

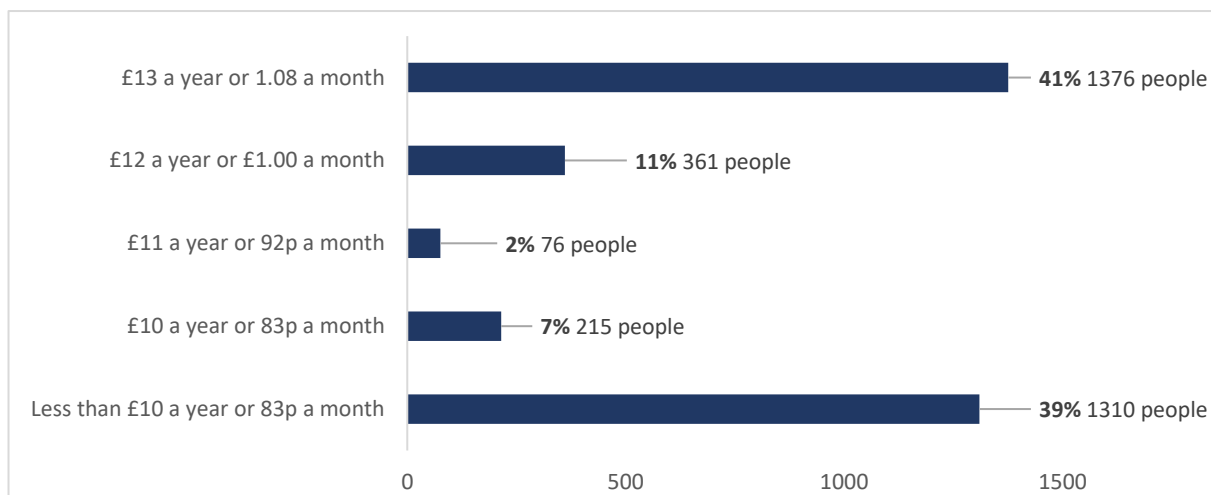
PUBLIC REPORT:
**Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey Council tax
consultation 2024/25**



As required by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey carried out a consultation on the proposed level of Surrey council tax that will be raised for Surrey Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner during the financial year 2024/25. The consultation was carried out over six weeks, from 19 December 2022 to 30 January 2024.

Summary

The consultation received 3,341 responses and 1,637 comments. 61% of respondents said that they would support an increase in the policing part of council tax equivalent to £10-13 a year, based on an average Band D Property. 39% of respondents selected an increase that is below £10 a year, with the most residents supporting a maximum increase of £13 a year or an additional £1.08 a month (41%):



Half of residents left a comment with their response, in line with previous surveys. Focus areas highlighted by the survey and comments include burglary, anti-social behaviour, drug use and dealing, and road safety.

The responses to this year's survey were higher than in 2023/24 but in line with the average number of responses to council tax surveys held in the last four years.

Questions

This year's survey contained the following introduction from the Police and Crime Commissioner and two main questions. The survey also asked where the respondent lived in Surrey and how they heard about the consultation:

Introduction from Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey Lisa Townsend

Asking the public for more money in their council tax is one of the most difficult tasks I have to undertake as your Police and Crime Commissioner.

Times are tough for lots of people and in setting the budget for Surrey Police, I must balance that pressure with maintaining an effective policing service for our residents.

Your views are important, and I hope that you will take a few minutes to let me know what you think. All of the options in this year's survey are under inflation - but they require Surrey Police to continue to make savings over the next four years.

It has been an important year for policing in Surrey – thanks to the amazing efforts of the Force, it not only met but surpassed the target for its share of the government's extra 20,000 police officers across the country. Over the last three years, Surrey Police has grown by 395 police officers – making Surrey Police the biggest in its history.

This has been achieved during a difficult financial climate and is great news for residents. Although those officers were funded by the government's national Uplift programme, the contributions made through your council tax remain crucial as the Force invests in their future.

Surrey Police continues to face significant challenges including inflationary pressure on pay, energy and fuel costs and increasing demand for policing services. In addition, the Force must find in the region of £20m in savings over the next four years.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of appointing Tim De Meyer as the new Chief Constable for Surrey Police. Since he took the helm, Tim has set out his vision for the Force that concentrates on what policing does best – fighting crime in our local communities and protecting people. This is what you, the Surrey public, have told me you want to see and why I want to support his vision by ensuring the Force is funded effectively.

Over the next two years, he wants Surrey Police to:

- Maintain a visible presence in our communities which tackles pockets of lawlessness - driving out drug dealers, targeting shoplifting gangs and cracking down on anti-social behaviour
- Substantially increase the number of offenders charged and crimes detected; with 2,000 more charges made by March 2026
- Relentlessly pursue thugs, thieves and abusers by identifying the most dangerous and prolific offenders in top ten lists and taking them off our streets
- Continue to investigate all reasonable lines of enquiry, including attending all domestic burglaries and following up where there is evidence such as camera footage
- Carry out major crime fighting operations that go over and above everyday policing

- Answer calls from the public quickly and ensure the response from police is swift and effective
- Seize more criminal assets - putting that cash back into our communities to make them safer.

I believe this plan will significantly boost the service provided by the Force. But in order to achieve it, we must maintain appropriate funding for our police teams.

I also want to ensure we don't undo all of that hard work that has gone into growing our frontline policing numbers in the years to come which is why I must think very carefully about making sound, long term financial plans.

The Government has announced in this year's settlement for policing that Police and Crime Commissioners may increase the level of local council tax that goes to policing (known as the precept) by up to £13 a year, based on an average Band D property. That is an extra £1.08 a month, which equates to a rise of just over 4% across all council tax bands - and is below the UK inflation rate of 4.7% (as at October 2023).

I want to hear your views and this brief survey sets out the below options for a below inflation increase based on an average Band D property:

- Below £10 per year or less than 83p a month
- £10 a year or 83p a month
- £11 a year or 92p a month
- £12 a year or £1.00 a month
- £13 a year or £1.08 a month

The Chief Constable has been clear that an increase of below £10 on an average Band D property would mean further savings by Surrey Police, including cuts to staff numbers. The Force may have no choice but to reduce some of the services which the public value the most - such as taking calls, investigating crimes and detaining suspects.

An increase of between £10 and £13 would mean that Surrey Police will be able to almost keep pace with inflation and keep any cuts to staff to a minimum.

Whilst the maximum increase of £13 would provide the Chief Constable with most of the resources he needs to achieve his plans for the Force, Surrey Police would still need to find at least £17m of savings over the next four years.

It is important that we make every efficiency we can and the Force is undergoing a transformation programme designed to ensure we provide the best possible value for money for the public.

Your contributions through council tax make a huge difference to the service our hard-working officers and staff provide. For every pound of precept set, Surrey Police is funded by an extra half a million pounds.

Setting the precept is a task I do not take lightly. Last year, the majority of those who took part in our poll voted for a council tax increase to support our policing teams and I want to know whether you would be willing to continue that support again in what is a challenging time for us all.

Please take a few minutes to have your say.

Thank you,

Lisa Townsend
Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

1. How much of an increase in police council tax would you be willing to pay to support our policing teams in Surrey? All options were under the UK CPI inflation rate of 4.7% as at October 2023.

- Below £10 a year or less than 83p a month
- £10 a year or 83p a month
- £11 a year or 92p a month
- £12 a year or £1.00 a month
- £13 a year or £1.08 a month

Please add any comments you have in the box below:

2. Which areas of policing would you like to see Surrey Police focus on over the coming year? Please pick three choices from the list below:

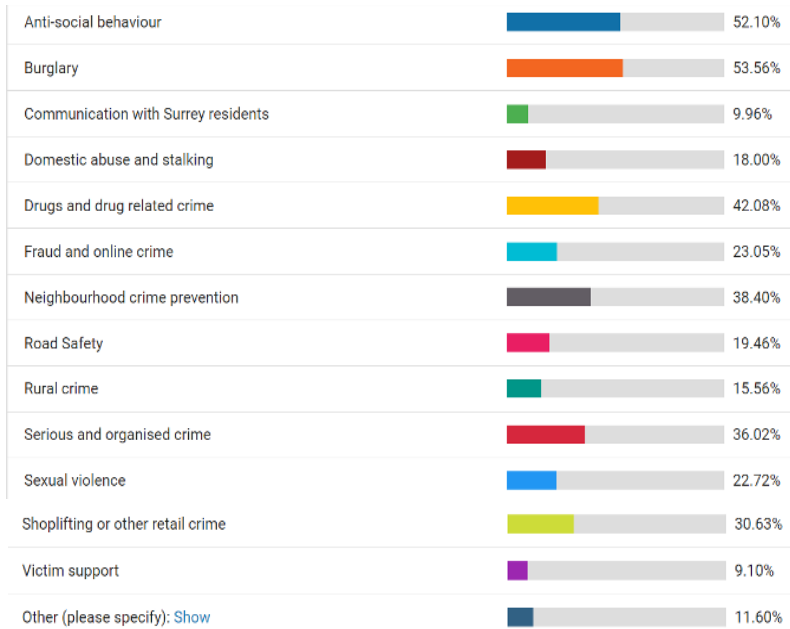
- Anti-social behaviour
- Burglary
- Communication with Surrey residents
- Domestic abuse and stalking
- Drugs and drug related crime
- Fraud and online crime
- Neighbourhood crime prevention
- Road safety
- Rural crime
- Serious and organised crime
- Sexual violence
- Shoplifting or other retail crime
- Victim support
- Other

Local priorities

Residents were asked to choose three areas they would like Surrey Police to prioritise in 2024/25. Most respondents said they would like to see a focus on burglary (54%) and anti-social behaviour (52%), followed by drug crime (42%), neighbourhood crime prevention (38%) and serious organised crime (36%).

The fewest respondents selected communication with residents (10%) and victim support (9%). Grouped together, crime types that are more likely to be targeted at women and girls (domestic abuse, stalking and sexual violence) were selected by 41% of respondents.

This year's results are consistent with the responses received in last year's survey (2023/24), with an increase (6%) in the number of people who selected anti-social behaviour and a small decrease (3%) in those who selected burglary:

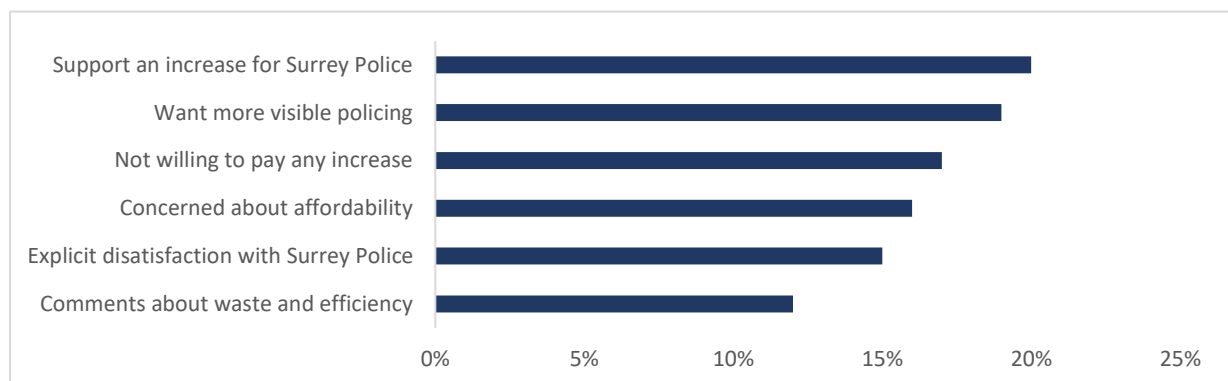


12% of people selected 'other'. Most of comments left under this category were not about a focus area or crime type, but contained comments about visible policing or stated that it was not possible to choose only three categories.

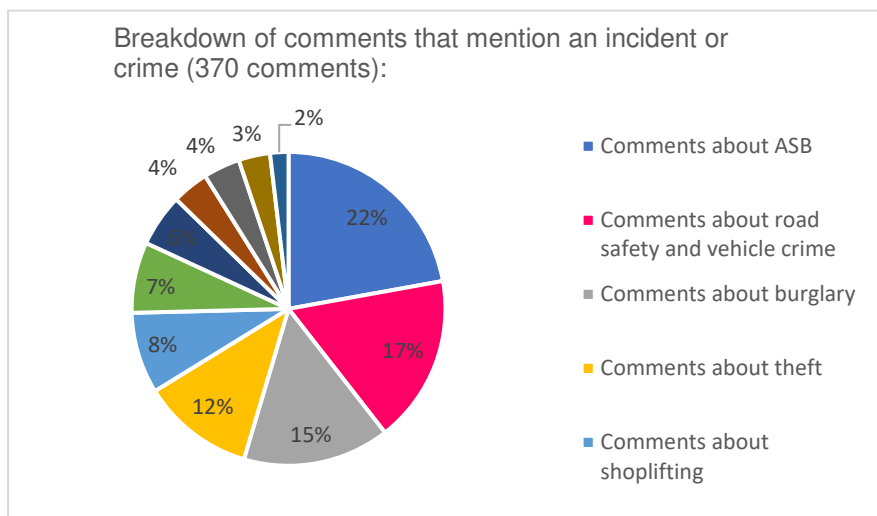
Comments

49% of residents left a comment with their response (1,637 people). Most people were supportive of an increase to their council tax (20%) followed by those who wanted to see more visible policing (19%) and did not want to pay any increase to their council tax (17%). The fewest comments were about the wider criminal justice system, mental health or improving the feedback that is provided by Surrey Police.

Main comment topics in 2024/25:

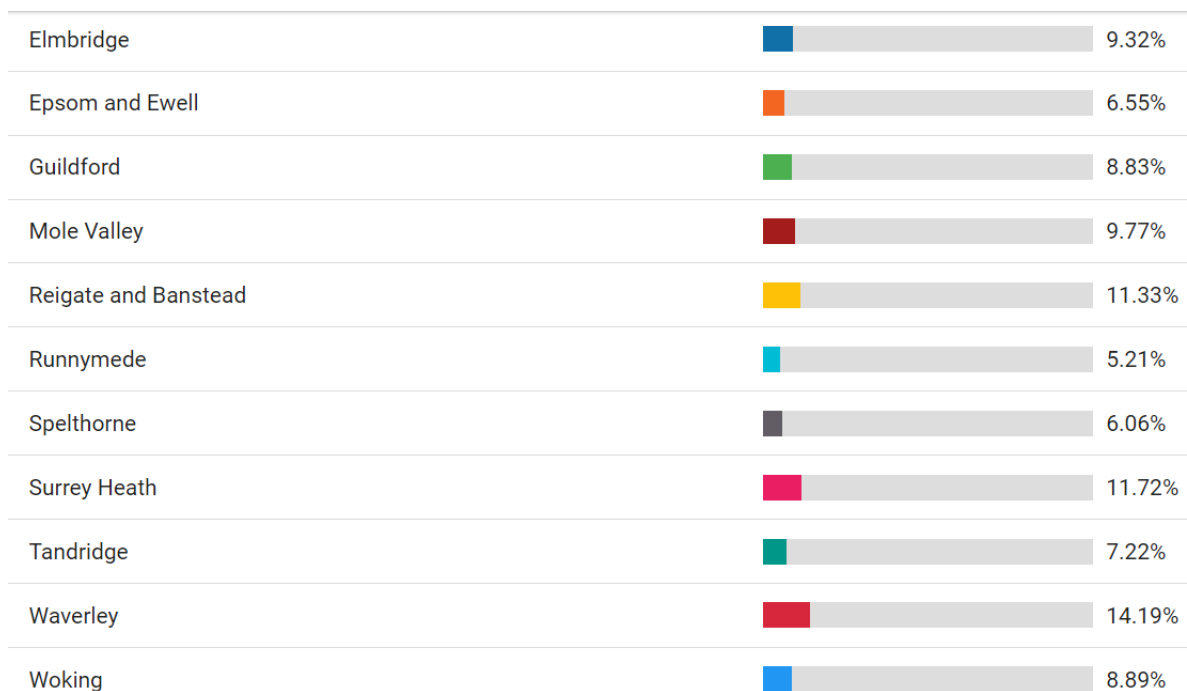


A quarter of comments reference an incident or crime type. Most of these comments were about anti-social behaviour (22%), followed by road safety (17%, speeding and in-proper use of vehicles) and burglary (15%). The least mentioned crime types were hate-crime and fly-tipping (1%):

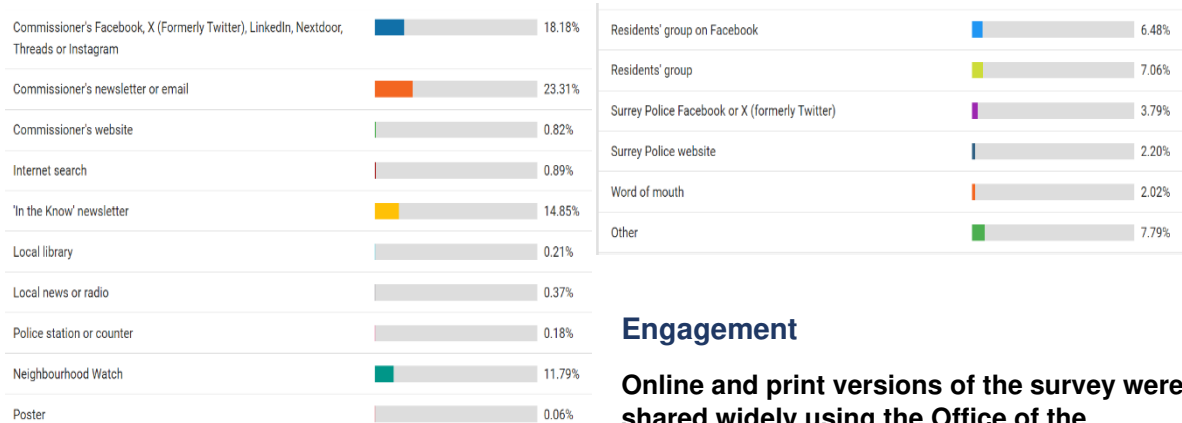


Responses by area

The largest number of survey responses came from boroughs in West Surrey, with the most responses from Waverley and Surrey Heath. The fewest responses were received from Runnymede and Spelthorne. 30 people (1%) said they did not live in Surrey:



Almost half of respondents (42%) were made aware of the survey through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s online channels and email list, followed by Surrey Police In the Know messages, social media (19%) and Neighbourhood Watch (12%):



Engagement

Online and print versions of the survey were shared widely using the Office of the Commissioner’s online channels and stakeholders including commissioned services, local councillors, resident groups and partner organisations,

The following methods and channels were used to promote the survey:

- **PCC website**
- **Surrey Police intranet and internal email**
- **Media releases**
- **PCC Newsletter and emails**
- **‘In the Know’ messages from Surrey Police**
- **Social media:** Facebook, X (Formerly Twitter), Threads, Nextdoor, LinkedIn and Instagram
- **Joint ‘Policing our Community’ engagement events** on Facebook and YouTube Live
- **Partner organisations** including funded services, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum and Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
- **Residents’ meetings attended** by the Commissioner in January 2024
- **Translations of the survey and FAQ** available in Romanian, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese and Hungarian

Contact us

Get in touch with our Office at surrey-pcc.gov.uk or call us on **01483 630200**. You can also write to us using the address below or follow us online:

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