

The following is a Police Connect message.



Would you pay more council tax for policing in Norfolk? PCC invites you to have your say.

Would you pay more council tax to help fund policing in Norfolk? That is the question being posed by the county's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

PCC Lorne Green will soon have to decide whether to increase or freeze the policing element of council tax. First, he wants to know what the Norfolk public thinks and is asking how much people would be willing to pay.

"I want to hear from the people of Norfolk. Do you support keeping the policing part of the council tax at last year's level, or do you support a rise? And, if so, how much would you be prepared to pay?" asked Lorne.

"I have spent a great deal of time over the past year listening to Norfolk communities. They tell me not only do they want to be safe, they want to feel safe. Our constabulary has a responsibility to offer that assurance in our homes, on our streets and in our communities.

"At the same time I recognise the financial situation for policing continues to be extremely challenging. The nature of crime continues to change and is becoming more complex. Ahead of December's police funding announcement, I made representations to the Home Secretary, Policing Minister and Secretary to the Treasury to impress upon them just how serious the financial picture here in Norfolk is and the threat it poses to our policing service.

"It is important to be clear however that, before I even consider raising the policing element of the council tax, I have to be absolutely sure that the force continues to drive efficiencies at every turn, including from collaboration and partnership working.

"The Chief Constable has told me that a precept freeze would, inevitably, lead to police officer and staff reductions. He has also said that, were I to raise the council tax by the maximum amount of 46 pence a week, this would allow significant investment in the force, including the addition of 40 extra officers. I would urge people to listen to what the Chief Constable has to say before having their say.

"To help inform my budget decision, I would like to know your views. Some 56% of Norfolk's policing budget is funded by central government, meaning your council tax makes up the rest - so I want all Norfolk residents to have the opportunity to have their say.

“There are lots of ways you can share your views, not least through the survey on the Norfolk PCC website – www.norfolk-pcc.gov.uk. Please take the time to have your say as your views are important to me.”

Norfolk residents are being asked whether they would be prepared to pay more for policing in Norfolk. If they support an increase, taxpayers are being asked how much they would be prepared to pay. The options being presented are up to an extra 15 pence per week, an extra 31 pence per week or an extra 46 pence per week.

The implications for each option, based on a Band D property, are outlined as:

- Without a precept rise, there will be no opportunity for investment and the force will also have to find savings equivalent to approximately 90 officers.
- An increase of 15 pence a week (£8 a year) would not offer any opportunity for investment in officer numbers or technology, and would still require further savings to be found equivalent to at least 45 officers.
- An increase of 31 pence a week (£16 a year) would maintain the rollout of the 2020 policing model, but only provide very limited opportunity to increase officer numbers or invest in technology.
- An increase of 46 pence a week (£24 a year) would enable significant investment in the frontline, with an increase of 40 officers. It would provide an opportunity to invest in technology, enabling officers to spend more time on patrol, respond quicker and be more visible.

There will be an early chance to give your views when the PCC and Chief Constable Simon Bailey answer questions from the public at their first Q&A session of 2019. Lorne will host the event at The Forum in Norwich on Wednesday 9 January to give people the opportunity to share views, issues or concerns about crime and policing in their area.

The full consultation document and online survey can be found at www.norfolk-pcc.gov.uk. The consultation will run from 2 January until 30 January and people can also have their say by getting in contact with the Norfolk PCC office in the following ways:

Post: OPCCN, Jubilee House, Building 8, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, NR18 0WW

Telephone: 01953 424455

Email: TellLorne@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

Hard copies of the consultation document and survey form are also available on request.

The PCC will take his budget proposals to the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel on 5 February 2018.