used to tackle mental health issues.
- How the IT investments would be used and how this would assist with being able to report crimes to 101 more speedily.

The overall feedback was that, if people want to feel safe through a strengthened police service, they need to be willing to pay more towards the police element of council tax.

4.2.4 Members of Parliament

All county Members of Parliament were invited to attend a budget briefing from the Commissioner and Treasurer at Jubilee House in Kenilworth. Apologies were received from Jeremy Wright QC MP and Nadhim Zadawhi MP, though their offices were engaged in the discussions and have both assisted with communicating the survey to constituents. All other county MPs were able to attend.

5.0 Conclusions

There is broad support for an increase of the police precept, taking into account the results of the online polls (72.4% in favour of a raise of £2 per month on an average Band 'D' property, with 30.9% indicating they would have been willing to pay even more, had it been an option) and other forms of consultation.

Despite this, note should be made of the numbers of people who have indicated through the consultation that they would prefer no raise or would like to see only a smaller raise enacted, even if they are supportive of the broad principle of increasing the numbers of police officers in Warwickshire.

A recurring comment both in the online survey and through social media was a feeling that central government should be providing the funding for additional police officers/increased police budgets centrally, rather than relying on local taxation to make up the difference.

Perhaps understandably, a common desire among those expressing support for a raise was the wish to see funding prioritised for areas in which they live. This was especially true of respondents in rural areas and in the north of the county.

The online survey and the general comments also suggest there is still much confusion surrounding Council Tax generally, and its role in funding local services. A frequent, if not common, opinion expressed was that local authorities should prioritise funding to policing over other services, reflecting the fact that some people do not understand the complete separation of these budgets and the different precepting authorities concerned. Equally, it is clear that a majority of people do not know or are incorrect about the amount they actually pay towards policing through Council Tax.

It is also worth noting that the sample size achieved this year is significantly larger than in previous years. While all results are self-selecting and there should be care taken in drawing concrete conclusions from the numbers involved, it is nonetheless encouraging to see greater numbers taking the time to give their opinions.

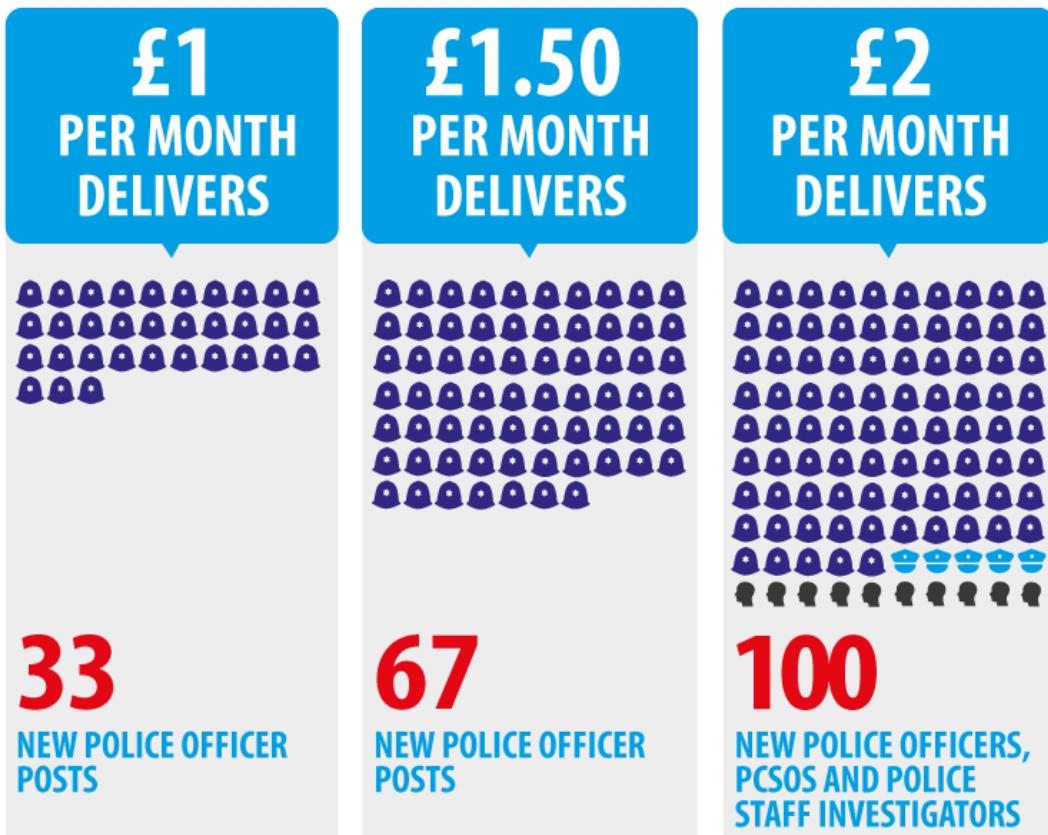
By way of comparison, at the time of compiling this report, a number of other PCC offices have published results of their own precept consultations and these may be of interest when reflecting on the Warwickshire results:

Area	Number completing survey	Percentage in favour of raise of £2 per month on Band D	Population of area
Warwickshire	2,490	72.4%	560,000
Thames Valley	8,031	69.7%	2.1 million
Lancashire	4,600	63%	1.5 million
North Wales	1,877	51%	675,000
Sussex	2,694	61%	1.6 million

Appendix A: Infographics used in the consultation

HOW MUCH EXTRA ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY TO SUPPORT POLICING IN WARWICKSHIRE?

FOR AN AVERAGE BAND D PROPERTY IN WARWICKSHIRE AN INCREASE OF:



HAVE YOUR SAY AT: WWW.WARWICKSHIRE-PCC.GOV.UK

WHY IS THERE NO PROPOSAL TO FREEZE THE POLICE PRECEPT IN WARWICKSHIRE?

FREEZING THE PRECEPT (NO INCREASE) WOULD MEAN:



0 NEW POLICE
OFFICER POSTS
CREATED

NO IMPROVEMENTS TO:



LEADING TO A REDUCED LEVEL OF SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

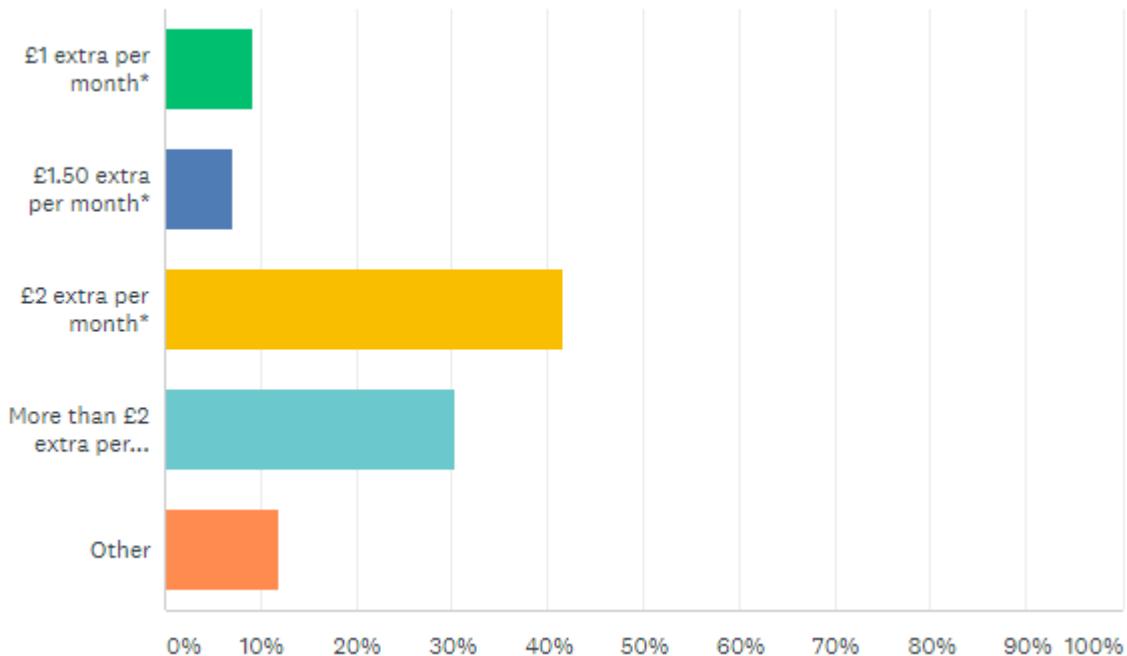
THE COMMISSIONER DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS IS ACCEPTABLE

Appendix B: Statistical breakdown by district / interest area

Top level results are presented below for each of the areas of interest. Please note that for these responses, the 'other' categories have not been further broken down to identify those that did not support a raise or has specified some other figure to raise the precept by.

Warwickshire residents

Answered: 2,325 Skipped: 165

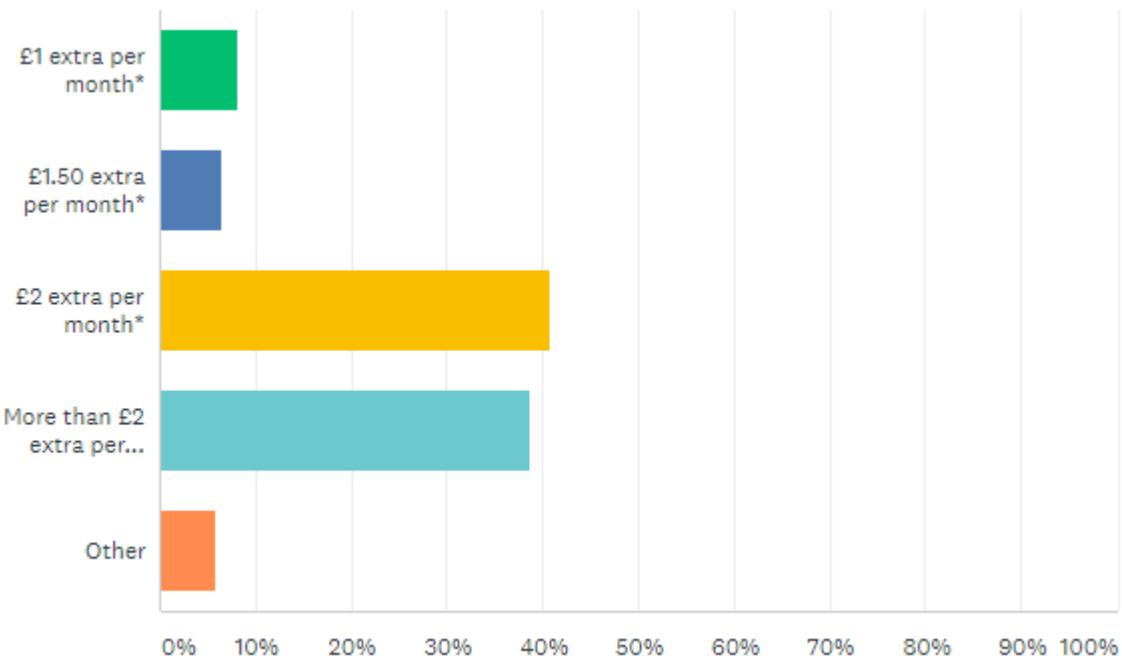


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	9.16%	213
£1.50 extra per month*	7.10%	165
£2 extra per month*	41.55%	966
More than £2 extra per month*	30.32%	705
Other	11.87%	276
Total: 2,325		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Non-Warwickshire residents

Answered: 186 Skipped: 17

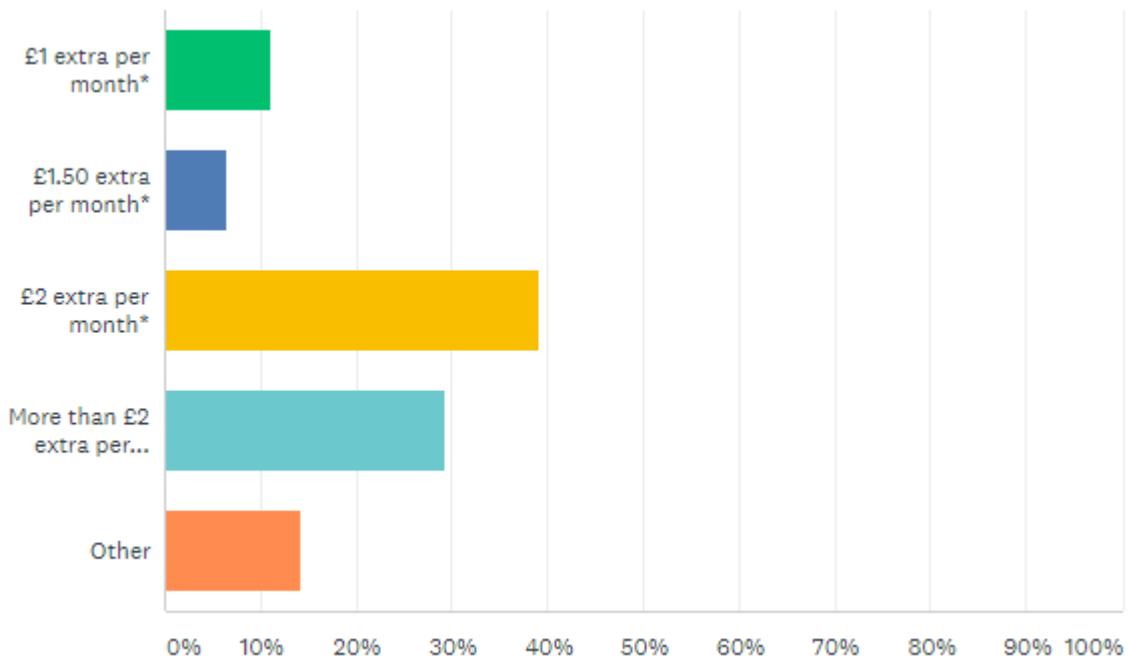


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	8.06%	15
£1.50 extra per month*	6.45%	12
£2 extra per month*	40.86%	76
More than £2 extra per month*	38.71%	72
Other	5.91%	11
Total: 186		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

North Warwickshire District residents

Answered: 500 Skipped: 48

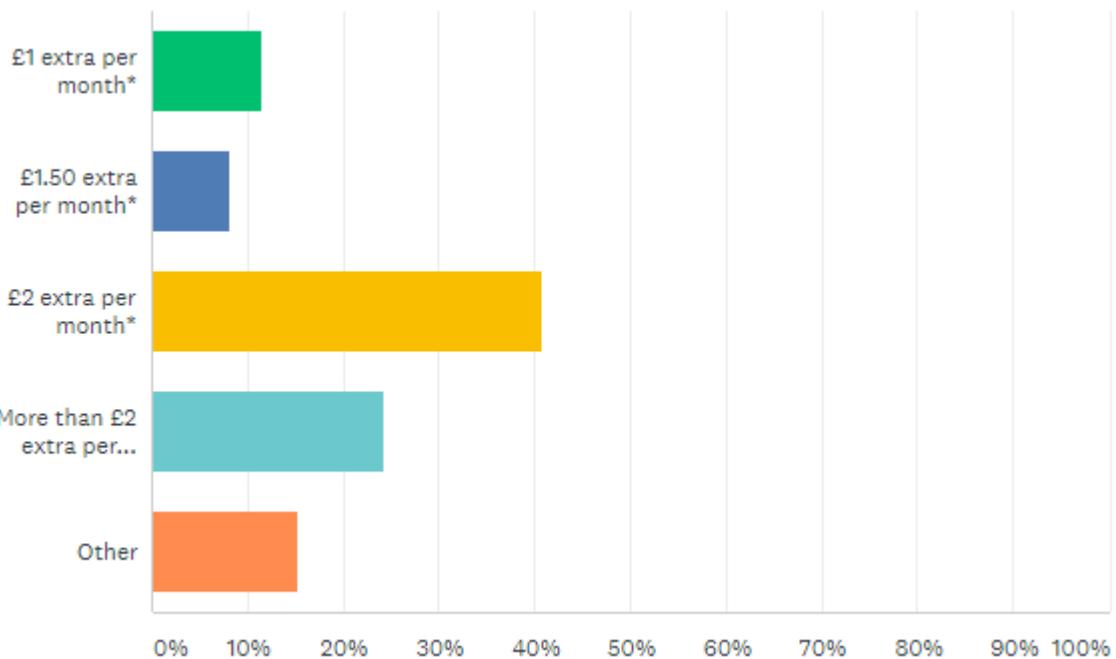


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	11.00%	55
£1.50 extra per month*	6.40%	32
£2 extra per month*	39.20%	196
More than £2 extra per month*	29.20%	146
Other	14.20%	71
Total: 500		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough residents

Answered: 382 Skipped: 21

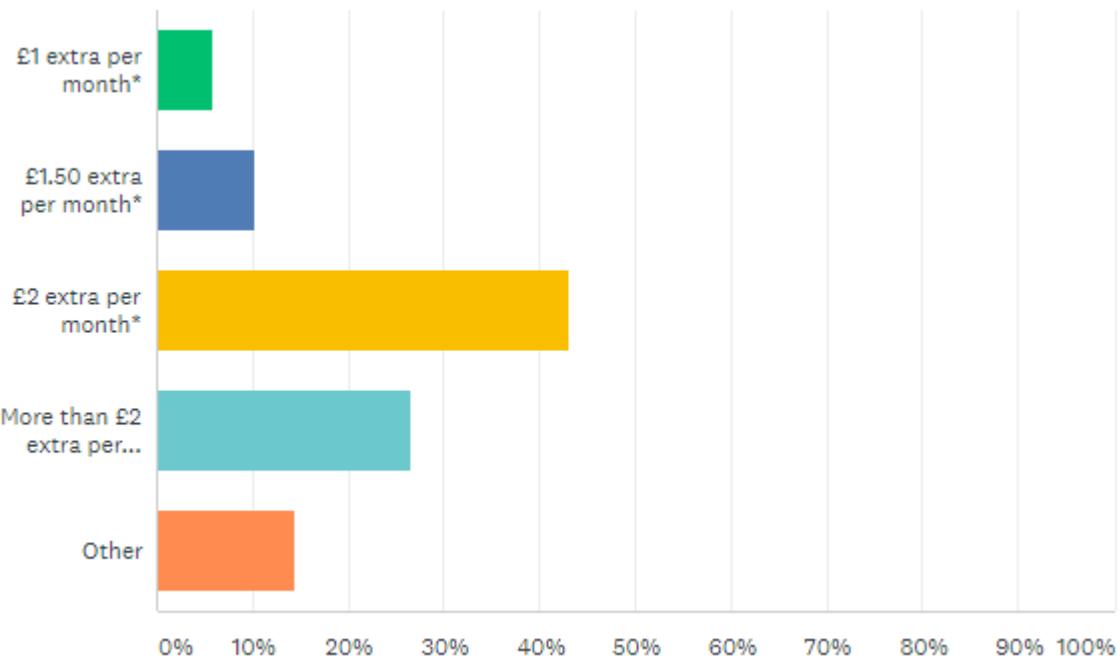


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	11.52%	44
£1.50 extra per month*	8.12%	31
£2 extra per month*	40.84%	156
More than £2 extra per month*	24.35%	93
Other	15.18%	58
		Total: 382

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Rugby Borough residents

Answered: 272 Skipped: 20

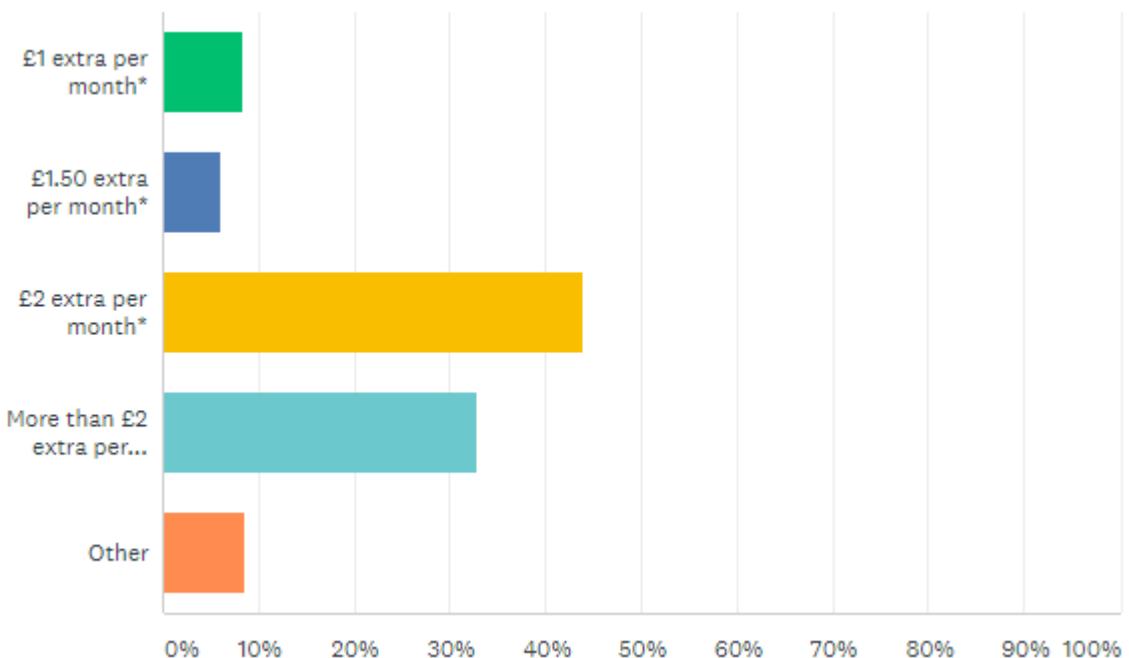


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	5.88%	16
£1.50 extra per month*	10.29%	28
£2 extra per month*	43.01%	117
More than £2 extra per month*	26.47%	72
Other	14.34%	39
Total: 272		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Stratford-on-Avon District residents

Answered: 620 Skipped: 34

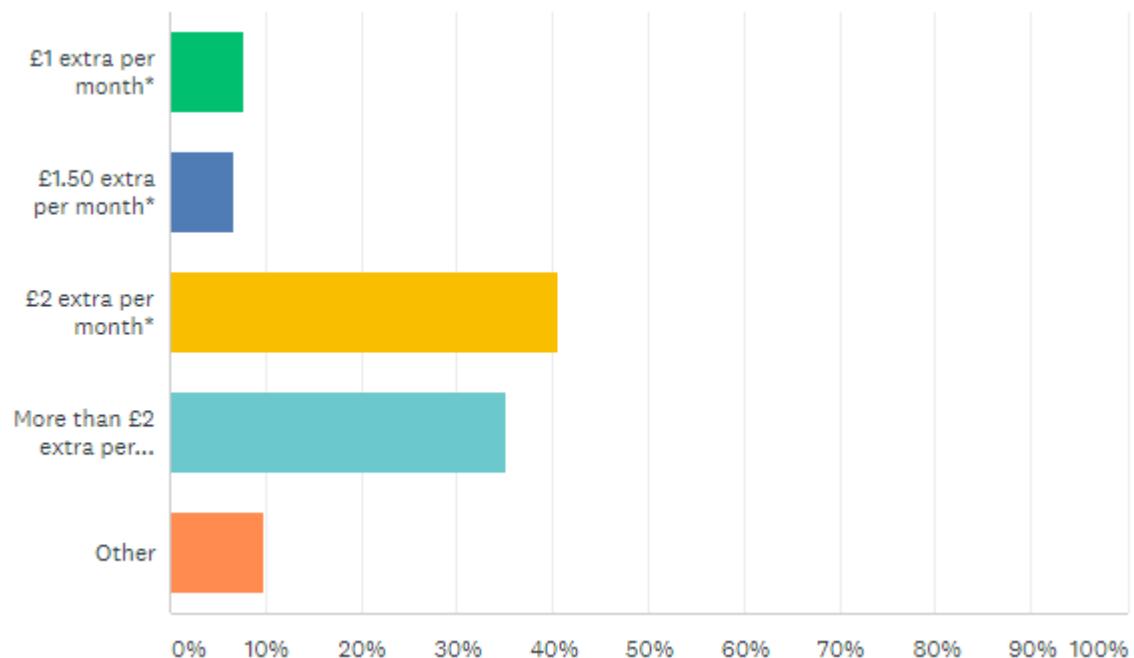


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	8.39%	52
£1.50 extra per month*	6.13%	38
£2 extra per month*	44.03%	273
More than £2 extra per month*	32.90%	204
Other	8.55%	53
Total: 620		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Warwick District residents

Answered: 531 Skipped: 33

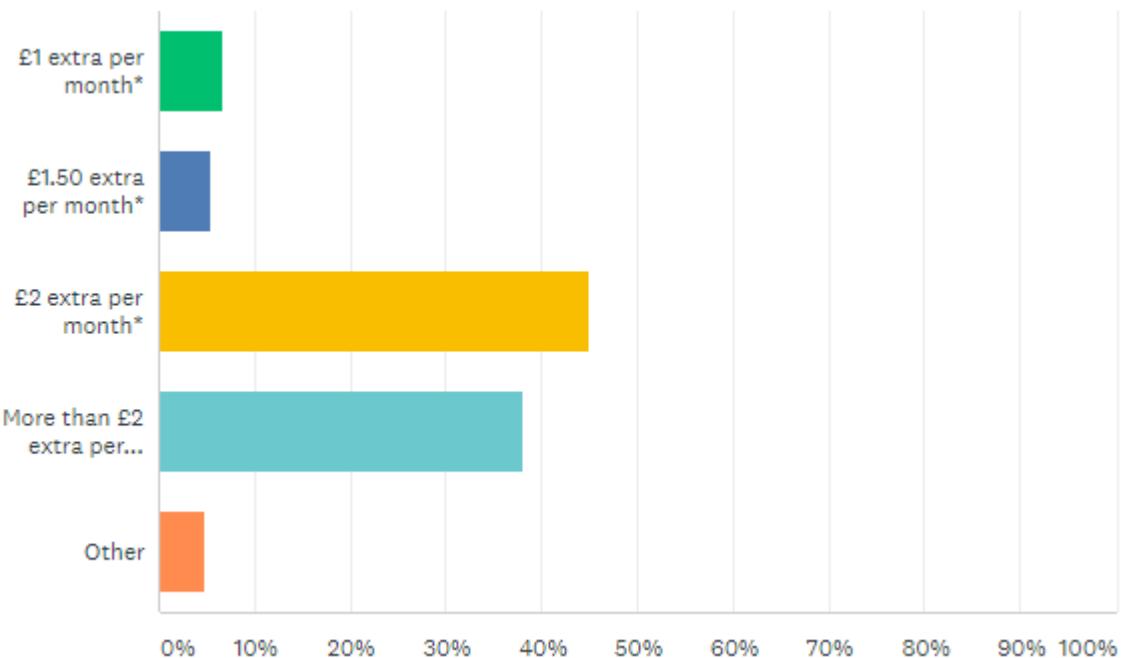


Answer choice	Results
£1 extra per month*	7.72%
£1.50 extra per month*	6.59%
£2 extra per month*	40.68%
More than £2 extra per month*	35.22%
Other	9.79%
Total: 531	

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Police employees/volunteers

Answered: 455 Skipped: 18

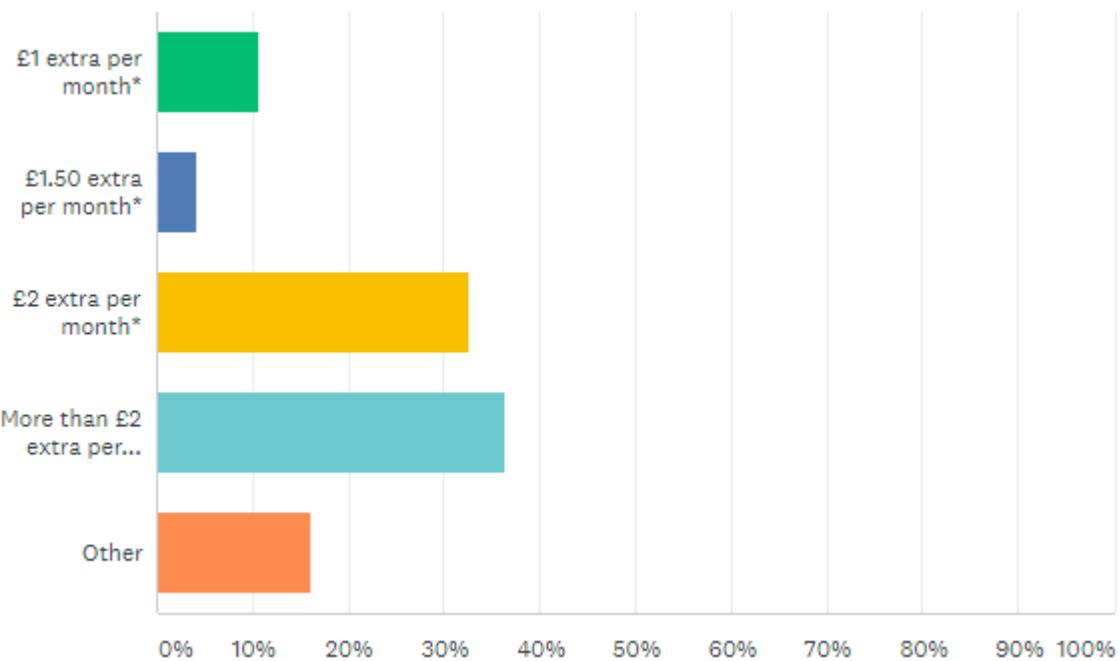


Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	6.59%	30
£1.50 extra per month*	5.49%	25
£2 extra per month*	45.05%	205
More than £2 extra per month*	38.02%	173
Other	4.84%	22
Total: 455		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill

Victims of crime

Answered: 440 Skipped: 0



Answer choice	Results	
£1 extra per month*	10.68%	47
£1.50 extra per month*	4.09%	18
£2 extra per month*	32.73%	144
More than £2 extra per month*	36.36%	160
Other	16.14%	71
Total: 455		

* Based on an average Band 'D' bill