

Nottinghamshire OPCC Precept Consultation Report 2024/25

January 2025

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview of findings from the OPCC's Precept Consultation arrangements between December 2024 and January 2025 to inform the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) decision making process.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 The PCC has a statutory duty¹ to obtain the views of local people and ratepayers on budget and precept proposals. This is undertaken in Nottinghamshire via an **online poll** open to all residents in December each year and the OPCC's **Police and Crime Survey**, a rolling programme of social research which obtains a robust² and representative sample of views from around 4,200 Nottinghamshire residents each year over four quarterly waves of fieldwork.
- 2.2 The Police and Crime Survey captures a wide range of information that can be triangulated with views on the precept for policing. This includes details of respondent demographics, feelings of trust and confidence in the police, the extent to which the police service represents value for money, experience of crime and ASB, contact and satisfaction with the police and feelings of safety.

¹ Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

² The Police and Crime Survey provides a margin of error of +/-3% at the 95% confidence level. Sampling points for the survey are set at Lower Super Output Area level to ensure good geographical coverage, and responses are representative of the local population by age, gender, ethnicity, employment status and deprivation.

2.3 All respondents to the Police and Crime Survey were asked the following question in 2024

Households in Nottinghamshire pay, on average, £282 a year towards policing as part of their Council Tax (Band D properties). The Police and Crime Commissioner has the ability to increase this amount in 2025.

If the precept was increased, the additional funding would be used to maintain police officer numbers in Nottinghamshire, help ensure that they have the resources to do their job effectively and increase the amount spent on crime prevention.

To what extent would you be prepared to pay more?

Please tick ✓ one box only

Yes - I'm prepared to pay an additional £15 per year (£1.25 per month) for policing

Yes - I'm prepared to pay an additional £10 per year (83 pence per month) for policing

Yes - I'm prepared to pay an additional £5 per year (42 pence per month) for policing

No - I'm not prepared to pay any more for policing

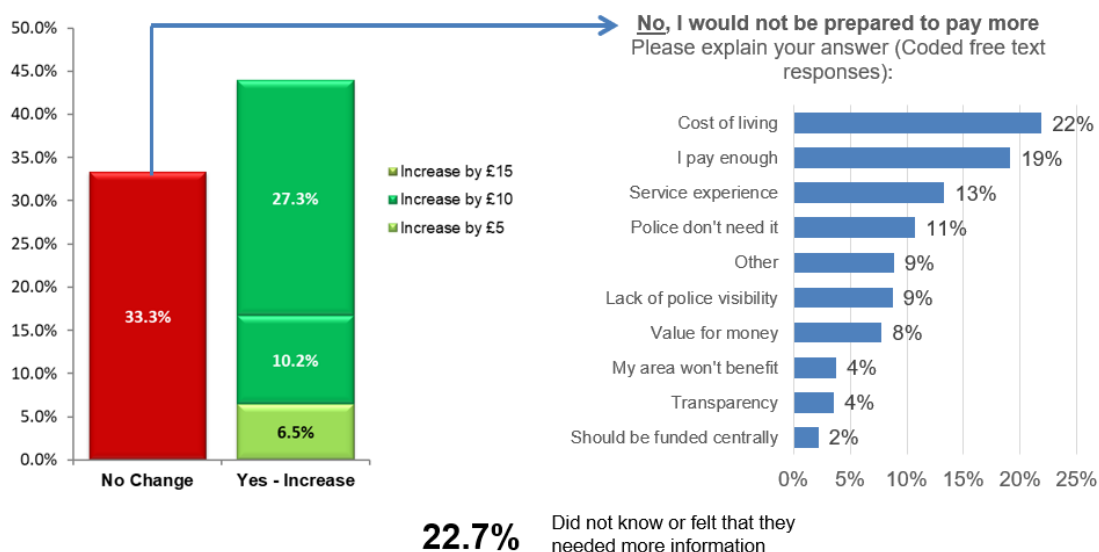
Don't know - I need more information

Please explain your answer:

3. Police and Crime Survey findings to December 2024

3.1 In the 12 months to December 2024, 44.0% of respondents to the Police and Crime Survey stated that they supported an increase in the precept for policing compared to 33.3% that did not. This represents a statistically significant difference (95% CI). More than a fifth of respondents (22.7%), however, stated that they needed more information to decide.

To What Extent Would You Be Prepared to Pay More for Policing? PCS to December 2024



3.2 The proportion of respondents supporting an increase in the precept for policing (44%) has risen by 4.0% points over the previous year, however, changes in the question methodology³ have impacted upon longer term comparisons.

3.3 The proportion of respondents that do not support an increase in the precept (33.3%) has seen a marginal (non-significant) reduction of 1.7% points over the previous year, while the proportion stating that they do not know (22.7%) has fallen by 2.3% points.

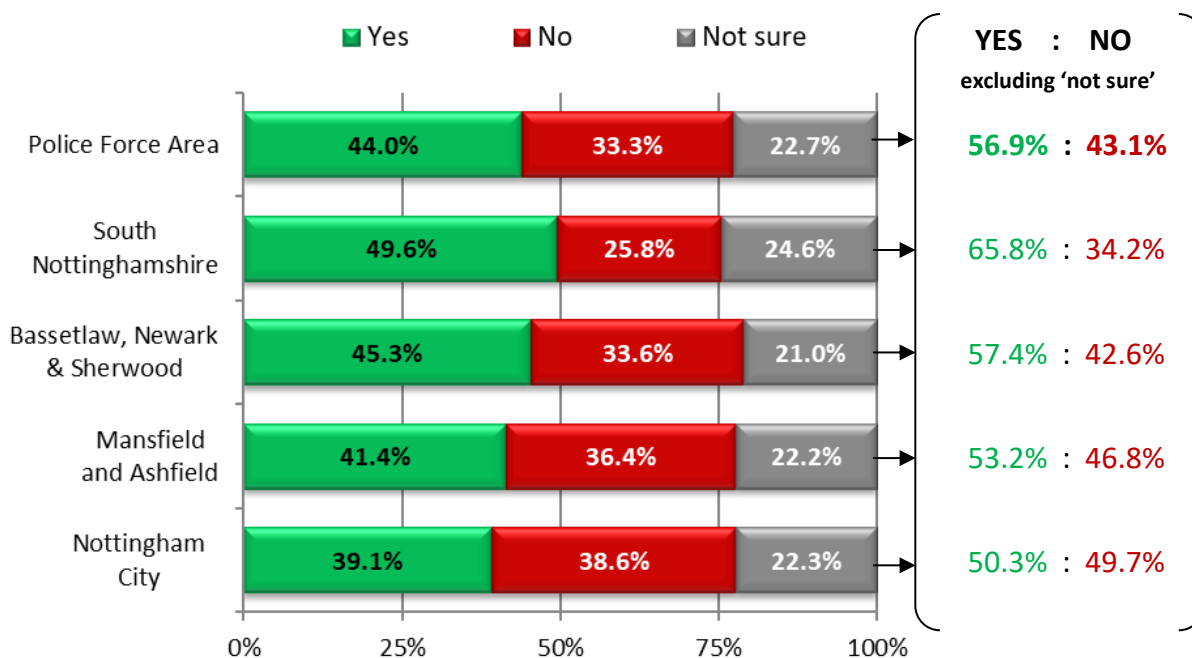
3.4 Among those that do not support an increase in the precept for policing, 22% cited the cost of living as the main reason. This has seen no significant change over the previous year but has fallen markedly since 2022 (27%). The proportion that feel they 'already pay enough' has risen from 11% to 19% over the last year.

³ Options have changed over time impacting upon levels of support expressed for an increase in the precept: Mar 2018: [£6, £12, £18, no, don't know] Mar 2020: [£5, £10, £12, £24, no, don't know] Mar 2022: [£10, no, don't know] Mar 2023: [Up to £15, no, don't know] Mar 2024: [£5, £10, £15, no, don't know].

3.5 Positively, fewer respondents stated ‘a lack of police visibility’ as a reason for not supporting an increase in the precept in 2024 (9%) when compared to 2023 (15%). Similarly, the proportion of respondents feeling that the police do not need further funding has fallen from 14% to 11% over the same period.

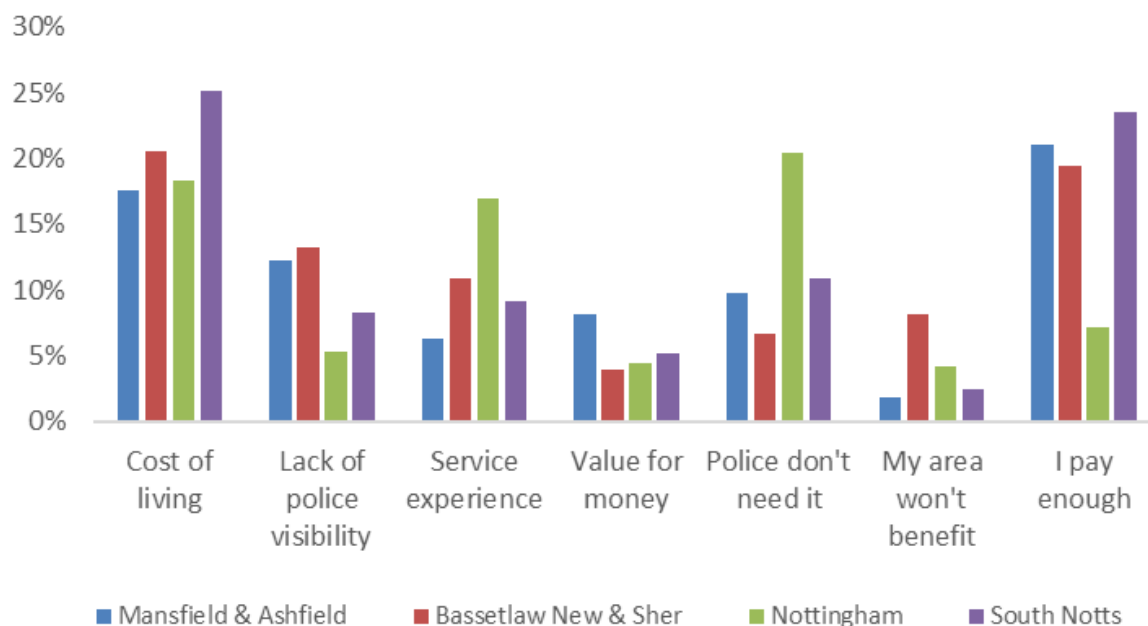
3.6 Positively, the proportion of respondents supporting an increase in the precept for policing continues to exceed the proportion that do not across all Community Safety Partnership areas. Support remains strongest in South Nottinghamshire (49.6%), having increased by 2.7% points in the last year. Lower levels of support continue to be seen in and Nottingham City (39.1%) and Mansfield and Ashfield (41.4%) Despite this, Nottingham City has seen a marked increase in levels of support for an increase in the precept over the last year (+5.3% pts), largely due to a notable reduction in respondents stating that they ‘do not know’ (-6.5% pts).

To What Extent Would You Be Prepared to Pay More for Policing? PCS to December 2024



3.7 The reasons for not supporting an increase in the precept for policing can vary significantly by area. Respondents from Nottingham, for example, are more likely to cite a negative service experience or feel that the police do not need any extra funding – potentially on account of the higher levels of police visibility in the city. Respondents from Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood and Mansfield and Ashfield are more likely to cite a lack of police visibility. The high cost of living and a feeling that residents already pay enough was more likely to be expressed by South Nottinghamshire residents who typically express some of the highest levels of trust and confidence in the police.

Reasons for not supporting an increase in the precept for policing as a proportion of those that do not support an increase - PCS to December 2024



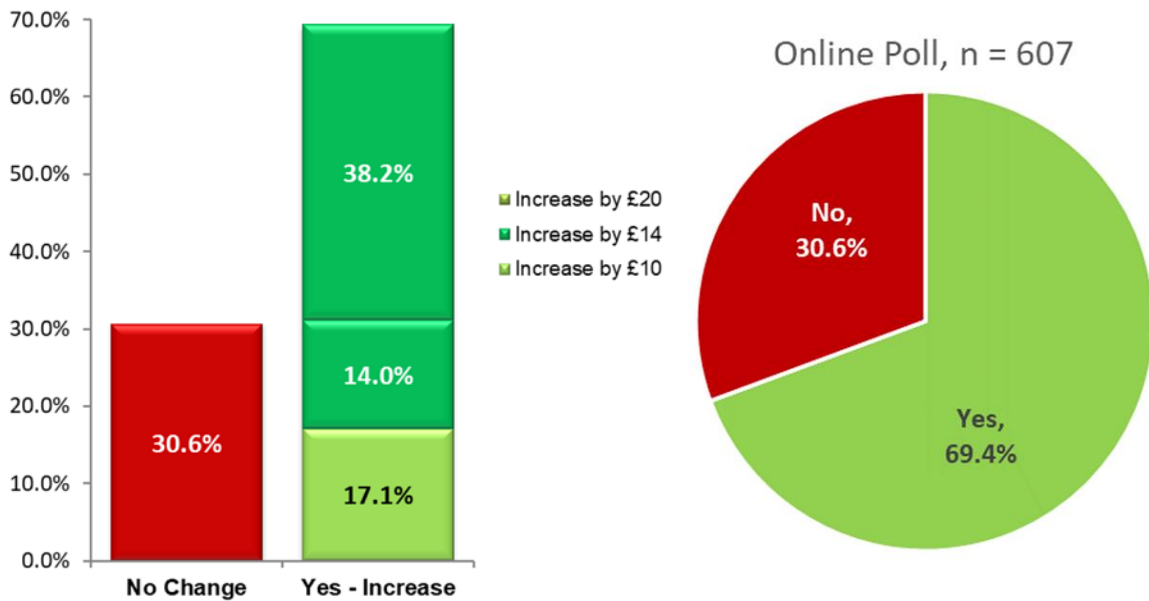
4 OPCC Online Poll: December 2024 to January 2025

- 4.1 The OPCC launched an online poll between 19 December 2024 and 20 January 2025 to raise awareness of the precept process and canvas opinion on proposed options. The poll had received 607 responses from local residents, 69.4% of which supported an increase in the precept, compared to 30.6% that did not.
- 4.2 Of those that supported an increase in the precept, over half (55%) favoured the maximum level of increase (i.e. £20) which would trigger the threshold for a referendum.
- 4.3 The online poll typically elicits a stronger degree of support for an increase in the precept than the Police and Crime Survey⁴. This is, in part, skewed by the demographic profile of those responding via Neighbourhood Alert and social media channels⁵. Despite this, it should be noted that levels of support for an increase in the precept as measured via the online poll has fallen from around 82% in 2023/24.

⁴ The levels of support for an increase in the precept in 2024 was 44% via Police and Crime Survey (N.B. 25% did not know) compared to 70% via the online poll

⁵ South Nottinghamshire residents and residents aged 45 to 59 are typically over-represented

To What Extent Would You Be Prepared to Pay More for Policing? Online Poll Winter 2024/25



4.4 When asked about the areas and initiatives that residents would most like to see resources invested over the coming term, the majority (69.9%) cited neighbourhood policing. Other priority areas highlighted included investment in technology to improve police response (49.7%), investing in work to tackle serious violence (42.0%) and improving investigations (39.5%).

5 OPCC Focus Groups: January 2025

5.1 The OPCC commissioned a series of focus groups each January in each community safety partnership area to obtain more detailed and informed qualitative insight. This process provides an opportunity to set out more detailed, timely and specific spending plans and take account of any further information provided by central government in respect of anticipated precept thresholds.

5.2 The focus group methodology also typically elicits a stronger degree of support for an increase in the precept than the Police and Crime Survey⁶, largely impacted by the level of additional information that can be provided and constructive discussion taking place.

5.3 The focus groups engaged a total of 36 individuals (9 per area) of which 29 (81%) expressed support for an increase in the precept. Reflecting findings from the Police

⁶ The levels of support for an increase in the precept in 2024 was 44% via Police and Crime Survey (N.B. 25% did not know) and 78% via focus groups.

and Crime Survey, views were more balanced in Nottingham where 5 respondents expressed support for an increase compared to 4 that did not.

- 5.4 The majority of overall respondents understood the need for an increase in the precept in order to maintain current service levels and staffing. Many were surprised and saddened, however, by the scale of savings required to balance the budget. Many participants expressed broader concerns about the collective impact of council tax rises and some expressed frustration with the government for not providing more funding centrally.
- 5.5 Reflecting findings in previous years, support for an increase in the precept for policing is generally dependent upon:

Visibility of results: Respondents want to see tangible, visible improvements in policing and local safety as a result of their increased contribution. They are looking for direct outcomes and effective use of their fund in addressing specific local issues.

Trust and accountability: Focus Group participants have expressed a lack of trust in those tasked with spending and managing force budgets, coupled with some scepticism as to how wisely money is being spent. Participants have asked for greater transparency and accountability in how the funds are utilised.

Effective communication and engagement: Focus group participants have highlighted a lack of effective communication and engagement from the police and local authorities. They expressed a desire for more proactive, transparent communication regarding the allocation and impact of the additional funds.

8. Appendix A – Precept Consultation Questions December 2024

FOCUS GROUPS AND ONLINE POLL

A message from your Police and Crime Commissioner, Gary Godden

The public's voice is incredibly important when it comes to big decisions on policing and support services in Nottinghamshire.

As Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), I have a duty each year to set a balanced budget and set the amount of funding that will be generated through council tax locally, known as the 'policing precept'.

Police officer numbers have returned to the levels they were a decade ago in Nottinghamshire. However, inflationary costs and the rising scale and complexity of the demand on policing continue to place increasing pressure on our services. This is despite the year-on-year efficiency savings that we continue to deliver.

In 2025, I would still need to raise a little more from the precept if we are to maintain current service levels and meet the government's target of increasing police officer numbers in Nottinghamshire by 30. We have calculated that, without further efficiency savings, a precept increase of around £47 per Band D property would be required in 2025 in order to maintain current services and invest in all areas of identified need.

I know that policing, crime prevention and community safety are important issues to the residents of Nottinghamshire, but I am also acutely aware of the financial pressures many Nottinghamshire households face. I would therefore like to hear your views on this matter. I hope you can spare around three minutes of your time to answer the following questions and help me to make the right decision for Nottinghamshire.

I thank you in advance for your support in our work to prevent and respond to crime, support victims and keep Nottinghamshire Safe.

PCC Gary Godden

PLEASE NOTE: Your details will be kept confidential, will not be passed to any other service/agency and will be used in strict accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. You are entitled at any time to ask for your details to be deleted.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which Nottinghamshire area do you live in?

- *Ashfield / Bassetlaw / Broxtowe / Gedling / Mansfield / Newark & Sherwood / Nottingham / Rushcliffe / I do not live in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire*

2. Nottinghamshire Police are working to deliver ongoing improvements in the services you receive and achieve the ambitions of the PCC’s Police and Crime Plan. Of the initiatives listed below, please tell us where you would most like to see the Police and PCC focus their resources in 2025.

Please select no more than three options.

<p>Strengthening the capacity of our neighbourhood policing teams: To provide greater visibility and reassurance and work with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and other issues of local concern</p>	
<p>Investing in our victim care services: To ensure that victims of crime are aware of their entitlements and get the help they need to cope and recover from the harm they have experienced</p>	
<p>Investing in crime prevention activity: To improve approaches to preventing crime across Nottinghamshire, including youth diversionary activity and safety and security initiatives</p>	
<p>Investing in work to tackle and prevent violence against women and girls: Increase capacity to investigate domestic violence and stalking and make healthy relationships programmes available to all schools</p>	
<p>Investing work to tackle serious violence and knife crime: Bringing agencies together to tackle serious violence and strengthening our work to meet the needs of vulnerable young people</p>	
<p>Investing in the police response: To maximise the use of technology to enable officers to respond more quickly and effectively to incidents and further improve the way 999 and 101 calls are triaged and assessed</p>	
<p>Improving investigations: Investing in technology to improve forensic opportunities and improve the number of crimes solved and offenders brought to justice</p>	

Council Tax Precept for Policing

Households in Nottinghamshire pay between £188 (for a Band A) and £564 (for a Band H) a year towards policing as part of the annual Council Tax bill. A Band D property, in the middle pays £282 per year.

The PCC needs to set a balanced budget for 2025/26 and is seeking the views of residents on how much more you would be prepared to pay to fund policing and crime prevention activity across Nottinghamshire.

3. How much more you would be prepared to pay to fund policing and crime prevention activity across Nottinghamshire in 2025/26. Please select one of the options below:

- A) **83 pence more per month / £10 more per year for a Band D property:** This would provide £4.6m additional funding and enable us to maintain police officer numbers but would not meet inflationary cost pressures. This would require us to reduce investment in the equipment and technology required to improve the services we deliver to the public as well as reduce staff numbers. The force would need to make around £15m savings in order to achieve a balanced budget.
- B) **Up to £1.17 more per month / £14 more per year for a Band D property:** This would provide £6.3m additional funding and enable us to increase police officer numbers by 30 and maintain staffing levels but would not meet inflationary cost pressures and all current investment requirements. The force would still need to make around £9m savings in order to achieve a balanced budget.
- C) **£1.66 more per month / £20 more per year for a Band D property:** This would provide £9.2m additional funding and enable us to increase police officer numbers by 30, increase staffing levels in some of our highest priority areas such as safeguarding and digital investigation, meet inflationary cost pressures and invest in equipment, technology and training. The force would still need to make around £5m savings in order to achieve a balanced budget.
- D) **Not prepared to pay any more per month/year:** This would mean that the PCC would be unable to meet the costs of inflation and service pressures. The police force would need to identify around £17.3 million of budget reductions resulting in significant cuts to policing services, the potential loss of some frontline roles and delays in the deployment of new technology to fight crime.

Note: All of the above scenarios take account of future efficiency savings already planned and accounted for in the police budget.

- 4. Could you tell us why you chose that answer?
- 5. I am the council tax payer Yes / No / I pay on behalf of someone else (e.g. carer or relative)
- 6. Do you have any further comments on this topic? If so, please provide details in the box below.