

2019/20

Consultation text

Views sought on budget plans to recruit more police officers

Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe is asking the public to have their say on plans to increase the number of police officers, community support officers and police staff investigators by up to 100, in order to meet rising demand and provide a better service to local communities.

The proposals come as part of the draft budget for the 2019/20 financial year and would allow for officer numbers to be boosted and deliver improved capacity for urban and rural policing. This will build on last year's police precept investment of 50 frontline police officer posts.

The consultation follows the Government's annual funding settlement announcement for policing on 13th December, which has given PCCs flexibility to raise their precept by up to £24 on a Band D property for 2019/20.

The Commissioner wants to hear your views on these plans, which would require an increase to the police's share of council tax in 2019/20. An online survey is now live and will be shared widely in the coming days to allow for the highest possible feedback.

Under the proposals, achieving the maximum number of new officers would require an increase of £2 per month for an average Band D council tax payer, but could deliver 85 new police officer posts, five new police community support officers and an additional 10 police staff investigators.

As well as these additional officers, the extra funding would also ensure that much-needed investments could continue to be made into modernising police IT and estates to ensure they are efficient and effective, enabling Warwickshire Police to deliver an improved service to the public.

Options for increases of £1.50 per month and £1 per month at Band D are also being consulted upon, but these would see fewer new officers posts created and no new PCSOs or police investigators appointed.

Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe said: "When I go around the county talking to the public, people make it very clear to me that they want to see additional police officers out on patrol and working to protect our communities from crime and for crimes to be investigated quickly and effectively when they are reported.

"Similarly, when I talk to police officers in Warwickshire, I hear of the increased workloads that they are all having to carry in order to meet the current rising levels of demand.

"The Government has provided some welcome additional funding for policing this year, but this alone will not deliver enough resources to be able to make the substantial increase in officer numbers that I believe is required, nor would it fully allow for the investments in IT, equipment and estates that are badly needed in order to improve the quality of service given the public.

"Doing nothing to change this situation is not an option that in my view is either sustainable or desirable, so this year I have outlined proposals to increase the portion of Council Tax by up to £2 a month, £1.50 a month or £1 a month on average, in order to provide the Chief Constable with the resources he needs.

“While these increases are based on an average Band D taxpayer, in reality, many people would see a smaller increase, with those Warwickshire residents living in Council Tax bands A to C paying proportionately less per month. However, I understand that any proposals to raise Council Tax cause concern, so I am very keen to get the public’s views on which of these options is the most preferable.

“Your opinions will help influence my final decision on next year’s budget and I hope to hear from the widest possible number of you through the consultation survey.”

You can give your feedback online at www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk. The survey will be open until Tuesday, January 24, 2019.

The Commissioner is also holding a special event for businesses to give their feedback on the proposals. It will be held at 2pm on Thursday 10 January at the Northgate House Conference Centre in Warwick. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner on 01926 412322 or email opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk.

For further information about Council Tax and to check the tax band of your home, click here to visit the Gov.uk website.

Consultation questions

Q1 Are you a resident of Warwickshire?

Q2 Which district do you live in?

Q3 Do you work for Warwickshire Police?

Those answering yes were also asked:

Are you a:

- a) Police officer?
- b) PCSO?
- c) Member of police staff?
- d) Volunteer
- e) Special Constable

Q4 Are you a Council Tax payer?

Q5 How much do you think the current Police Precept is each week?

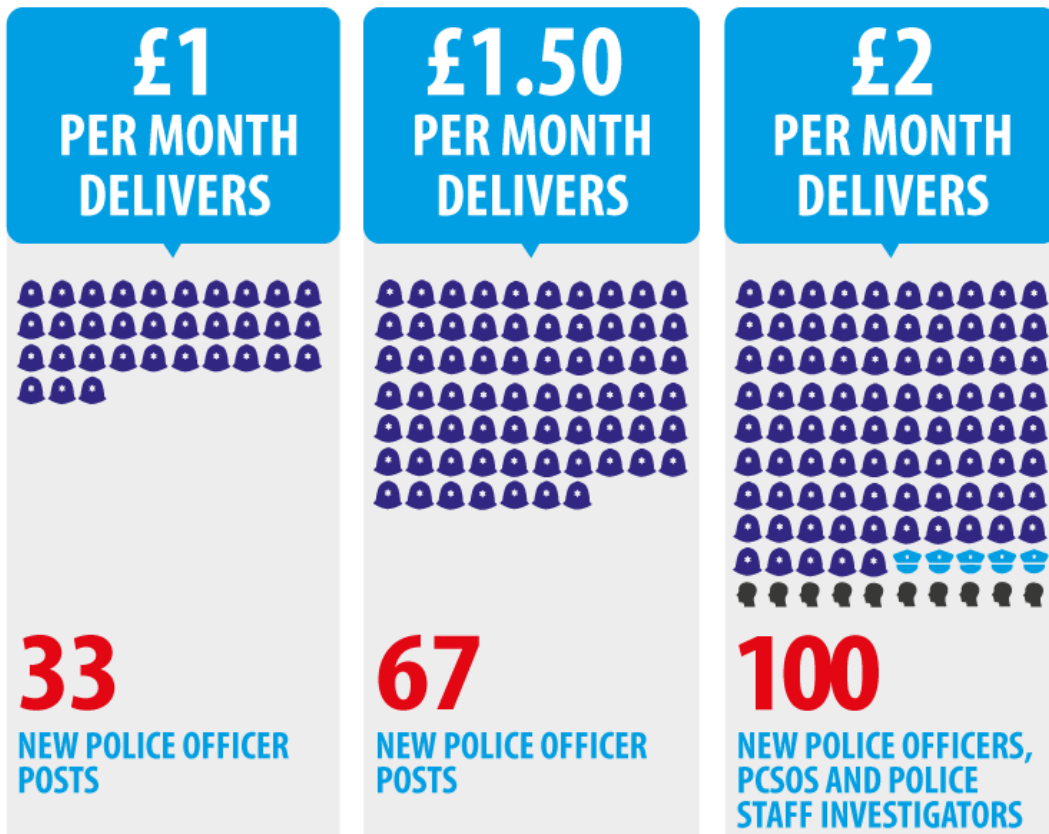
- a) Less than £2.50 per week
- b) Between £2.50 and £5 per week
- c) Between £5 and £7.50 per week
- d) More than £7.50 per week
- e) I don’t know

Q6 The PCC is proposing to increase the portion of council tax which pays for policing in 2019/20, in order to ensure that the Chief Constable has the necessary funding to recruit more officers, pay for vital upgrades to the force IT infrastructure and meet the rising levels of demand for service. The following pages outline what each of the increase options will mean and also why an option to not increase the precept is not being put forward for consideration this year.

Below are the options for increasing the precept which the Commissioner is proposing*. The graphic illustrates what each of these will deliver.

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

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



* For an average Band D Council Tax payer. Tax payers in lower bands will pay a smaller increase and those in higher bands would pay a larger increase.

If there was no change in the Police Precept

The Commissioner is not proposing to freeze the precept (i.e. apply no increase) as he believes this would lead to an unacceptable reduction in the service Warwickshire Police could provide. The below graphic illustrates some of the key reasons why a precept freeze is not being considered in 2019/20.

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:

- VISIBLE POLICE PATROLS
- CRIME INVESTIGATION
- BURGLARY, VEHICLE CRIME & OFFENDER MANAGEMENT
- SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS
- THE POLICE RESPONSE TO RURAL CRIME
- CRIME INVESTIGATION

LEADING TO A REDUCED LEVEL OF SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

THE COMMISSIONER DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS IS ACCEPTABLE

Thinking about the options you have just seen, please tell us:

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

- a) £1 extra per month*
- b) £1.50 extra per month*
- c) £2 extra per month*
- d) I would be willing to pay more than £2 extra per month*
- e) Other

Q7 Would you like to provide more information about your answer?

Q8 What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64

- 65+

Q9 Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one)

- White/White British
- Black/Black British
- Asian/Asian British
- Mixed race
- Rather not say
- Another race or ethnicity (please specify)

Q10 What gender do you identify as?

- Female
- Male
- Rather not to say
- Other (please specify)

Q11 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Rather not say

Q12 Have you been a victim of crime in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Rather not say