

Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel – 5th February 2024

Police and Crime Budget Report for 2024/25

(Including Medium Term Financial Strategy)

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed budget and precept proposal for the police and crime element of the Staffordshire Commissioner's portfolio for 2024/25. This is the Commissioner's third budget in office and delivers one of his key responsibilities under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The report sets out the following:

- Net police and crime budget requirement for 2024/25
- Proposed precept for the police and crime element of the council tax 2024/25
- Proposed policing Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Outline policing capital budget

The report should be read in conjunction with the accompanying:

- Treasury Management Strategy
- Reserves Strategy
- Capital Strategy

Recommendations

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to:

- Examine the information presented in this report, including:
 - The total 2024/25 net revenue budget requirement of £264.824m (**see Appendix 1**), including
 - A council tax requirement for 2024/25 of £100.091m before the collection fund surplus is considered (**see Appendix 5**)
- Support the proposal to increase the 2024/25 precept for the policing element of the council tax bill by 4.99% which is equivalent to **25 pence per week** (£13.00 per annum), increasing the council tax to £273.57 for a band D property

- The 2024/25 proposed precept increase is below the 2024/25 increase in state pension (8.5% increase), working age benefits (6.7% increase) and below the most recent (December 2023) ONS data for wage growth (7.2% increase).
- Note that the council tax base has increased to 365,868 band D equivalent properties, equivalent to an increase of 1.55% (**see Appendix 4**). The council tax collection fund has also been finalised delivering a surplus of £1.239m (**see Appendix 3**).
- Note the use of £1.621m of revenue reserves to balance the 2024/25 budget (this is in addition to use of other earmarked reserves to support identified purposes).
- Note the MTFS summary financials (**Appendix 6**) and MTFS assumptions (**see paragraph 5.4**)
- Support the delegation to the Director of Finance for the Staffordshire Commissioners Office and the Director of Resources of Staffordshire Police to make any necessary adjustments to the budget as a result of late changes to central government funding (including changes due to the final funding settlement being announced) via an appropriation to or from the budget support reserve.
- Support the proposed four-year Capital Investment Programme (**see Section 8**) totalling £83.508m and the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme paper.
- Note the outcome of the Staffordshire Commissioner's budget consultation within the Commissioner's foreword which included a survey regarding the proposed level of precept for 2024/25 (**see Appendix 9**).

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Commissioner's Foreword



This is my third budget and council tax precept proposal for Staffordshire Police as Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Since my election in May 2021, the professionalism and commitment of our Police officers and staff has helped to ensure good progress has been made to deliver the ambition I set out within my Police & Crime Plan. I would like to thank them for this and particularly for their ongoing commitment and dedication ensuring the safety of the communities we serve.

This 2024/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is set against a backdrop that includes some significant uncertainties. Both pay and inflationary pressures were higher in 23/24 than anticipated, with an average pay award of 7% being announced. These significant inflationary pressures, against a backdrop of tighter public and personal finances, have made setting this year's MTFS challenging. Since the last budget was set we have also seen further unrest within Israel in addition to the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine which continues to challenge western economies.

In December 2021 I published my local Police & Crime Plan which sets out priorities and service expectations on behalf of Staffordshire residents. These include a local and responsive service, preventing harm and protecting people, supporting victims and witnesses, safer roads, reduced anti-social behaviour and a more effective criminal justice system. I have reported progress against my plan to the Police Fire and Crime Panel and also challenged the performance by questioning the Chief Constable during a number of Public Performance Meetings held during the last year.

I am very pleased with the progress Staffordshire Police has made over the past year. It has been welcome to see HMICFRS discharge one of the two accelerated cause of concern notices in late December 2023 and for Staffordshire to continue to progress to becoming an outstanding Force.

Staffordshire Police are now more local, visible and responsive. 999 and 101 call times have improved and crucially the force is set to have 2,000 officers by April 2024. This is 400 more than 2019, and even more than I promised when elected in 2021. Other priorities are being met too. 24/7 roads policing is imminent, new safety cameras and vans are being rolled out to improve road safety and £0.5m has been invested in more number plate recognition to track criminals using our roads. Meanwhile my office is supporting more victims, doing more prevention work and making our neighbourhoods safer.

I have worked with Staffordshire Police to address future years' budget gaps through a number of planning sessions and I am pleased to present the MTFS for 2024/25 through to 2027/28. This incorporates a net draw on reserves of £5.226m to support the budget over the four years.

This MTFS will ensure that the Chief Constable has the resources needed to deliver on the local plan and national government priorities. It goes further than this though and for allows significant investments into Policing and Crime over the course of the MTFS. This includes capital funding to invest in infrastructure including the refurbishment of Police Stations and custody facilities across Staffordshire, EV infrastructure and sustainability schemes to reduce running costs and meet the governments net zero ambition.

Alongside this is further capital funding to invest in technology services to improve contact systems to better meet public expectation, as well as meeting the increasingly complex needs around digital forensics to ensure justice is received for victims of crime.

Additional investments in staffing within technology services and change are necessary to address the future financial and operational challenges set out in the MTFS and enable Staffordshire Police Officers and staff to carry out more pro-active activity including investigations into serious organised crime linked to drug and vehicle crime. It would also allow the service to take advantage of new technology including artificial intelligence, freeing up officer time to target criminals, prevent harm, protect people and support victims.

With these investments, inflation and wage pressures in mind, I have concluded that the 2024/25 Police council tax precept should increase by 4.99%, equivalent to £13 per year or 25p per week for a band D property. The proposed increase in the Police council tax precept over the four-year period of this MTFS is once again lower than the forecast cumulative rate of inflation and wage growth. I will always aim to keep council tax as low as possible without compromising safety. The Council Tax proposal is in line with the referendum limit which was set at 4.99% for Police Forces in 2024/25.

I am acutely aware that household budgets are tight, so I expect every pound of taxpayer's money invested in Police & Crime to be spent wisely and for Staffordshire Police alongside my Office to continually seek efficiencies. To balance this MTFS over the period there is a significant savings requirement of £19m to be found by 2028 and work has already started to ensure that this transformation requirement will be met. This will be challenging but given a good record of making savings, smarter use of technology, more collaborative working with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service through sharing buildings and back-office costs, I believe this is achievable.

The number of Staffordshire officers in 'front line' roles is the third highest in the United Kingdom and Staffordshire continues to be one of the safest places to live, work and visit in the country. Staffordshire Police continue to perform well and with your support and the continued investment set out in this MTFS it is my expectation that our Chief Constable, Chris Noble, will continue to build on the improvements in making Staffordshire Police a more local and responsive service and continue to keep us safe.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report, and the council tax precept proposal within it, considers public and stakeholder consultation, demand for policing services as well as key government announcements.
- 1.2 Following the announcement of the council tax referendum levels and police grant settlement by government, the Commissioner has considered; current and future funding requirements, together with the factors included within his Police and Crime Plan, the results of the survey with local residents, as well as actual and expected cost pressures and expected efficiency savings available to the force and to his own office.
- 1.3 The budget considers the current and emerging operational challenges, both nationally, regionally and locally, with particular reference to those areas included within the Force's Strategic Assessment and the most recent inspection from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- 1.4 It has been welcome to see HMICFRS discharge one of the two accelerated cause of concern notices in late December 2023. This has been underpinned in part by the investment into contact services within Staffordshire Police.
- 1.5 Staffordshire Police continues to deliver Value for Money. In the latest HMICFRS Value for Money profiles, Staffordshire Police is the 7th lowest funded force in England and Wales on a per head of population basis but continues to be one of the safest places to live, work and visit in the United Kingdom.
- 1.6 The investment in additional officers seen both through the governments uplift programme and local increases in policing precept will not have an instantaneous impact given the need to recruit and train as well as for these new officers to gain valuable operational experience. This very much is an investment being made now to deliver medium- and long-term benefits, however items such as response times are seeing the early benefit from this investment.
- 1.7 Pay and inflationary pressures were higher in 2023/24 than forecast in the MTFS with the average pay award of 7% being announced. These significant inflationary pressures on both pay and prices have been captured in the 2024/25 MTFS, however have necessitated difficult choices on both precept and also savings.
- 1.8 These inflationary increases, against a backdrop of tighter public and personal finances, have made setting the 2024/25 MTFS challenging. The current external environment, seen through inflationary pressures, remains volatile increasing the likelihood of budget assumptions being materially challenged in year.
- 1.9 The Commissioner has considered the adequacy and level of reserves and the impacting of future financial challenges and opportunities in the MTFS. The MTFS assumes a net drawn on reserves of £5.226m to support the MTFS revenue budget over the four years. There are other reserves being used for the purpose for which they are earmarked over the life of the MTFS.

- 1.10 As at Quarter 3, the forecast outturn for 23/24 is a £0.142m underspend, after a contribution of £0.750m into the budget support reserve. In this financial year, 99% of the £7.001m MTFs savings target has been delivered. 2023/24 saw the recruitment in full of the additional 60 police officers contained in the 2023/24 budget. This has established a baseline of 2,000 officers, the highest number of officers in a decade. £0.500m was also invested into Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras across Staffordshire, alongside investing in support services targeting victims of domestic abuse and creating a dedicated Offer Personal Safety Training facility.
- 1.11 Due to a desire to recruit experienced officers alongside the normal intakes of student officers the Force has recruited a significant number of transferee officers from other Forces. This has resulted in a budget pressure (as they are paid more than student officers) which has been captured in the 2024/25 MTFs.
- 1.12 The draft policing settlement was published on 14th December 2023. The Home Office has provided a one-year local settlement only as part of the last year of the current spending review.
- 1.13 The grant has increased due to increased pension costs and the uplift maintenance grant being increased to cover incremental progression and pay awards for uplift officers. Excluding this core funding is cash flat (e.g. pay awards and inflationary pressures are to be met locally via savings or precept increases).
- 1.14 The MTFs makes assumptions about what core funding and precept referendum limits will be for future years. It is assumed that core funding will increase by 2% in cash terms (a real terms reduction taking account of inflation and population growth) and a precept referendum limit of 2.99%. Both are likely to be items for decision for the next government given when a general election is required to be called.
- 1.15 The above assumed tightening of the future financial position, as outlined in the autumn statement by the chancellor for unprotected government departments, alongside increase in pay and inflation assumptions requires a step change in the organisational capacity to deliver cashable budget reductions. This underpins the rationale for the investments being proposed in IT and change staffing.
- 1.16 The impact of this tightening has been reflected in the MTFs, leading to more significant budget gaps in future years. It is now assumed the full impact of both salary progression and pay awards for the uplift cohort are met locally with no additional grant to cover these costs. For example, the cost between a newly appointed PC and a PC at the top of the salary band is c.£25k including on costs. Panel should note that these are assumptions at this stage and are of material levels of uncertainty given both the end of the current spending review and a forthcoming general election.
- 1.17 In addition, interest rates are forecast to be higher and for longer, driving an increase in the latter years of the MTFs in interest costs on borrowing for capital investment. This, alongside a desire to reduce the investment backlog in IT and Estates, sees an increase in capital financing charges. The Force and Commissioner remain committed to investing in the capital programme.

- 1.18 Panel should note the budget assumes that the additional £1.824m offered by the government for officer numbers above the Home Office uplift baseline is continued throughout the life of the MTFS (additional recruitment top up grant). This is a risk item, however given the commitment of the government to maintain the uplift numbers it is felt an appropriate risk.
- 1.19 After consideration of all of these aspects, the Commissioner is proposing a precept increase of 25 pence per week from April 2024. The proposed precept enables the Commissioner to provide an increase in funding raised from the precept of £4.756m in 2024/25 (excluding the collection fund positions and increase in council tax base).
- 1.20 The Commissioner and Chief Constable will make the following headline investments into Policing and Crime over the course of the MTFS, above and beyond those provided for by central government in:
- Increasing staffing within technology services (IT) by c.30fte,
 - Increasing change capacity by c.15fte,
 - Funding the over recruitment of 25fte in call handling for 2024/25 and 2025/26 in addition to the 20fte permanent growth in numbers agreed in the last two years,
 - Capital funding to invest in infrastructure across Staffordshire including refurbishment of Police Stations and custody facilities, EV infrastructure and sustainability schemes to reduce running costs and meet the governments net zero ambition
 - Capital funding to invest in technology improvements to improve contact systems to better meet public expectation as well as meeting the increasingly complex needs around digital forensics to ensure justice is received for victims of crime.

Further detail is contained in **Section 4**.

- 1.21 Panel should note that excluding the investment in technology services and corporate change the commissioner would have been able to set a budget without drawing on reserves in 2024/25. These investments are however key to address the future financial and operational challenges as set out in the MTFS.
- 1.22 The Commissioner will continue to support the Chief Constable's transformation programme and has committed to ensuring that the scope of the capital programme and achievement of capital receipts will support this, through new IT platforms and estate. This paper is accompanied by a Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy which explain how this investment will be afforded. Further detail on the proposed capital investment is contained in **Section 8**.
- 1.23 If the proposals in this document are supported then the Staffordshire Commissioner will have the following funding available in 2024/25:

Table 1 Net Budget Requirement Comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25

	2023/24	2024/25	Change
Funding	£'000	£'000	£'000
Home Office Police Grant	129,860	137,622	7,762
Police Pension Grant	1,825	5,677	3,852
Uplift Ringfenced Grant	4,145	6,406	2,261
Additional Recruitment Top-Up	0	1,824	1,824
Revenue Support Grant	8,423	8,423	0
Council Tax Freeze Grant	3,541	3,541	0
Precept	93,883	100,091	6,207
Council Tax Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	1,270	1,239	(30)
Total Funding	242,947	264,824	21,876

	2023/24	2024/25	Change
Spend	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staffordshire Commissioner	7,287	7,538	250
Staffordshire Police	228,656	249,886	21,230
Capital Financing & Revenue Contribution to Capital	8,018	8,596	578
Investment Income	(1,014)	(1,196)	(182)
Total Spend	242,947	264,824	21,876

The detailed budgets are shown in **Appendix 1**.

2. The Budget Process

- 2.1 The 2024/25 budgeting round continues to use a risk-based approach to budget setting which has sought to align the budget process with identified strategic operational priorities and risks, making strategic investments where funding allows in line with the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
- 2.2 Underpinning the budget and MTFS process are the principles of setting a good and balanced budget. Whilst setting a balanced budget is a legal requirement, significant focus is spent on ensuring it is a 'good budget'.

A **Balanced Budget** means that:

- Income equals expenditure
- Cost reduction targets and investment proposals are credible and achievable, and:
- Key assumptions are 'stress tested'



A **Good Budget** means that:

- It has a medium term focus, supporting the Policing Plan
- Resources are focused on our priority outcomes
- It is not driven by short term fixes
- It demonstrates how we have listened to our communities through consultation
- It is transparent and well scrutinised
- It is integrated with the capital programme; and
- It maintains financial stability

- 2.3 The Commissioner and Staffordshire Police have considered key corporate risks when setting the budget. Essentially these risks are operational and organisational around managing people, infrastructure assets, information, commissioning etc.
- 2.4 The force continues to identify its strategic operational risks as part of the Force Management Statement (a requirement of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service). This has been used to inform resourcing strategies at both command and departmental level.
- 2.5 The latest MTFS and, in particular, the 2024/25 budget contained within this report aligns financial resources to areas of greatest risk and therefore is fundamental to the performance management of Staffordshire Police and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office.
- 2.6 Both Section 151 Officers have worked closely with the wider finance team throughout the year during the budget monitoring process and in preparation of the revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25. In respect of the budget, this has included (but was not limited to), the identification and agreement of assumptions and methodology and challenge and scrutiny of the budget workings across both the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) and Staffordshire Police.
- 2.7 The Commissioner and his management team have held regular discussions with the Chief Constable and his Chief Officers throughout the year on the MTFS. These discussions have culminated in a number of full and robust discussions of the budget requirement, the right sizing and funding of the capital programme, national and local operational and financial challenges, the precept options available to the Commissioner and a review of the MTFS and associated risks.
- 2.8 Furthermore, there has been a significant degree of scrutiny and challenge undertaken by the Commissioner and his team, prior to, during and post the January Strategic Governance Board, culminating in final discussions on the policing budget

and decision on precept by the Commissioner. The decision around precept is taken by the Commissioner applying his judgement based upon the above budget process.

2.9 The approach taken to the MTFS is one where we continually seek to be a well-run organisation, scrutinising areas of spend as well as containing pressures. The overall approach to the MTFS process, in the order below, is:

1. Well run

- Containment of pressures,
- Identifying and achieving savings which involve no change to the operating model or incurring redundancy costs,
- Spending every £ wisely

2. Commercially astute

- Income generation
- Asset sales
- Balance sheet management
- Procurement and purchasing efficiencies

3. Transformation

- Changing the way we do things
- Leveraging capital investment to support changes to our staffing model
- Right sourcing of services and support

3. Precept Strategy and 2024/25 Proposal

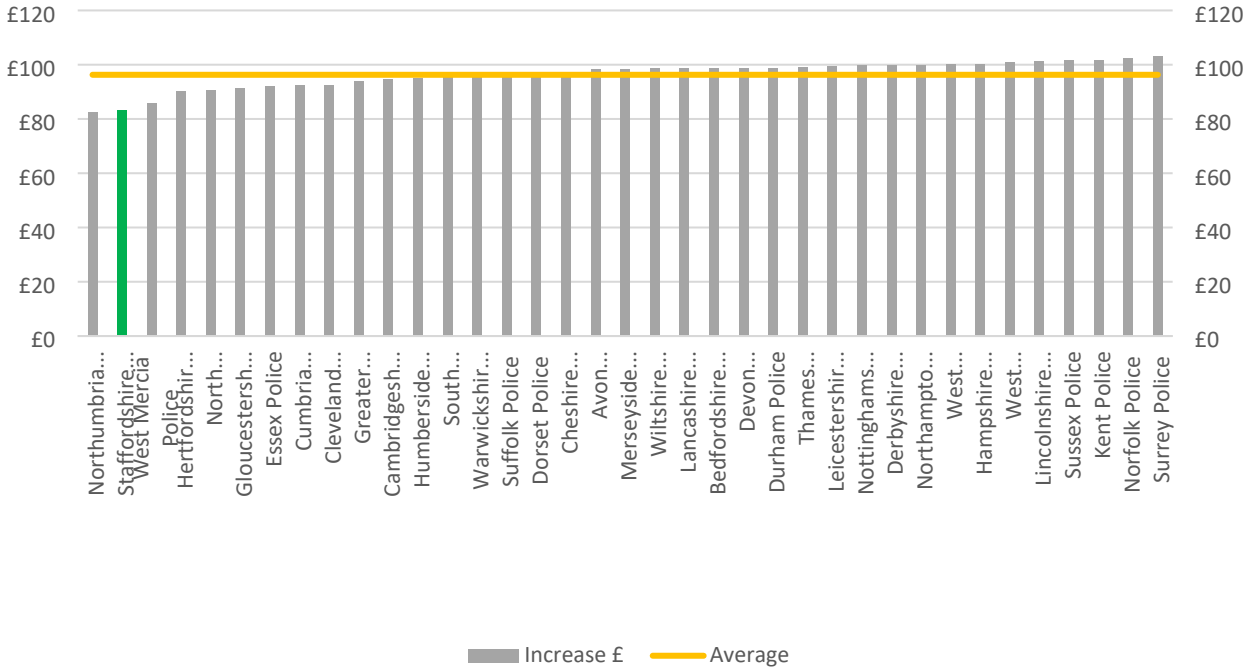
- 3.1 The 2024/25 proposed precept increase is 4.99%. This increase is below the 2024/25 increase in state pension (8.5% increase), working age benefits (6.7%) and below the most recent (December 2023) ONS data for wage growth (7.2% increase).
- 3.2 The Council Tax Referendum Principles for 2024/25 state that PCCs can increase the policing element of council tax by £13 per annum before triggering a referendum.
- 3.3 The Commissioner has engaged with local residents and stakeholders on a wide range of matters. In relation to the precept, the recent consultation showed that 62.1% of all respondents support an increase in the police and crime precept.
- 3.4 The Commissioner has listened to this feedback and his intention to increase funding in the coming year by £6.207m (excluding the collection fund positions) from the precept, which will provide additional investment to policing as well as ensuring that material cost pressures are met for the budget year 2024/25. Importantly this increase provides additional protection to services in the medium term.
- 3.5 The table below illustrates the financial impact of the precept changes on the council band D rate and increase in funding for Police and Crime in Staffordshire.

Council Tax (Police & Crime Element)	2023/24	2024/25
Band D Council Tax Proposed	£260.57	£273.57
Increase on Prior Year	£12.00	£13.00
Percentage increase on Prior Year	4.83%	4.99%
Total Precept Levied	£93,883,136*	£100,090,544*
Weekly Increase	£0.23	£0.25

**This includes changes in the tax base as well as precept rate changes*

- 3.6 The increase in council tax funding also takes in to account the actual tax base increase for 2024/26 (1.55%) when calculating the financial impact of the precept flexibility. The proposed council tax increase by banding is shown in **Appendix 5**.
- 3.7 Precept increase in Staffordshire have been kept low over the last decade, resulting in the second lowest cash increase between 2013/14 and 2023/24. This represents the impact of a long-term strategy of seeking efficiency ahead of tax rises from the local taxpayer.

Cash Increase 2013/14 to 2023/24



4. Investments in Policing

- 4.1 The Commissioner, in reaching a decision to increase the policing precept, has considered the need to balance increases in local taxation against the investments required in local policing to continue building back in capability and capacity, as well as enabling Staffordshire Police to respond to new and emerging threats.
- 4.2 These investments have been designed to balance and complement the investment in police officer numbers as a result of the government investment in policing. The government's focus has been on increasing officer numbers and the infrastructure directly related to increasing officer numbers. The government's investment does not focus, at a local level, on increasing technological innovation, specialist police staff roles, volunteer roles both in relation to revenue spend through pay costs or capital investment in infrastructure. These areas are becoming increasingly important to policing in terms of meeting future demand.
- 4.3 Whilst total numbers are important, what is also important is what these officers are doing. Officers should be doing a job that requires warranted powers and not in a role that can be more effectively and efficiently done by others simply to increase the relative headcount without seeing the impact of this on the public's priorities. The number of Staffordshire officers in 'front line' roles is the third highest in the UK.
- 4.4 Excluding the investments in technology services and corporate change the commissioner would have been able to set a budget without drawing on reserves in 2024/25. These investments are however key to address the future financial and operational challenges as set out in the MTFS.
- 4.5 The investment into IT since this service was brought back in house has paid significant dividends. This includes reducing the number of outages from 53 in the previous reporting period to 1 in 2022. This alongside new technology has resulted in significant productivity gains within policing. Now is the time to build on this relatively improved performance to better enable service delivery, ensure time is used efficiently and effectively as well as support the continual financial challenge outlined in the MTFS.
- 4.6 Alongside meeting the challenges of the MTFS the additional resource into IT is complemented by a fully refreshed IT capital programme. Alongside continuing to address technical debt there are major investments in improving contact systems to better meet public expectation as well as meeting the increasingly complex needs around digital forensics to ensure justice is received for victims of crime.
- 4.7 The Force continues to have a complex and challenging change programme, which it is delivering to support the Force's journey to being outstanding. However, there is a desire to accelerate this change and also to provide capacity to drive greater efficiency as the external funding position has tightened whilst protecting front line service delivery.
- 4.8 The full year effect of both investments' totals £0.800m into Change resources and £2.5m into IT. Of this £0.800m is included for change and £1.25m in IT in 2024/25.

- 4.9 Within the wider capital programme there remains a commitment to build a new firearms training facility, re-provision of the public order training facility, upgrades to both custody facilities to ensure safe detention and upgrades to operational police stations. However, within the estates capital programme there remains a balance to be struck between affordability and pace in relation to upgrading facilities and this is reflected in the MTFS.
- 4.10 The Commissioner continues to invest into equipment across the Force. This has included the increase in ANPR capacity and capability which will continue into 2024/25 as well as upgrading Tasers to the latest available device to enhance Officer and Public safety at a cost of £1.072m.

5. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been updated as follows and is shown in detail in **Appendix 6**.

- 5.1 The MTFs is an important document in the overall financial framework of the group's planning. It builds on the budget for 2023/24 and incorporates plans to meet changes in available financing with the need to meet current and future commitments.
- 5.2 It is a requirement that the Police and Crime Plan must cover the period until the end of the financial year however it is prudent to prepare a medium-term financial strategy over a longer period than this and therefore the report focusses on a four-year timeline.
- 5.3 The MTFs is based on full delivery of a number of savings arising through Resource Allocation Challenge panels as included in **Appendix 8**.
- 5.4 The MTFs includes a number of key assumptions covering likely funding levels, inflationary increases and expenditure items. A summary of the main MTFs assumptions are shown below for consideration:

Table 4: Assumptions

Description	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
<u>Police Officers</u>				
Pay Award	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%
<u>Police Staff</u>				
Pay Award	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Incremental uplift	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Pension Contribution	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%	21.5%
<u>Non Pay Inflation</u>				
General	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Utilities & Fuel*	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<u>Funding & Income</u>				
Government Funding	8.84%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Council Tax Base Increase	1.55%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Variable Income Charges	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Council Tax Precept Increase	4.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%
* % increase stated is an average across budgets				

- 5.5 All assumptions in the MTFs are subject to change however they are useful in establishing the general size of the underlying pressures in the budget.

- 5.6 Assumptions on inflation have been cross-referenced with other policing and local public sector organisations and believe they are consistent. Panel should note however that in relation to inflation this is significantly more difficult to forecast than in previous years.
- 5.7 In relation to pay inflations assumptions we have undertaken a survey of other forces. This has shown that relative to the sector our assumption is prudent and is the most commonly used assumption in the sector. The results of this are below:

	Police officers	Police Staff
Staffordshire	3%	3%
Average (Mean)	2.69%	2.67%
Average (Mode)	3%	2%

Pay forecasting remains challenging as pay awards are made c.6 months after budget setting and strict treasury guidance on pay awards seen in the past has been relaxed in recent years allowing for more ministerial discretion.

- 5.8 Panel should note that given the increases in pension and benefit rates seen in April 2023 of 8.5% and 6.7% respectively this may set a level of expectation that would prove unaffordable in both the short and long term for policing in the UK if salaries were to match these increases.
- 5.9 Based on forecast energy usage and the proposed energy prices from our energy advisors we have seen a maintenance of this budget at the level for 2023/24. However, this remains an area of volatility that underpins the need to hold sufficient general fund reserves.
- 5.10 The tax base forecasts are based upon economic growth forecasts from the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) blended with local insight and knowledge from billing authorities.
- 5.11 Police officer pension costs remain a significant risk over the medium term, in particular in light of the McCloud judgement on pension's age discrimination. To offset this risk the Commissioner has established a pensions reserve, however the impact of this could amount to a significant multi-million-pound annual cost.
- 5.12 The triannual police officer pension scheme revaluation has resulted in an increase in the employer cost for active members. This has been offset by a grant received by the Force, however whilst this forms a significant cash increase this is simply to offset the increase in cost of active members. This grant amounts to £5.677m in 2024/25, which also includes c.£0.400m in one-off funding in relation to the Pensions Remedy costs.

6. Risks and Sensitivity Analysis

- 6.1 In reflecting on where and whether investments are appropriate in 2024/25, the Commissioner will also reflect on the development of risks within the environment and respond to the monitoring of those risks.
- 6.2 The table below sets out a sensitivity analysis on key assumptions within the 2024/25 budget.

Table 5: Sensitivity Analysis on Assumptions

Cost Area	Change	£'000
Police Pay	1%	1,312
PCSO/Police Staff	1%	831
Utilities	1%	28
Vehicle costs	1%	40
Supplies & Services	1%	102
Police Pension Contribution	1%	862
Police Core Grant Funding	1%	1,376
Precept	£1	366
Precept	1%	1,001

- 6.3 Inflationary pressures remain a significant concern both over the short term and are more likely than not to present a significant challenge around non-pay spend.

7. Reserves Position

- 7.1 The Commissioner's Reserve Strategy sets this out the minimum general fund reserve to be 3% of the net revenue budget, with the general fund reserve currently at 3.91% of the 2023/24 net revenue budget.
- 7.2 A number of earmarked reserves are included within the overall reserves position; these reserves exist to cover increased risks in the external environment such as pension changes.
- 7.3 The 2024/25 MTFs includes the unwinding of the budget support reserve of £5.266m; £1.621m in 2024/25 and the balance of £3.645m 2025/26. The use of £1.621m is used to balance the underlying net budget requirement in 2024/25.
- 7.4 In 2024/25, in addition to the unwinding of the budget support reserve, there is also planned use of the Uplift reserve (c.£0.750m) to support an additional 10 supernummary sergeants to focus on capacity and capability building in local policing, and PCC ring-fenced reserves to support commissioned services (c.£0.780m).

- 7.5 Should a pay award be higher than budgeted (as was the case in 2023/24), this may necessitate the use of the budget support reserve, which is currently allocated to be used in 2025/26.
- 7.6 If the proposals in this report are adopted then the reserves position will be as shown in **Appendix 2**. These reserves are from the unaudited accounts reserves for the year ending 2022/23.

8. Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28

- 8.1 The Capital Programme and Capital Strategy for 2024/25 to 2027/28 has been developed and is reviewed within the Capital Strategy. The Capital Programme has been developed by the operational budget holders in discussion with the Chief Accountant and the Director of Resources.
- 8.2 The revenue consequences of the proposed programme have been considered in the development of the revenue budget and the required prudential indicators are set out in the accompanying Treasury Management Strategy.
- 8.3 Panel should note that over the last 3 years the Force and Commissioner have reduced the capital financing requirement (e.g. 'debt') to support both investment in front line policing. Long term this direction of travel cannot be maintained without incurring significant backlog maintenance and driving in inefficiency by not exploiting technology.
- 8.4 The Force has carried out a comprehensive review of the capital programme for the 2024/25 MTFS, re-baselining the programme and ensuring greater congruence between corporate change programmes and the capital programme.

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Capital Financing Costs MTFS 2023/24	6,991	7,157	7,323	N/A
Capital Financing Costs MTFS 2024/25	6,091	8,682	10,246	11,880
(Reduction)/Increase	(900)	1,524	2,923	N/A

- 8.5 In the short term the reduction in capital financing costs has been driven in part by a number of planned interventions including reducing the in year (2023/24) programme, additional revenue contributions and reserve contributions to avoid borrowing costs.
- 8.6 Over the medium term the programme costs increase driven by both increases in the cost of borrowing with rates assumed to have risen from c.3% to c.5% over the medium term as well as increases in the programme itself. Each 1% increase in borrowing costs on each £1m of borrowing adds £0.010m per annum in interest cost that requires funding.
- 8.7 Overall new borrowing to replace both existing borrowing maturing and new net borrowing is forecast to cost £2.366m from 2023/24 to 2027/28. This is at a current assumed interest rate of 4.87%. A number of maturing loans were taken out when rates were historically low and refinancing costs, which have been working in our favour over the last decade (e.g. high cost old loans being replaced by new low-cost ones) is now working against us.
- 8.8 The table below details the Capital Programme projects and spend over the MTFS period with the expected funding of the programme. The detailed programme for 2024/25 is shown within Appendix 7 – Capital Programme.

Table 6: Capital Programme Spending

Department	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000	2026/27 Estimate £'000	2027/28 Estimate £'000
IT	11,258	8,957	6,483	5,483
Estates and Facilities	14,313	21,131	4,370	1,290
Transport	2,075	2,100	2,150	2,200
Operational Equipment	1,378	220	50	50
Capital Programme	29,024	32,408	13,053	9,023

Funding				
Capital Receipts	0	(380)	0	0
Deferred Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0
Capital Grants	0	0	0	0
Capital Specific Grants	0	0	(331)	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	(2,257)	(2,257)	(2,257)	(2,257)
Earmarked Reserves	(1,072)	0	(1,784)	0
Borrowing Requirement	(25,695)	(29,771)	(8,681)	(6,766)
Total Funding	(29,024)	(32,408)	(13,053)	(9,023)

8.9 Whilst the capital programme has been constrained by affordability the commissioner will continue to seek opportunity to reduce cost and seek alternative funding as well as making additional revenue contributions should the opportunity arise in year to keep down long-term debt.

8.10 There are a number of projects that the Force would ideally undertake should additional funding be available that are currently scheduled for the years immediately after the current MTFS period. These are:

- Refurbishment of police premises in:
 - Leek
 - Burton
 - Cannock
 - Burslem
 - Headquarters
 - North/City CID and Forensics hub
- Enhanced fleet replacement programmes to replace items such as carriers which have current life cycle of c.15 years
- IT device replacement cycle to be in line with industry leading replacement cycles

9. Statement of the Commissioner CFO on the robustness of the Budget and adequacy of the proposed financial reserves

- 9.1 The Local Government Act 2003, Part 2, Section 25, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2013, requires the Commissioner's CFO to report on the robustness of the estimates used for the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The Commissioner is required to have regard to the report of the CFO and the report must be given to the Police and Crime Panel.
- 9.2 It is noted that the budget years 2025/26 onwards are planned with more uncertainty than has been the case in recent years. The external environment continues to be volatile, with significant inflationary pressures and significant uncertainties, not least to the fact a general election must be held before the 2025/26 financial year starts and a spending review held. Whilst there remains some uncertainty with regard to future settlement funding, increased pay awards and inflation, estimates have been included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and appropriate provision within Earmarked Reserves.

I conclude, therefore, that the budget for 2024/25:

- Is balanced and has been prepared on a robust basis,
- Is accompanied by a Capital, Treasury Management and Reserves Strategy

Katharine Ross MBA CPFA
Director of Finance / S151 Officer for the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office

Appendix 1

Revenue Budget 2024/25

	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Year on Year Change £'000
Pay			
Police Officer Pay Costs	116,647	131,168	14,521
PCSO Pay Costs	8,663	9,490	827
Police Staff Pay Costs	66,708	74,402	7,694
Other Employee Costs	4,117	3,700	(416)
Police Officer Pensions	4,663	4,253	(410)
Total Pay	200,798	223,013	22,216
Non Pay			
Repairs & Maintenance	31	32	1
Other Premises Costs	6,309	6,892	583
Vehicle Costs	4,065	4,042	(23)
Other Travel Costs	563	583	20
Operational Supplies & Service	6,537	6,725	188
Communications & Computers	12,600	13,175	575
Administration	1,866	2,578	712
Other Supplies & Services	929	857	(72)
Total Non Pay	32,901	34,884	1,983
Contracted			
Third Party Payments	18,888	18,941	53
Total Contracted	18,888	18,941	53
Capital Financing Cost			
Capital Financing Costs	5,789	6,339	550
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,257	2,257	0
Total Capital Financing Cost	8,046	8,596	550
Income			
Grants & Contributions	(8,904)	(8,644)	260
Reimbursements	(5,529)	(5,836)	(307)
Sales, Fees & Charges	(860)	(1,171)	(311)
Other Income	(1,062)	(1,259)	(197)
Total Other Income	(16,355)	(16,910)	(555)
Unallocated Savings			
Unallocated Savings	84	(133)	(217)
Total Unallocated Savings	84	(133)	(217)
Total Revenue Budget before Reserves	244,362	268,392	24,030
Transfers to/(from) Reserves	(1,415)	(3,569)	(2,153)
Total Revenue Budget	242,947	264,824	21,876
Financed By:			
Home Office Funding	147,794	163,494	15,699
Council Tax Funding	95,153	101,330	6,177
Total Financing	242,947	264,824	21,876

Appendix 2

Useable Reserves Forecast

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
General Fund	9,631	9,631	9,631	9,631
Capital Receipts Reserve	0	0	0	0
Capital Grants Unapplied	331	331	0	0
Budget Support Reserve	3,645	0	0	0
Capital Reserve	484	741	998	1,212
Collaboration Reserve	199	199	199	199
ESN Reserve	1,784	1,784	0	0
Insurance Reserve	699	699	699	699
IT Transformation Reserve	1,890	1,490	1,090	690
Major Events Policing Reserve	473	473	473	473
Operational Reserves	6,331	4,170	3,455	3,442
Pension Reserve	5,696	5,696	5,696	5,696
Reshaping the Future Reserve	2,149	2,149	2,149	2,149
Uplift Reserve	3,361	3,361	3,361	3,361
Total Earmarked Reserves	26,711	20,762	18,120	17,921
Total Usable Reserves	36,674	30,725	27,751	27,552

Appendix 3

Council Tax Report 2024/25

Council Tax Surplus / (Deficit) by Billing Authority

	2024/25 £000
Cannock Chase	(37)
East Staffordshire	65
Lichfield	107
Newcastle	7
South Staffordshire	172
Stafford	(20)
Staffordshire Moorlands	(12)
Tamworth	36
Stoke City Council	922
Total	1,239

Appendix 4

Council Tax Base by Billing Authority

	2023/24 (Band D Equivalent)	2024/25 (Band D Equivalent)	Change (Band D Equivalent)
Cannock Chase	29,851	30,015	164
East Staffordshire	40,060	40,935	875
Lichfield	40,534	41,116	582
Newcastle	38,099	38,738	639
South Staffordshire	39,609	39,914	305
Stafford	48,864	49,303	439
Staffordshire Moorlands	33,374	33,737	363
Tamworth	23,376	23,479	103
Stoke City Council	66,532	68,632	2,100
Total	360,299	365,868	5,569

**n.b. figures are rounded to the nearest whole Band D equivalent*

Appendix 5

Council Tax Report 2024/25

Council Bands for Each Band and Billing Authority Precepts

Based upon a Band D increase of 4.99%

Band	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Annual Increase £	Increase per week £
A	173.71	182.38	8.67	0.17
B	202.66	212.77	10.11	0.19
C	231.62	243.18	11.56	0.22
D	260.57	273.57	13.00	0.25
E	318.48	334.37	15.89	0.31
F	376.38	395.16	18.78	0.36
G	434.28	455.95	21.67	0.42
H	521.14	547.14	26.00	0.50

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Change £
Cannock Chase	7,778,288	8,211,138	432,850
East Staffordshire	10,438,434	11,198,588	760,154
Lichfield	10,562,049	11,248,049	686,001
Newcastle	9,927,456	10,597,555	670,098
South Staffordshire	10,320,917	10,919,284	598,367
Stafford	12,732,375	13,487,748	755,373
Staffordshire Moorlands	8,696,263	9,229,431	533,168
Tamworth	6,091,084	6,423,150	332,066
Stoke City Council	17,336,269	18,775,602	1,439,332
Total	93,883,136	100,090,544	6,207,408

Appendix 6

MTFS Summary Financials 2024/25 to 2027/28

	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Budget 2025/26 £'000	Budget 2026/27 £'000	Budget 2027/28 £'000
Pay				
Police Officer Pay Costs	131,168	136,565	142,013	147,678
PCSO Pay Costs	9,490	9,589	10,006	10,439
Police Staff Pay Costs	74,402	78,162	81,263	84,579
Other Employee Costs	3,700	3,775	3,853	3,932
Police Officer Pensions	4,253	4,320	4,389	4,458
Total Pay	223,013	232,411	241,523	251,086
Non Pay				
Repairs & Maintenance	32	33	33	34
Other Premises Costs	6,892	6,911	7,367	7,501
Vehicle Costs	4,042	4,100	4,159	4,219
Other Travel Costs	583	594	606	618
Operational Supplies & Service	6,725	6,916	6,989	7,247
Communications & Computers	13,175	13,245	13,510	13,780
Administration	2,578	2,669	2,721	2,751
Other Supplies & Services	857	993	1,001	1,009
Total Non Pay	34,884	35,462	36,388	37,159
Contracted				
Third Party Payments	18,941	18,131	18,254	18,275
Total Contracted	18,941	18,131	18,254	18,275
Capital Financing Cost				
Capital Financing Costs	6,339	8,930	10,495	12,129
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,257	2,257	2,257	2,257
Total Capital Financing Cost	8,596	11,187	12,752	14,386
Income				
Grants & Contributions	(8,644)	(6,997)	(6,997)	(6,997)
Reimbursements	(5,836)	(5,709)	(5,714)	(5,719)
Sales, Fees & Charges	(1,171)	(1,234)	(1,297)	(1,297)
Other Income	(1,259)	(589)	(392)	(326)
Total Other Income	(16,910)	(14,528)	(14,400)	(14,338)
Unallocated Savings				
Unallocated Savings	(133)	(133)	(133)	(133)
Total Unallocated Savings	(133)	(133)	(133)	(133)
Total Revenue before Reserves	268,392	282,530	294,383	306,435
Net use of Reserves	(3,569)	(5,390)	(1,116)	(413)
Transformation Requirement		(5,858)	(14,266)	(19,024)
Total Revenue Budget	264,824	271,282	279,001	286,997

Financed By:				
Settlement Funding				
Home Office Police Grant (inc. Uplift Ringfenced Grant)	145,852	148,769	151,744	154,779
Police Pension Grant	5,677	5,269	5,269	5,269
Revenue Support Grant	8,423	8,423	8,423	8,423
Council Tax Freeze Grant	3,541	3,541	3,541	3,541
Total Settlement Funding	163,494	166,002	168,978	172,013
Council Tax	101,330	105,280	110,023	114,984
Total Financing	264,824	271,282	279,001	286,997

Appendix 7 – Capital Programme

Estates Capital Programme

Package	Description	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Forecast 2025/26 £'000	Forecast 2026/27 £'000	Forecast 2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
Investment Programme						
Baden Hall	Health and safety works including environmental compliance works	172				172
Burton Police Station	Minor improvement scheme to address elements of backlog maintenance	300	299			599
Burslem Police Station	Repairs to the roof at Burslem Police Station following inspection	100	100			200
Cannock Police Station	A minor improvement scheme to include roof repairs, refurbished interview room, front counter redesign and replacement of windows.	180	182			362
Cheadle Police Station	Minor improvement scheme to address elements of backlog maintenance		80			80
Public Order Training Facility	To jointly design and build a new public order training facility with West Mercia Police, that meets college of Policing licensing standards	500	500			1,000
Armed police training facility	The construction of the armed policing training facility and costs post planning conditions. Whilst the scheme has yet to be tendered this is the latest cost estimate post planning and design.	3,350	13,450			16,800
Leek Police Station	Minor improvement scheme to address elements of backlog maintenance		30			30
Lindum House	Minor improvement scheme to address elements of backlog maintenance	350				350
Longton Police Station	A full refurbishment of the site. The site has had minimal to no investment since it was built in 1992 with multiple failures in Mechanical and electrical engineering as well as poor working conditions including H&S concerns.	3,800				3,800
Northern Area Custody Facility Refurb Wing Phases	Investment required to maintain facility, built over 20 years ago, within safer detention standards. This site has seen minimal investment since it was built	3,000	700			3,700
Rugeley	Minor works to ensure Health and Safety compliance			80		80
Stafford Police Station	Following the decision taken by the Commissioner not to seek a joint base (and HQ) in Stafford in May 2023 a scheme will be developed to refurbish Stafford Police Station providing modern fit for purpose accommodation and ensuring there is no backlog maintenance on site	70	1,000	3,000		4,070
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	There is a legal requirement to transition away from internal combustion engine vehicles and increasingly manufacturers are not making these vehicles ahead of that deadline. Across the force estate work will need to be undertaken to ensure that we are able to meet these deadlines to ensure ongoing operational efficiency. At this point there are no government support schemes for infrastructure to Police Forces	750	750	750	750	3,000
Invest to Save scheme - solar panels	A business case has been developed to expand the provision of solar panels across the estate to reduce ongoing electricity costs. The first phase of this project has seen a payback period within 4 years against an expected lifespan in excess of 25 years	400				400

Permanent Cannabis Store	There is a need to extend the current cannabis store given increased seizures of the drug and delays in the court system leading to temporary storage being used.	100				100
Southern Custody - Watling Street	Investment required to maintain facility, built 20 years ago, within safer detention standards. This site has seen minimal investment since it was built. Phasing wise this will follow the refurbishment of the larger facility in the North of the County	0	1,800			1,800
HQ Enabling Works (Blocks 1, 8 & 9)	Works required, as a minimum, to accommodate the replacement of blocks 2,3 & 4 that cannot be accommodated elsewhere at no cost to build the firearms range. A broader scheme has been developed and shared but at this point is a financial challenge and has been constructed.	500	1,000			1,500
Block 5 stock condition works	Work required from stock condition surveys to reduce backlog maintenance including window and door replacement. This building was built in the 1980's and has seen minimal investment in its fabric since then.	25	300			325
HQ Block 7- HVAC System upgrade	An upgrade to the Heating, Ventilation and Cooling system within the main conference and visitor block at HQ is required to replace a failing end of life system. As part of these works the reception area will need reconfiguration	50	400			450
Business as usual						
Project Resource Costs	Resource cost to deliver the above projects	250	250	250	250	1,000
HQ Block 8 - Window and Doors Replacement		25				25
Lift replacement- HQ		21				21
Refreshments and rest area replacements programme		50	50	50	50	200
Heating and Ventilation replacement programme		80	0	0	0	80
Security Upgrades and CCTV upgrades		80	80	80	80	320
Fixed Plant - mechanical equipment, M&E services		40	40	40	40	160
Internal and External Building Fabric Improvements		80	80	80	80	320
Fire Detection and Fire Safety		40	40	40	40	160

14,313	21,131	4,370	1,290	41,104
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IT Capital Programme

Package	Description	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Forecast 2025/26 £'000	Forecast 2026/27 £'000	Forecast 2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
Network Infrastructure						
SDWAN	Implementation of a new wireless internet system	610				610

Storage & Hosting						
Application Streaming (AVD solution)		150				150
Operational Systems						
CRM Call Assist	Improvements in customer contact and service including introducing automated updates to individuals around ongoing crime matters	400				400
Compass	system upgrade	80				80
Gazetteer	system upgrade	60				60
Smart Storm	system upgrade	90				90
Digital Interview Recording Phase 2	phase one of digital interview recording has been successfully implemented, with a move away from CD-ROM usage to digital storage	250	150			400
Digital Asset Management	system enhancement	0	250			250
Digital Forensics (Infrastructure)	significant enhancements to our digital forensics infrastructure and systems to improve efficiency and improve the chances of prosecution.	1,207	1,700			2,907
Digital Forensics Case Management	significant enhancements to our digital forensics infrastructure and systems to improve efficiency and improve the chances of prosecution.	200				200
Mass Audit Data Phase 2	system enhancement	109				109
Vehicle Telematics	Currently we do not have dashcams across the fleet. It is anticipated that by linking dashcams to driver standards that over the medium-term driver standards will rise and result in a reduction in the running costs of fleet through better standards and reduced fleet numbers	200				200
Dashcams	Currently we do not have vehicle telematics. It is anticipated that by linking vehicle telematics to driver standards that over the medium-term driver standards will rise and result in a reduction in the running costs of fleet through better standards	589				589
SharePoint	system enhancement	60				60
Digital Case File	a nationally mandated project to improve file upload to the CPS. Currently only 1mb can be transferred in one go to the CPS resulting in additional workload for investigators	250	250			500
Control Room upgrade	Requirement to upgrade the control room infrastructure and wider systems that are end of life	500	2,000	500		3,000
Robotic Process Automation capacity	This has been identified by HM treasury and policing as an area for productivity gains in policing and the wider public sector. This will help address the coming MTFS gap	250	500	500	500	1,750
Device Replacement						
Phones	Rolling replacement programme	900	207	383	383	1,873
Laptops & Desktops	Rolling replacement programme	1,500	1,200	1,200	1,200	5,100
IT Infrastructure Refresh Hardware	To replace end of life infrastructure. There is additional funding in year one to address backlog end of life replacement	1,500	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,500
Body Worn Video	Requirement to upgrade end of life kit. Current device is anticipated to cease production before the end of 2023/24	1,396				1,396
Body Worn Video Docks	Requirement to upgrade end of life kit. Current device is anticipated to cease production before the end of 2023/25	247				247
National Systems & Projects						
ESN Programme	Nationally mandated scheme to replace airwave. This is the locally anticipated funding required	110	800	2,000	1,500	4,410

Other						
Staffing	Capital element of the £2.5m investment into IT staffing to deliver an enhanced capital programme	600	900	900	900	3,300
Total IT Programme		11,258	8,957	6,483	5,483	32,181

Fleet Capital Programme

Package	Description	Budget 24/25 £'000	Forecast 2025/26 £'000	Forecast 2026/27 £'000	Forecast 2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
Fleet Refresh Programme						
Replacement Programme	The replacement of vehicles selected through a process of evaluation, considering the age, mileage and condition of every vehicle. These have been identified as critical for replacement due to either excessive mileage, age or being no longer operationally fit.	2,050	2,100	2,150	2,200	8,500
Enhanced Capabilities						
Smart Key Cabinet	Key cabinets to enable more effective pooling of vehicles and their usage. Alongside telematics this has the potential to reduce the number of fleet vehicles to reduce cost in future years	25	0	0	0	25
Total Fleet Programme		2,075	2,100	2,150	2,200	8,525

Package	Business Benefit & Narrative	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Forecast 2025/26 £'000	Forecast 2026/27 £'000	Forecast 2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
Operational Refresh Programme						
Replacement Programme	Ensuring that Staffordshire Police has a modern and fit for purpose equipment provision. This provision includes tactical body armour, ANPR replacement as well as specialist forensics and investigative equipment	50	50	50	50	200
Tasers	Full replacement of taser devices with the latest device which is effective from twice the distance and has an enhanced number of shots	1,072				1,072
Forensics Digital Camera Replacement	Replacement of cameras within forensics services for use at scenes of crime	66				66
ANPR Vehicle Programme	Ensuring that Staffordshire Police has a modern and fit for purpose Vehicle ANPR replacement programme.	190				190
ANPR Static Programme	Ensuring that Staffordshire Police has a modern and fit for purpose ANPR static replacement programme.	0	170			170
Total Equipment Programme		1,378	220	50	50	1,698

Appendix 8 – Savings

Directorate	Service	Savings description	Theme	£000's 2024/25	£000's 2025/26	£000's 2026/27	£000's 2027/28	Total £000's
Corporate	All	A vacancy factor, to account for how much will be saved through the gap between employees leaving and replacements taking up the vacant posts will be increased from 4% to 5%. Note this does not apply to contact services where a 0% factor is set due to a policy of over recruitment.	Vacancy Management	(1,249)				(1,249)
Corporate	Officer Ill Health Charges	There has been a reduction in the number of officers requiring ill health retirement. This budget reflects the average spend over the last 4 year period.	Cost reduction	(764)				(764)
Corporate	Officer Injury lump sums	Reduction in the pension scheme charges in relation to the above saving	Cost reduction	(20)				(20)
Corporate	Agency Staffing	A reduction in the agency staff budget within Force	Cost reduction	(123)				(123)
Total Corporate				(2,156)	0	0	0	(2,156)
DCC	Corporate Communications	A reduction in subscription and licence costs within corporate communications	Contractual	(19)				(19)
DCC	Corporate Communications	A reduction in Media and Marketing costs will be targeted as well as more regional collaboration on media campaigns to reduce costs	Cost reduction	(15)				(15)
DCC	Corporate Communications	Increased income generation from 3rd parties towards staffing costs	Income generation	(22)				(22)
DCC	Corporate Communications	Printing budget reduction	Cost reduction	(3)				(3)
DCC	Corporate Communications	Staff Overtime Budget reduction	Cost reduction	(1)				(1)

DCC	Corp Planning & Business Change	A review of non-pay budgets has been undertaken	Cost reduction	(7)					(7)
DCC	Executive Team	Additional sponsorship for open day	Income generation	(5)					(5)
DCC	Executive Team	A reduction in non-pay costs has been achieved within the executive	Cost reduction	(15)					(15)
DCC	Professional Standards	Various Vehicle Costs	Cost reduction	(7)					(7)
DCC	Professional Standards	0.2 F Grade FTE Vacancy	Cost reduction	(8)					(8)
Total DCC Command				(101)	0	0	0	0	(101)

Enabling Services	All	Increased income generation across the directorate from 3rd parties	Income generation	(353)					(353)
Enabling Services	Commercial	Savings as a result of moving to a joint finance system across Police and Fire leading to service redesign and the removal of 1fte	Cost reduction	(39)					(39)
Enabling Services	Commercial	A reduction in insurance premiums following the outcome of the insurance tender in 2023/24	Cost reduction	(164)					(164)
Enabling Services	Commercial	Procurement savings across the Force	Cost reduction	0	(250)				(250)
Enabling Services	Commercial	Increase Damages & Compensation Income within Insurance Services	Income generation	(10)					(10)
Enabling Services	Estates	A review of postage usage has been undertaken. With more demand being seen through digital channels traditional postage costs have been reduced.	Cost reduction	(10)					(10)
Enabling Services	Estates	Reductions in various non-pay budgets across estates will be targeted	Cost reduction	(20)					(20)
Enabling Services	Estates	Utility Cost Reimbursements	Income generation	(5)					(5)
Enabling Services	Estates	Aerial Mast income	Income generation	(5)					(5)

Enabling Services	Estates	Reduction in leased buildings costs compared to previous estimations for 2024/25	Cost reduction	(70)					(70)
Enabling Services	Estates	A number of Estates posts, through the estates restructure, have been identified as chargeable against the capital programme. The impact of this is reflected in the revenue budget	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(263)					(263)
Enabling Services	Finance	A review of senior leadership has been undertaken within finance during 2023/24. This has resulted in a reduction by 1fte	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(41)					(41)
Enabling Services	Finance	Reductions in various non-pay budgets across finance will be targeted	Cost reduction	(33)					(33)
Enabling Services	IT	IT Azure Overages reduction	Cost reduction	(75)					(75)
Enabling Services	IT	Integra recharge to Fire (IT)	Income generation	(17)					(17)
Enabling Services	IT	IT Development Fund budget reduction	Cost reduction	(50)					(50)
Enabling Services	IT	IT Peripherals budget reduction	Cost reduction	(10)					(10)
Enabling Services	IT	A recharge for the licence costs of the fleet management system to SFRS	Income generation	(12)					(12)
Enabling Services	IT	A review of IT contracts has been undertaken compared to the budgeted assumption in costs. Within this we have seen some significant procurement savings on items such as mobile phone charges	Cost reduction	(538)	(10)				(548)
Enabling Services	JETS	A reduction in fuel spend following the introduction of more fuel-efficient vehicles, the local policing model and a reduction in price. This is a risk item should the government re-introduce the fuel duty escalator in the March 24 budget	Cost reduction	(150)					(150)
Enabling Services	JETS	An increase in income received from the disposal of end of life vehicles	Income generation	(7)					(7)

Enabling Services	People & OD	A reduction in non-pay budgets for Staff Associations and Trade Unions	Cost reduction	(20)					(20)
Enabling Services	People & OD	Origin upgrade efficiencies	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(34)					(34)
Enabling Services	People & OD	Physiotherapy	Cost reduction	(45)					(45)
Enabling Services	People & OD	Apprenticeship Levy Top Up	Cost reduction	(30)					(30)
Enabling Services	People & OD	As the Force stabilises Police Officer numbers at 2,000 following 4 years of rapid growth there is a reduction in training costs through the DHEP scheme	Cost reduction	(115)					(115)
Total Enabling Services Command				(2,117)	(260)	0	0		(2,377)

Force Contact and Operations	Criminal Justice	Archive service storage cost reduction	Cost reduction	(5)					(5)
Force Contact and Operations	Criminal Justice	Police Led Prosecutions	Income generation	(180)					(180)
Force Contact and Operations	Criminal Justice	Bank holiday saving - 1 hour per shift	Cost reduction	(10)					(10)
Force Contact and Operations	Criminal Justice	Income increase for SSRP team recharge	Income generation	(52)					(52)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Contact Centre	A review of non-call handling posts within contact due to changes in the operating model	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(47)					(47)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Protest removal training target	Income generation	(18)					(18)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Abnormal Loads Income target	Income generation	(220)					(220)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Consultancy budget	Cost reduction	(22)					(22)

Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Other Media & Marketing Cost	Cost reduction	(5)					(5)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Ops & Testing Equipment Purch	Cost reduction	(13)					(13)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Bank holiday saving - 1 hour per shift	Cost reduction	(2)					(2)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Bank holiday saving - 1 hour per shift	Cost reduction	(2)					(2)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Servator Project	Cost reduction	(6)					(6)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Increase Income for Gym coordinator - recharged to Gym Committee	Income generation	(1)					(1)
Force Contact and Operations	Force Ops	Income increase for Firearms Licencing team recharge.	Income generation	(26)					(26)
Force Contact and Operations	Regional Initiatives	A one-off income generation line due to secondments to the National Police Air Service (NPAS)	Income generation	(131)	131				(0)
Total Force Contact and Operations Command				(739)	131	0	0		(608)

Specialist Crime Command	Forensics	A reduction in Digital Forensics outsourcing	Service redesign	(58)					(58)
Specialist Crime Command	Forensics	Savings reflecting the capital investment being made into Digital Forensics as part of the business case	Cost reduction	(8)	(25)	(170)			(203)
Specialist Crime Command	ROCU	Following changes agreed at a regional level savings have been made within the ROCU	Cost reduction	(472)					(472)
Specialist Crime Command	Knowledge Hub	Removal of vacant posts within the Early Intervention and Prevention Unit (EIPU)	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(143)					(143)

Specialist Crime Command	Knowledge Hub	Removal of shift allowance for senior management within Knowledge hub	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(27)					(27)
Specialist Crime Command	Knowledge Hub	Freeze on recruitment within EIPU management structure until April 2025	Changes to organisational structures & responsibilities	(55)	55				(0)
Specialist Crime Command	Knowledge Hub	EIPU - property protective budget - remove	Cost reduction	(15)					(15)
Total Specialist Crime Command				(778)	30	(170)	0		(918)

Local Policing Command	Specials	SC Police federation subs take up lower than budget	Cost reduction	(16)					(16)
Local Policing Command	Specials	SC Reduction in expenses	Cost reduction	(26)					(26)
Local Policing Command	Command Mgmt	Increase income on events	Income generation	(15)					(15)
Local Policing Command	Command Mgmt	A one-off vacancy factor on PCSO numbers to account for the timing of recruitment intakes and leavers vs budget	Vacancy Management	(448)	448				(0)
Local Policing Command	Command Mgmt	Bank holiday reduction to resourcing		(116)	116				0
Local Policing Command	City Mgmt	Income increase for Staffs University Liaison Officer based on 24/25 pay model vs 23/24 current income budget	Income generation	(3)					(3)
Local Policing Command	City Mgmt	Bank holiday reduction to resourcing		(42)	42				(0)
Total Local Policing Command				(666)	606	0	0		(60)

Total Savings - Staffordshire Police				(6,558)	507	(170)	0		(6,221)
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Appendix 9

Precept consultation outcomes

Purpose of report

This report is a summary of the results obtained from the public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to seek views on the amount of council tax the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are willing to pay towards their Police and Fire & Rescue services.

Background

Funding for police and fire & rescue services is made up of a mix of central government grants, combined with the 'precept' – the contribution residents make as part of their annual council tax.

The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for setting the budget for Staffordshire Police, and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, including the amount of council tax used for both services.

It is the Commissioner's responsibility to ensure policing, fire & rescue and community safety is properly funded in 2024/25 to provide the services expected by those who live, work and visit Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

A formal consultation took place between 7 December and 4 January. A range of methods were used to encourage participation, resulting in responses from 1,985 people from Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The views from this consultation will help the Commissioner arrive at his proposals for the setting of the 2024/25 budgets.

How we did it

We used a range of methods to promote the consultation including:

- **Social media** – Multiple social media posts were issued from the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office (SCO), Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue and partners. Paid adverts also ran on Facebook and Instagram targeting residents of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- **Media** – A press release issued to inform local media of the importance of the consultation
- **Stakeholders** – Emails sent from the Commissioner requesting key partners' involvement including local MPs, Councillors, volunteers, community groups and business owners
- **Smart Alert** – Multiple messages issued to over 21,000 residents via Staffordshire Smart Alert

- **Internal** – Internal message sent to police and fire staff to encourage participation
- **SCO Newsletter Subscribers** – Email sent to the SCO newsletter subscriber list of 1,636 people

Consultation foreword

As your [Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner](#), it is my duty to secure effective and efficient Police and Fire & Rescue services that ensure community needs are met, while commissioning services to prevent crime, reduce anti-social behaviour and support victims across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

I do this by setting out a strategic direction in Local Plans for [Staffordshire Police](#) and [Staffordshire Fire & Rescue](#). I am responsible for setting their budgets and determining the contribution you make as part of your annual council tax precept.

I also appoint our Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer. Their role is crucial as they make the operational decisions and run the organisations. I believe I have recruited two of the best in Chris Noble and Rob Barber. They have each built strong leadership teams that are driving our local services forward with dedicated and hard-working teams made up of police officers, PCSOs, firefighters, staff and volunteers.

Last year's cost of living rise hit residents hard so I decided to set council tax increases below the maximum allowed by government and below inflation. Even so, you provided an additional £6m for your local Police and £1.9m for Fire & Rescue and this has made a difference.

Our Fire & Rescue service are tackling more incidents, many due to climate change, and continue to target prevention activity at the most vulnerable while pioneering activity to support our local NHS and West Midlands Ambulance.

Staffordshire Police are more local, visible and responsive. 999 and 101 have improved and crucially the force is set to have 2,000 officers by April 2024, 400 more than 2019, and even more than I promised when elected in 2020.

Other priorities are being met too. 24/7 roads policing is imminent, new safety cameras and vans are being rolled out to improve road safety and £500k has been invested in more number plate recognition to track criminals using our roads. My office is supporting more victims, doing more prevention work and making our neighbourhoods safer.

While both services have sound finances the future is uncertain with energy costs remaining high, international instability and the cost of servicing our national debt following the pandemic likely to restrict central government grants. Staffordshire Police and Fire & Rescue will continue to make savings and increase productivity but to secure their future, to keep improving service levels and provide the security we expect, it will require investment.

Additional investment would help Staffordshire Police carry out more pro-active investigations into serious organised crime. It would also allow the service to take advantage of new technology including artificial intelligence - freeing up officers to target criminals.

Investment in Staffordshire Fire & Rescue would help secure the number of wholetime and on-call firefighters required to respond effectively across all our urban and rural areas while building their prevention team's capacity to work with NHS and others to keep us safe.

This year many people have seen their pay, benefit or pension increase but I know balancing household budgets is still challenging. I aim to keep council tax as low as possible. I will only ask for more in order to maintain or improve your Police and Fire & Rescue Service.

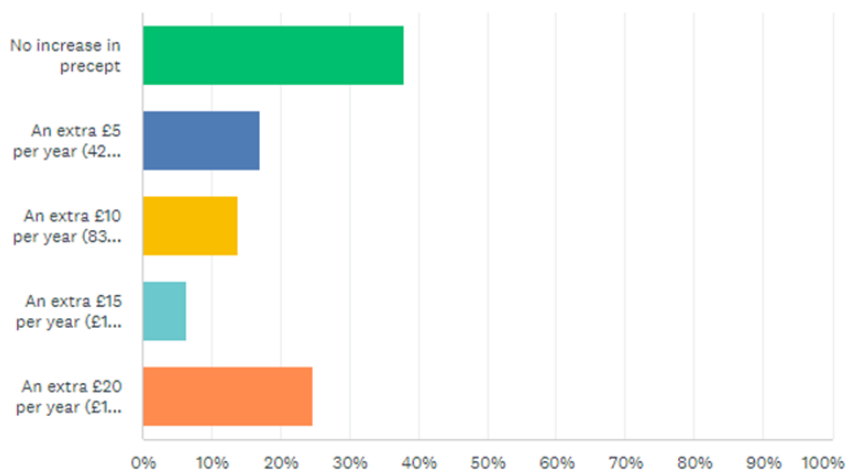
So, I would welcome your thoughts. What level of additional council tax contributions would you support to help our Police and Fire & Rescue services?

Every penny helps to keep Staffordshire safe.

The results

The following options are based on a Band D property currently paying £260.57 each year for Police services. How much more would you be prepared to pay per year for your Police services?

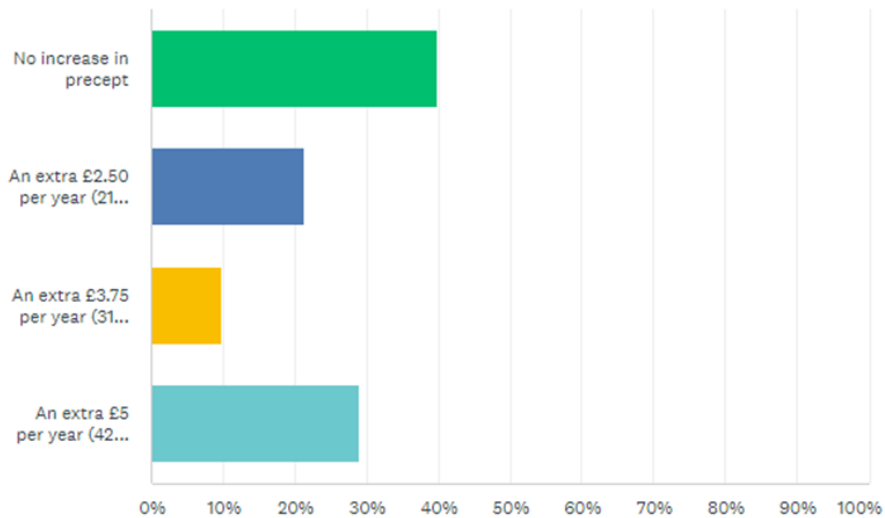
Answered: 1,969 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ No increase in precept	37.89%	746
▼ An extra £5 per year (42p extra a month) This is a 1.92% increase	17.06%	336
▼ An extra £10 per year (83p extra a month) This is a 3.84% increase	13.81%	272
▼ An extra £15 per year (£1.25 extra a month) This is a 5.76% increase	6.40%	126
▼ An extra £20 per year (£1.67 extra a month) This is a 7.68% increase	24.83%	489
TOTAL		1,969

The following options are based on a Band D property currently paying £84.25 each year for Fire services. How much more would you be prepared to pay per year for your Fire & Rescue services?

Answered: 1,966 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ No increase in precept	39.88% 784
▼ An extra £2.50 per year (21p extra a month) This is a 2.97% increase	21.31% 419
▼ An extra £3.75 per year (31p extra a month) This is a 4.45% increase	9.72% 191
▼ An extra £5 per year (42p extra a month) This is a 5.94% increase	29.09% 572
TOTAL	1,966

Common themes from the precept consultation

891 respondents provided comments in the question 4 free text box which asked 'If you have any additional comments, please include these in the box below'. The following sections include key themes from the responses.

Police and Crime

A number of comments were focused on the lack of visible policing in their local areas, with 'no bobbies on the beat' and police stations closed. A number of respondents also expressed concerns over the quality of the service, contact and distractions from the issues that matter to communities.

'In over 38 years of living on Boley Park, Lichfield, I have only seen a full police officer once. I think closing the Police Station in the centre of Lichfield was a mistake. Not everyone can jump in a car to go out of town to the north of the City to report a crime.'

'No policing seen in my area for years and when they do come out, nothing is done, no crime number etc just told to get my own security cameras.'

'Police need to stop spending money on 'Woke' nonsense. How much and who briefed on what words to use and not use! Absolute waste of money.'

'I do not want our police force becoming the "thought police". That direction is outrageous.'

'Every year the police budget rises but we in Audley never see uniformed officers patrolling the area, crime is on the increase and phoning 101 is an absolute joke, I wouldn't mind paying the extra but like I say we do not see regular police patrols at all.'

'Policing should be centrally funded and come from an entirely different pot of money than council tax. As the partner of a serving officer I see the trauma, the hours, the behaviours they have to contend with, and how work is not always restricted to the locality for which they work in.'

'Both services are underfunded by Government and it is necessary to protect these essential life-saving services as well as build them back up to what they used to be. Without additional funding we will continue to see the most vulnerable suffer and crime rates being high. Currently there are huge issues with anti-social behaviour and Staffordshire has been identified as a failing force. There is too much emphasis on more police officers when they are only part of the answer. There are other roles in the police which can help if they have the resources and then the officers can be back out on the streets.'

'Delivery of services currently feels poor, so can't justify an increase in precept without an initial improvement in service delivery.'

'Police on the streets is what is required. A visible presence. Give PCSOs responsibility to ticket parking offences.'

'We see very little police activity in Wombourne. No police station but a working office. Very confusing. We need a face-to-face point of contact, not a multi-response telephone system and/or email. We need more visible police presence to deter thieves and law breakers.'

'I do not get a good service now, the Police force are dealing with social care issues predominantly and crime is not getting reported due to the public awareness that nothing gets done – why should we pay more? You should be working harder to expose the govt. shortcomings and promote an increase in social care spending.'

'Unfortunately, given our rural location and the fact the police are hugely overstretched, it's more feasible for us to spend more money on protecting our own properties such as upgrading burglar alarms, windows and insurance policies than it is to fund an increase which may not necessarily see increased services to our village, but instead the funding directed elsewhere.'

'My honest view is that the Police do not perform the duty that they are commissioned to do effectively at all. In fact I am very disappointed. I feel that the uniform is shoddy, attitude dreadful, officers including PCSOs not wishing to make eye contact. Trying to telephone the police is a lengthy affair. Not everyone has computers and the like. Overall I am very disappointed. I rarely see an officer in the town centre and never in my street.'

Fire and Rescue

Fewer responses were received about Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, but those that did included comments around demand, supporting other emergency services and staffing levels.

‘I think more can be done with the fire service to reduce crewing overnight. They have very little calls for service in the night-time hours, and by either switching wholetime firefighters to a blend of in-station and on-call approaches or widening the response base during night-time hours to reduce the crews needed would save money.’

‘I’m a firefighter, and I can’t see anything improving, just constant cuts!’

‘FRS is hugely understaffed, the levels of work are disproportionate to the people able to deliver it. This increases pressure on those in post and an increase in staffing levels would help deliver the priorities in a more proportional and productive manner.’

‘I am not sure what the Fire Service is doing extra to support communities so unsure why they need a rise? Could they not be doing more? They seemed to have stuck to a traditional role when every other agency has had to do more with less. Given their 12% pay rise, the highest in public sector, I am not prepared to pay more for little to no change in role. Could they not support the Ambulance or Police more on incidents?’

‘Prove to me that SFRS are attending more calls due to climate change? I spent 21 years in the job and flooding caused by development doesn't count. Sort out the retained section so pumps are on the run at weekends instead of booked off, and get rid of pointless managers instead of frontline staff.’

‘The fire and rescue service offers excellent value for money and can be protected for what is an insignificant amount given other cost of living pressures.’

‘After many years of funding austerity, the Fire Service should receive maximum additional precept funding and I would choose to pay an extra £5 every year.’

‘The police already get the largest amount of money and have no issues with spending on things. Whereas the fire service are running on bare bones and haven’t got the equipment, facilities or money for personnel.’

‘In recent years the proactive approach of the fire brigade has kept people safe. We want this vital service to be properly funded.’

‘Our fire services are already well paid and have proven themselves to be self-serving rather than operating for the community with their too easily remembered strike action. Coupled to the fact the work schedules are ‘light’ and I don’t know a single firefighter who doesn’t have the ability to work a second job. As for the police – they need way more support. Services have been cut too far and society is become lawless. Irrespective of the actions of the courts, we need a stronger police presence.’

‘We need more firefighters!’

Supporting an increase

A number of comments explained the reasons why they would support an increase in council tax as long as the money went to frontline services to keep communities safe.

‘I think if the police are to meet the standard that are expected of them, they need much more funding than they currently have. There aren't enough officers to attend all the jobs in the timeframes expected of them.’

‘Ultimately if I was victim of crime or unfortunate enough to need fire and rescue I'd expect/need help fast. For that to be the case the services need appropriate funding and efficient use of resources. The funding is the role of the taxpayer, as much as we begrudge that on a monthly payment, ultimately we'll be grateful.’

‘I would be happy to contribute more if I could see how and where that benefit is gained, even if not directly to myself, but others in need.’

‘Would like to see more police presence if there is an increase in the cost.’

‘I feel that what they do goes unrecognised therefore would be happy to pay the extra as each day they risk the loss of their life for people.’

‘We are aware that inflationary pressures have meant significant increases in the costs of running Staffordshire Police outside of the wages bill. We are concerned that this could mean, without an increase in precept, paying the bills can only be done at the expense of police staff jobs. If that happens we will see a reduction in service to the people of Staffordshire and a less cost-effective service as the essential roles will necessarily be filled by police officers with different training.’

‘I would only be happy paying additional money if I could be sure it would be used as intended. At the moment, we have virtually no police presence and crime is on another level in Stafford.’

‘I would be prepared to pay more for the police if there was a police station, it's ridiculous to have an office in Wombourne, but with no access for the public.’

‘When you see an improvement in service you don't mind paying a bit more. Since you became Commissioner I think we have seen that.’

‘We sympathise with your position around having to raise local taxation to maintain public safety when we believe this should be funded by the Home Office as opposed to the local taxpayer. However, our precept increase last year was the lowest in the UK at £12 and over the last decade increases have been the 2nd lowest in the UK. Staffordshire has one of the lowest number of police officers in the UK. On a per head of population basis we have the 4th lowest number in the UK. The impact of this on welfare from cancelled rest days to maintain public safety is a challenge for us that higher numbers of officers would alleviate.’

‘I would want some guarantee that this was where the extra tax money was going. I would want it to be spent wisely and not just to increase the amount of middle management there are in these services.’

‘These essential services are well worth paying extra to maintain high standards. Thank you for consulting the public directly.’

‘An extra £25 a year to have a safer Staffordshire is worth every penny.’

‘My agreement to paying more for Police services is subject to the Police being far more visible and responsive in South Staffordshire.’

‘The Police and Fire Service save lives, they respond, I think both services should be getting a higher % of the council tax bill.’

‘I would sooner have a decent police and fire service and pay the higher level. When the worst happens, I want protecting and not just have a basic response “trying” to protect me.’

Not supporting an increase

The majority of additional comments were against an increase in council tax, with rising household bills being a factor. There were also concerns about Police performance in particular, and a number of responses calling for greater efficiencies rather than increased taxation.

‘We keep paying more for a less of a service, where does the money go? Cuts to police and fire, they’re sharing locations etc, so what are you actually spending the money on?’

‘Both have had quite an increase over the last few years and I've not seen any benefit, so I am loathe to pay more for the same.’

‘We pay enough for a service that does not deliver. If the services were businesses, they would be bankrupt within 6 months.’

‘I can’t afford an increase. I recognise the need for finances for both fire and police but this should come from central government.’

‘Council tax is already crippling and yet many services are being cut despite costs rising. It's unaffordable to fund more emergency services when the local government is so unbearably greedy for money that lines their pockets and no one else's. It's their fault we can't afford more. I still believe there are efficiencies that can be made before increasing either precept.’

‘Residents are already drained dry by wildly expensive, hopelessly bad local government delivering very, very little at very, very high cost. Pay more for dire services? Why?’

‘I think the focus should be on the best possible use of the existing budget and try to avoid precept increases unless it can be shown that the increase will enable the introduction of new and additional services.’

‘People are facing hardships in their daily lives, food inflation is out of control, rent and mortgage increases are continuing. The public purse has to be curtailed.’

‘After the number of cases of police officers being found guilty of sexual assaults, rapes, kidnappings, coercive control and even murder, why should the public plough more into the institution? It’s a

disgrace of a service I have absolutely no faith in. In the majority of cases the police aren't bothered about the effects of crime on people. Don't deserve a penny!

Commissioner's Office

A number of responses specifically mentioned the role and cost of the Commissioner and his office, feeling the money would be better spent on frontline services.

'Whilst the Police force is under special measures and no sign of any real improvement following the recent IOPC report, there should be no increase in precept. I do not believe as PCC you are sufficiently holding the Chief Constable to account.'

'Get rid of the pointless police and fire Commissioner and use the money saved to improve community police and fire services.'

'I think the office of Commissioner for Police is a created one and the millions of pounds it costs would be better spent sending direct to the police force for police officers, CID officers and forensic officers as these are wanted more than anything.'

'Yes. sack the Commissioner who is costing far too much for him and his office, money wasted on an appointment that is not necessary. We pay a Chief Constable who should be qualified enough to run his department, same with fire.'

'Delete the position of Commissioner and the extra bureaucracy associated with the role. It adds no value just additional cost.'

'The PCC role should be abolished to save money. The Conservative Party has argued for this in the West Mids as they are in special measures. It's not clear why they believe the role should continue to exist in Staffs which is in the same position.'

'Remove the Commissioner's Office and spend on policing instead.'

The Police and fire Commissioner role is to scrutinise these bodies to ensure value for money and with both of these organisations under the same body service can be shared ie service of vehicles, buildings and so forth.'

'Private companies cannot just ask for more money just because they can't manage a budget. You should look at your office and cuts there first rather than asking the public.'

Additional comments

'Council tax is a burden we don't deserve. There's problems everywhere – people striking, potholes a disgrace, speed cameras that don't work, pavements that need urgent repair that never get done. Police short staffed, can't cope – and we are paying for something we are not getting. Always excuses – councils going broke. It's all one big farce!!'

'Funding should come from central government. The number of people who pay council tax shouldn't be expected to keep footing the bill.'

'Police and Fire personnel should report all potholes etc they come across to the Highways Authority.'

'If the council filled in the potholes. They need to be held accountable for the waste projects like knock them down and start again. We vote them in, so we should have a say how money gets spent.'

'I would welcome the streets, roads and foot/bridle paths to be swept and tidied more than once a year.'

'We have very few facilities in Edingale and the roads out of Edingale get flooded so what should be a 6 or 7 mile trip to town ends up about 20.'

'I would like to feel that the Council Tax contributions made are being put to good use. I pay a not insignificant amount each month and yet drive down roads littered with potholes, dirt from farms that hasn't been cleaned and hedge clippings that destroy tyres. Social Care is funded via Council Tax contributions and yet is massively underfunded as a sector, with job vacancies at an all-time high and increasingly complex resident needs. With an ageing population this is an area that we too must focus on.'

'I think the Ambulance Service desperately need reviewing. Patients are being left for hours when in need for an ambulance. I believe the current situation is unacceptable. Wait and turnaround times are at an all-time high... Managers are obviously not getting it right.
Can the fire brigade help with these wait times?'

'Yes, sirens – are they necessary overnight? We live very close to Eastern Avenue. We support our emergency services but hope they use the sirens with consideration.'

'As we are already paying so much for Council tax – much of which appears to me to be wasted on such things for example as £14 million for a car park on the outskirts of Hanley, and this other wasted monies by an inept council, as pensioners we just cannot afford to pay even more – we are now at breaking point with decisions to be made to heat or eat.'

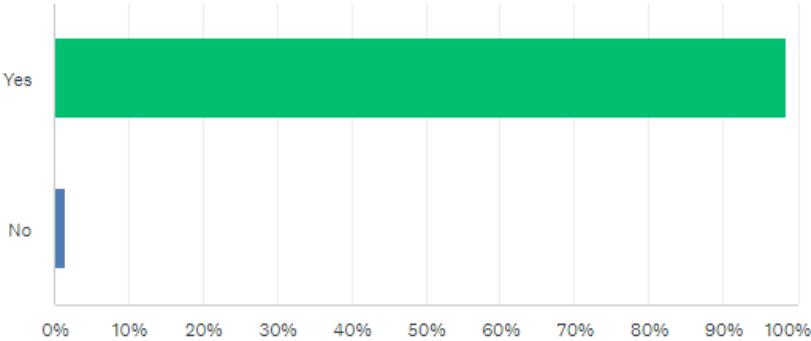
'I do not know how much money you think we have left over from one OAP, after all the increase in living costs etc. I will not be having a garden waste bin next year, because I do not have the money to pay for it. My savings are dropping by the month.'

'The Parish Council was unclear as to the purpose of giving options to members of the public and stakeholder organisations when the impact of such spending on services was not clear. It therefore felt unable to complete the actual survey. The Parish Council was very concerned about the health and safety impact for Fire Service crews and for the public of the proposal to have fire tenders crewed by only three individuals. It strongly recommended that this proposal be withdrawn.'

Additional Questions

Are you responsible for paying council tax?

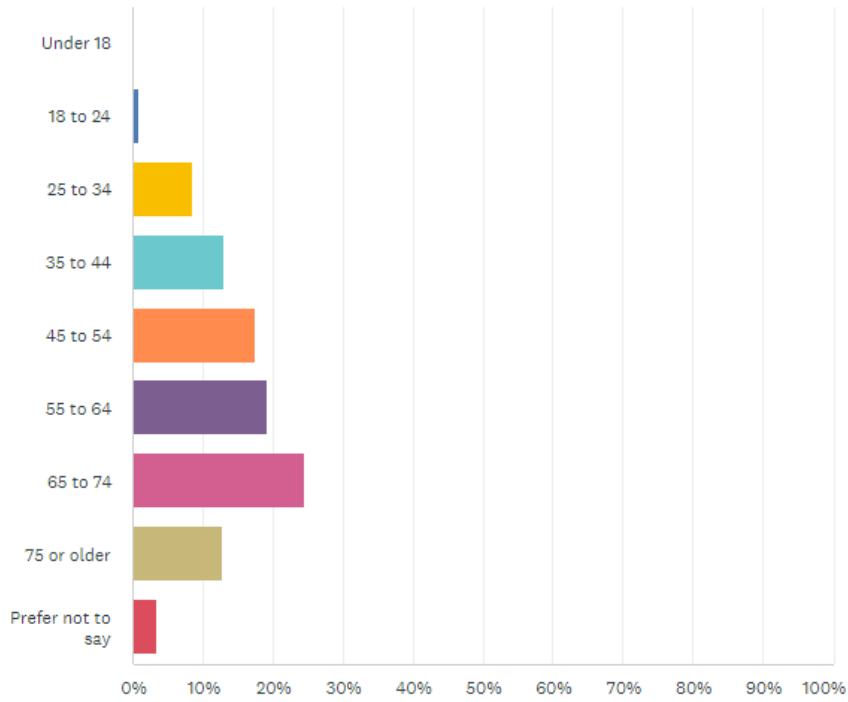
Answered: 1,922 Skipped: 63



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	98.49% 1,893
No	1.51% 29
TOTAL	1,922

What is your age?

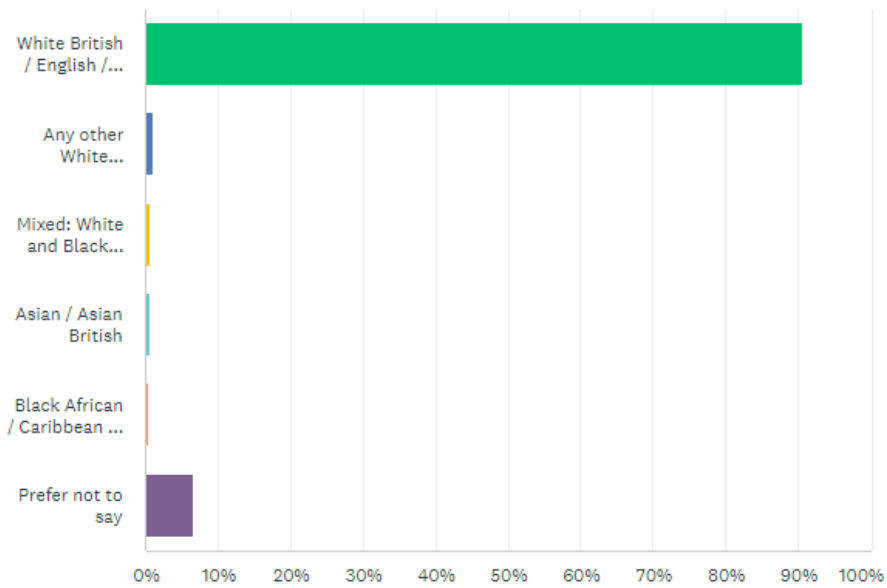
Answered: 1,823 Skipped: 162



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 18	0.00% 0
18 to 24	0.82% 15
25 to 34	8.61% 157
35 to 44	13.11% 239
45 to 54	17.50% 319
55 to 64	19.20% 350
65 to 74	24.52% 447
75 or older	12.78% 233
Prefer not to say	3.46% 63
TOTAL	1,823

What is your ethnic origin?

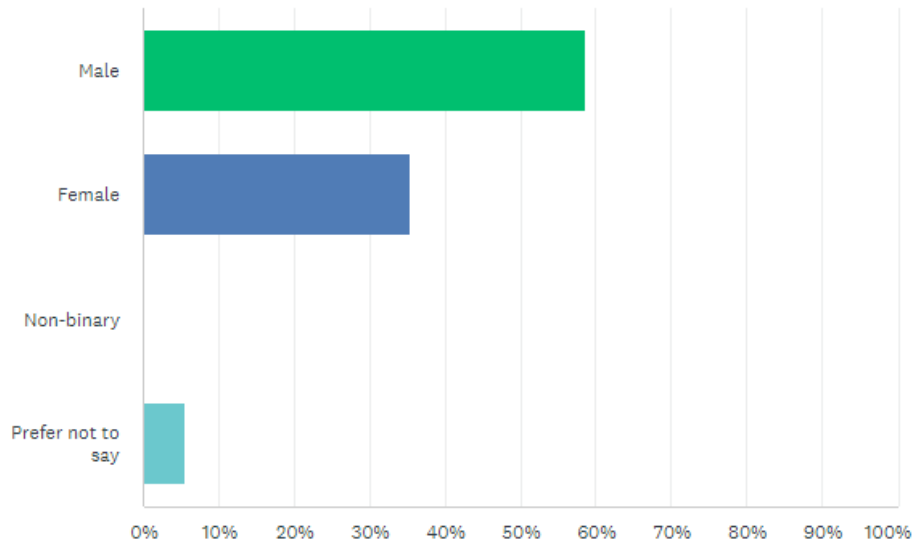
Answered: 1,797 Skipped: 188



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	90.54% 1,627
Any other White background	1.11% 20
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian	0.67% 12
Asian / Asian British	0.61% 11
Black African / Caribbean / Black British	0.45% 8
Prefer not to say	6.62% 119
TOTAL	1,797

Are you?

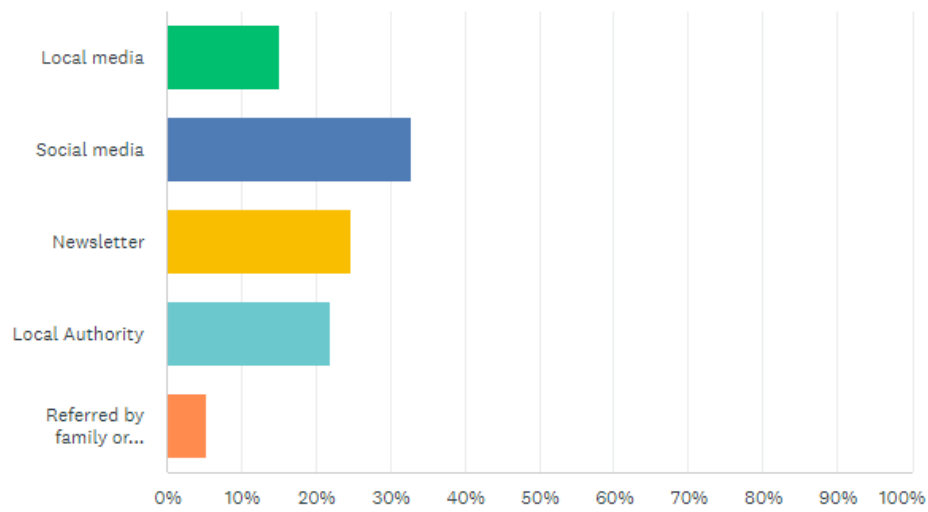
Answered: 1,812 Skipped: 173



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Male	58.66% 1,063
▼ Female	35.43% 642
▼ Non-binary	0.28% 5
▼ Prefer not to say	5.63% 102
TOTAL	1,812

Where did you hear about this consultation?

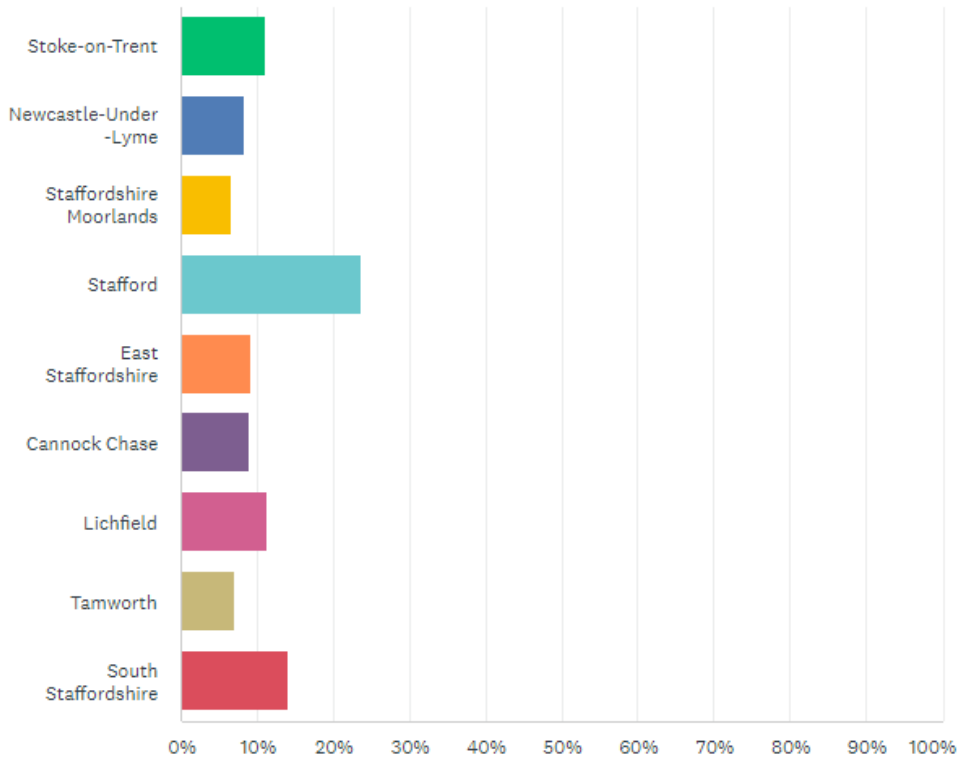
Answered: 1,530 Skipped: 455



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Local media	15.03% 230
Social media	32.94% 504
Newsletter	24.77% 379
Local Authority	21.96% 336
Referred by family or friend	5.29% 81
TOTAL	1,530

Which area of Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent do you live in?

Answered: 1,822 Skipped: 163



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Stoke-on-Trent	11.09%	202
▼ Newcastle-Under-Lyme	8.23%	150
▼ Staffordshire Moorlands	6.53%	119
▼ Stafford	23.60%	430
▼ East Staffordshire	9.11%	166
▼ Cannock Chase	9.00%	164
▼ Lichfield	11.36%	207
▼ Tamworth	7.08%	129
▼ South Staffordshire	14.00%	255
TOTAL		1,822

If you would like to receive updates about the work of the Commissioner, please enter your name and email address below:

Answered: 442 Skipped: 1,543

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Name	Responses 99.55% 440
Email address	Responses 99.10% 438