

Precept Consultation – Overview

Promoting the consultation.

Following the announcement by the government on Northumbria’s funding settlement, a press release was issued to all local media for publication. The article was featured in newspapers such as the:

- Northumberland Gazette <https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/have-your-say-on-police-precept-rise-to-secure-funding-1-8919557>
- Shields Gazette <https://www.shieldsgazette.com/news/police-chief-wants-south-tynesiders-views-on-costs-of-fighting-crime-1-8920494>
- Evening Chronicle <http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/council-tax-rise-12-fund-14059722>

Twitter Accounts

Twitter (times people saw tweet relating to Police Precept on Twitter)

Date of Tweet	Number of People
11/1	1892
10/1	1055
9/1	2558
8/1	1236
21/12	1066
20/12	1085
19/12	2645
Total	11,537

It was also mentioned on BBC twitter accounts such as Richard Moss of the North East politics show.



Facebook

2925 people were reached on Facebook regarding the consultation.

Direct engagement with Communities

Information and an invitation to comment were shared with OPCC contact lists. These lists include the advisory groups and scrutiny panels and other interested stakeholders. For Advisory Group members a letter was sent inviting them to share the information within their group and contacts to send in their thoughts on the Police Precept. There are over 1000 contacts on the lists held.

Staff from the OPCC visited shopping areas across the force area to find out local views on the Precept.

Summary of responses direct to OPCC

As in previous years, many people do not respond to the contact/tweets from the office, of those who did – here are figures showing that from those who did 70% are supportive of the proposed precept.

Local Authority	Total	Yes	No
Newcastle	44	35 (80%)	9 (20%)
South Tyneside	17	12 (71%)	5 (29%)
Sunderland	33	22 (67%)	11 (23%)
Gateshead	23	21 (91%)	2 (9%)
North Tyneside	35	18 (51.5%)	17 (48.5%)
Northumberland	42	27 (60%)	15 (40%)
Total	194	135 (70%)	59 (30%)

Public Insight.

The Public Insight team at Northumbria Police also surveyed over 600 people (100 in each local authority) to find out their thoughts on the Police Precept. This contact took place in January and from 686 participants who were surveyed there is an 80% support for an increase in council tax to maintain the level of policing. A detailed report is attached with further information and findings from six local authority areas with comments and common themes raised by the respondents.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	12 January 2018
Police Precept Telephone Consultation, January 2018	
Report of: Simon Tate, Corporate Development Department	
Author: Simon Tate, Public Insight Team	

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the police precept council tax public consultation that took place in January 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

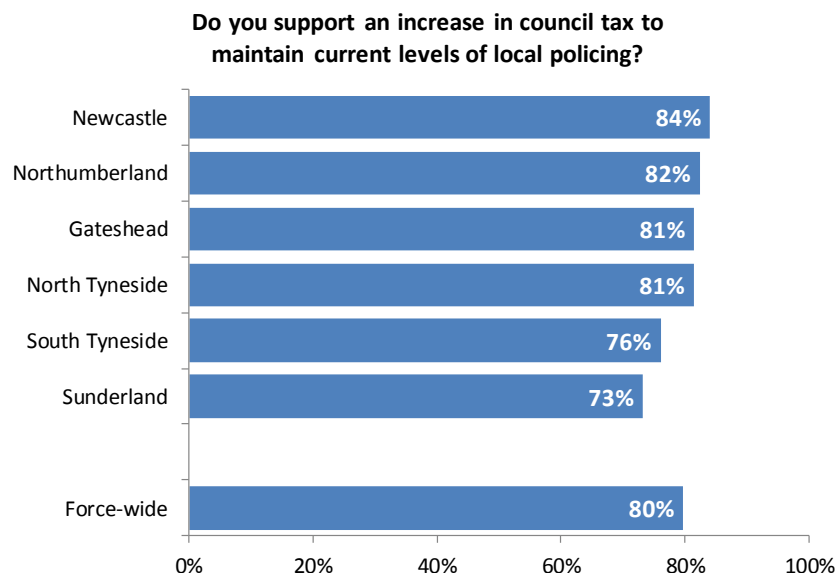
Telephone surveys were conducted by the Public Insight Team with members of the public to ask if they would be happy with an increase in their council tax to maintain current levels of policing. A total of 686 surveys were completed between 9 and 12 January 2018 covering each Local Authority area as follows:

Local Authority	Survey Participants
Sunderland	112
South Tyneside	121
Gateshead	108
North Tyneside	113
Newcastle	113
Northumberland	119
Force-wide total	686

Only participants that confirmed they were council tax payers were invited to take part in the survey. Results have been weighted according to the proportion of the population at a force-wide level to ensure representation.

3. RESULTS

Four out of five people (80%) across the force area are supportive of an increase in council tax to maintain current levels of policing. Just over 12% were unsupportive, whilst 8% did not know either way. The chart below shows the results of those who support the increase, in descending order, broken down by Local Authority area.



4. COMMENTS

Common themes from the comments people made in response to the question are presented below (along with verbatim quotes):

Widespread support for the police and the increase in council tax

- I would support an increase if it maintained the current levels or if it increased the current levels.
- It is vital that the funds do go to the police.
- I support the amount going to Northumbria Police. If Dame Vera Baird is supportive of it then I am too. She is excellent
- It is very important to have an adequate police force.
- My natural inclination to any increase in taxes is a 'no' but it's a necessary service so I agree.
- Yes, if it was maintained to current levels.
- It should be higher as need more police.
- If it's for the police then yes.
- I don't mind if it is for the police.
- if the police need it then they should have it.
- I will support anything to maintain the levels of local policing.
- I would do with policing but not anything else.
- It is so important. There is so much money wasted on stupid things. The most important are what affects everyone.
- It should go to the police, give the police more leeway. We need to get more police, they need more support.
- Police and other emergency services are under-funded.
- I have had information on this and I am happy to support it.
- It is worth every penny
- We have got to have policing. I can't afford a big increase, I'm on my own but I'm all for the police.
- I think they are worth every penny and it's not fair they are being cut the bone they should get as pay rise.
- Double the increase.
- I think they are underfunded and they need more people on the streets.
- Well, yes for the Police; but no for everything else!
- Considering my husband was a serving police officer for Northumbria before he retired and my son was, yes I support anything for the police.
- I think it is a good thing, as people on their own need the police. They rely on them.
- I think the police is so important and everyone should pay more.
- It's a sign of the times, this is a service we need.
- I think it is important to keep the standard we have today.
- It's a small amount to pay for the police to protect us.
- If it helps the police, then I do support it. The police do a great job, we cannot do without them.
- I fully support the rise and think that it is a good thing to cover the costs of policing, nationally everyone should be prepared to pay for essential services.
- Definitely, I support that. Some people expect everything but don't want to pay for it.
- I agree that we should have to pay more, as I have had reason to use the Police recently with break in's to my charity shop and they were fantastic. We need the Police.
- The Police have an awful job to do and I am more than happy to pay for an increase, if that is where the money is going to go.
- We need the Police force and if the increase of the funds has to come from the tax payers - then we must have to pay.
- I support you all the way, you have been fantastic since I moved up here.
- I support the highest increase you can get away with on the grounds the police not being cut. Any further cuts are a disgrace and I will support any increase.
- That's nothing is it, compared to how much we need the police.

The money should come from central Government, not local taxation.

- The answer is in two parts; yes, definitely we would, 100%! The Police do a fantastic job, they need to be well resourced and well-funded. However nationally, there's a huge issue there and the Government need to take on board that issue and make sure the funding is correct nationally. But yes, locally, we are happy to take on that cost.
- I support the police but the increase should come from central Government rather than local Government.
- I support anything to do with the police, it is disgraceful that money is taken away from Northumbria Police. More money should be put into the police. It is a very difficult job for the police these days, we should support them as much as we can.
- I am happy with that but I would prefer the central Government to fund it more.
- Yes, but furious it's made by central Government. It should come from general taxation and not from household tax.
- I think the Government should pay and put their hands in their pockets.
- I prefer for the central Government to fund local authorities properly.
- I believe that the way they are going with the Government cuts the police have a really hard job.
- I think the Government should fund the police instead of asking people to pay more tax. Make those pay who can afford it.
- It is wrong, it should be centrally funded. If it maintains the current level, a £12 increase is neither here or there, to keep the levels maintained.
- The Government should get their finger out and they should pay for it themselves instead of putting it on the ordinary people.
- I think the Government have put us in a position where we have to. I think that central Government should pay for the police.
- I don't agree with the way politics sort things and cut everything with the budgets. I don't begrudge paying towards police and fire things like that but they don't keep important stuff. If it went to the police then yes fair enough but it goes to politics.
- I think the current levels are poor, it is a Government problem. The police levels now to what we used to have is disgusting, it is past redemption, they have lost the battle.
- I think the Government should do more, I don't think they give enough because there are very few police on the streets.
- The Government should pay it. We pay enough. The police are under pressure with the Government cuts. It is absolutely unfair for the services to be under that pressure. I absolutely support the good work the police do.
- I don't agree that it is going on council tax. The Government need to look at funding the police in another way. We need to put money in to policing but it's the average man who's paying for it all the time. We see very little of the police where we live.

The assurance that the money would all go to local policing

- If it would guarantee it would go to local policing I will say yes, sometimes goes to other areas.
- If it does go towards the local policing, then yes. If it comes down to the Government, I never know where it goes.
- I would support if it definitely went to policing.
- If it goes straight to policing, then yes.
- If it is guaranteed that that money only goes for the reason stated.
- The thing is you really don't know where the money is being used, like to they have audit every year to show where the money goes, unless this is done I don't agree to any increases.
- I'd like to know where the funds are going.
- If it was going to the police yes.
- I support if it does improve the local policing, but they don't always get what they say they will get.
- I would support it as a one-off but not a year on year increase.
- As long as it did go to the police and not towards the areas that will not use it or need it.
- Yes if it goes towards public services. Not if it goes to the Government.

- Yes I would be willing to pay that and more, as long as it is ring fenced for the police.
- As long as it's not to pay for the Government and it does actually go to the police.
I don't mind about that if it goes to the police but I am worried that it gets used as waste money for no good reason.
- I would have to be certain that is where the money would be going.

An expectation that an increase in council tax should result in greater levels of policing

- Provided I get to see more officers on the beat. I have yet to see officers on the beat, only in cars.
- I would do that without any qualms at all to have more police on the beat.
- It would be better if we can have even higher level rather than just current levels.
- I do if there is policing on the street.
- If it means I will see a policeman walking around then I would say yes.
- This would require an increase of the policing levels not just to maintain current levels.
- As long as see more police officers on the street. We don't see many they always seem to be in Morrisons.
- I would support it if it increased police numbers on the streets.
If we could have extra police as we have problems with motorbikes.
- We don't see the police around here very often so I don't know what difference it would make.
- I would support an increase to improve the current policing but not to maintain it. I would like to see more police on the beat.
- I would support that but I would like to see more police around.
- If it is an increase in money I would want an increase in levels of local policing.

Those unsupportive of the increase felt they pay enough already, could not afford a rise, Government should fund it (see above) or that they do not see enough police in their local area as it is.

- They've got enough money.
- Because we don't have any policing here, we never see a police man.
- See that we don't see the police where I am I don't know.
- They are not very good at the moment anyways so no.
- Just going off past experience. When I have rang the police, they have never turned up or investigated the crime.
- We are already paying a lot of taxes and the services are getting lesser and lesser so no, I wouldn't support this, we are already struggling.
- We never see a policeman so no.
- Council tax is high enough as it is.
No, I don't. I think the Police are not around as much as they should be as you don't see them on the beat anymore.
- What we pay now, we never see police around this area. They are not there when we need them.
- I don't think they have the right to put it up as much. We don't get the police presence where I live.

APPENDIX - Police Precept Telephone Questionnaire

Hello my name is {Name}. I'm calling on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner to ask for your views on the part of your council tax that pays for local policing. Can I ask are you a council tax payer?

If yes: Can you spare a couple of minutes to answer a few questions?

If No: Is there anyone available at the moment who pays council tax? (If yes, start intro again. If no, thank them for their time and end the call)

The Government recently announced the funding for Northumbria Police for 2018/19. Maintaining the current levels of policing requires an increase in the part of your council tax that pays for local policing.

Most properties in the Northumbria Police area are band A which would mean an increase of £8 per year. The average property nationally is band D which would be an increase of £12 per year.

If the increase does not go ahead, it will mean a real terms cut to the police budget of just over 5 million pounds.

Q1. Can I confirm that your Local Authority area is...

- Sunderland
- South Tyneside
- Gateshead
- North Tyneside
- Newcastle
- Northumberland

Q2. Do you support an increase in council tax to maintain current levels of local policing?

Prompt: The average increase for the majority will be around £8-£12 a year.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments:

Thank you very much for your time. Your views will help inform the Police and Crime Commissioner about the views of the public.