



POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Darryl Preston

**PRECEPT SURVEY
REPORT**

January 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Policing Protocol Order 2023, which came into force on 3 July 2023, states at Article 2 paragraph 16 that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is, *“the recipient of all funding, including the government grant and precept and other sources of income, related to policing and crime reduction and all funding for a force must come via the PCC. How the money is allocated is a matter for the PCC in consultation with the Chief Constable. Or in accordance with any grant terms. The Chief Constable will provide professional advice and recommendations.”*
- 1.2 In Cambridgeshire, police funding comes from two main sources.
- Central government grant
 - Local council tax (precept)
- 1.3 Paragraph 17 (d) states that the PCC has the legal power and duty to *‘decide the budget, allocating assets and funds to the Chief Constable; and set the precept for the force area using local schemes of governance which do not fetter the effective financial management of forces and enable the Chief Constable to deliver their role efficiently and effectively’*.
- 1.4 The PCC has committed to engaging with the public regarding the precept decision-making process.
- 1.5 This document sets out the approach taken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver this commitment. It includes qualitative and quantitative analysis of the public response to the survey.
- 1.6 On 5 December 2023, the Local Government finance policy statement settlement included an ability for Police and Crime Commissioners to increase the policing part of council tax by up to £13 per year (or 25p per week) in 2024/25 (based on a Band D property).
- 1.7 A press release with the proposed precept increase was published on the Police and Crime Commissioner’s website and shared with local media.

2 Outline of the survey

- 2.1 An online public survey was developed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner (the "Commissioner"). Members of the public without access to the internet were offered the opportunity to provide their views via telephone and email.
- 2.2 The survey, which was hosted on the Commissioner's website, was launched on 12 December 2023. The survey closed on 2 January 2024.
- 2.3 The introduction to the survey outlined how this increase would enable the Chief Constable to continue to deliver an effective policing service in the face of rising costs. This includes supporting new officers recruited through the Government's Uplift programme, sustaining performance and strengthening resilience against future challenges.
- 2.4 Included in the survey was an opportunity for members of the public to provide their views on the proposed increase to the policing part of council tax.

3. Summary of the survey activity

- 3.1 The survey was launched and communicated to the public via the following methods:
 - A press release containing a link to the survey and wider background was distributed to all Cambridgeshire and Peterborough media with an offer of broadcast interviews with the Commissioner.
 - Regular social media posts (including reminders) on the Commissioner's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts signposting to the press release, wider narrative and survey link.
 - Regular sharing by OPCC staff on LinkedIn.
 - Distributed through the Commissioner's Neighbourhood Alert account (c.15,500 subscribers).
 - Distributed through the Commissioner's monthly newsletter – just under 3,000 subscribers.
 - Shared with colleagues through the countywide Warn & Inform (public sector)

Communications group for publication on staff intranets and sharing on their social media accounts.

- Disseminated via partnership networks.
- Shared with victim and witness service providers.
- Shared with all councillors who were encouraged to share on their hyper-local sites.
- Shared with all volunteers including ICVs and Scrutiny Panel members.
- Shared with Police and Crime Panel members.
- Shared with seldom-heard representative groups (including those representing black, minority and ethnic, non-English speaking and youth groups).

A full list of all channels engaged through the survey and resulting media coverage is provided at **Appendix 1** to this report.

3.2 The OPCC Communications team used a BCH-approved and free version of Microsoft Forms (MS Forms) as the format in which to present the survey online. MS Forms offers an accessible way in which to present questions and complements our single online home website in terms of accessibility legislation. This was used effectively for a previous survey in July 2023. This format enabled the team to ensure office-wide access to responses for resilience in data analysis.

4 Analysis and findings

4.1 The online survey is one of the mechanisms which helps the PCC determine the Police precept for 2024/25.

4.2 The survey opened on 12 December 2023 and closed at 5pm on 2 January 2024. The survey incorporated text fields, numeric fields and fields supported by drop down options. Initial data cleansing was necessary to remove test responses.

4.3 Further data cleansing and analysis is required to explore the text responses provided to specific questions. In this initial analysis sentiment analysis has been used to gauge an answer to the following question:

- Please provide your views on increasing the policing part of council tax in the

box below.

- 4.4 The remaining text fields provide perception data relating to safety and effectiveness. A further drop-down section asked the respondents to identify the top five priorities when it comes to tackling crime and keeping communities safe.
- 4.5 In total, 612 people responded to the survey. This is a similar number of online responses to last year (Base: n=646). All respondents were via the online survey.

Views on increasing the policing part of council tax

Q1. Please provide your views on police funding for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in the box below. Base: n = 612)

- 4.6 This question focused upon obtaining views on the policing part of the council tax. In the introduction to the survey, information was provided about the context behind the proposed increase for 2024/25, based upon a Band D property. Views on police funding for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were sought. This was a free text field. Simple sentiment analysis was then applied to the responses to determine whether respondents either supported or did not support any increase.
- 4.7 Responses were assessed against three criteria: whether the sentiment of responses suggested that respondents were generally supportive of the increase; whether they were generally unsupportive of the increase or that they held a neutral stance on the increase.
- 4.8 Examples taken from the survey which suggest that the respondents were generally supportive of the increase are as follows;
- I agree with the proposal.
 - I believe police funding is nowhere near the level it needs to be to provide effective policing in this modern age.
 - It should be sufficient to provide for adequate staffing at all levels and properly remunerated, to provide the visible presence that so many residents want and to be able and willing to deal with all and any incidents. If the precept has to

increase so be it but I hope that savings can be found which do not affect front line policing so that any increase is minimal, using the maximum possible contribution from council tax.

4.9 Examples from the survey which suggests that respondees held a neutral stance on increasing the precept;

- I'm not really aware of all the implications.
- An essential element of taxation, it is important (vital) that information on where funds are allocated to ensure public support. This is even more important when annual rises are applied as the cost-of-living crisis faced by everyone is squeezing budgets more than ever before.
- If central govt provide your funds then it is fair that they lead on the policing agenda - but we also provide local funds and it would be good to understand what is done specifically with those funds, i.e., local initiatives, local engagement, local presence.

4.10 Examples from the survey which suggest that the respondees were generally unsupportive of the increase are as follows;

- The government should be paying for this rather than our council tax. If they want law and order then it comes at a price.
- Odd question. My view is we need functioning police (service) and not at the expense of council tax payers.
- In the current climate I'm unable to fund any more.

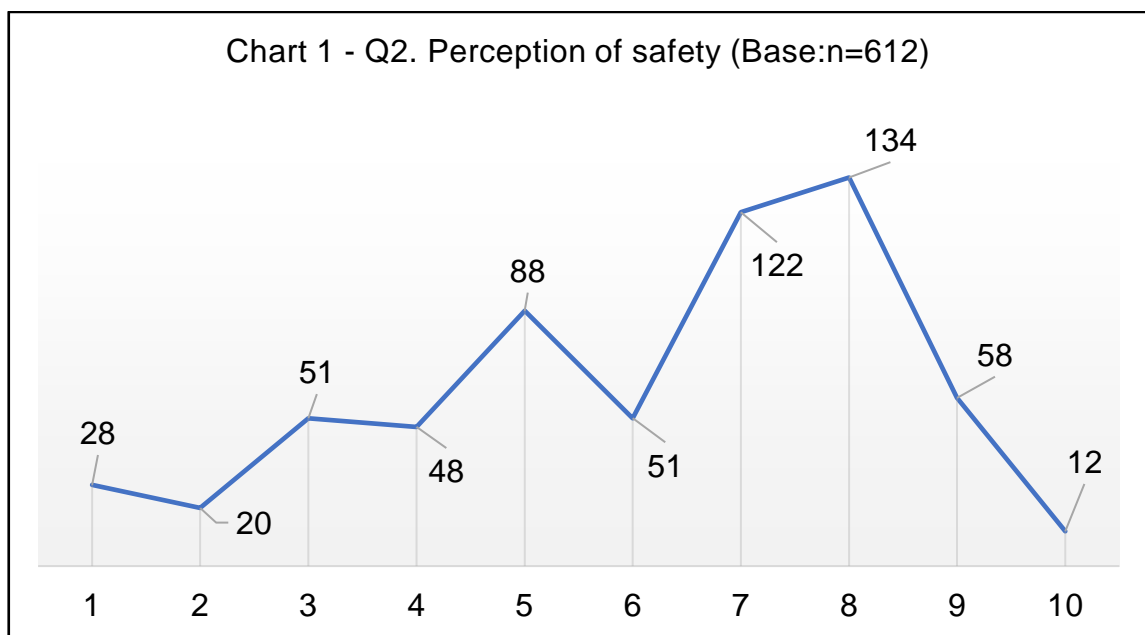
4.11 Of the 612 responses, 245 held a neutral stance on increasing the precept. Of those that expressed a positive or negative view, 62% (229) were generally supportive of the increase and 38% (138) were generally unsupportive. This is not dissimilar to last year, with 61% (Base: n =640) supportive of the increase.

Feeling of Safety

Q2. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very unsafe and 10 being very safe, how safe do you feel in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough? This was supplemented with an opportunity to validate that response with free text.

4.12 This question focused upon perception of safety and was a quantitative based question. A supplementary question was asked to enable a qualitative element for consideration.

4.13 Chart 1 – Q2. Perception of safety shows responses to a question using a 1 – 10 score. A simple average of the 612 responses scores a 6 on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very unsafe and 10 being very safe. A similar score of six was returned last year.



4.14 There is supplementary analysis available which adds value to the perception of safety across five of the six areas of Cambridgeshire. During 2023, Cambridgeshire County Council undertook a Quality-of-life survey. This was published in October 2023¹. A question from that survey focused upon safety.

4.15 Question five of the QoL survey asked ‘I’d now like to think about the local community in Cambridgeshire in which you live. Think about this as the areas within a 15-minute walk of your home. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Base: n =5,500. Statement “I feel safe in my local community”. Of the 5,500 respondees, 84% strongly agreed or

¹ [Quality of life survey 2023 - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

somewhat agreed with this statement, with 15% somewhat disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement.

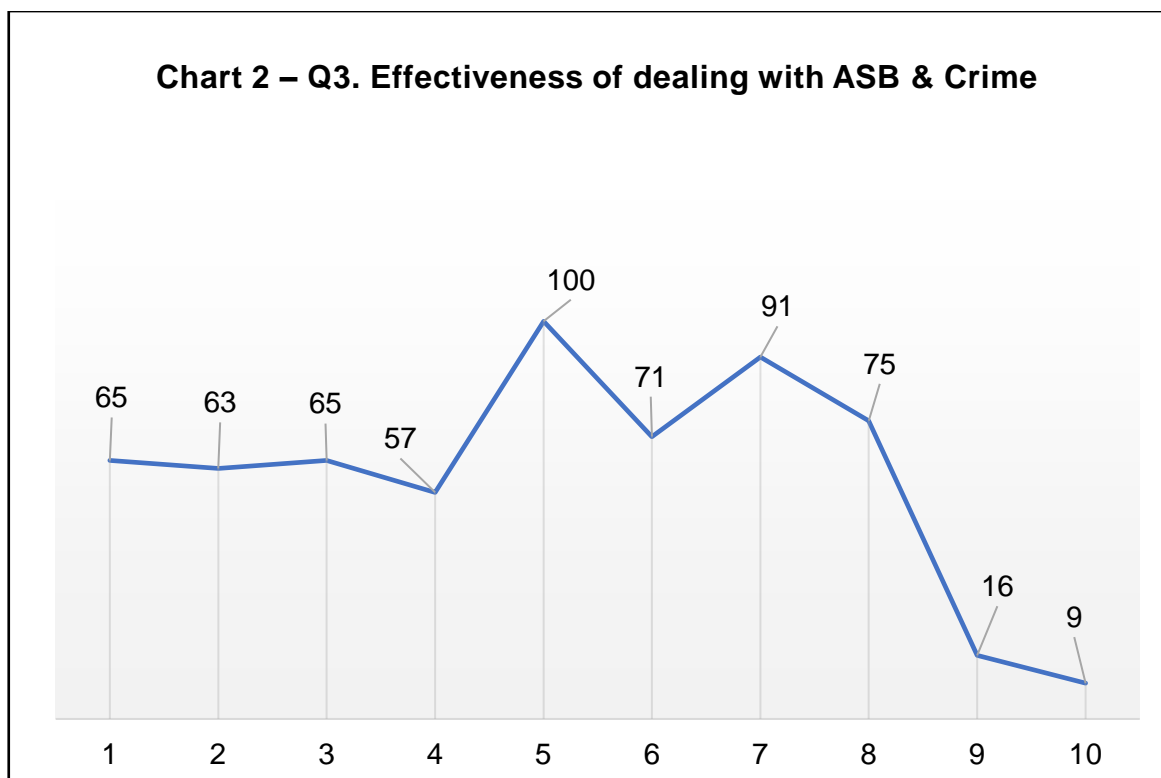
4.16 The free text field which asked respondees to tell us why they felt safe or unsafe provided qualitative feedback. The OPCC are working with the Constabulary on the anonymised free text to enable analysis of trends (e.g. by area / age profile) and identify areas that link in with the confidence and satisfaction work, which is currently being carried out by the Constabulary.

Perception of efficiency and effectiveness in dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime

Q3. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very ineffective and 10 being very effective, how do you think the police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime?

4.17 This question focused upon perception of how effectiveness and efficiency in dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime? This was a quantitative based question. A supplementary question was asked to enable a qualitative element for consideration. One of the main statutory responsibilities of the Commissioner is to hold the Chief Constable to account for the efficiency and effectiveness of the Constabulary. This question and the supplementary free text help to enable this.

4.18 Chart 2 – Q3. Effectiveness of dealing with ASB and Crime shows responses to a question using a 1 – 10 score. A simple average of the 612 responses scores a 5 on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very ineffective and 10 being very effective. This was similar to last year.



4.19 The free text field which asked respondees to tell us about the effectiveness and efficiency of dealing with ASB and Crime provided qualitative feedback. The OPCC are working with the Constabulary on the anonymised free text to enable analysis of trends (e.g. by area / age profile) and identify areas that link in with the confidence and satisfaction work, which is currently being carried out by the Constabulary.

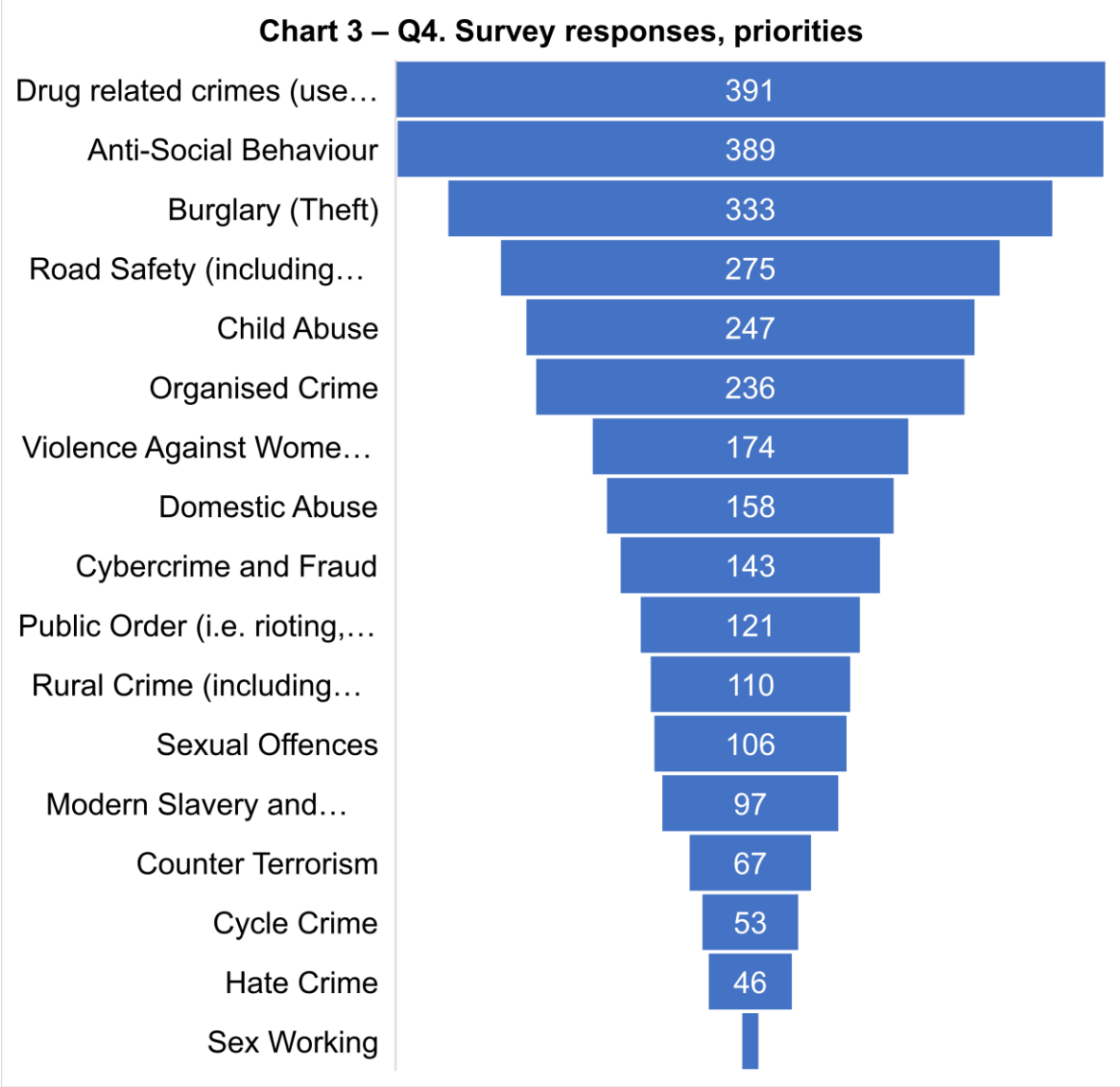
Survey response, priorities

Q4 Please select up to five options you believe Cambridgeshire Constabulary and its partners should prioritise.

4.20 This question sought to identify from a list of 15 priorities what priorities respondees wanted Cambridgeshire Constabulary and its partners to focus upon. The list has generally remained unchanged. It enabled the Commissioner to make informed decisions in the development of his Police and Crime Plan 2021-24.

4.21 Chart 3 – Q4. Survey responses, priorities show from a list of 15 priorities, the number of times that priority was selected. This was the simplest way to identify

what priorities respondents believed Cambridgeshire Constabulary and its partners should focus upon. Respondents could only select five. A small number of respondents chose to identify just one or two.

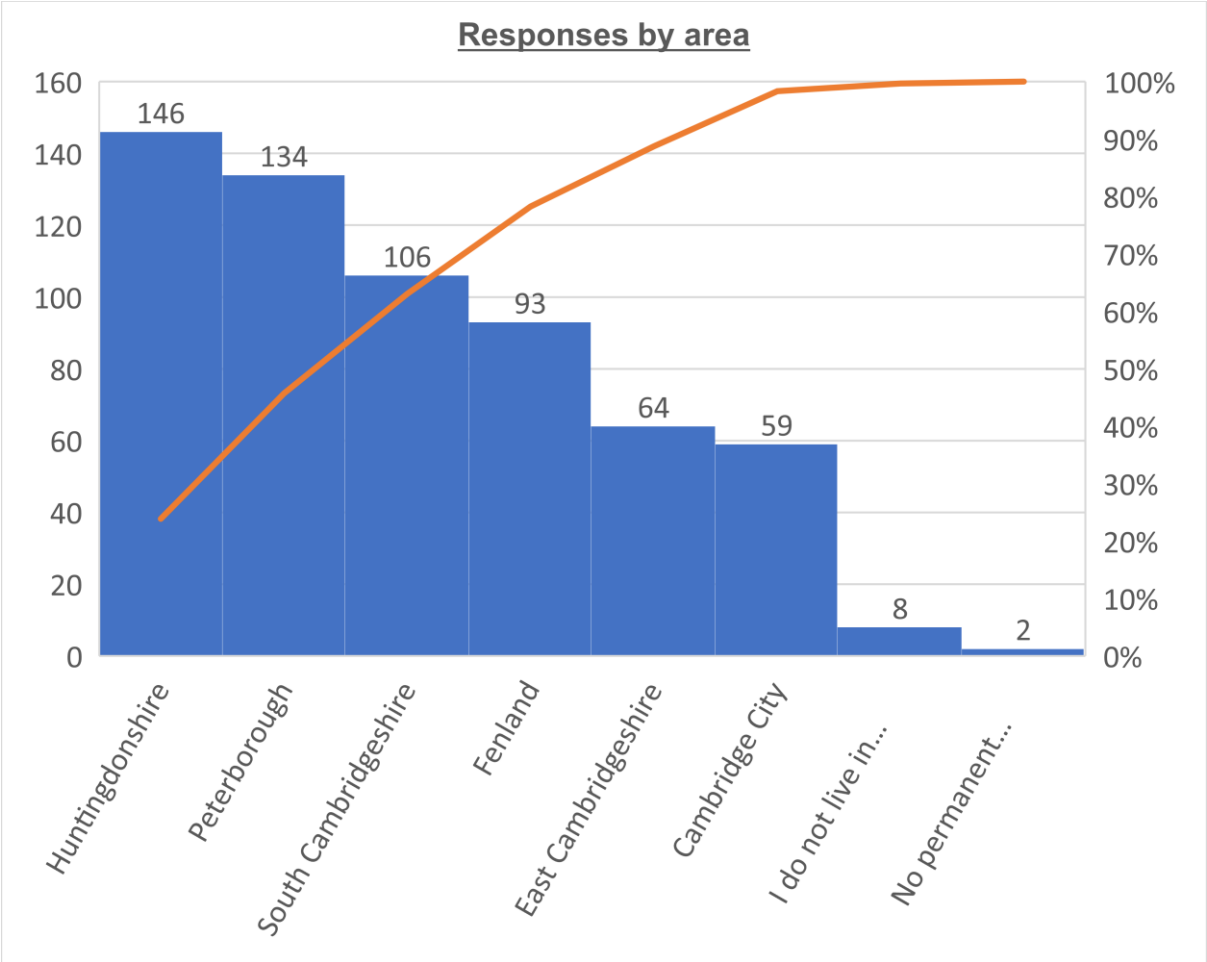


Survey responses by area

Q. Which area of the county do you live in?

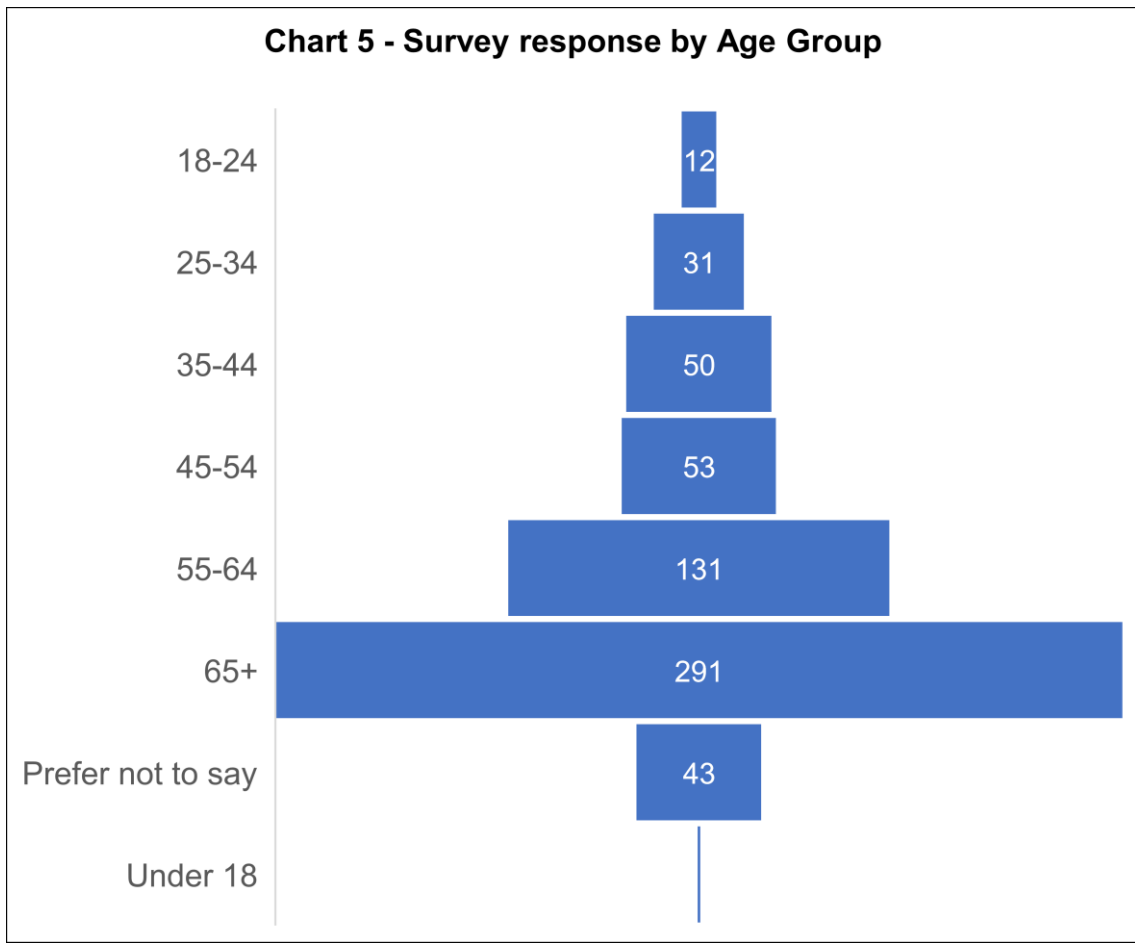
4.22 Chart 4 – survey response by area shows the total number of people who responded to the online survey by area. Of the 612 people who responded, Huntingdonshire had 146 (24%) respondents, the highest of all areas and a similar result to last year. This was followed by, Peterborough (22%), South

Cambridgeshire (17%), Fenland (15%), East Cambridgeshire (10%) and Cambridge City (10%. A further 10 respondees did not specify in which area they lived or worked. The profile for responses is similar. For example in 2022/23 Huntingdonshire had a 25% response rate. In 2023/24 it was 24%, the same as this year.



Survey Response by Age Group

4.23 Chart 5 – Survey response by Age Group provides a break down by age of those who responded to the online survey. In a similar trend to last year’s survey, 291 (48%) of respondees came from the +65-age group. If that was expanded to include the age group between 55-64, i.e.,55+ then this would account for 69% of respondees.



Additional demographic information

4.24 Ethnicity – Self defined ethnicity was included within the online survey. Of the 612 respondees just over 80% self-defined as white English or white British. These results are similar to last year. A further 45 (7%) preferred not to disclose their ethnicity. The ethnicity profile of respondees is not representative of the diverse communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

4.25 Disability – Respondees were asked whether they had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? Of the 612 respondees 419 (68%) said no, with 137 (22%) saying yes. The remaining 10% preferred not to say.

4.26- Gender – Of the 612 respondees, 214 (35%) were female 355 (58%) were male. This was a similar profile to last year. The gender profile of respondees is not representative of communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 In conclusion, 612 people responded to the survey. This is a similar number of online responses to last year (Base: n=646). All respondents were via the online survey. It is recognised that this is not a representative sample size. However, Appendix 1 outlines the lengths the OPCC went to, to raise the awareness of this survey and seek support from others.
- 5.2 A feeling of safety is important, and this year's results were supplemented by a quality of life survey for five of the six areas and a representative sample size of 5,500 or 1,100 from each area. When asked to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements "I feel safe in my local community". It is notable that 84% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement, with 15% somewhat disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement.
- 5.3 Finally, the core purpose of the survey was to obtain views on the proposed increase to the policing part of the council tax, the precept. Of the 612 responses, 245 held a neutral stance on increasing the precept. Of those that expressed a positive or negative view, 62% (229) were generally supportive of the increase and 38% (138) were generally unsupportive. This is not dissimilar to last year, with 61% (Base: n =640) supportive of the increase.

Appendix 1 - Precept survey 2024-25

Engagement Activity Log

Target audience	Name of organisation	Date Survey shared
Cambridgeshire media		
Media interviews:		
BBC Radio Cambs	Chris Mann Show interview with PCC Darryl Preston BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.	19/12/23
	Hourly news bulletins (AM) - final chance to have your say.	02/01/24
Hunts post	https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/23984823.cambridgeshire-peterborough-pcc-police-funding-survey/	13/12/23
Fenland Citizen	https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/residents-invited-to-share-their-views-on-police-funding-plan-9344420/	13/12/23
Peterborough Telegraph	https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/crime/peterborough-residents-can-have-their-say-on-how-much-extra-they-would-be-willing-to-pay-in-council-tax-for-police-funding-4451608	13/12/23
Cambridge Independent	https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/23984823.cambridgeshire-peterborough-pcc-police-funding-survey/	13/12/23
Cambs Times	https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/23984823.cambridgeshire-peterborough-pcc-police-funding-survey/	13/12/23
Wisbech	https://www.wisbechstandard.co.uk/news/23984823.cambridgeshire-peterborough-pcc-police-funding-survey/	13/12/23
Social Media		
Instagram – 945 followers	Shared social media messaging	12/12/23 19/12/23 28/12/23
Twitter (X) - 3,815 followers	Shared social media messaging	12/12/23 19/12/23 28/12/23 01/01/24 02/01/24
Facebook – 1,900	Shared social media messaging	12/12/23

followers		19/12/23 28/12/23 01/01/24 02/01/2024
LinkedIn	Shared via OPCC Team members with reminders	12/12/23
Internal Comms		
Force intranet	Shared with all officers and staff.	18/12/23
Stakeholders		
Warn and inform group	Shared with 54 members including: Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Cambridgeshire Constabulary East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust Cambridgeshire County Council Peterborough City Council East Cambridgeshire District Council Fenland District Council Huntingdonshire District Council South Cambridgeshire District Council Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Environment Agency Cambridge and Peterborough Integrated Care System NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough British Red Cross	21/12/23
Community Safety Partnerships		
East Cambs CSP	Shared	28/12/23
South Cambs CSP	Shared	22/12/23
Cambridge City CSP		
Fenland CSP	Shared	16/12/23
Hunts CSP		
Peterborough CSP		
Police and Crime Panel members		
	Emailed Panel Secretary asking for survey to be shared to Panel members.	12/12/23
	Reminder sent	14/12/23
Volunteers		
Community Scrutiny Group	Sent to 34 Panel members	12/12/23
ICVs	Shared with ICV volunteers	12/12/23
Subscribers		
Neighbourhood Alert subscribers,	Via OPCC account Email sent out to 16,900 recipients.	12/12/23 13/12/23

c.15,500		18/12/23
Cambs & Peterborough Councillors	Sent to 470 Parish Councillors across Cambridge City, Peterborough, Fenland, East Cambs, Huntingdonshire and South Cambs.	12/12/23 21/12/23
PCC's monthly newsletter	Shared with 2,812 subscribers. Special reminder sent about precept. Repeat message to subscribers – final days to go	19/12/23 28/12/23 28/12/23
Cambs Youth Panel	Phil Priestley, Inclusive Technology	22/12/23
Anglia Ruskin University	Graphic design (BA) students engaged through an ongoing new brand for the OPCC live brief.	22/12/23
Hyper local	The River Porter – St Ives newsletter Waterbeach Babble – Facebook group Northstowe Facebook group Brampton newsletter Over, Willingham, Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe Facebook pages and Parish/ Town Councils.	12/12/23
Community & faith Leaders	Countywide faith leaders asked to share the link	21/12/23
Victim Support Services (providers)	Cambs DASV Partnership Cambridge Women's Resource Centre IDVA Service Embrace CVOC Cambs Deaf Association Victim and Witness Hub The Meadows Child & Family Wing One Voice 4 Travellers Peterborough Rape Crisis Cambs Deaf Association Cambs Rape Crisis Cambridge Women's Aid Hourglass Barnardos Specialist Midwife First response integrated mental health team Probation Services Sexual Health Commissioning Services Trauma Recovery CIC YMCA Consultant & Senior Paediatric Clinician NHS England Senior Public Health Commissioner Diverse	12/12/23

	Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre	
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