



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Precept Consultation Report

2024-25

January 2024

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE OPCC PRECEPT CONSULTATION 2023/24

05 FEBRUARY 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to 'obtain the views of local people and ratepayers' on budget and precept proposals and to consult and engage with local people on policing and in setting police and crime objectives.
- 1.2. In fulfilling these requirements, the Commissioner maintains a rolling programme social research which obtains a robust and representative sample of views from Nottinghamshire residents on attitudes towards the precept for policing. The OPCC also undertook focus groups in December 2023 to obtain more informed qualitative insight from a diverse sample of residents and launched an open online poll to further canvas public opinion.
- 1.3. This paper presents headline findings from these respective sources and based on independent research undertaken between January 2023 and January 2024.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

- 2.1 Quantitative findings are primarily drawn from the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Survey which obtained a robust and representative sample of views from 4,043 residents across Nottinghamshire over four quarterly waves of fieldwork in 2023. Sampling points for the survey are set at Lower Super Output Area level to ensure good geographical coverage, and was representative of the local population by age, gender, ethnicity, employment status and deprivation. The survey provided a margin of error of +/-3% at the 95% confidence level.
- 2.2 Qualitative findings are drawn from four independently facilitated focus groups all held during the week commencing 18 December 2023. A focus group was held in each of Nottinghamshire's four Community Safety Partnership areas: Nottingham City; South Nottinghamshire; Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood; and Mansfield and Ashfield, and involved a total of 40 participants from diverse backgrounds. The focus groups provided an opportunity to provide more detailed information to participants regarding the force's current financial position and planned activity in the year ahead.
- 2.3 To supplement these research methods and increase awareness of the precept proposals, the Commissioner also ran an online public poll between 20 December 2023 and 26 January 2024 receiving responses from over 680 residents and engaged with over 194 residents through a series of pop-up events at shopping centres and community hubs throughout December 2023 and January 2024. Whilst these methods could not assure a representative sample of responses from across the police force area, the valuable comments and feedback received have been used to inform this report.

3. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME SURVEY

- 3.1. The Police and Crime survey captured responses to the following question from 4,043 residents across Nottinghamshire in 2023. as part of a robust and representative independent consultation exercise:

Households in Nottinghamshire pay, on average, £269 a year towards policing as part of their Council Tax (Band D properties). The PCC is expected to have the ability to increase this amount by up to £15 in 2024, which would equate to an additional £1.25 per month per Band D household.

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 select one option only.

- Yes - I'm prepared to pay up to an additional £15 per year (£1.25 per month) for policing
- No - I'm not prepared to pay more for policing
- I Don't know - I need more information

Please explain your answer.

- 3.2. **The Police and Crime Survey found that 40.0% of respondents across Nottinghamshire supported an increase in the precept for policing compared to 35.0% that did not. This represents a statistically significant difference (95% CI). A quarter of respondents however, felt that they needed more information.**
- 3.3. The overall proportion supporting an increase has fallen by 6.2% points since 2022, whilst the proportion that do not support an increase has remained relatively stable (-0.7% points). The proportion stating that they did not know increased by 1.9% points.
- 3.4. Positively, however, the proportion of respondents supporting an increase consistently exceeded the proportion that did not in all quarterly waves of fieldwork during 2023, with the greatest difference (45.0% versus 31.3%) featuring in the latest wave (Nov-Dec 2023).
- 3.5. Of those stating that they did not support an increase in the precept, the most common reason was the cost of living (23%), a lack of police visibility (14%) or a feeling that the police did not need additional funding (12%).

Figure 1: On average, households in Nottinghamshire pay £269 a year towards policing as part of their Council Tax. The PCC is expected to have the ability to increase this amount by up to £15 in 2024, which would equate to an additional £1.25 per month per Band D household. To what extent would you be prepared to pay more? Police and Crime Survey, 2023. Responses by Community Safety Partnership area

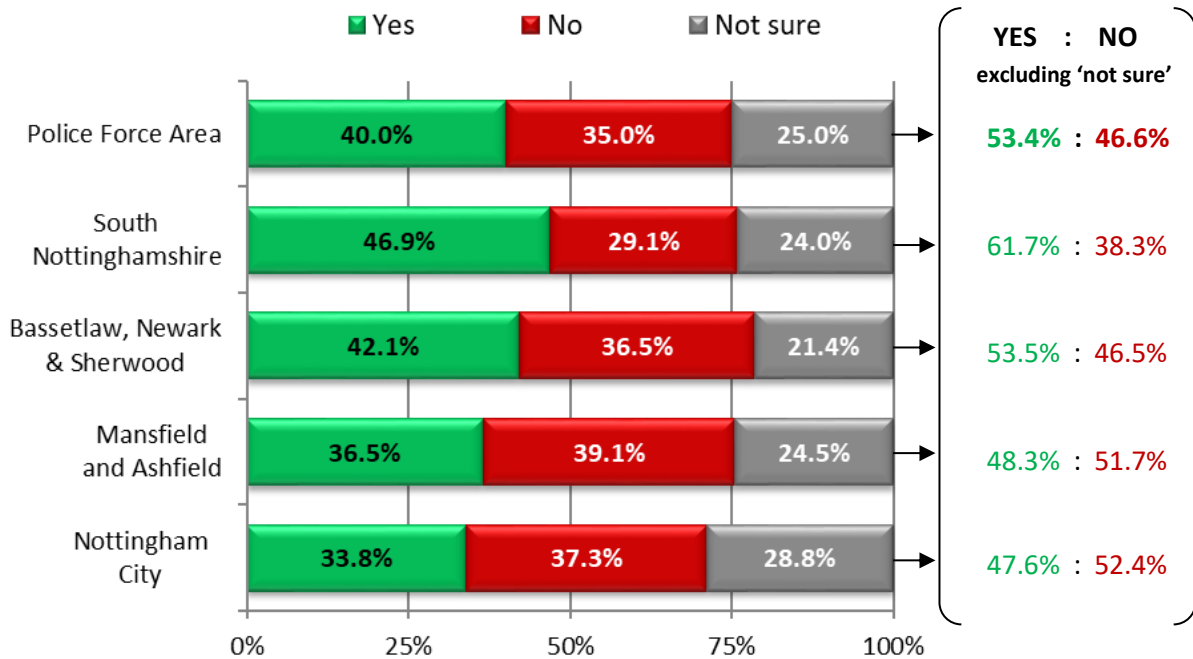


Figure 2: If you do not support an increase in the precept for policing, please explain your reason why. Police and Crime Survey, 2023

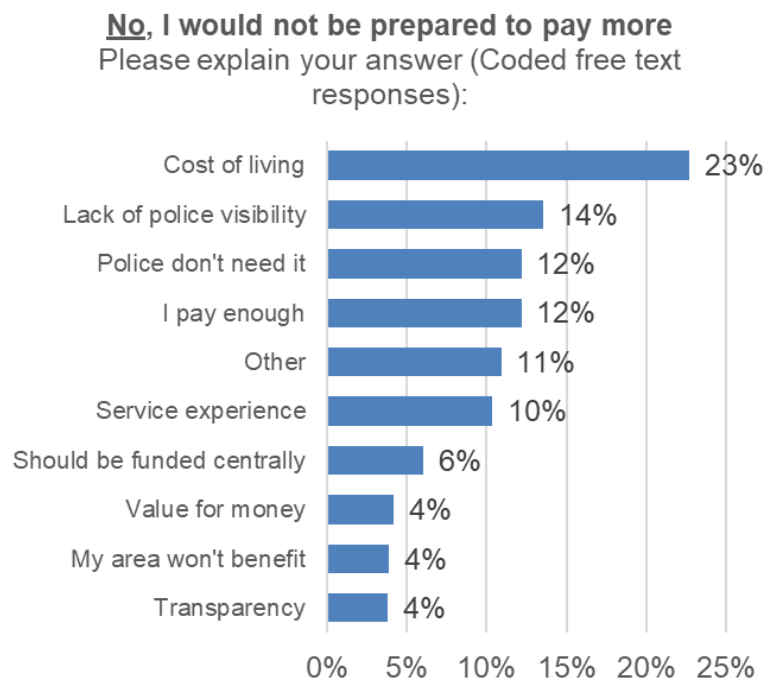


Figure 3: If you do not support an increase in the precept for policing, please explain your reason why. Results by local Authority area. Police and Crime Survey, 2023

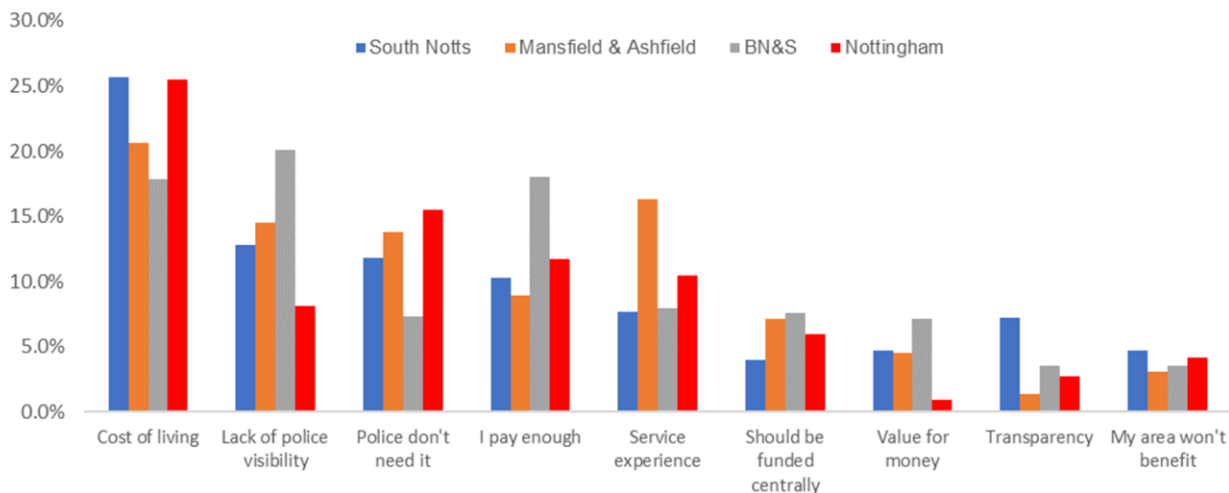


Table 1: Sample of free text responses provided. Police and Crime Survey, 2023

Yes, I'm prepared to pay up to an additional £15	No, I'm not prepared to pay more for policing	I don't know, I need more information
<i>"I think the police have very difficult job. I think we are served very well by police offices"</i>	<i>"Because we never see any police presence in the area"</i>	<i>"I need to know how effectively funding is used - then I could see if paying more is justified"</i>
<i>"As long as we can see a difference / where the money is going, I have no issue"</i>	<i>"I've not seen a policeman in this village in the 10 years I've lived here"</i>	<i>"I would like a breakdown of what would come of increasing police numbers"</i>
<i>"£15 pounds a year to be safer? Of course!" "Paying a small increase to improve services can only be beneficial"</i>	<i>"I would like to fund policing more but simply can't afford to"</i>	<i>"I have very minimal contact with police and have little information about police programmes"</i>
<i>"Provided that extra income was definitely used for benefit of policing in our community"</i>	<i>"I am now on pension and with the utility bills going up I do not want extra expenses"</i>	<i>"Would be helpful to know the breakdown of what these costs cover"</i>
<i>"Any amount levied is worth the security as long as it is being spent effectively"</i>	<i>"The police need to manage with what they have, more does not mean better"</i>	<i>"Is this due to further decline in central government support? Is so, they should foot the bill"</i>
<i>"Money is going up for everything else so why not?"</i>	<i>"I don't feel that paying more will solve anything"</i>	<i>"I would want to see a step-by-step guide to where the money was being spent"</i>
<i>"The fact that I haven't had any contact with police in the 9 years I've lived here tells me they must be doing a good job"</i>	<i>"They never helped my son when he needed it"</i>	<i>"I don't know if police number are at a suitable level that warrants being maintained"</i>
<i>"You can't put a value on safety and the police are invaluable"</i>	<i>"I would like to see reduced bureaucracy and increased efficiency"</i>	<i>"I am currently receiving no information about how police are dealing with crime in my area"</i>

4. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PRECEPT FOCUS GROUPS

4.1 Independently facilitated focus groups were also held in December 2023 with a view to providing a richer understanding of residents' views on a proposed £15 increase in the precept per Band D household. Participants were recruited using a randomised telephone methodology in each of the four Community Safety Partnership areas. Quotas were set based on the local population including age, gender, and ethnicity. Twelve residents were recruited for each group to ensure a healthy attendance and account for the natural attrition. Each attendee was provided with a £40 payment to compensate for any costs incurred and as a thank you for their participation. Incentives are distributed in line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

4.2 The sessions were informed by details of the force budget, efficiency savings and areas of anticipated spend. Participants considered the following precept scenarios and their implications for policing and delivery of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Plan:

- **42 pence more per month / £5 more per year for a band D property:** This would provide £2.3m additional funding which would help us to maintain current officer numbers along with savings and likely reductions in PCSO and police staff investigator roles.
- **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, meet inflationary cost pressures and invest in equipment and technology to improve the services we deliver to the public.
- **£1.25 more per month / £15 more per year for a band D property:** This would provide £6.8m additional funding and enable us to maintain police officer numbers, meet inflationary cost pressures, invest in equipment and technology to improve policing and increase our staffing numbers in key areas such as restorative justice and tackling serious and organised crime.
- **Freeze in the Council Tax for policing:** This would mean that the PCC would be unable to meet the costs of inflation and service pressures. The force would need to identify over £5m of budget reductions resulting in significant cuts to policing services, potential loss of some frontline roles and delays in the deployment of new technology to fight crime.

4.3 Public support was slightly less positive than in previous years, however the majority of focus group participants (31 out of 40) were conditionally willing to contribute a greater amount towards the Police Precept. Support was, however generally contingent upon:

4.4 **Visibility of results:** Participants expressed a need to see tangible, visible improvements in policing and local safety as a result of their increased financial contribution. They are looking for direct outcomes and effective use of their funds in addressing specific local issues:

"It doesn't matter how much you put it up every year, nobody ever sees a result so we're just throwing money into a pot but what do we see from it?"

"People want to see foot patrols, visibility... So, I'm not sure what the Police and Crime Commissioners relationship is with the senior police officers, but I have concerns, because they're deploying the police and year after year it's the same, nothing seems to change."

- 4.5 **Effective communication, engagement and feedback:** Participants highlighted a lack of effective communication and engagement from the police and other public bodies and expressed a desire for more proactive, transparent information regarding the allocation and impact of additional funds:

"We're the biggest stakeholders in the police force, so why are we not communicated with enough about that? Every private company has to do budgets... you have to budget for everything, and this gets communicated out to the company."

"It's not that we're not prepared to spend on things, but it's knowing what we're getting for it. I'd happily pay it, but I just want to see or hear something come from it."

"If we get a letter from the council saying there's an increase of £15 in the council tax because we want to increase the number of police officers, stations, equipment, that's fine and let this happen. But next year we need the letter saying, 'thank you for giving us more money, we've done this and this'."

"...if there were maybe 3 local issues that were picked on that could then be reported back on, maybe that's a way to connect to people a bit more. Yes, everyone wants more police and to feel safer, but the police have to connect with people deeper than that. It needs to be more community focussed, I need those things where I live, in my neighbourhood"

- 4.6 **Trust, accountability and value for money:** The willingness to pay more is also closely linked to the perceived value they would receive. Participants want assurances that any additional payment would lead to noticeable improvements in community policing and crime resolution:

"I would happily pay an extra £15 a year but... first of all you need to make sure that it's been maximised in the right areas before you start asking for more in my opinion."

"If they get an extra so many million a year, what are we seeing? Are they having new carpets and a coffee machine, where does it actually go? There's probably more advanced technology that they could use now to help them evidence and solve crime quicker. I want to see Notts Police be progressive and keep up."

"If you could believe this money was going to be spent wisely, then why not? We're paying in Kirkby one of the highest council taxes in the country. Why don't they spend this more cleverly?"

“Can we be sure bearing in mind the current situation with Nottinghamshire City Council, Derbyshire County Council and I think it’s about 7 other County Councils up and down the country, do we know that money won’t be put into something else to meet these budgets they can’t manage?”

5. ONLINE POLL AND POP-UP ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

5.1 The OPCC ran and promoted an online poll¹ and undertook a series of in person engagement events between 14 December 2023 and 26 January 2024 to obtain views on attitudes towards the precept for policing. In each case, residents were asked to consider the following scenarios and ask to what extent they supported an increase in the precept for policing in 2024:

- **42 pence more per month / £5 more per year for a band D property:** This would provide £2.3m additional funding which would help us to maintain current officer numbers along with savings and likely reductions in PCSO and police staff investigator roles.
- **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, meet inflationary cost pressures and invest in equipment and technology to improve the services we deliver to the public.
- **£1.25 more per month / £15 more per year for a band D property:** This would provide £6.8m additional funding and enable us to maintain police officer numbers, meet inflationary cost pressures, invest in equipment and technology to improve policing and increase our staffing numbers in key areas such as restorative justice and tackling serious and organised crime.
- **Freeze in the Council Tax for policing:** This would mean that the PCC would be unable to meet the costs of inflation and service pressures. The force would need to identify over £5m of budget reductions resulting in significant cuts to policing services, potential loss of some frontline roles and delays in the deployment of new technology to fight crime.

5.2 The **online poll** obtained responses from 681 residents in the period to 25 January 2024 of which 82% supported an increase in the precept for policing. Around 67% of all respondents supported an increase of between £10 and £15 per Band D household. In considering this strong level of support, it should be noted that respondents from South Nottinghamshire (41%), Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood (29%) and people aged 75 and over (30%) were over-represented in the sample compared to the area’s demographic composition (30%, 21% and 9% respectively).

5.3 Reflecting the focus group findings, support for an increase was largely contingent on seeing visible and tangible results in their community.

¹ <https://www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk/Get-Involved/Consultations-and-Surveys/Police-Budget-202324-Consultation.aspx>

**Figure 4: To what extent would you be prepared to pay more towards policing in 2024?
OPCC Online Poll, December 2023 to January 2024**

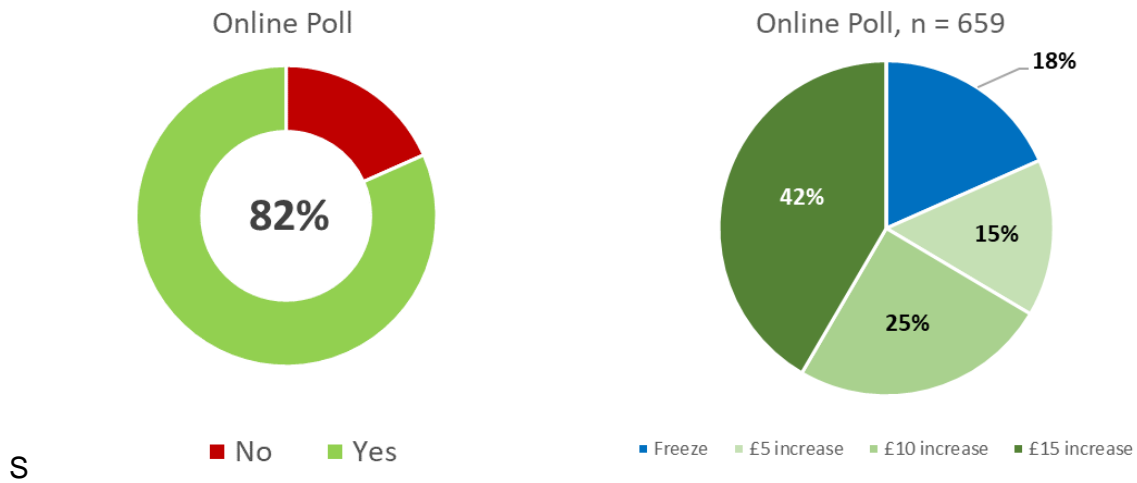


Table 2: Sample of free text responses provided. OPCC Online Poll, 2023-24

Yes, I'm prepared to pay up to an additional £15	Yes, I'm prepared to pay up to an additional £5 to £10	No, I'm not prepared to pay more for policing
<p><i>"The police deserve our support"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't mind spending extra money on policing providing I see concrete results in the local area relating to anti-social behaviour"</i></p> <p><i>"I am prepared to pay more if it grants more bobbies on the beat in the village, clamping down on speeding, illegal off road bikes and drug use"</i></p> <p><i>"I am happy to pay for a high quality service which improves the quality of life for my family"</i></p> <p><i>"Just want to see the money meaning something and not disappear into a black hole"</i></p> <p><i>"£15 isn't going to make any difference to me but would make a difference to my community"</i></p> <p><i>"If we want the police to be able to stop crime we need to fund it in every aspect be it technology, security or more officers"</i></p>	<p><i>"I would love to say more, but our personal costs are also rising, so I picked the mid amount as I realise costs have to rise"</i></p> <p><i>"Seems reasonable. Other services need money as well"</i></p> <p><i>"I feel we probably do need to pay more but more than £10 is not affordable for many people"</i></p> <p><i>"Our police officers are fantastic but morale will drop if we spread the service too thin. These are essential services"</i></p> <p><i>I don't mind paying a bit extra but cannot afford much with bills and mortgage rises as they are"</i></p> <p><i>"I accept an increase is required but you need to become more efficient and utilise resources in a better way"</i></p>	<p><i>"I would select £5 more per year, but, there have been too many price increases - food, utility bills, council tax, water rates, but my wages remain the same"</i></p> <p><i>"Too much public money is mismanaged and wasted"</i></p> <p><i>"Whilst I support the Police and what they do I believe there are further efficiencies and cost savings that could occur before raising council tax"</i></p> <p><i>"The police are invisible in my area and we do not get value for money from policing or in any Council Tax charges"</i></p> <p><i>"I would pay more if I felt I would see any benefit but I don't believe I will - any increase will be swallowed up in towns and cities where the least money gets the most results"</i></p> <p><i>"The money should be there already. Where has it gone?"</i></p>

5.4 In person ‘pop up’ events were held at supermarkets in Arnold, Mansfield, Worksop, Hyson Green, Bulwell, Netherfield, Newark, Clifton, Retford, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Gamston and West Bridgford during December 2023 and January 2024. Collectively, these events obtained the views of 194 local residents. 72% of all respondents consulted via this method expressed support for an increase in the precept for policing, with 59% of all respondents supporting an increase of between £10 and £15 per Band D household.

Figure 5: To what extent would you be prepared to pay more towards policing in 2024? Local Area Pop Up Events, December 2023 to January 2024

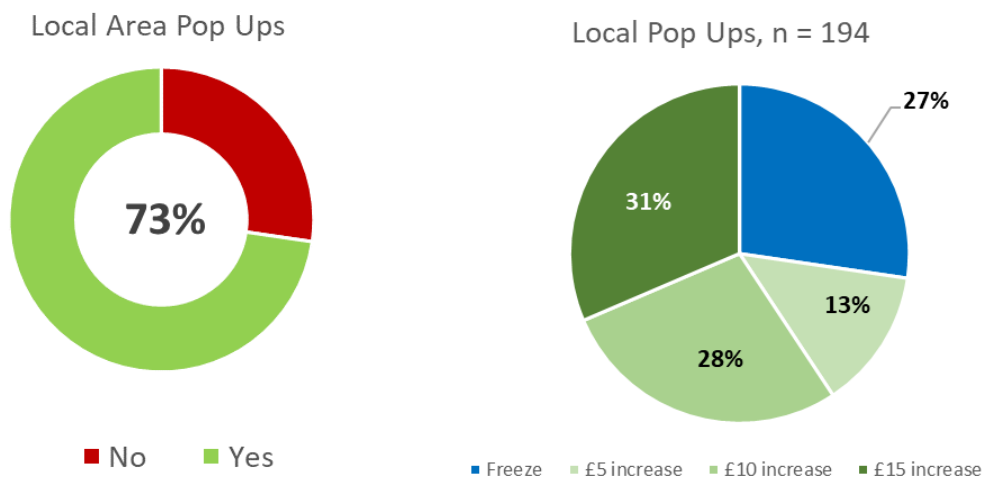


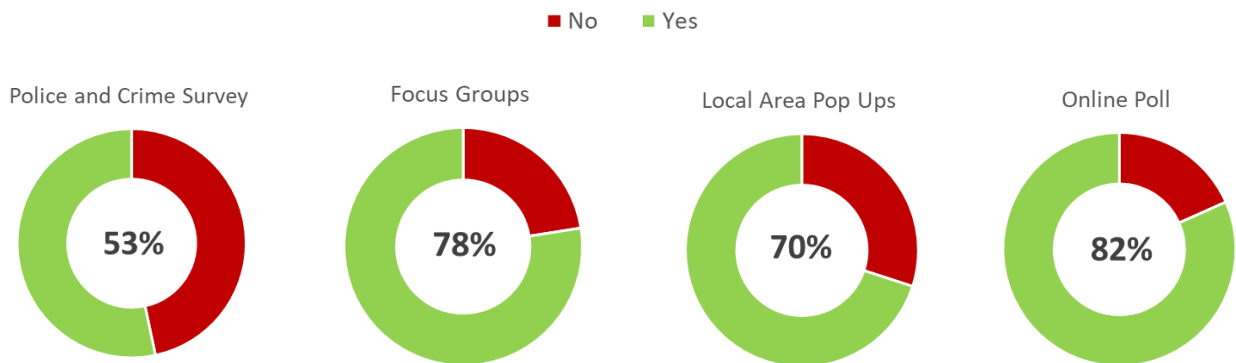
Table 3: Sample of free text responses provided. OPCC Pop Up Engagement Events, 2023-24

Yes, I'm prepared to pay up to an additional £15	Yes, I'm prepared to pay up to an additional £5 to £10	No, I'm not prepared to pay more for policing
<p><i>"Only £1.25 a month, I see that as affordable"</i></p> <p><i>"I understand the pressures the police are under"</i></p> <p><i>"I can afford this but understand that many cannot"</i></p> <p><i>"Anything I can do to improve and support the police"</i></p> <p><i>"We don't need anything else cutting"</i></p> <p><i>"I'd like to see more police on the streets"</i></p> <p><i>"To get a better service"</i></p>	<p><i>"This is manageable"</i></p> <p><i>"They deserve an increase for what they do. Wish I could afford more"</i></p> <p><i>"You've got to have some sort of increase to go in line with inflation"</i></p> <p><i>"I do believe it needs increasing but don't think it should all rely on council tax"</i></p> <p><i>"I want more PCSOs, £10 increase is affordable for me"</i></p>	<p><i>"They get enough"</i></p> <p><i>"I pay enough already"</i></p> <p><i>"Police were no help when I needed them following an incident with my garage"</i></p> <p><i>"There is a cost of living crisis, I feel we don't get value for money"</i></p> <p><i>"We don't get what we pay for now, so why should we pay any more?"</i></p> <p><i>"The overall council tax should be looked at as more of it should go to policing"</i></p>

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Evidence drawn from a range of different consultation and engagement methods indicates that levels of public support for an increase in the precept for policing has reduced over the previous year, largely driven by concerns relating to the rising cost of living. Despite this, the proportion of residents supporting an increase in the precept generally outweighs the proportion that do not.
- 6.2 Support for an increase in the precept was most pronounced in the online poll (82%) however, unlike the Police and Crime Survey, this method was unable to achieve a fully representative sample of responses by local authority due to the self-selecting nature of the methodology. Face-to-face community engagement and focus group exercises (70%-78%) both found strong support for an increase in the precept while allowing greater opportunities for participants to review the current financial position and proposed areas of spend.
- 6.2 The Police and Crime Survey found that support for an increase in the precept remains strongest in strongest in South Nottinghamshire (62%) and Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood (53%) and lowest in Nottingham and Mansfield and Ashfield, where 48% support an increase when those that 'did not know' are excluded.

Would you be prepared to pay more towards policing?



- 6.2 Across all consultation methods, support for an increase in the precept was largely based on an expectation that communities would see visible and tangible improvements in policing as a result of their contribution and greater assurance that the service is delivering good value for money.

Respondent Profile 2023/24

	Police and Crime Survey		Online Poll		Focus Group Participants		Pop-up Events	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	2,035	50.3%	267	39.2%	20	50%	n/a	n/a
Male	1,997	49.4%	377	55.4%	20	50%	n/a	n/a
Prefer to self-describe	11	0.3%	31	4.6%	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Under 25	458	11.3%	15	2.2%	5	13%	n/a	n/a
25 to 34	854	21.1%	51	7.5%	10	25%	n/a	n/a
35 to 44	617	15.3%	45	6.6%	10	25%	n/a	n/a
45 to 54	602	14.9%	55	8.1%	6	15%	n/a	n/a
55 to 64	563	13.9%	150	22.0%	5	13%	n/a	n/a
65 to 74	533	13.2%	157	23.1%	4	10%	n/a	n/a
75 and over	415	10.3%	202	29.7%	0	0%	n/a	n/a
White British	3,257	80.6%	608	89.3%	25	63%	n/a	n/a
Asian background	233	5.8%	15	2.2%	3	8%	n/a	n/a
Black background	118	2.9%	5	0.7%	6	15%	n/a	n/a
Dual Heritage background	99	2.4%	6	0.9%	1	3%	n/a	n/a
Other White background	278	6.9%	29	4.3%	4	10%	n/a	n/a
Other background	57	1.4%	0	0.0%	1	3%	n/a	n/a
Bassetlaw, Newark & Sher	830	20.5%	195	28.6%	10	25%	56	28.9%
Mansfield and Ashfield	807	20.0%	106	15.6%	10	25%	39	20.1%
Nottingham	1,174	29.0%	97	14.2%	10	25%	42	21.6%
South Nottinghamshire	1,232	30.5%	280	41.1%	10	25%	57	29.4%
Total	4,043	100%	681	100%	40	100%	194	100%