



MEETING	Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel
DATE	05 February 2026
TITLE OF REPORT	Report on Police Precept Consultation 2026-2027
SUBMITTED BY	Dr Amie Birkhamshaw, Deputy Chief Executive, OPCC
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To notify the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Panel of the results of the public consultation on the proposed police precept for 2026/27.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	To discuss in conjunction with the 2026/27 Budget Report
RISK IMPLICATIONS	To discuss in conjunction with the 2026/27 Budget Report
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	None noted at this time
EQUALITIES IMPACTS	Sixty-six percent of chargeable dwellings fall within council tax bands A to D, meaning they will incur an additional cost of £15 or less per year. Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) schemes are available in every district to help both pensioners and working-age individuals with their council tax payments.
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION EXEMPTION SECTION IF APPLICABLE	Not exempt under Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1. Introduction and Background

Police and Crime Commissioners have a legal duty to consult with residents and those persons or organisations who appear to the PCC to be representative of those subject to non-domestic rates in their area on the police element of the Council Tax precept. In January 2026 the Commissioner consulted the residents of Hertfordshire on his proposal to increase the policing element of the precept for an average (Band D) equivalent by **£15 per annum or 5.66% per cent** on the comparable figure for 2025/26, rising to **£280 per annum**.

The Commissioner outlined his priority to maintain the record number of police officers working to keep the county safe through the strong neighbourhood and responsive local policing teams. The public consultation outlined the financial pressures that Hertfordshire Constabulary is facing with rising costs, inflation and higher employer National Insurance contribution. This is against the backdrop of Hertfordshire continuing to have one of the lowest contributions towards policing through their council tax with the **current precept being £32 a year below** the England and Wales average. Raising the precept by the full flexibility allowed would generate **£6.8m in income in 2026/27**, resulting in a total grant

funding of £182.2m for Hertfordshire. This level of funding will still fall short of the increased cost base.

Table 1 below shows the calculation for a precept increase of £15 per annum for 2026/27 across all household bandings A- H. Under the proposal, each household would see an annual increase of between **19p and 58p per week on their 2026/27 precept.**

Table 1: Proposed Precept increase by Household Bands A - H (2026/27)

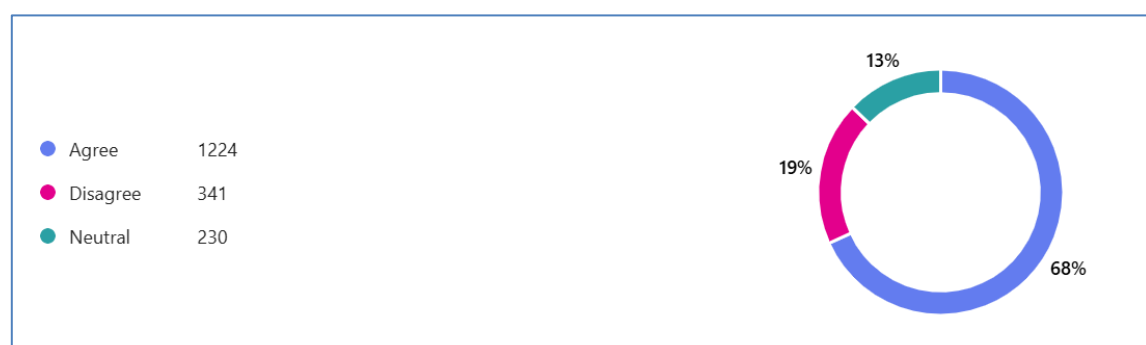
Band	2025/26 Charge £	2026/27 Charge £	Precept increase			
			£			
			per annum	per month	per week	per day
A	176.67	186.67	10.00	0.83	0.19	0.03
B	206.11	217.78	11.67	0.97	0.22	0.03
C	235.56	248.89	13.33	1.11	0.26	0.04
D	265.00	280.00	15.00	1.25	0.29	0.04
E	323.89	342.22	18.33	1.53	0.35	0.05
F	382.78	404.44	21.66	1.81	0.42	0.06
G	441.67	466.67	25.00	2.08	0.48	0.07
H	530.00	560.00	30.00	2.50	0.58	0.08

The public survey was opened for 14 days from 12 – 26th January 2026. The shorter timeframe was due to the PCC and Chief Constable exploring precept flexibility with the Home Office and the considerable uncertainty with the Home Office's process and timescale produced.

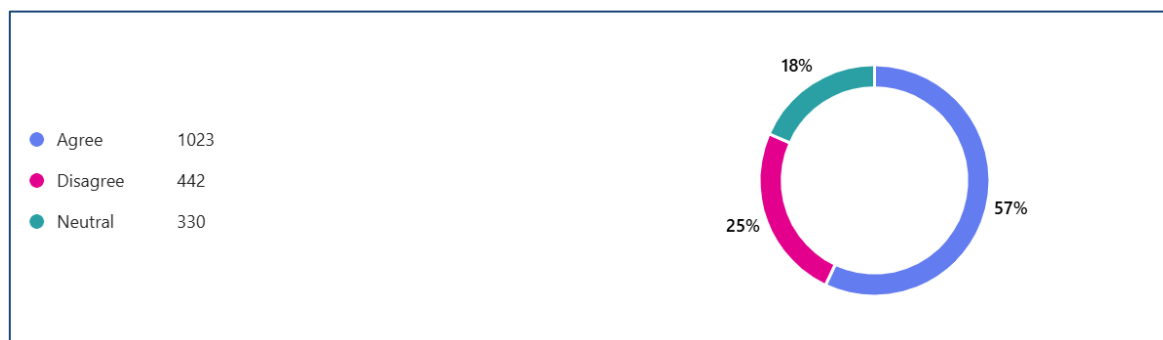
The survey was sent to 60,000 residents on Herts Connected and publicised widely on social media through the PCC's Facebook and X account. 1,795 Hertfordshire residents responded to the online survey, a higher number of responses than last year at 1,289. Most responses to the survey indicated agreement with the PCC's proposal to increase the council tax precept. A fuller summary of the survey results can be found in the Appendix A.

2. Results of the Public Consultation

Q1: Do you agree with the proposal to increase the police precept by £15 for 2026/27 (for an average Band D property)?



Q2: Hertfordshire residents currently pay one of the lowest police precepts compared to other areas in England and Wales, about £32 per year below the average. This gap is the equivalent of about 240 extra police officers. If the government allowed flexibility to increase the precept by more than the current £15 cap, would you be willing to pay more to support additional policing in the county?



Of the 1,795 that responded to the first question, more than two thirds – 68% said they would be prepared to pay £15 or equivalent increase in their council tax precept. 341 respondents (19%) said they disagreed and 13% had no preference. This indicates that a clear majority of those who took part in the survey are willing to pay an increase in their council tax precept. The 68% approval rate for the £15 increase is higher than the approval rate for the £14 precept increase last year (62%). Similarly, over half (57%) of respondents indicated they would support an increase of the precept by more than the current £14 if it were so permitted by the government. As noted from the following comments:

“Increase contribution to £50!”

“I think we should increase the budget by more than £15.”

“I would be prepared to pay more for policing and without merging forces.”

“I would be willing to pay more if this is going to result in police out on streets and in neighbourhoods”

There was a significant proportion of respondents who gave explanations for why they voted in favour of an increase in the open text box at the end of the survey. Many respondents articulated the continued need to have a visible police presence on the streets of Hertfordshire. Nearly 8% of respondents (141) noted how the visibility of police patrolling their neighbourhood was important and therefore supported an increase in funding if it meant greater visibility:

“There is a need for 18-24hr foot patrols in town centres. Visible foot patrols are a real deterrence to antisocial behaviour”.

“I would just like to see more police presence in the community to deter criminality”.

“Police visibility is good, as is their involvement in local events, eg street markets”

"I think seeing police around is a very good thing in giving local people confidence."

Some respondents noted that they would be in favour of supporting the £15 increase, but it was on a conditional basis. Most of the reasons cited related to respondents wanting some reassurance that funding would be ring-fenced for neighbourhood patrols:

"I do not object to paying an increased police precept as long as the additional funding is ring fenced ... If this can be demonstrated I will be happy to pay an increased precept above the cap in the future."

Add an additional £5 to the precept ring-fenced for neighbourhood patrols and I'm in."

For those who were not in favour of the precept increase, respondents cited affordability with references to financial strain saying they cannot afford the rise. Concerns include fairness, pensioner impact, and frustration with "paying more for less" noted in the following comments:

"I can't afford continued 5% increases in everything!"

"If this means my council tax will be increased, I am against it—I live on a pension... and cannot afford to pay any more."

A fuller analysis of responses to the survey can be found in Appendix A.

3. Recommendation

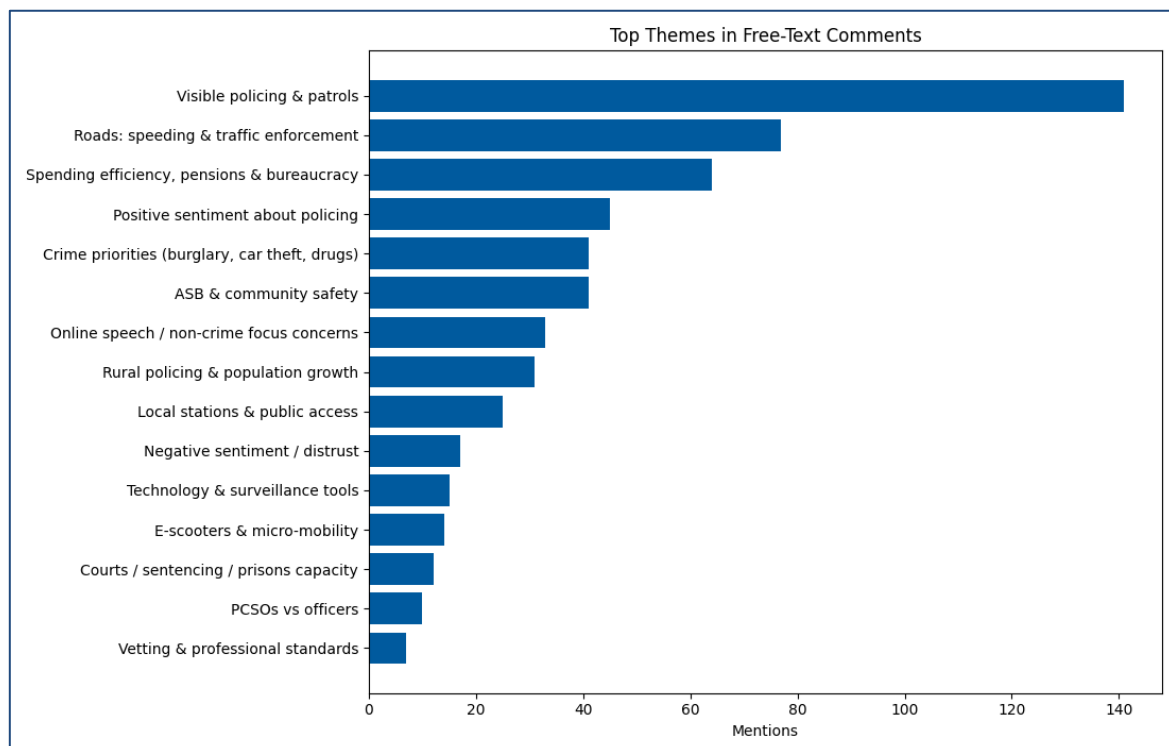
It is recommended that Police and Crime Panel:

- a) Notes the results of the consultation as outlined in this report.

Appendix A: Summary of public feedback

The top themes arising from the feedback from the 1,774 respondents who made comment in the open text box included visible policing and patrols, roads, speeding and traffic followed by crime priorities (burglary, car theft, drugs, ASB).

Table 2: Themes arising from the survey responses



Of the 8% (141 respondents) who mentioned visible policing, mentioned wanting more police officers on the street, for police to undertake regular “drive throughs” for dead end/remote roads, town centre presence; bikes/e-bikes for patrols; school adjacent peak times; reassurance for older residents.

“There isn’t a visible presence of police on the streets at the moment.”

“I would love to see far more officers on patrol on foot and in vehicles.”

“I have not seen local police walking the streets for years.”

“The bigger the force the less likely for us to ever get foot patrols in our area.”

“I think seeing police around is a very good thing in giving local people confidence.”

Other respondents noted that they wanted the precept to fund a shift from ‘desks to streets’. There was a plea to fund automation of back-office tasks to release officer hours and to best use technology and digital tools including ANPR, CCTV, drones and noise cameras to automate evidence and free frontline time.

Road safety was also a key concern of respondents and one that was suggested should be supported through additional funding through the precept. This included targeting speeding, dangerous parking and anti-social driving and vehicle removal for persistent offenders. As noted in the following comments:

“We need to address the issue of traffic speed, which is excessive, the cost of cameras would easily be paid for by the fines.”

“More police visibility and interventions would be welcome particularly regarding speeding, red light infringements, aggressive and dangerous actions by too many motorists who seemingly feel very safe to do so.”

“I would like to see police focus on the riding of electric bicycles on the pavement... I would expect that the police need to investigate more crimes and anti-social incidents.”

The third highest theme from the survey results related to spending efficiency, pensions and bureaucracy. Many respondents were keen that any additional funding would be set in the context of the police making efficiencies. This was noted in the following comments:

“What price for an efficient and caring police force? The police are undervalued and I am happy to support an increase”.

“If economies are made, I agree. More efforts are needed to cut out waste”.

“There should be fewer police doing admin and more visibility. The police should be wholly funded by the government”.

Appendix B: Press & Social Media

The precept survey was emailed directly to MPs, as well as all county, district and borough councillors. It was promoted via two separate messages sent to the 60,000 residents signed up to receive OPCC messages via Herts Connected. The survey was shared on the OPCC and Constabulary Facebook pages, garnering 2,326 views. Meanwhile, equivalent posts on X collected 268 impressions.

The press release and survey were picked up widely across the local Hertfordshire newspapers, raising public awareness:

- **Watford Observer:** [Policing precept increase 'to protect officer numbers' | Watford Observer](#)
- **Hemel Today:** [Residents encouraged to share views on how much taxpayers should contribute towards policing in Hertfordshire](#)
- **Living Magazine:** [Commissioner asks residents' view on council tax precept - Living Magazines](#)
- **Press Reader:** [PressReader.com - Digital Newspaper & Magazine Subscriptions](#)
- **Bishop Stortford Independent:** [Have your say on plans to increase Hertfordshire residents' policing bill by 5.6%](#)

