



**Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Budget Consultation
February 2022**

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<i>'Fire currently makes up approximately 4% of your council tax bill and the average household (band D) pays £63.20 a year (approximately £1.21 a week) towards Fire and Rescue Services. In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views?'</i>	
<i>'In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are doing?'</i>	
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Background & Methodology

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Stephen Mold, has responsibility for setting the budget for Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. Police and fire funding is made up of a mixture of government grants and money from local taxpayers.

Just 18% of the council tax residents pay in Northamptonshire comes to the PFCC to pay for policing and fire services: the rest of the council tax goes to the local authorities.

Northamptonshire is one of the fastest-growing places in the country and our population has increased much more than the national average, but government funding for police and fire services has not kept pace with this change.

Set in the context of the covid 19 pandemic, a growing population and a financial settlement that will not meet the costs of inflation, this year's budget is likely to be more challenging than ever.

After listening to local people, the Commissioner recently updated the Police, Fire and Crime Plan to further reflect community priorities. Now we are considering the budgets for next year and the level of the council tax we will ask residents to pay to provide these services.

Over the past five years, based on public feedback and priorities, council tax has been invested to provide:

- More police officers than ever before
- An increased focus on visible, local policing neighbourhoods
- More firefighters, along with the tools and equipment to help them do their job
- Modern services that are fit for the future

This year, the financial picture is uncertain and it is anticipated that the cost of inflationary increases will be more than the funding available from the government. The challenge for us is to find ways of sustaining the improvements in local services that we have made and meet the priorities for further improvement.

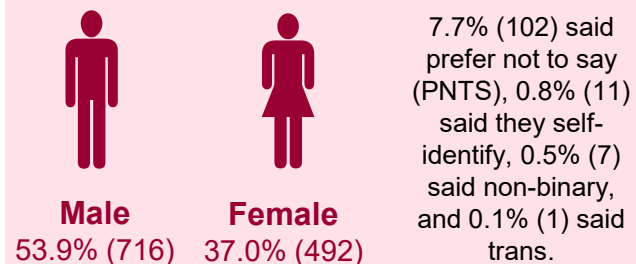
The public were invited to tell us their views and we launched this budget survey to ask you whether they would pay more for the services provided by policing and the fire service – responses will be taken into account by the PFCC in deciding the level of council tax precept to ask residents to pay towards police and fire services in Northamptonshire next year.

Survey Sample - Demographic Breakdown

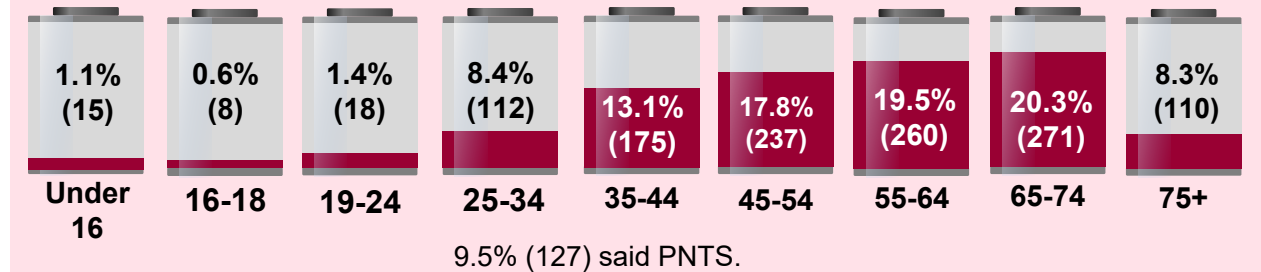
1,484 people participated in the Council Tax Consultation.

A demographic breakdown of the people who participated in the survey is provided on this page.

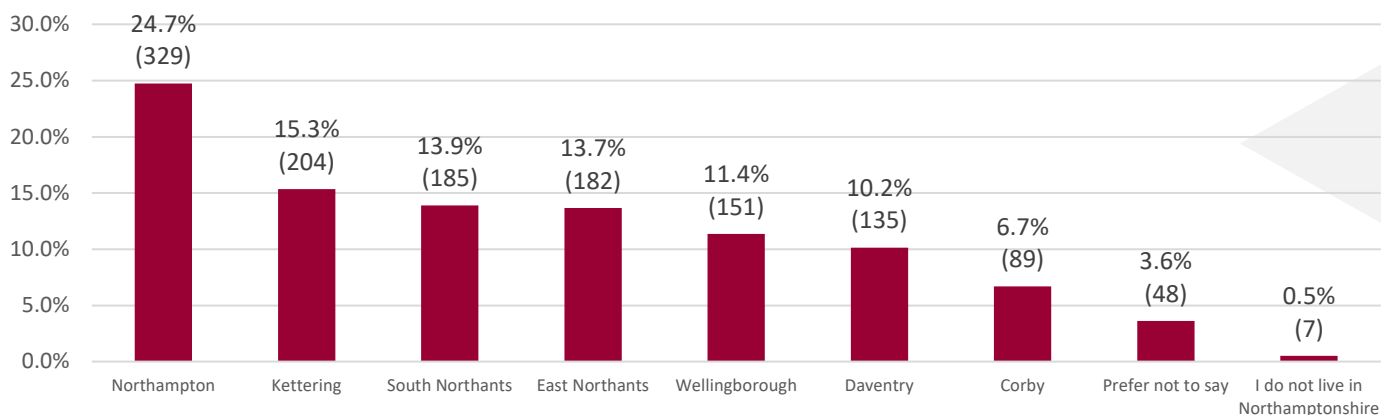
Gender (n=1,329)



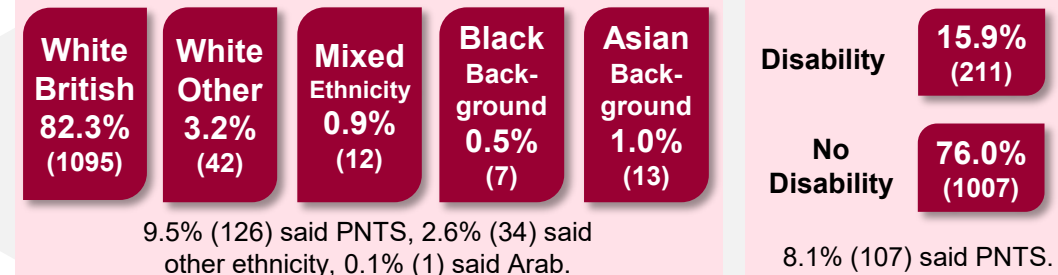
Age (n=1,333)



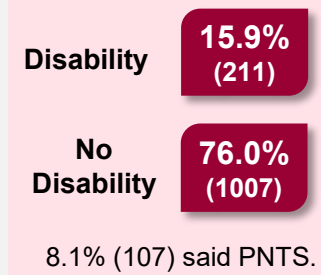
Location of Participants (n=1,330)



Ethnicity (n=1,330)



Disability (n=1,325)



Do you work for Northamptonshire Police, PFCC or Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service? (n=1,335)

No	83.7%
I work for Northamptonshire Police	7.0%
Prefer not to say	6.6%
I work for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service	2.1%
I work for Northamptonshire PFCC	0.7%

During the last 12 months have you been a victim of crime? (n=1,328)

No	77.9%
Yes	13.7%
Prefer not to say	8.4%

Are you completing this survey as (n=1,391)

An individual	97.8%
A public sector organisation	1.9%
A private sector organisation	0.3%

Religion (n=1,323)

Christian	46.3%	612
No religion	37.1%	491
Bahai	0.5%	7
Pagan	0.5%	7
Buddhist	0.4%	5
Spiritualist	0.4%	5
Hindu	0.2%	3
Muslim	0.2%	3
Sikh	0.2%	3
Jewish	0.2%	2
Jain	0.1%	1
Jehovah Witness	0.1%	1

11.0% (146) said PNTS and 2.8% (37) said another religion.

Sexuality (n=1,315)

Heterosexual	79.8%	(1050)
Bisexual	1.4%	(19)
Gay Man	1.7%	(22)
Lesbian / Gay Woman	0.8%	(10)
Questioning	0.1%	(1)

13.2% (174) said PNTS and 3.0% (39) said other.

*See appendix for open text responses

Sample Representativeness

The sample size is large enough to be representative of Northamptonshire's population as a whole (95% confidence intervals and a 3% margin of error), meaning that the findings are more likely to be generalisable and to provide a more accurate picture of the views of Northamptonshire as a whole.

Demographic representativeness in comparison to the 2019 and 2020 mid-year population estimates across the county for geography, gender, and age is noted below.

Sector:

	Population 2019	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
Corby	9.6%	6.7%	-2.9%	Slightly underrepresented
Daventry	11.4%	10.2%	-1.2%	Fairly representative
East Northamptonshire	12.5%	13.7%	1.2%	Fairly representative
Kettering	13.5%	15.3%	1.8%	Fairly representative
Northampton	29.8%	24.7%	-5.1%	Slightly underrepresented
South Northamptonshire	12.5%	13.9%	1.4%	Fairly representative
Wellingborough	10.6%	11.4%	0.8%	Fairly representative

Unitary Authority:

	Population 2020	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
North Northamptonshire	46.3%	47.1%	0.8%	Fairly representative
West Northamptonshire	53.7%	48.8%	-4.9%	Slightly underrepresented

Gender:

	Population 2020	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
Female	50.5%	37.0%	-13.5%	Underrepresented
Male	49.5%	53.9%	4.4%	Slightly overrepresented

Age:

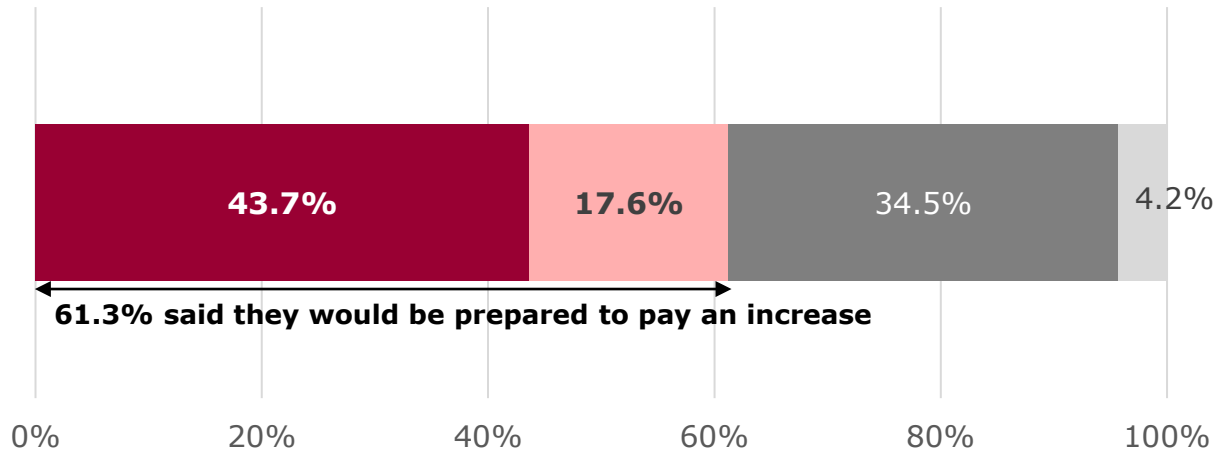
	Population 2020	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
24 & under	29.9%	3.1%	-26.8%	Underrepresented
25-34	12.0%	8.4%	-3.6%	Slightly underrepresented
35-44	13.0%	13.1%	0.1%	Fairly representative
45-54	14.0%	17.8%	3.8%	Slightly overrepresented
55-64	12.6%	19.5%	6.9%	Slightly overrepresented
65-74	10.3%	20.3%	10.0%	Overrepresented
75+	8.0%	8.3%	0.3%	Fairly representative

Survey Findings

Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service

Fire currently makes up approximately 4% of your council tax bill and the average household (band D) pays £63.20 a year (approximately £1.21 a week) towards Fire and Rescue Services.

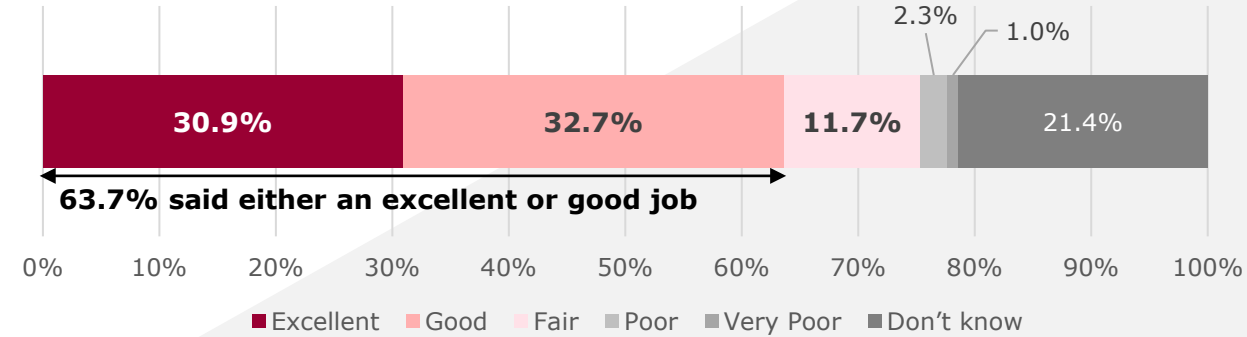
In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views? (n=1,484)



61.3% said they would be prepared to pay an increase

- I would be prepared to pay an increase of £5 a year for Fire & Rescue services (approximately 10p per week)
- I don't think the Fire & Rescue services are funded enough in Northamptonshire and I would be prepared to pay more towards them if it were possible
- I would not be prepared to pay any more for Fire and Rescue Services than I do now
- I don't know

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are doing? (n=1,439)



63.7% said either an excellent or good job

Why do you say that? (n=654) - Top qualitative themes identified

- Positive experience - police presence and work observed (265 people, 17.9%)
- Don't know (143 people, 9.6%)
- Not needed to use their service (136 people, 9.2%)
- Lack of visibility/the work they do is unknown or seen/purpose unknown (64 people, 4.3%)
- Lack of representation or information provided in public communication (50 people, 3.4%)
- Resource issues (48 people, 3.2%)
- Funding issues (45 people, 3.0%)
- Good response (33 people (2.2%))
- Negative view/experience (30 people, 2.0%)

61.3% of participants stated that they would be prepared to pay an increase for Fire & Rescue services. 43.7% said they would be prepared to pay an increase of £5 a year, 17.6% said they don't think Fire and Rescue services are funded enough and would be prepared to pay more if it were possible, 34.5% said they would not be prepared to pay any more than they do now, and 4.2% said they don't know.

63.7% of participants said that they think Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are doing either an excellent or good job, 11.7% said a fair job, 2.3% said a poor job, 1.0% said a very poor job, and 21.4% said they don't know.

*See appendix for all identified themes.

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service? (n=388)

Families & households are already struggling financially/wages are down & cost of living is up (60 people, 4.0%)

- "They do a fantastic job, but where does this stop? You say the funding is lower than inflation, but so are my wages but my living costs are climbing."
- "Because I simply cannot afford it, and we never see any improvements when you do get extra."
- "Bills are already stretching households. It's not sustainable"
- "Wages are down and cost of living is up significantly, why not try to save costs before asking for more."
- "Families already are struggling to pay so this could be really hard on them"

The service needs more money/funding (51 people, 3.4%)

- "This is a key PUBLIC service. Please fund it fully and properly in order that it can meet its commitments in full when called upon."
- "Having been criminally underfunded before being aligned to the PFCC, the service desperately needs extra funding to cope with the ever changing demographic of the county."
- "I don't think public services are funded enough, and would like to pay more but I'm on a low income, every year our council tax rises, yet we seem to have less and less services? Which councillors pocket are we lining??!"
- "Council should stop wasting money and fund these services which we all agree are under funded."
- "The fire service in Northants has always been under funded for the past 15 years. The service needs the correct funding to move forward and provide the essential it tries to deliver."

Happy with the service provided (47 people, 3.2%)

- "I am not seeing an under performing service, so don't see why more cash is needed"
- "They do a great job on limited resources"
- "Fine service"
- "Think they do a sterling job"
- "I think the Firemen and Firewomen do a brilliant job and would be happy to pay whatever extra money they need."
- "Their work is invaluable but I struggle to meet bills with the council tax increase we had this year and the last 5 years"

No (39 people, 2.6%)

Improve efficiency/cut costs/work better with the police (36 people, 2.4%)

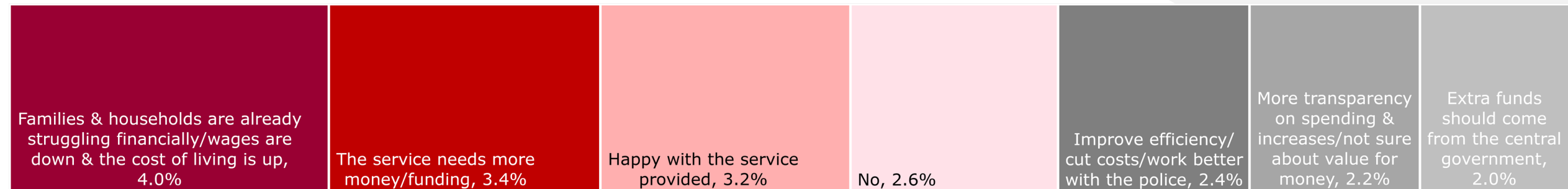
- "You need to seriously cut out unnecessary waste to reduce costs. All too easy to keep increasing council tax. Operate as a business with a fixed revenue and cut costs accordingly."
- "Usage of existing should be more efficiently spent and not simply wasted. It's very sad that taxpayers are continually expected to pay more when they themselves can't afford it."
- "Reduce the bureaucracy and you will have adequate funds for frontline activities."
- "If possible HQ to be in a hub with police and ambulance service."
- "I would pay more towards them if they were utilised by Police when not at Fire incidents."
- "Wasted money at Daventry you could have all been in the police station and used the fire/ambulance station for police cars"

More transparency on spending & increases/not sure about value for money (32 people, 2.2%)

- "I don't think we get value for money for service tbh"
- "What would the extra money actually pay for"
- "I might be prepared to pay more but would want to see a business plan"
- "If paying more, I'd like to see some benefits. This can't be arbitrary, the customer needs to see the services that it is paying for"
- "We need to see statistics first what have been done/improved/gone worse that are linked to lack of fundings."
- "What is the fire service doing to ensure value for money? How are you spending more than your budget?"

Extra funds should come from the central government (30 people, 2.0%)

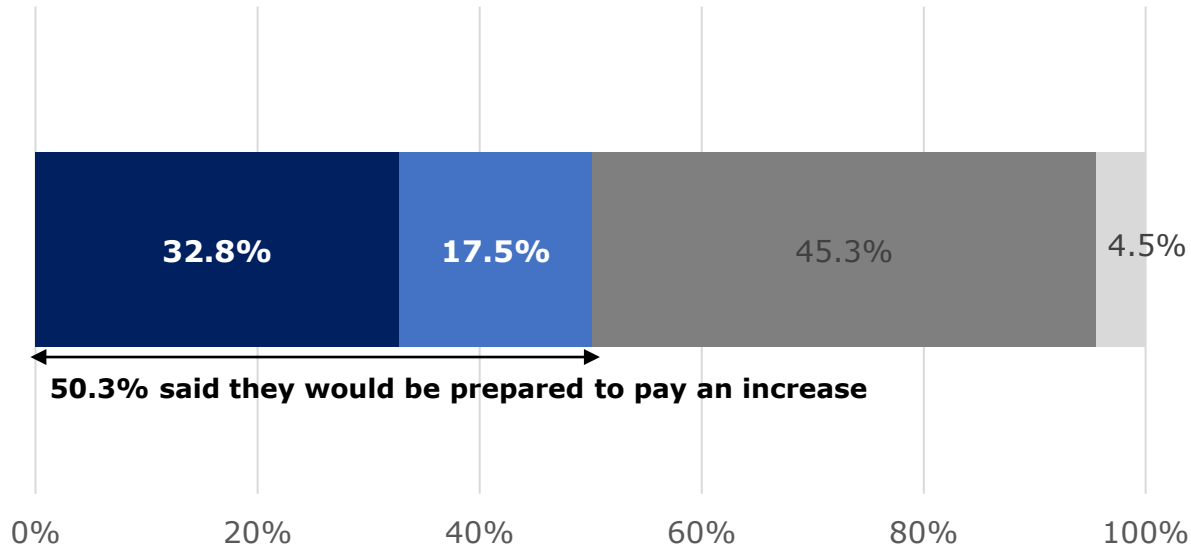
- "Funding should come from Central Government"
- "The government should pay for this"
- "Every year we are in the same position, more effort as needed to ensure that the Government is aware and Northamptonshire is fairly funded."
- "Neglected by local politicians"



*See appendix for all identified themes.

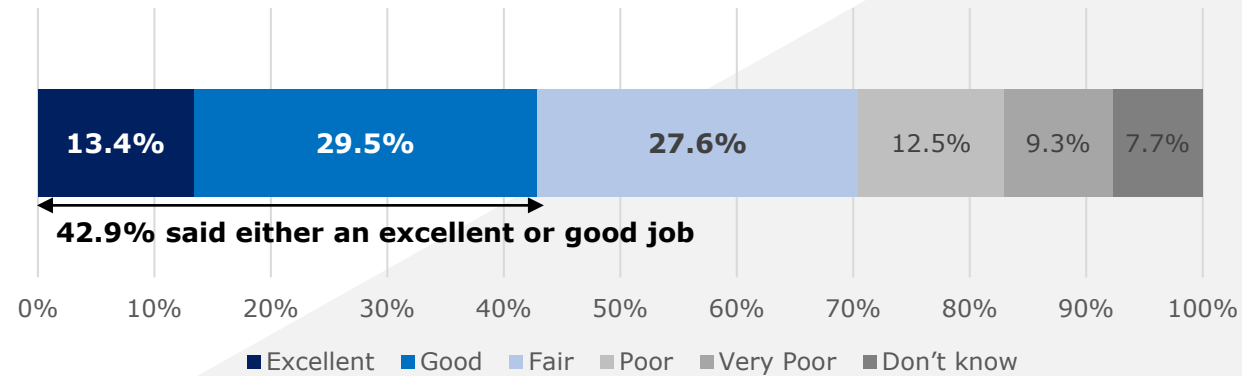
Police currently makes up approximately 14% of your council tax bill and the average household (band D) pays around £268.04 a year (approximately £5 per week) towards policing.

In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views? (n=1,404)



- I would be prepared to pay an increase of £10 a year for policing (approximately 19p per week)
- I don't think the Police are funded enough in Northamptonshire and I would be prepared to pay more towards them if it were possible
- I would not be prepared to pay any more for policing than I do now
- I don't know

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Police are doing? (n=1,379)



Why do you say that? (n=732) - Top qualitative themes identified

- Negative views/thoughts about the police (198 people, 13.3%)
- Neighbourhoods feel neglected/lack of police presence/need more "boots on the ground" (172 people, 11.6%)
- Unhappy with the service provided (154 people, 10.4%)
- Positive views/thoughts – Northants Police do a good job (138 people, 9.3%)
- No confidence in the police (114 people, 7.7%)
- Poor response/not easily accessible/not enough done to tackle some crimes (113 people, 7.6%)
- Resource issues (100 people, 6.7%)
- Unhappy with the priorities (94 people, 6.3%)

50.3% of participants stated that they would be prepared to pay an increase for policing. 32.8% said they would be prepared to pay an increase of £10 a year, 17.5% said they don't think the police are funded enough and would be prepared to pay more if it were possible, 45.3% said they would not be prepared to pay any more than they do now, and 4.5% said they don't know.

42.9% of participants said that they think Northamptonshire Police are doing either an excellent or good job, 27.6% said a fair job, 12.5% said a poor job, 9.3% said a very poor job, and 7.7% said they don't know.

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about Northamptonshire Police? (n=620)

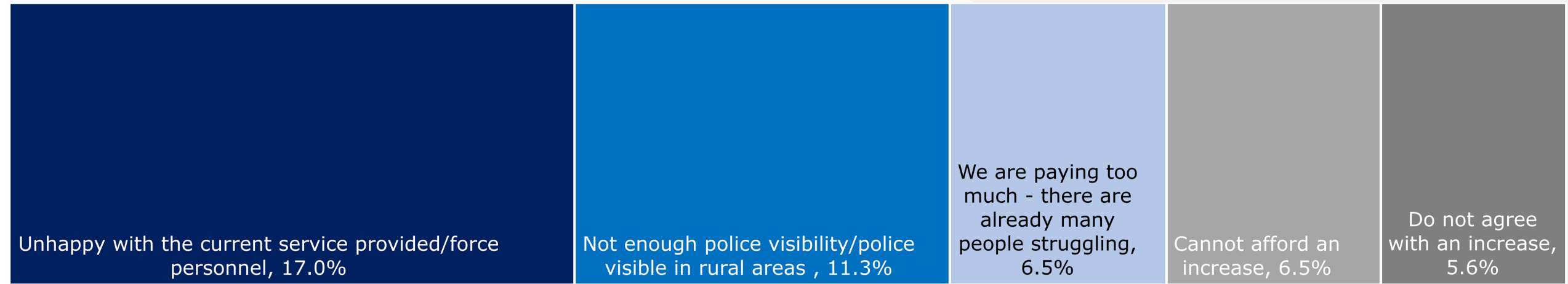
Unhappy with the current service provided/force personnel (253 people, 17.0%)
 "Never there when needed always got more important things to do. Cant get through when you phone. Waste of time."
 "Too many resources currently misallocated to the wrong priorities."
 "The police force is not value for money, far to expensive, when you need them they are not there to help, Badly managed."
 "All they do is drive around when they are out of town. Never see them on the beat to stop antisocial behaviour "
 "Inefficient and never see them now nearly invisible"
 "They need to reduce the amount of leaders they have and better spend it on the control room"
 "Northamptonshire police continually let their County Down "

Not enough police visibility/police visible in rural areas (168 people, 11.3%)
 "Need more police visibility on the streets"
 "Need more visibility!!"
 "I realise they do a good job via computing etc., and we still need to see more police in the villages. Crime has gone up here and they need to be much more visible on a regular basis."
 "They need to have a more visible presence especially in the town centre."

We are paying too much – there are already many people struggling (97 people, 6.5%)
 "I believe extra funding should come from the government. I don't think it should be local people who're responsible for paying for a service that's broken. We're already struggling with increases on everything else"
 "Already struggle financially. Not enough in my budget for fresh healthy food and gas"
 "I pay too much now."
 "It's to expensive now"

Cannot afford an increase (96 people, 6.5%)
 "As a pensioner on a fixed income I can't afford to pay much more"
 "We pay more and more each year but my wages do not increase by this amount".
 "I can't give what I don't have"

Do not agree with an increase (83 people, 5.6%)
 "Why would I pay more? Policing seems to get worse the more money you throw at it."
 "Until I can see an improvement in my local area (knowing that there are now more police) I would not be prepared to pay more. I need to see evidence of policing first"
 "Improve efficiencies with what you have already"
 "Never see police in my town so why should I pay more to not see police in my town"



*See appendix for all identified themes.

Appendix

Open-Text Responses – Demographics

Are you completing this survey as... Which organisation?

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Northants			
Police	12	1391	0.9%
Local Council	10	1391	0.7%
As an individual	5	1391	0.4%
N/A	4	1391	0.3%
NFRS	4	1391	0.3%
Social Services	1	1391	0.1%
None	1	1391	0.1%
Northampton Saints	1	1391	0.1%
Probation service	1	1391	0.1%
Salvation army	1	1391	0.1%
Prefer not to say	1	1391	0.1%
OPFCC	1	1391	0.1%

Gender I self-identify as (please specify)

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Irrelevant	4	1329	0.3%
Human	2	1329	0.2%
Gender-fluid	1	1329	0.1%
Victim of crime you failed to investigate	1	1329	0.1%
Me	1	1329	0.1%
A couple	1	1329	0.1%
Turnip	1	1329	0.1%

Ethnicity Other (please specify)

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Irrelevant	14	1330	1.1%
English	6	1330	0.5%
White English	6	1330	0.5%
Human	2	1330	0.2%
Anglo-Norse	1	1330	0.1%
Cornish	1	1330	0.1%
First nation	1	1330	0.1%
N/A	1	1330	0.1%
German	1	1330	0.1%
Hispanic	1	1330	0.1%
White Welsh	1	1330	0.1%

Sexuality Other (please specify)

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Irrelevant	28	1315	2.1%
Asexual	3	1315	0.2%
N/A	2	1315	0.2%
Human	1	1315	0.1%
Don't know	1	1315	0.1%
Male	1	1315	0.1%
Married	1	1315	0.1%
Straight	1	1315	0.1%
Terrific	1	1315	0.1%

Another religion (please specify)

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Irrelevant	13	37	35.1%
N/a	4	37	10.8%
Agnostic	3	37	8.1%
Humanist	3	37	8.1%
Atheist	2	37	5.4%
Catholic	2	37	5.4%
Believer	1	37	2.7%
Church of England	1	37	2.7%
Existentialism	1	37	2.7%
FSMism	1	37	2.7%
Gnostic	1	37	2.7%
Individualist	1	37	2.7%
Jedi	1	37	2.7%
Lego	1	37	2.7%
Open minded	1	37	2.7%
Roman Catholic	1	37	2.7%
Spiny Normanist	1	37	2.7%

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are doing? – Why do you say that? Other, less frequently identified themes

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Lack of statistics to judge performance	28	1484	1.9%
Police related answer	24	1484	1.6%
Lack of community engagement	18	1484	1.2%
Could be better	10	1484	0.7%
Inconsistency across the county	9	1484	0.6%
Inefficient use of funds	6	1484	0.4%
Financial burden on an already financially constrained general public	6	1484	0.4%
Current service is adequate	4	1484	0.3%
Need more support	3	1484	0.2%
Underpaid	3	1484	0.2%
Legislation issues	1	1484	0.1%

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service? Other, less frequently identified themes

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Disagree with an increase	28	1484	1.9%
Happy to pay an increase	23	1484	1.5%
Other	19	1484	1.3%
Police related answer	17	1484	1.1%
Already paying too much	16	1484	1.1%
More houses/population should mean more council tax	10	1484	0.7%
Need more staff/better equipment/stations	9	1484	0.6%
The work they do is dangerous/they're willing to put life on the line	7	1484	0.5%
Close/reduce Commissioners office	6	1484	0.4%
Review how council tax is distributed	5	1484	0.3%
Local authorities are wasting money	5	1484	0.3%
More preventative/community work	4	1484	0.3%
No noticeable improvements from the last increase	4	1484	0.3%
Questioning why this is a low funded service	4	1484	0.3%
Never used the service but glad it's there	3	1484	0.2%
Important service/protects life	3	1484	0.2%
Prefer money to be put into policing	3	1484	0.2%
NHS need it more (funds)	2	1484	0.1%
Worry that it funds high salaries and pensions	2	1484	0.1%
Questioning what they do	2	1484	0.1%
Stations are too far away	1	1484	0.1%
Negative comment about the survey	1	1484	0.1%
Negative experience of NFRS	1	1484	0.1%

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Police are doing? – Why do you say that? Other, less frequently identified themes

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Non-police related comment/no comment/other	64	1484	4.3%
They are doing what they can	49	1484	3.3%
Funding issues	43	1484	2.9%
Officers/service overstretched/underpaid	30	1484	2.0%
Could do better/more needs to be done to improve the service provided	29	1484	2.0%
Lack of information about what they do/statistics	27	1484	1.8%
Don't have much experience with them	23	1484	1.5%
Unhappy with management/retention of officers	17	1484	1.1%
More community engagement is needed	14	1484	0.9%
Positive experience with officers	11	1484	0.7%
Negative experience with officers	10	1484	0.7%
Happy with the service provided	8	1484	0.5%
Don't hear much about them	7	1484	0.5%
Sometimes seen - monitoring traffic, mobile speed cameras, Beat Bus.	7	1484	0.5%
Central government/government should do more	5	1484	0.3%
Cannot afford	1	1484	0.1%

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about Northamptonshire Police?

Other, less frequently identified themes

Theme	Number of people who contributed towards the theme	Total n	%
Resource issues	42	1484	2.8%
Use government/central government funds	41	1484	2.8%
Positive view/they do a good job	41	1484	2.8%
Inefficient use of funds/reduce waste of funds	40	1484	2.7%
Happy to pay extra for better local policing/if service improves	37	1484	2.5%
Use current funds and resources effectively	35	1484	2.4%
Cannot see the benefits from previous increases	29	1484	2.0%
Poor response to crime reports	28	1484	1.9%
Funding issues	28	1484	1.9%
Scrap the PCC/the PCC is overpaid/cut overpaid senior officers salaries	22	1484	1.5%
Service needs more funding	19	1484	1.3%
Need to improve on public engagement	16	1484	1.1%
No information on the current finances to make a decision	12	1484	0.8%
Funding needs to be reduced	7	1484	0.5%
Unhappy with recruitment process	6	1484	0.4%
Over-funded	3	1484	0.2%
Police presence observed	3	1484	0.2%
Fire related answer	2	1484	0.1%
Abolish council tax	1	1484	0.1%
Not really a large increase	1	1484	0.1%

