

2017/18

Consultation text

Commissioner proposes a freeze on police element of council tax

A freeze on the police element of council tax in Warwickshire for 2017/18 is being proposed by the county's Police and Crime Commissioner, Philip Seccombe, as he launches a public consultation prior to setting the budget for Warwickshire Police.

The move would see the Police Precept pegged at the same levels as in 2016/17, meaning that the portion of Council Tax bills which is spent on policing would remain unchanged from their current levels for all Council Tax bands.

The Commissioner is asking the public for their feedback on his proposal and a simple online poll has been launched where residents can indicate whether they support the proposed freeze. Email and postal responses are also invited, with the public asked to state their support for the proposed freeze – or alternatively to ask the Commissioner to look for alternative proposals to increase the precept. The consultation will run until January 27 on the PCC website.

Philip Seccombe, Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire, said: "I know that these are very difficult economic times for many people and there are also increasingly large pressures on the budgets of local authorities and other public-sector bodies. While this is likely to mean that other portions of the council tax may have to rise, I am keen to ensure that wherever possible this is not the case for the Police Precept.

"The amount Warwickshire Police receives centrally from the Government has been protected in real terms, though this would in effect require me to increase the police precept by the maximum amount of 1.99% to ensure that Warwickshire Police continues to receive all of the funding it requires. However, I do not think it would be fair to ask the taxpayers of Warwickshire to fund this locally while the force has financial reserves from previous savings and underspends at its disposal. I am therefore proposing to fund this shortfall for 2017/18 by spending from those reserves.

"While this is something I am able to do this year, like any form of savings, once the reserves are spent they are not available again in future years. It will be important therefore that Warwickshire Police continues to find new and more efficient ways of working in order to deliver identified further savings and protect the overall budget in the longer term. My Police and Crime Plan sets out the framework for how this will be achieved and I am confident that, for the next 12 months at least, there is no need to ask the public to pay more to ensure frontline policing is both protected and enhanced.

"My proposed budget will also continue to provide grant funding to organisations across Warwickshire who are working to put victims first, ensure effective and efficient policing, protect people from harm and prevent and reduce crime.

"I am keen however to hear people's views, so I would urge all Warwickshire residents to take part in the consultation and tell me whether you back my proposal."

You can give your feedback by:

- Visiting www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/preceptsurvey
- Or emailing opcc@warwickshire.gov.uk and stating whether you support a freeze (0% increase), or alternatively think the Commissioner should look to increase the Police Precept (up to a maximum of 1.99%).

- Or writing to Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, 3 Northgate Street, Warwick CV34 4SP, again indicating whether you support a freeze (0% increase), or alternatively think the Commissioner should look to increase the Police Precept (up to a maximum of 1.99%).

A factsheet giving more detailed information about the Commissioner's proposal and answers to frequently asked questions about Council Tax and the Police Precept are also available on the PCC's website on the consultation page.

The consultation will run until midday on Friday 27 January.

Consultation questions

Q1 Are you a resident of Warwickshire?

Q2 Which district do you live in?

These respondents were then asked whether they supported the Commissioner's proposal to freeze the precept, along with a summary of what the proposals would deliver.

Q3 With this in mind do you:

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

Q4 Do you have any other comments?

Please note: A Frequently Asked Questions and Police Precept Proposal leaflet were also embedded within the survey. These are provided as Attachments A and B.