

Introduction

This report summarises the findings from a survey of Essex residents to seek their views about investing in both Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

Recent investment in Essex Police means that there will be 900 more police officers in Essex by March 2023, making Essex Police the largest it has ever been. Essex Police is putting more officers in local neighbourhoods, focusing on preventing crime, and supporting victims and is committed to making the Police service even more local, visible and accessible. This investment is already making a difference with anti-social behaviour down by 45%, dwelling burglary by 51% and theft by 19% since 2016.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has made strong progress in recent years, improving the training provided to firefighters, investing in protection service and preventing harm. Continuing this investment will help the Service to continue to reduce the risk to the public and property across Essex.

The 2023/24 budgets for both Services are being set against the backdrop of a challenging economic environment with inflation and pay, utilities and fuel costs all rising. A sixth survey was carried out in order to find out the views of Essex residents to help inform the plan for police and fire service funding in 2023/2024.

The Police Precept survey was live between 17th October and 1st December 2022. The total number of respondents to the survey was 2,349, although not all respondents answered every question.

In addition, in order to obtain the views of children and young people, as few were likely to complete the survey, the Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECYVS) ran a number of focused group sessions. Almost 800 young people took part in the VVU listening project, 217 young people took part in the children & young person's police strategy listening project and 140 children and young people took part in the PFCC priorities listening exercise.

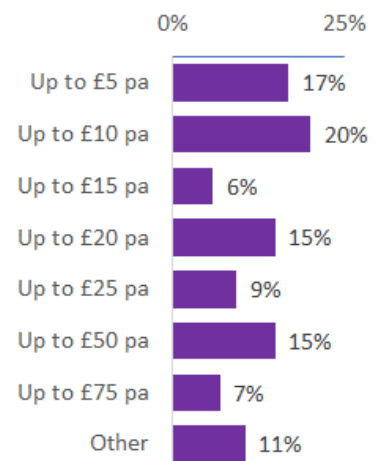
The raw data from the survey and the results of the listening project were provided to an independent researcher to undertake the analysis and produce this report.

Executive Summary

Policing precept

- 77% (of 2,155 respondents giving an answer) said that they would like to see more investment in policing in their community.
- 78% (of 2,151 respondents giving an answer) said they would like to see Essex Police receive more funding to invest in getting crime down, prevention, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county.
- However, just 51% (of 2,151 respondents answering this question) said that they would be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided.

- 75% of the 1,287 people who gave a view said they were prepared to contribute up to £10 per year or more to invest in policing¹. This proportion fell by three percentage points this year after a significant increase in 2021. 55% of the respondents said they would be prepared to pay up to £15 per year or more.



- Tackling gangs and drug related violence were ranked as the most important area for extra investment, followed by local neighbourhood policing, serious and organised crime and tackling anti-social behaviour.

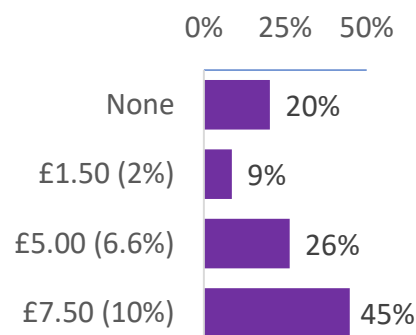
Of the 2,349 total respondents, 469 provided a comment. The main themes were:

- As in the last five surveys, the highest number of comments (14% of all those made) related to having more visible policing or a greater police presence (this was also important to young people). Many felt police visibility would act as a deterrent to crime or lack of a visible presence leads to an increase in crime. 14% of respondents providing a comment wanted to have police on the streets.
- 10% of respondents wanted a better response to the kinds of “low level” crime activity that affects them and their communities and which many said that they report but see no action about. 7% wanted an improved response to crime.
- 5% wanted to see neighbourhood policing introduced or re-instated, often in relation to deterring or preventing crime through better local intelligence.
- A significant proportion of comments related to funding, mainly that people could not afford to pay more, especially as times are hard with rising bills and inflation (5%), that respondents have not seen any results from previous increases in the precept (5%), that residents are paying more money but getting a worse service or no services or that they do not get value for money currently (3%).
- 10% of all comments wanted the police force to increase their efficiency or to cut existing waste.

¹ This percentage includes people who specified a relevant amount under “other” responses

Fire service funding

- 80% of 1,733 respondents said they were willing to pay more for fire and rescue services, with 71% saying they would be willing to pay an increase of 3% (£5) or more. 20% said they did not want to see any increase, 9% would be prepared to pay a 2% increase (£1.50), 26% would pay an increase of 3% (£5.00) and 45% would be prepared to pay an increase of 5% (£7.50).



There were 426 comments made. The main themes were:

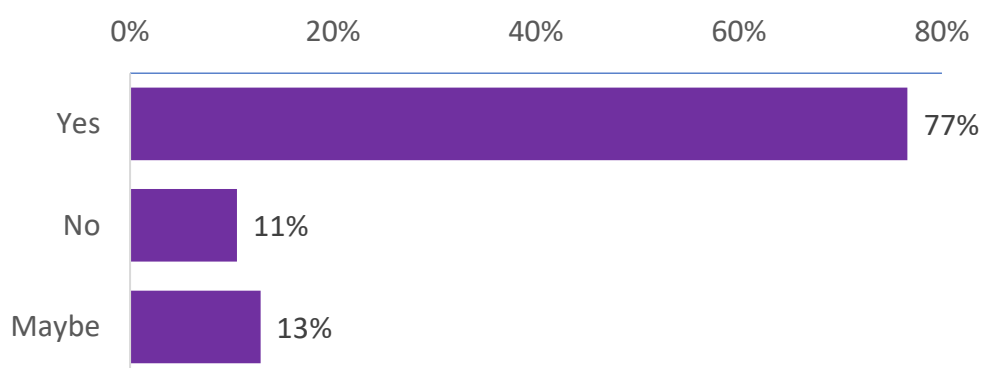
- 26% of respondents providing a comment highlighted that the Fire Service requires investment. Another 4% felt that previous budget cuts have impacted adversely on the service.
- 17% of comments related to funding, reflecting similar themes to those made under the policing precept section, including 12% saying that people cannot afford an increase in the current times.
- 13% highlighted what a good job the fire service does and what an invaluable service it is.
- 11% suggested the fire service could be more efficient or stop waste, including reducing management.

Detailed Findings

Policing Precept

Respondents were asked whether, in general, they would be like to see more investment in policing in their community and 77% of the 2,155 people who provided a response said that they would. This is very similar to the responses in 2021.

Chart 1: Would you like to see more investment to increase policing in your community?



This question was changed slightly in 2021, so no direct comparison can be made with the data prior to 2020, but the figures are included here as an indicative comparison. (In previous years, the question asked was whether in general, respondents would be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided.)

Table 1: Responses to question: “Would you like to see more investment to increase policing in your community?”

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Yes	78%	56%	66%	71%	66%
No	9%	30%	21%	20%	24%
Not sure	14%	14%	12%	9%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Where respondents provided their postcode, these were matched to the most likely Council Tax Band for each postcode area and a total of 1,147 matches were made. The results for Bands G and H were combined due to the small sample sizes within each band.

A higher proportion of respondents who are likely to be in Council Tax Bands D said they would be prepared to invest more and a lower proportion in Bands G/H said that they would maybe be prepared to invest more.

Table 2: Responses by estimated council tax band to question: “Would you like to see more investment to increase policing in your community?”

Council tax band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G&H	All respondents	
								%	n
Yes	78%	78%	77%	84%	77%	76%	74%	78%	900
No	9%	9%	10%	6%	12%	13%	9%	9%	109
Maybe	13%	12%	13%	10%	11%	11%	16%	14%	138
Number	100	106	342	213	242	70	74	2,155	1,910

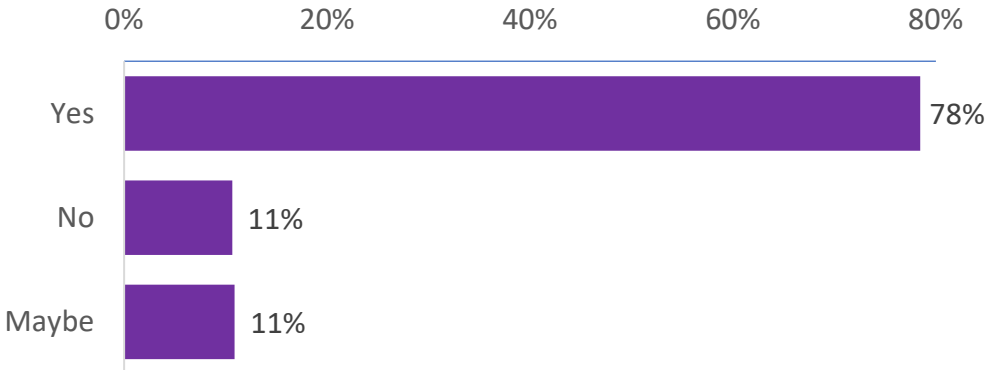
There were no significant differences by age (the difference for those under 25 is not significant due to the small number of responses).

Table 3: Responses by age band to question: “Would you like to see more investment to increase policing in your community?”

Age	Under 25	26 - 40	41 - 64	65 +	All respondents
Yes	81%	76%	77%	78%	78%
No	11%	15%	10%	8%	9%
Not sure	9%	9%	13%	14%	14%
Number	47	295	756	467	2,155

Respondents were asked whether they would like to see Essex Police receive more funding to invest in getting crime down, prevention, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county. 78% of the 2,151 people who replied to this question said they would (down very slightly from 80% of respondents in 2021).

Chart 2: Would you like to see Essex Police receive more funding to invest in getting crime down, prevention, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county?



There were no significant differences by Council Tax Bands in the proportion of respondents saying they would be prepared to invest more in getting crime down, prevention, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county.

Table 4: Responses by estimated council tax band to question: “Would you like to see Essex Police receive more funding to invest in getting crime down, prevention, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county?”

Council tax band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G&H	All respondents	
								%	n
Yes	82%	80%	81%	82%	79%	77%	80%	78%	1688
No	10%	9%	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	11%	229
Maybe	8%	10%	9%	9%	10%	13%	12%	11%	234
Number	100	106	342	211	242	70	75		2,151

There were no significant differences in responses by age.

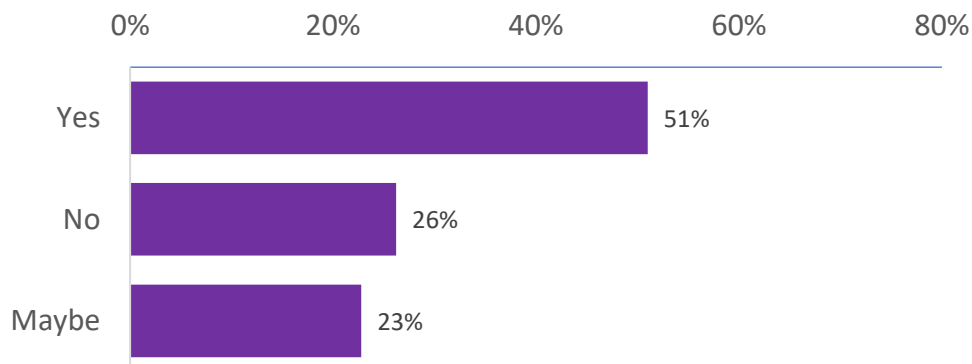
Table 5: Responses by age band to question: “Would you like to see Essex Police receive more funding to invest in getting crime down, prevention, protecting the vulnerable and supporting victims across our county?”

Age	Under 25	26 - 40	41 - 64	65 +	All respondents
Yes	79%	79%	80%	78%	78%
No	13%	15%	10%	9%	11%
Not sure	8%	6%	10%	13%	11%
Number	48	295	753	465	2,151

Feedback from the listening exercises with children and young people was that they are committed to seeing their emergency services improved and invested in. It may not be something they can currently invest in themselves, but they want to feel safe and recognise that investing in these services will help themselves and their communities to be safer places to live.

Respondents were asked whether they would be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided. Just over half (51%) of the 2,151 people who replied to this question said they would.

Chart 3: Would you be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided?



A higher proportion of respondents who are likely to be in Council Tax Bands E and G/H said they would be prepared to invest more to help improve the service provided.

Table 6: Responses by estimated council tax band to question: “Would you be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided?”

Council tax band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G&H	All respondents	
								%	n
Yes	49%	54%	55%	54%	60%	50%	64%	51%	1097
No	27%	27%	24%	17%	23%	27%	21%	26%	564
Maybe	24%	19%	21%	28%	18%	23%	15%	23%	490
Number	100	106	342	213	242	70	75		2,151

Respondents who were aged 26-49 were more likely to say yes to this question than respondents in other age groups.

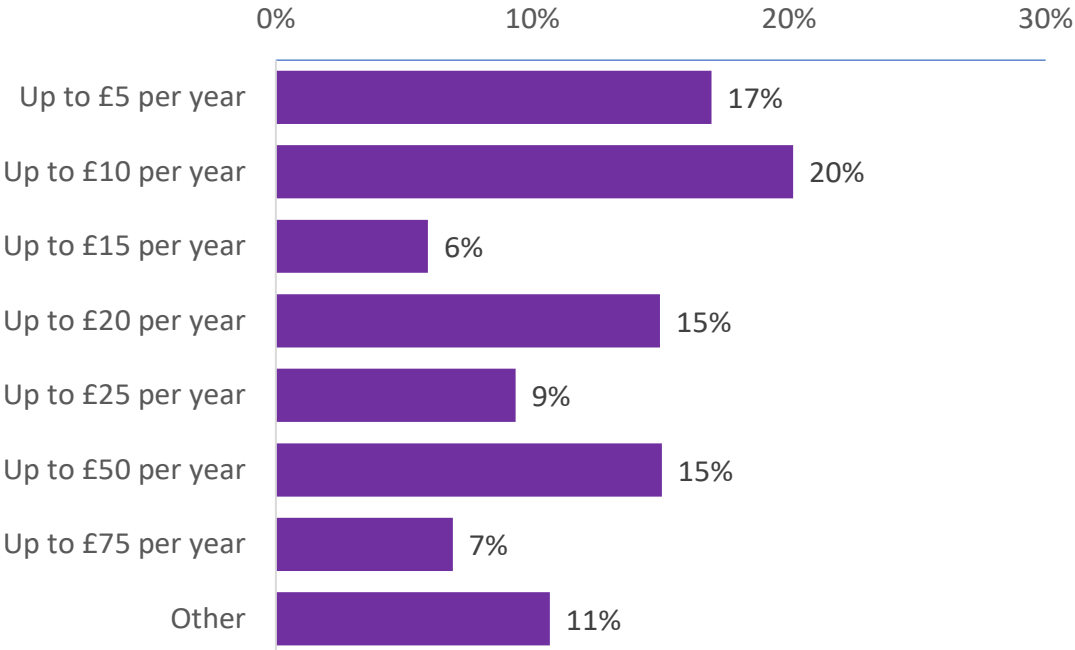
Table 7: Responses by age band to question: “Would you be prepared to invest more in policing to help improve the service provided?”

Age	Under 25	26 - 40	41 - 64	65 +	All respondents
Yes	50%	57%	53%	53%	51%
No	25%	28%	29%	21%	26%
Not sure	25%	16%	19%	26%	23%
Number	48	294	756	465	2,151

The Council Tax for policing is approximately one-tenth of a total Council Tax charge and is often referred to a ‘police precept’. The Band D Council Tax for policing in Essex for 2023/24 is £218.52. Respondents were asked how much more they would be prepared to contribute to support more investment in policing.

Of the 1,287 respondents who replied to this question, 75% said they were prepared to contribute up to £10 per year or more to invest in policing while 55% said they would be prepared to pay £15 or more².

Chart 4: How much more would you be prepared to contribute to support more investment in policing?



The proportion of respondents saying they were prepared to pay amounts of up to £10 per year or more fell by three percentage points this year after increasing significantly in 2021.

Table 8: Responses to question: “How much more would you be prepared to contribute to support more in policing?”

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Up to £5 per year	17%	16%	16%	9%
Up to £10 per year	20%	18%	20%	15%
Up to £15 per year	6%	6%	6%	7%
Up to £20 per year	15%	15%	15%	16%
Up to £25 per year	9%	12%	10%	17%
Up to £50 per year	15%	18%	13%	18%
Up to £75 per year	7%	9%	6%	11%
Other	11%	7%	14%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
All saying up to £10 or more ²	75%	78%	72%	85%
All saying up to £15 or more ²	55%	62%	52%	76%

² These percentages include people who specified a relevant amount under “other” responses

7% of respondents suggested other amounts, as detailed in the table below. Seven respondents said that this would depend on what it is being spent on and another 14 suggested something else, mainly that it should be what is necessary, should require an improved service, or should be based on income levels/cost of houses.

Table 9: Other amounts suggested in response to question: “How much more would you be prepared to contribute to support more in policing?”

‘Other’ amounts	Number of respondents who specified an ‘other’ amount
Nothing	20
Between £1 and £99 per year	7
An extra £100 per year	26
An extra £120 per year	7
£200 or more per year	12
Other replies	18
Number of respondents	83

Areas for additional investment

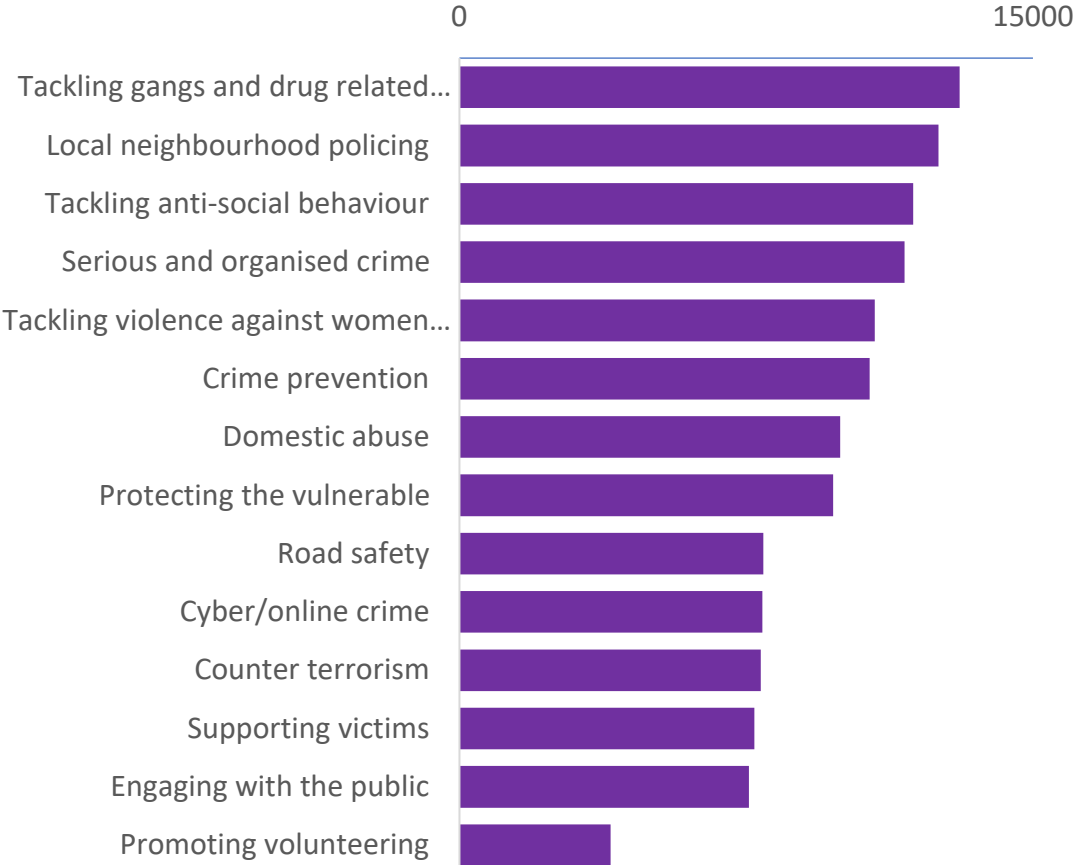
Respondents were asked how important they feel that extra investment is in 14 specific areas (ranked in order of importance with number 1 being the most important and 14 being the least important).

Tackling gangs and drug related violence were ranked at the top, followed by local neighbourhood policing, serious and organised crime and tackling anti-social behaviour. These four areas were all also in the top four in 2021.

- 1 Tackling gangs and drug related violence
- 2 Local neighbourhood policing
- 3 Tackling anti-social behaviour
- 4 Serious and organised crime
- 5 Tackling violence against women and girls
- 6 Crime prevention
- 7 Domestic abuse
- 8 Protecting the vulnerable
- 9 Road safety
- 10 Cyber/online crime
- 11 Counter terrorism
- 12 Supporting victims
- 13 Engaging with the public
- 14 Promoting volunteering

The chart below shows the total scores given to each area of policing, whereby tackling gangs and drug related violence scored more than three times promoting volunteering.

Chart 5: Of the 14 areas listed below, which would you like to see more investment in?



The 217 children and young people taking part in listening project were asked what they think is the most important thing in the strategy that the police need to focus on. Their top answers were:

1. Building positive relationships with young people.
2. Reducing criminalisation and offending.
3. Preventing harm.
4. Keeping us safe.
5. Listening to us.
6. Protecting children in care.
7. Protecting our rights & reducing reoffending.
8. More safe activities for us to do.

The 140 children and young people taking part in the PFCC priorities listening exercise in 2021 were asked what the most important issues were to be addressed in the 'crime prevention' and 'reducing drug driven violence' priorities and they said the following:

1. Support for people to step away from gang life.
2. More Police .
3. Early help and projects for young people.
4. Work with local communities to identify changes needed.
5. Close down County lines.
6. Use technology (like apps, social media, tasers, body cams).

54% of the 800 young people taking part in the VVU listening project said that their biggest concern around safety in Essex was knife crime/getting stabbed and 52% said they were worried about being exploited by gangs.

Other comments

Respondents were asked whether there was anything else that they would like to say about the policing precept, and 469 comments were made.

Policing and police visibility

Just as in the previous five precept surveys, the largest number of comments (by 64 respondents or 14% of all comments made) related to having more visible policing or a greater police presence. Many respondents linked the greater visibility of police to this acting as a deterrent to crime or that the lack of a visible police presence has led to an increase in crime.

“First level policing is visually poor. Officers are infrequently, if ever, seen patrolling in my neighbourhood. Basic law is not adhered to. For example, why do you allow cyclists on pavements? Why are there no prosecutions for this offence? If control is not exhibited at a basic level does it not dilute your control and authority? Why are basic crimes not being reported? You have to be visible to be viable.”

“It’s a fair charge when the results are obvious. So, would I pay more? On that principle, yes. The irritation arises when areas of daytime safety become “warzones” when the sun goes down. It is easy to blame late night entertainment but the reality is that the areas are on the whole unpoliced and as such, effectively wild. Be there, be seen, be active.”

“There definitely needs to be a visible police presence around the town and its environs. Not in a threatening way but as a community presence as police always used to, so people knew they were there if help was needed. I know times change and funding is always being pared back for all services, but people were reassured by seeing “bobbies on the beat” old-fashioned as it may seem.”

“More police officers visible on the street would help deter people from criminal and anti-social behaviour.” (young person from listening exercises)

The young people in the VVU listening project were asked how safety in their presumed hot spot crime areas could be increased and the overwhelming top answer

was that they wanted to see more police on patrol in their local area. When asked what would help to make them feel safer, the second highest answer (at 25%) was that they would like to see more police on patrol.

A number of people also linked greater visibility to having police on the streets and/or having police stations open. 37 comments (8% of them all) related to having police on the streets or "bobbies on the beat" while 39 comments (8%) related to the need for more police on the streets or more frontline police officers. 41 respondents (9% of comments) said that they do not see the police.

"Definitely to go back to police on the beat. In that way they know their neighbourhood and the public know them."

"More patrols on the streets and addressing low level crime and particularly the carrying of weapons and there ultimately being a recognised deterrent so that crime does not pay."

"I would like to see some kind of Police presence in all major towns in terms of a shop unit or similar used as a front desk type location. In Wickford as an example the Police station was closed, however I realise a station doesn't stop or prevent crime but it does give a base for officers, PCSO's, Special constables etc. It also possible allows a place for the public to report crime or speak to someone about concerns they have in the local area. Also, there is such a need for officers walking the beat again, we desperately need this in my view, it's vital to get to know problem areas or issues like anti-social behaviour and allow the chance to work with local people to resolve issues, often solving these issues leads on to solving more serious crime."

23 comments (5%) were about having police stations open or reopening stations.

"I live in Southend and both police stations have been closed down now when I call for help the call goes to Chelmsford which is several miles away! More should be done to reassure us that there is even a police presence in this city."

"I appreciate and understand the reasons why the Essex Police estate has been so drastically reduced since 2011. Running costs, maintenance costs etc etc. However, in the decade or so since we saw this rapid decline in the size of the estate, it does not seem to have had any discernible positive difference on service delivery. I agree that smaller Police houses and lodges were quite rightly sold off, however working, full size Police Stations that are able to safely house response, neighbourhood, investigative and intel teams as well as modestly sized custody suites and property offices are needed in order for Police to have an effective and firm grip of a districts law and order. Each LPA needs a dedicated 'mini HQ' sized station with the above, and this should act as a hub for several smaller stations throughout the LPA where response and neighbourhood teams can patrol from and offer adequate and better coverage, lower response times and a face to face point of contact for the lost, vulnerable and those in need of Police contact. The number of stations we need does not need to match what we have lost, but the fact of the matter is we need more. And they need to be presentable. The stations we have retained, are some of the oldest, ugliest and unprofessional looking buildings we have. With the increase in Officer numbers, where are they all

going to be based now that we've sold everything off? We sold off the family silver and have nothing to show for it. A force wide design language needs to be identified, established throughout the estate and we need new stations in our portfolio. This is the first step to becoming an effective, trusted and robust force. People don't trust what they can't see. And Essex Police are invisible to the public these days. "

11 respondents (2% of comments) wanted to have a more visible presence in rural areas and villages or highlighted what they see as an absence of service in these areas.

"Increasing the precept is all well and good - for urban areas. Nothing is done for rural areas, I live in a rural area, we also suffer from crime but never see a police presence in our area... Any increase in precept should take into account the shortfall experienced in rural areas...!"

26 respondents (6% of all comments) agreed that more funding was required but said they would pay more only if the investment were to be in more frontline police/resources, while 11 comments (2% of the total) were that respondents would pay more but only for services within their locality.

"Additional funding must be spent on additional front facing police resources, not on management structures or Home Office driven bureaucratic issues."

"I would be happy to see a manageable increase, however I would need to be assured I would see the result of that in my immediate area and not necessarily across other districts."

24 respondents (5% of comments) wanted to see neighbourhood policing re-introduced, frequently in relation to this acting as a deterrent or preventing crime through better local intelligence and visibility. Another 13 people (3% of comments) suggested the need for a more targeted policing strategy and 15 (3% of comments) wanted "woke" activities to cease.

"I think that neighbourhood policing should be a priority in our communities I know times are hard but the police would get a lot more intelligence from it which in turn brings down crime in communities."

"Excellent policing across the many aspects that police have to deal with stems from excellent foundations of local neighbourhood policing. With this in place other aspects follow naturally."

"No one size fits all policy will tackle the issues Essex faces- the plan needs to be specific to each area, according to the problem it faces."

"Work smarter, not harder. Stop unnecessary spending on 'woke ' policing and Rainbow symbols - prevent and detect crime. Use the limited resources to focus only on essentials, realign purpose to core business and utilise all available resources on the key business: prevention and detection of crime. Cut off any unnecessary, or distracting plans or activities have one purpose as both the vision, the slogan and the only goal: prevention and detection of crime. This is what the community wants (+ needs), fulfilling this brings

community engagement and support. A safe community is only possible when you have a single-minded objective: prevent and detect crime."

"To base more policing around areas where problems most occur is a good idea as this may help to prevent further crimes." (young person in listening exercises)

35 respondents (7% of all comments) wanted an improved response to crime from the police, including better response times. This was often clearly based on personal experience. 15 people (3% of comments) mentioned difficulties in reporting a crime.

"Show up when there is a burglary. Don't just call the victim. Investigate and make an effort to solve the crime. Otherwise, there is absolutely no deterrent."

"Before we throw yet more money at the problem I would like to see the police that we do have available being present and being interested enough to do something when they do witness low level crime being committed. More police officers will have no effect if they continue to avoid enforcing the law with a "policing by the path of least resistance" approach."

"You need to make it possible for the public to be able to speak directly to the police and vice versa. Being directed to report matters on line or being put through to telephones that go unanswered means you are losing essential local intelligence and becoming remote from the local community. The 999 emergency number appears to be effective, but non urgent matters, which often provide vital information, are being poorly dealt with. Try calling 101 and you will see what I mean. Money and more thought needs to be given to this matter."

"To make the online reporting system easier to use it's far too long winded and very frustrating to use. 'Id rather call and speak to a human."

45 people (10% of all comments) wanted a better response to the kinds of low level crime activity that affects them and their communities and which many said that they report but see no action about. Some of these respondents also felt that this would prevent an escalation in criminal behaviour. Another 18 (4%) wanted police to focus on real crime or "go back to the basics".

"Too many things these days are just let go. Working closely with local traders things like shoplifting seem to be not dealt with. Southend high street also is just full of feral youths who seem to think they can do what they want with no consequences. Essex police need to invest in their town teams again. If you really crack down on the small stuff hopefully this would prevent the more serious stuff in the future."

"Police on foot and mobile patrols providing each other mutual support and don't give criminals and anti social behaviour any space in which to work. Anti social behaviour is a police issue and take it away from council as they are useless!! Hit petty crime hard and instil morals in society, if you ignore minor offences society will break down and more serious crime will occur."

"I do believe that tackling the lower grade stuff may prevent it leading to higher grade stuff. Ie, no intervention in nuisance and criminal damage makes youths in particular think they can do what they like. We've just had youths on bikes wearing masks/ hoodie cycling past kicking mirrors off cars. Police not interested, if you confront youths you get abuse and fear of retribution. They think they're invincible because they know police won't do anything. Never see police about."

28 people (6% of all comments) suggested that more needs to be done in respect of road safety or tackling road/traffic offences.

"I might be willing to provide more financial support, but I have the fear that anything extra just goes into a big black hole and no noticeable benefit is seen locally. Almost every single day I see examples of traffic offences, ranging from parking on zigzags and double yellow lines, through untaxed vehicles, to traffic violations such as running red lights and illegal manoeuvres. If I can see these things almost every time I walk to the High Street, imagine how much is actually going on if you multiply that for the hours throughout the day. I rarely see a traffic warden, and have never seen police dealing with such offences. Get these antisocial drivers off the roads through identifying and successfully prosecuting them, and the roads will be safer for everybody."

17 comments (4% of all) related to the need to tackle drugs and gangs.

"I believe that areas that are at risk of gang tourism, and crime that is created in other boroughs ie: County lines should have funding for extra policing all year round. In high season when the local policing teams are dealing with these crimes local crimes can be overlooked and out of season they are playing catchup to some of these crimes that they were simply not able to deal with due to lack of officers, ie: drug dealers who think that they have found a safe spot during the tourist season, often in the parks that are so precious to communities but there is simply not enough police to patrol these areas. I believe that most crimes could be avoided from theft to murder if we could just get a grip on drug dealing and county lines."

20 people (4% of comments) wanted more engagement with the community – especially education in schools and with young people – or for police to be more proactive in crime prevention.

"More education to the public about what happens now compared to 10/20yrs ago so they understand. More engaging with children to educate them within school, about internet safety, road safety and even domestic abuse. Some children have grown up around it from such a young age it's normal to them. Abuse against them if female and to not speak up about it and bullying which is never dealt with in schools, most schools have removed the policy off their websites."

"I think the police need to Inform and educate others about all the risks and dangers, and reassure us that the police are here to help." (young person in listening exercises)

96% of children and young people agreed that 'prevention of harm' is a good priority. When discussing the Police children's and youth strategy one of the comments about the 'prevention of harm' heading' was that: *"Prevention of harm is the basic role of the police - it doesn't need its own title as it should over arch everything."*

"The police should be prioritising prevention, the more they prevent and educate the less crimes are committed."

These comments also resonate with all of the reports on safety completed with children and young people in that all of the young people wanted more early intervention, safer spaces and trusted adults (including more police) to talk to.

11 respondents (2%) said that they did not feel safe or were concerned for their safety. Another 5 highlighted that crime is high or is rising.

"I think the general opinion is that we lack police presence. Certainly don't feel safe and it seems so complicated now to get help when needed. Yes I have just turned 80 so things have changed dramatically for my generation. We used to have police who befriended the young and I think that helped stop them turning to petty crime. It feels like a lawless society now. Worried in case you get mugged, frightened to walk the dog in case it is snatched. It's dreadful."

Eight respondents (2% of comments) said that they were not convinced about the value of PCSOs.

"The use of public money to fund PCSO's who only work 9-3 and seem only to attend coffee mornings is in my opinion a complete waste of council tax money."

Police funding

24 respondents (5% of all comments) said that they have not seen any results from the previous increases in the precept.

"Each year the precept has been increased and we fail to see where the increased number of officers have been deployed - not even specials are to be seen and yet they now seem to be the backbone of the service. Where is the money being spent?"

"The precept for policing has been increasing year on year yet anti-social behaviour in the area that I live has not reduced at all, in fact it has increased with speeding cars in residential areas now accepted as the norm, groups terrorising our town centre in the evenings, etc. Before we throw yet more money at the problem I would like to see the police that we do have available being present and being interested enough to do something when they do witness low level crime being committed. More police officers will have no effect if they continue to avoid enforcing the law with a "policing by the path of least resistance" approach."

Another 14 comments (3% of them) were to the effect that residents are paying more money but getting a worse service or no services, or that they do not get value for

money currently. Another 12 respondents (3% of all comments) said that the increase should reflect a better service.

"Where I live we have no Police, except those PCSOs that our Town Council supply. That means we are paying twice for a very poor service."

"With the Cost of Living/inflationary crisis any increase in the policing precept must deliver above average service performance & delivery along with better performance and delivery from existing precept and services."

17 respondents (4% of comments) felt that funding should be increased. However, 15 people (3% of comments) felt that no more money should be allocated.

"The money we pay for the police and fire brigade is incredibly low - I pay more for my daily costa coffee than these 2 important services. Double the income - more constables on the "beat" - more specialist police units - more fire appliances."

"Firstly, I am a Police officer. This is important. Secondly, you do not need to increase any precept or other funding. Police receive enough funding - and have done for many years. The public sector throws bad money after bad. There is a perpetual circle of believing money solves the issues. It does not and cannot until the Police (and other public services) get their houses in order and structured most efficiently. There is no increase in precept that will provide an adequate police service."

Seven respondents (1% of all comments) highlighted a lack of spending or investment in policing.

"Not enough is being spent. 20,000 new officers is a drop in the ocean. The Conservatives have cut back recruitment now they are trying to make up the numbers. If Council Taxpayers want to see police on the street than it comes at a cost. My youngest is a London Metropolitan Officer, I know what he and his colleagues put up with every day. I too was a Special in Sussex I know full well what putting on the uniform is life. Today a police officer is as much a social worker than as for keeping the peace and catching bad guys. We need to make sure our thin blue line is well funded."

22 people (5% of comments) said that they or others couldn't afford to pay more, especially as times are hard with rising bills and inflation, and 4 said they already pay too much or pay enough (1% of comments).

"I understand the need for investment but with the rising cost of energy and food how are we expected to keep paying these increasing costs. There is a limit especially as pensioners as to how far we can stretch our pensions. We need to live not merely exist."

"I work for Essex Police. The government chose not to give me an inflation level pay rise. In fact, my pay rise was less than half the current inflation rate. I have suffered a 25% real terms pay cut in the last 12 years. Every bill from energy to mortgage to food and petrol is going up. I simply do not have sufficient spare money to pay for constant rises. Sadly, we want to fund E, but the government doesn't want to pay its staff fairly. Council tax has risen

several times in the past few years. It cannot simply keep going up. Until the economy is back on a more sustainable footing EP may just have to manage with what it currently has and find what savings it can elsewhere. I think the people of Essex will be more concerned with how they are paying their own bills without wanting to give more money away."

Nine respondents (2% of all comments) said that central government should fund policing rather than it coming from council tax, with a number also saying that the Police and Crime Commissioner should lobby for this.

"We keep getting asked to pay extra every year, on top of the precept. What are you doing to campaign to Central Government for more realistic funding in the first place, rather than getting more funding from Council Tax payers every year?"

Spending and efficiencies

46 people (10% of all comments) wanted the police force to increase their efficiency or to cut existing waste. The main suggestions were generally to become more efficient, reduce spending in non-essential/non-care policing areas, or to reduce bureaucracy and paperwork in order to free up front line police officers. This includes not reducing the number of civilian workers undertaking administrative work so that police officers are freed up for policing work.

"Cut down the bureaucracy and office loads on serving officers with them spending more time on the beat and out and about."

"Tv programs following real police personnel have highlighted that reduction in no of police stations has led to cars travelling miles to book in offenders and excessive paperwork is greatly reducing 'bobbies on the beat' is this cost effective?"

32 respondents (7% of comments) suggested that there is no benefit to having a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and/or that the costs of the office could be used to improve frontline policing.

"We need to maintain a good level of service to protect and serve the people of Essex, why are we paying so much for the PFCC and his cohorts that's 2 million pounds that could be used elsewhere and would be a far better use of our money."

Seven respondents (1% of all comments) suggested reducing management.

"Cut the number of 'managers' and 'leaders' in Policing - along with 3 archaic ranks that are not required - and you will make good foundations for efficiencies. Until then, cease and desist with asking for further funding."

Other comments

Ten respondents (2% of all comments) highlighted the good job that the police do.

"I think the police do a brilliant job considering how this government has treated the whole force of late. Well done for keeping going and keeping Essex relatively safe."

However, for the second year running 6 respondents (1% and fewer than in 2021) commented about the need for the police to regain trust or respect for the force.

"The police are widely regarded as useless at solving crime and I suspect that COVID lockdowns and working from home have made it worse. They appear to have become box tickers, and most business people will tell you that if there is a break in or arson attack you can expect nothing except a crime number. They need to rebuild their credibility by showing real determination to get to the bottom of problems. A change of culture and leadership is needed rather than more and more money."

22 comments (5%) related to sentencing or the criminal justice system and the need for police to be supported by tougher sentencing.

"No point arresting people and not charging them also times in prison is a joke should be much more time."

Six people (1% of comments) said that the Police should not be supporting people with mental health issues, victims etc but that this should be done by other agencies who are better placed to do so.

"Police should be left to police. At the moment they are the first (and last call). They are the first people you call in an emergency, but they get left with everything, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health etc. There should be nationwide multi agency DA teams made up of Police, Housing and LA, Housing support (like Peabody) DA services for the area, victim support, substance misuse services, CAB for legal and debt advice and others. Same with Mental Health. MH is not a policing matter unless it's a danger to themselves or others, it should not be left to police. If there were proper multi agency teams around then the police could pass to specialists so they could focus on the crime element of society."

Six comments (1%) were about police pay and the need for it to increase.

"Police Officers should be paid more for the job they are doing. A lot of Officers struggle to pay their bills and get paid less than managers at supermarkets. This makes me think they can't be retained and have motivation as most of the population get better salary for workings less hours and performing less stressful job."

Four comments (1%) were that the police need to make more use of IT and technology.

Six people mentioned taxation and that the system should be overhauled, including several suggesting that the wealthiest should pay more.

27 people commented about the priorities specifically, of whom 10 said that they are all important, so it is very hard to put in order of priority.

- Difficult to put in order without having more information about the existing investment (2 people).
- It is hard to rank those areas because they seem intertwined, i.e. you cannot crack down on serious organised crime if you don't engage with the public and gain their trust to disclose information, same with having local policing.
- There is a need to prioritise child protection highly, especially in view of the recent report released on 20.10.22
- Please stop saying "Tackling violence against women and girls" and just start saying "Tackling violence against EVERYONE".
- The policing precept should always be prioritised towards victim-led responses and focus on the more vulnerable in society.
- Assumed that engaging with the public would INCLUDE local neighbourhood policing and protecting the vulnerable. Similarly tackling violence against women and girls would INCLUDE domestic abuse (with the latter also being against men).
- Car Theft be given higher priority.
- Rising crime is not on the list.
- Crimes affecting people are not taken seriously enough.
- There should be an importance on crime prevention.
- Counter terrorism and Cyber/online crime are at the bottom as these are things that should be co-ordinated and funded at a national level.
- Everything is interlinked and they need funding to be organised in an effective manner for the residents and public. "
- Media reports of grooming of children as young as 9 years old for drug gangs mean that this is a priority area.
- The selections make no mention of the areas of most concern to most people i.e. burglary, lack of a local police service etc. The questions appear to have been carefully selected to avoid those of most concern to the public.
- Tackling violence against women and girls is a similar statement to black lives matters. Its is non inclusive. I would like violence against all individuals tackled in the same way I believe all lives matter. Thank you for listing Domestic Abuse as non-gender.
- Hate Crime and prevention needs a renewed focus - especially given how hate crimes across the board have risen - i.e. trans related hate crime has risen 1291% since 2011, and 56% between 2021 and 2022. Particular focus needs to be paid to LGBTQ+ targeted hate activities - there is a strong and growing connection & radicalisation between the far right and anti-LGBT groups, and especially anti-trans groups - something that the radicalisation teams seem to be missing. This radicalisation seems to focus on engaging with middle class targets, especially women.
- Local neighbour policing is the most important as this could bring crime prevention - surely it is better to invest in prevention rather than resolving crime?

29 people raised a specific point:

- A parish still has to pay for a community officer. It is not fair that a village has to 'buy' a police person when cities and towns do not.
- One Parish Council would like to add funding for local policing but cannot.

- The whole funding system could do with an overhaul, e.g. cybercrime and the prevention of terrorism should be a national central service, so all areas have access to the best.
- Counter terrorism is very important but it is a national issue and should be paid for nationally (hopefully the Essex precept does not go on the extra costs associated with policing Stansted Airport).
- Why is there no option to invest into normal shift officers who are responding to 999 calls and investigating volume crime? The public want to be able to call 999 and see an officer.
- Cut the officers who don't make it through 2 years' probation by either going off sick or being moved to a back-office role. They can be replaced by police staff.
- Police should have more power over housing associations and councils especially when there are issues in these types of areas. Police should have more power over Facebook and other online platforms to shut groups down. Police need to have more training regarding disabled people as they have insufficient training regarding this – for vulnerable adults/youths with autism, ADHD, ADD, mental health issues etc. police need to stop using handcuffs and there should be no holding in cells overnight with more specialised areas for people with these kinds of issues like calmer places and special people to deal with the offence.
- Any funding will only work hand-in-hand with improved structural changes elsewhere which reduce the propensity for crime; for instance, improved education and employment opportunities and the dismantling of tropes around the need for austerity and the types of 'othering' generated by hostile political rhetoric. Much more funding should be devoted to police training, both in terms of being able to respond to the increasing ingenuity of criminals (especially cyber criminals) and ensuring theirs is always a victim-led response (in particular, police officers should understand the serious implications of unconscious bias when conducting their duties).
- More training for the police on how to deal with the general public as they can be abrupt and not very approachable or helpful in most circumstances (training on people skills).
- Training of police officers is critical, too many new officers have not had adequate 'real world' training and lack the support of more senior officers.
- Specials play a valuable role in engaging with the public, but very often they are used to supplement where fully trained police are required.
- Why are there differences in the allocation of public funds to police forces? Taking population, geography, demographics etc. into account then all should be equal or very near to it.
- Higher crime areas should contribute more to the precept.
- Devise a scheme which rewards individual forces based on results i.e. the more crime solved, the greater the reward.
- Proceeds of crime recovered should be split half to the government and half to the local police force - so the areas with the most crime will get the most money and the areas with low crime will get less: this will automatically direct funds to areas of high crime.
- There is so much car theft that you need to be able to put bait cars out to catch the late night car thieves and those who break into cars.
- A government that supports the police with stop & search powers etc. would help. Obviously this has a racial profiling element that must be considered carefully but people of all colours and religions can and do commit crime: taking away stop & search powers helps nobody but would be offenders.

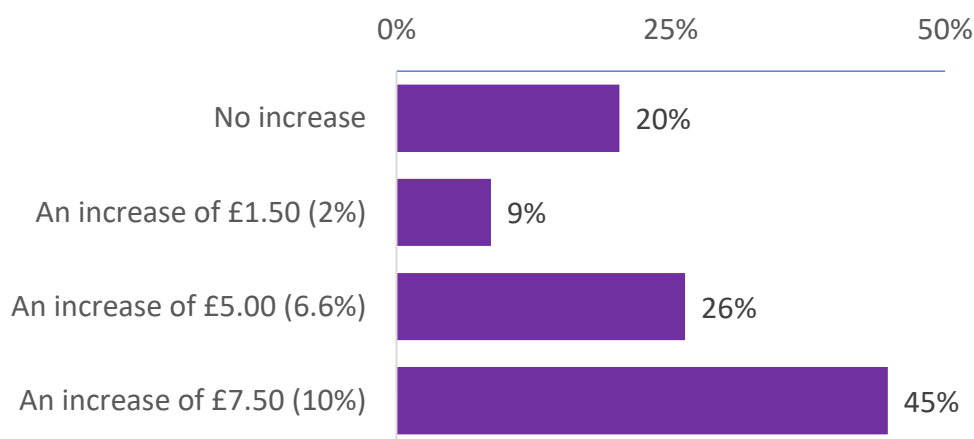
- Remove knife and guns carried by the public.
- Support for victims of crime needs to be improved.
- It would be interesting to know how much funding is obtained from government versus that obtained from Council tax payers.
- News has reported some lack of background checks on new recruits so respondent would be prepared to increase precept to cover these issues.
- Essex could amalgamate with Suffolk share resources and staff.
- It should not always be about protecting the most vulnerable. Everyone deserves protection, particularly those that are regularly paying taxes to benefit from the services.
- If 900 new officers are to be recruited and in place by March 2023, what is this increase in percentage terms? If an increase in the precept is agreed where will the extra funds be spent? Do the 900 new officers plug the gaps in manpower?
- Essex Police spend too much time and money on setting up teams which are ineffective in serving the public and internal policies which restrict their officers in completing proportionate investigations in line with the wishes of the victims.
- Essex Police need to spend more money on their driver training department, provide their officers with more training courses to develop them in terms of being response trained, taser trained, public order, interview training etc. Essex Police has a high number of non-response trained drivers which give slow response times and displays a poor public perception.
- Over half of the officers in Essex Police are within their probationary period. Essex Police should focus less on a recruitment campaign and 'Fitting the Bill' and focus on retaining the experienced officers, looking at why those officers are leaving and what needs to change in terms of organisational policies and procedures.
- More of the policing budget should be spent on functions within Strategic Change who provide important work for the force but are often overlooked.
- Local councils could promote more Neighbourhood Watch and volunteers to help look after local communities under police or council direction.
- What is the breakdown of costs & hours lost through diversion of police presence in core law enforcement activity whilst being diverted to politicised police activity (e.g. LGBTQ, festivals, protests, marches etc) and the budget YoY wasted on flags displayed on political/social events, decorating police vehicles, decorating police officers? What is the overall budget spent on equipping police vehicles as it does not need the level of money wasted on covering every square inch of a police car with luminous decals, more lights than a Christmas tree and complex tech which is a major overhead to maintain.
- More information about police numbers - why chose 2016 as the benchmark? What are the exact numbers over the past 10 years? How are police currently deployed? What is the relationship between numbers, deployment and crime prevention/detection?
- Activate more covert speed cameras in places where drivers actually speed on open roads and not on the fringes of small villages where cost of a camera installation is hardly ever justified. When Speed Watch groups are out and about taking note of driver behaviour, have a traffic officer appointed to them for the whole duration of time to make charges stick instead of lame warning letters.
- Run the cost of police helicopter as a charity, the same as Essex air ambulance.
- Stiffer jail sentences are needed for anyone abusing or assaulting police officers.

Fire and Rescue Service precept

Respondents were asked about their views on the precept for the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex and what percentage increase in funding they would be prepared to pay for in 2023/2024.

20% of the 1,733 respondents who answered this question said that they did not want to see any increase, compared to 33% in 2021. 9% (18% last year) said that they would be prepared to pay an increase of £1.50, which is a below inflationary increase of 2%, but will still result in a reduced service delivered by ECFRS. 26% said they would pay an increase of £5.00, which is a below inflationary increase of 6.6%, which will help the Service manage increased costs, continue its improvement work and maintain the same level of service. 45% said that they would be prepared to pay an increase of £7.50, which equates to a 10% increase and will allow the service to continue to invest more in its improvement programme and improve the level of service.

Chart 6: Which statement best reflects your view about the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service precept?



A total of 426 respondents commented on the Fire and Rescue Services precept.

90 people (21% of all comments) said that the service requires funding or investment while 21 (5%) said that there should be more funding for front line officers.

"We the public are incredibly quick to forget that the Fire and Rescue service are an insurance policy. Prevention and protection are subsidiary activities. Important as they both are. We pay our council tax contributions expecting a first class operational response not just sometimes but every time. This summer is a lesson in why continued investment in the FRS is so important. To see the FRS stretched so badly was scary. When we the public call 999 to the FRS, delays can cost lives."

"The only job (other than perhaps the RNLI) where you can be drinking tea one minute and 10 minutes later - you could be dead. We should ensure the best training - the best equipment and adequate numbers for a really bad emergency."

“As long as those investments are spent on adding full time personnel and appliances and not politically correct nonsense that adds no value to the frontline service. No further station closures or loss of working appliances should be tolerated.”

57 respondents (13% of comments) highlighted that the fire service does an excellent job, that fire officers are valued or that the service is invaluable.

“It is an absolutely vital service, very often answering calls that are a matter of life and death. I certainly don't object to the workers being given a decent pay rise.”

“This should be a priority as it is nearly always the first on call, and answers so many different purposes. I cannot praise them enough, for all the difficult situations they find themselves in.”

19 respondents (4%) felt that previous budget cuts have impacted adversely on the service.

“There isn't enough fire cover in what is an ever growing county. The fire service has been cut to pieces in the last 15 years with less firefighters and less fire engines being available. This is not acceptable.”

There were 45 comments (11%) saying that the fire service needs to be more efficient or stop waste, plus another 10 (2%) saying the service should reduce management/the number of senior officers. Another 6 people said that the service needs to do more to retain firefighters.

“Given the pressures on household budgets with inflation and cost of living increases all additional revenue should be from the Central Government or existing council tax levels. The services should continue to expand by increased efficiency and cost reduction in non operational departments and activities.”

“The Fire & Rescue service in Essex is poorly managed, and does not make the best use of hard earned tax payers money. Until such time as the PFCC gets a grip of the FRS's red tape and bureaucracy that runs deep through the ""can't do, won't change culture"" then I am not prepared to pay a single penny more for these services.”

“It is quite clear that the Service needs to do a lot more to reduce its central costs. The frontline needs to be protected and over bloated management and their support costs reduced.”

38 comments (9%) were that firefighters need to be paid more.

“They do not get paid anywhere near enough for what they are willing to risk. They deserve a pay rise at least in line with inflation to keep their families fed and housed.”

“This needs to go towards FF pay, their rates of pay and increases have not matched any other sector increases over the last 12 years and essentially at

the moment they are facing a 13-15% deficit in pay Vs costs of living increases. They deserve better pay!!"

14 respondents (3% of comments) said that the funding should be to improve response times and/or improve the service.

"If it is needed to maintain or hopefully improve the service then it has to be. We can't lower the standards we have already."

17 people (4%) suggested that the fire service should undertake more joint working with the other emergency services, or combine facilities.

"This year has been the first time that the Fire Brigade seems to have been extremely busy due to climate change. I strongly believe that the fire brigade staff should be more medically trained to assist the ambulance service when they have backlogs. This would then release the police to actually fight crime rather than for example, go to a mental health patient who is in crisis. Let's make sure that all out emergency services are working equally, not just in the summer months!"

"We need to maintain staff levels to keep response times to a minimum. Many incidents also require medical personnel if both service are based at the same location they could share rapid response vehicles to keep cost down."

14 people (3% of comments) felt that more of the precept should go to the fire service rather than the police.

"More of our council tax should go to the fire and rescue service than the Police. They should also be given the London allowance for where they work and should be given more pay for additional responsibilities that they are being asked to do, (ara payments for animal rescue, swift water etc)."

22 respondents commented on the fire and police service, including that: the fire service is underfunded and the "poor relation" of the emergency services; the fire service provides better value than the police, and is trusted more; and queries about why there is a difference in funding between the two services.

"I understand that the fire service are underpaid. Essex Fire Service would work better under their own umbrella as opposed to being governed by the police. This would increase their funding surely. From what I've heard the police take a lot more and the fire service plays second fiddle and get what's left if anything in the pot. The police have had a substantial pay rise due to inflation, what about the fire service? As they are under the same umbrella, both fire and police should have an equal pay rise. You can't give to one and not the other."

Reflecting comments made about the policing precept, 16 respondents (4%) said that there should be no increase in the fire service precept (and 3 said it should decrease) while 51 (12%) said that they could not afford an increase as times are hard and 1 that they already pay enough or too much.

“With the cost of living going up all the time I just cannot afford to pay another penny more on my council tax like thousands of other people in Essex and have to go to a food bank to get my food now because I cannot afford to buy it in supermarkets because of all the price increases, it may be fine for the rich and wealthy people but not for pensioners or people on benefits and low incomes. You already get a large government annual funding grant anyway and the existing PFCC precept on council tax is enough. So no more increases please. Thank you.”

“We the general public do not have the money to keep paying for annual increases, we are on our knees why don't you understand this instead of making unreasonable increases every year.”

30 respondents (7% of all comments) said that the government should fund the fire service.

“Central Government needs to step up and pay, not hard-working families who have seen increase after increase in their precept to the emergency services.”

“Ideally funding will come from central Government and not a rise in the local precept given the current cost of living challenges, rise in energy, food and fuel prices, but given these challenges it is unlikely public sector services will see an increase in funding, more likely the opposite, making the precept an even more critical element in funding for our local services, including policing.”

Nine respondents (2%) highlighted the importance of prevention and educational activities.

“There is a need for more preventative measures such as increasing community awareness re. fire hazards and life saving measures e.g. Stop, drop and roll if you are on fire. The danger of incendiary synthetic, garment material.”

13 comments were made to the effect that respondents need more information in order to make an informed decision.

“It is easy to get caught up in the emotion of the subject, but there needs to be more information regarding the use of funding and real associated risks/benefits if you want people to vote.”

22 respondents provided a comment about a specific point:

- The same level of cover should be given to rural areas, the towns and cities get more than their fair share.
- Extra funds to identify buildings vulnerable to grass fires and create fire break areas.
- The fire and rescue service should be given the London allowance for where they work and should be given more pay for additional responsibilities that they are being asked to do, (ara payments for animal rescue, swift water etc).
- Help the fire service budget by stopping unnecessary fire calls to assist ambulance services when it used to be the police. Charge for commercial

attendance and lock out as other private services do in other countries.

Charge vehicle fires with no life risk to insurance companies.

- Fire service should claim costs against insurance companies.
- Electric Vehicle fires and chemical spills should be funded by businesses who use the service (via insurance) and members of the public who need assistance putting out a vehicle fire of their Tesla (via car insurance).
- Does the fire service explore all options for insurance companies to contribute towards their costs for vehicle and house related matters?
- Very concerned about the ability of the service to deal with EV car fires in particular multi EV vehicle incidents e.g. RTC's or arson off vehicles in high density areas, eg under apartment parking.
- Already overpaid and underworked. One of the most militant fire services in the UK. Others do the chemical function for the police. LFB do a lot of drone work. Others look for missing persons. Reduce fire estate, make less hubs covering a larger area. Ensure they support the police/ambulance. I ask the PFCC to visit fire stations spontaneously. they will be eating, preparing to eat, in the gym or sleeping. The PFCC can see all of their sign written vans ready for their second jobs after they sleep all night shift. Essex police have 2 traffic hubs responding to RTC's, Fire could reduce to a North & South hub and reduce their officers and estate considerably.
- Perhaps increase the 2% cap equal to the Police.
- More emphasis on fire safety inspections in both commercial and private properties as self regulation by property owners is ineffective and often either skimmed or ignored by property owners and developers.
- There has been a sharp increase in house building in the area. The councils need to put up more revenue from this towards the running of the police and fire brigade - with the increase in revenue from Londoners moving out here that should more than cover the increase in costs.
- There is a perception that fire crews spend all their time working out in the gym or sleeping while on duty. Perhaps they could be doing something visible to the public when not on a call.
- Include more women.
- Not a penny more unless it is guaranteed that local fire stations are maintained.
- Could this service be put to better use if we utilised the fire service time better? There is a lot of down time. Like all the services, time wasting by the public needs to be addressed.
- The fire service and the police service should be run as two different organisations and they shouldn't be run by the PFCC.
- As with the Police precept, when a sum of money is gifted to both organisation without ANY terms and conditions attached then the Organisations are Self managed. Both Police & Fire should be contractually responsible to a non-elected body who can act as a Board of Directors (as in business) essentially to obtain value for money and Accountability and to measure performance free of political influence.
- It is important to remember that for many residents "Parish precepts" are added to the various banded properties, meaning some will pay a larger overall council tax than others. Quite often there is no difference in the service provision for these additional amounts, this is an area to consider when thinking of increasing precepts.

- It already went up but if police stopped the sale of fireworks and dangerous substances then we'd need the fire and rescue system less. The NHS also plays into this. If services were improved for mental and physical health there would no doubt be fewer incidents for fire and rescue to attend.
- Needs to be lobbying of govt. Also reserves of ECC explored before expecting residents to pay more.
- We should not be subsidising lease cars for senior managers. They are paid more than adequately already to be able to manage their own transport requirements. The lowest paid members of the Service are expected to pay for their own cars to get to and from their place of work, including out duties. It is patently ridiculous and immoral that the highest paid members of the Service receive subsidised vehicles. All members of the Service should also receive exactly the same remuneration for providing their own transport, regardless of rank. This would present a substantial saving, which can be put to better use elsewhere.

30 comments were made about specific working practices:

- On call works to a degree as long as neighbouring areas have services.
- Recruit on call firefighters that actually give cover and not whole timers from the same watch. Utilise whole time fire fighters for standby cover and reliefs instead of leaving them sleeping in their beds. On call pumps doing around 2,000 miles a month wastes diesel and results in massive man hour costs.
- Look at recruiting part time staff from around the larger stations, Harlow, Grays, Chelmsford, Colchester, Southend making the stations 1 wholetime, 1 on-call appliance.
- Less on call station or better support for on call station so that actually on duty rather than being off run most of time.
- The service has been continually cut year after year and no longer has the resilience required if called upon. It cannot rely on the precept of more on-call firefighters who have day jobs that pay considerably more. There is a need for the return of full-time firefighters manning more stations, the service is severely stretched if there are two large incidents occurring at the same time.
- It is difficult to recruit on-call firefighters in many areas, many pumps are permanently or almost permanently off the run. There are long waits for attendance in some areas.
- Retention and recruitment of on call personnel needs addressing. Too many fire appliances are off the run so fire cover is compromised.
- Why are you paying on call firefighters to sit on stations that are not on during the night when your whole time fire fighters are sleeping through the night? Why are we paying for whole time firefighters to sleep, when no other emergency services do this?
- Why are full time fire fighters allowed to sleep during the night on duty, when other areas in the country are being propped up by on call? You need to rework your WT firefighters so they actually do something and not get paid to sleep. And treat your on call better who are always supporting and working harder than your full time firefighters.
- Why is it that on a fire the whole time will only be there for 4hrs but on call are willing to stay well past this? This isn't value for money, what other job do you do 4 hours work then get someone in to cover? Why are your on call doing standbys during the night when your whole time are asleep in their beds on stations?

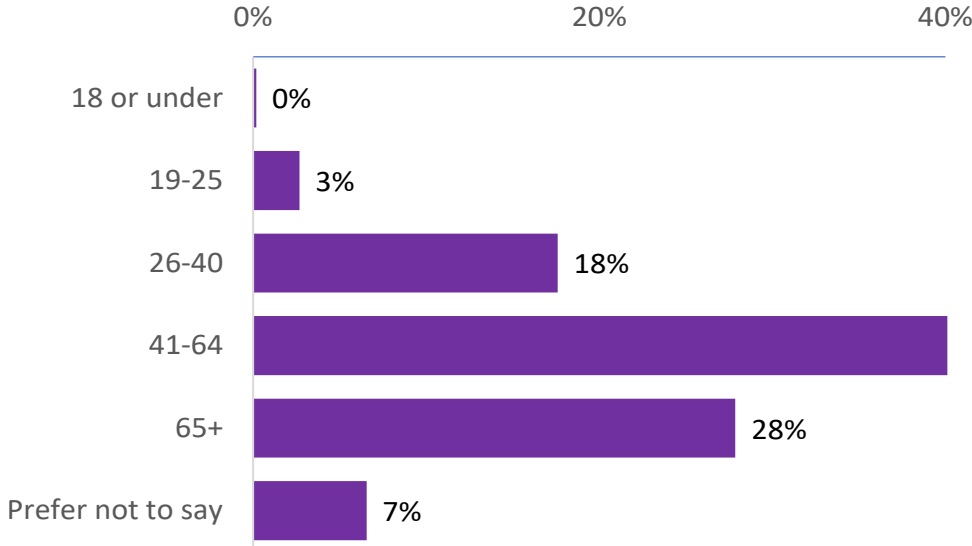
- The Fire Service has already lost their day crewing stations who have now become On Call Stations which can put more pressure on the Whole Time Stations if any On Call Stations are off the run.
- Go back to the old style where all appliances had their own crew rather than the “crap” jump crew system.
- More investment in Wholetime crews: if stations or fire engines have crewing difficulties and over the past 5 years have provided 25% or less availability, then they aren't required and are actually costing money for no return. Close the stations and remove the fire engines that are costing money for no return and invest the savings into front line services.
- Focus needs to be on accepting that On-call shift systems are not sustainable and focus needs to be made on investing in Wholetime fire stations.
- The retained fire service which is meant to support and work in the local community is spread all over the county to cover the untenable short falls which Essex has created.
- To increase the use of retained firemen and to help with recruitment they need to be treated the same as full time firemen as they do exactly the same job and have the same skills. They need to have the same rights of hours working etc.
- More needs to be done to have retained stations being available to provide cover. Is there not an argument to have a pool of manpower to cover known gaps similar to what is in place in Suffolk?
- The crewing of the ladder appliance is not maned 24/7 and this needs to change as it's putting the public of Essex at a hight risk and also the firefighters of Essex at more danger. Having to wait for 40 minutes to get a ladder appliance is not acceptable.
- Fewer part time stations.
- Smaller sub-stations sited in rural areas
- Retained stations are never on the run because the firefighters have to work their main job so don't have the spare hours to give and those they give are underpaid for the work they do and sacrifice they give. Braintree is a “key retained station” but is backfilled all the time by Colchester. Colchester already has a huge ground to cover and when Manningtree, Halstead and Braintree are off the run, there are only 2 fire engines covering miles of residential, commercial and field land.
- An area like Braintree should now have a full time station, even with 1 full and 1 part time crew. The area has expanded and is continuing to do so. They also cannot always provide a part time, volunteer crew
- Maldon is already run by volunteers at the station how does increasing my council tax benefit them when we don't even have a full time company?
- Facilities should be put in place to make sure stations are on instead of having other fire engines from other towns at great expense.
- Having engines coming from all over the county to cover the on call key stations that are off the run is a disgrace. Full time fire engines are propping up the on call stations.
- Utilise the removed whole time appliances to cover current on-call areas where recruitment is poor, South Woodham Ferrers, Dovercourt, etc. Utilise those removed resources to place a wholetime officer and driver at on-call stations so the number of on-call staff required to maintain operational cover is reduced, increasing life saving fire and rescue cover.

- If you removed all whole time second fire appliances then cover the shortfall across the service with the extra people then you would have a service that's fully manned. Look at your resources you have an ALP at Southend that never goes out, it will never go to a fire in Southend as you don't have the crew to man it, so move it out of there to somewhere more central. You could easily take an appliance out of Southend as you have Leigh, Hawkwell, Shoeburyness and Rochford all close to Southend, this way you could give better fire cover elsewhere.
- Invest in more compact vehicles for off road fires and using smaller vehicle and crew for non fire minor situations.
- An additional cost has arisen with the supply of service vehicles to ferry standby firefighters around the county and these vehicles should have been disposed of. Appliances have been reduced and the remaining are covering larger areas, therefore response times could increase dramatically adding more risk to the public. Money could be saved by reducing the fleet list of light vehicles, better management of use and no cars allocated to those who leave them parked on station for weeks not being utilised.
- The precept of a shared Fire/police support workshop facility as a cost saving has not been supported with evidence of the debate had with consultants who do not consider the work required to maintain a fire appliance to a standard over and above that of a bread delivery lorry, standards will drop to meet that expectation.
- The Ambulance service is a major issue within Essex with waiting times of hours being advised to the public and other services leaving firefighters on scene to stop the clock and be alone for up to an hour or more with calls that they're not suitably trained or paid for and don't have the experience to deal with.
- Educate the public on the actual services you provide and how you pay for them, e.g. a retainer fee for the fire service is ridiculously low for being tied into the station for 90 hours a week, NO additional pay is given unless there are calls out to jobs effectively paying around 40p an hour for being on call unless you get a job.

Who gave their views?

A total of 2,349 people responded to the survey this year (up from 2,052 in 2021). 56% of respondents were male, 86% described themselves as English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British, and 73% were aged 41 or over.

Chart 7: Percentage of respondents by age band

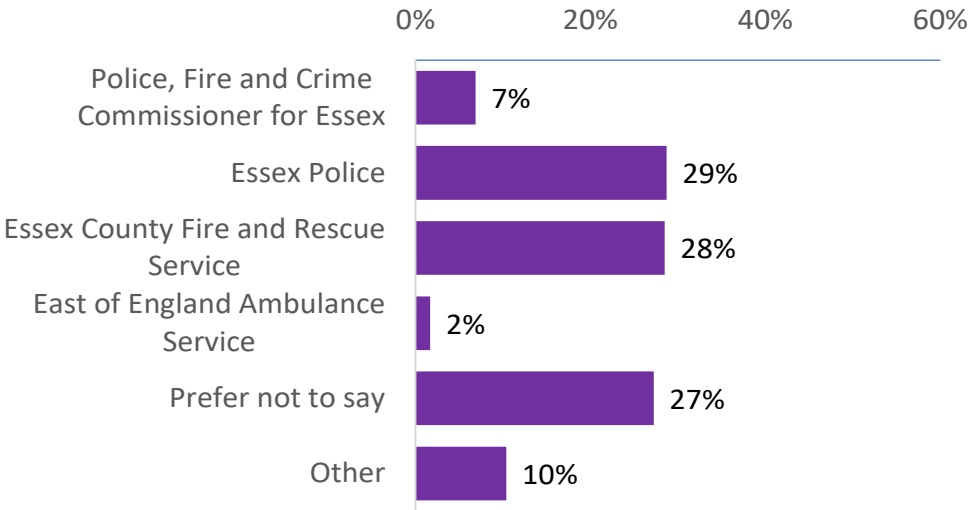


The majority of respondents had no disability or impairment. The number of respondents saying they had a specific disability or impairment is shown below.

No impairment	1,023
Hearing impairment/deaf	80
Visual impairment/blind	12
Deafblind	1
Mental Health needs	50
Physical impairment	149
Learning difficulties/disabilities	14
Autistic spectrum disorder	13

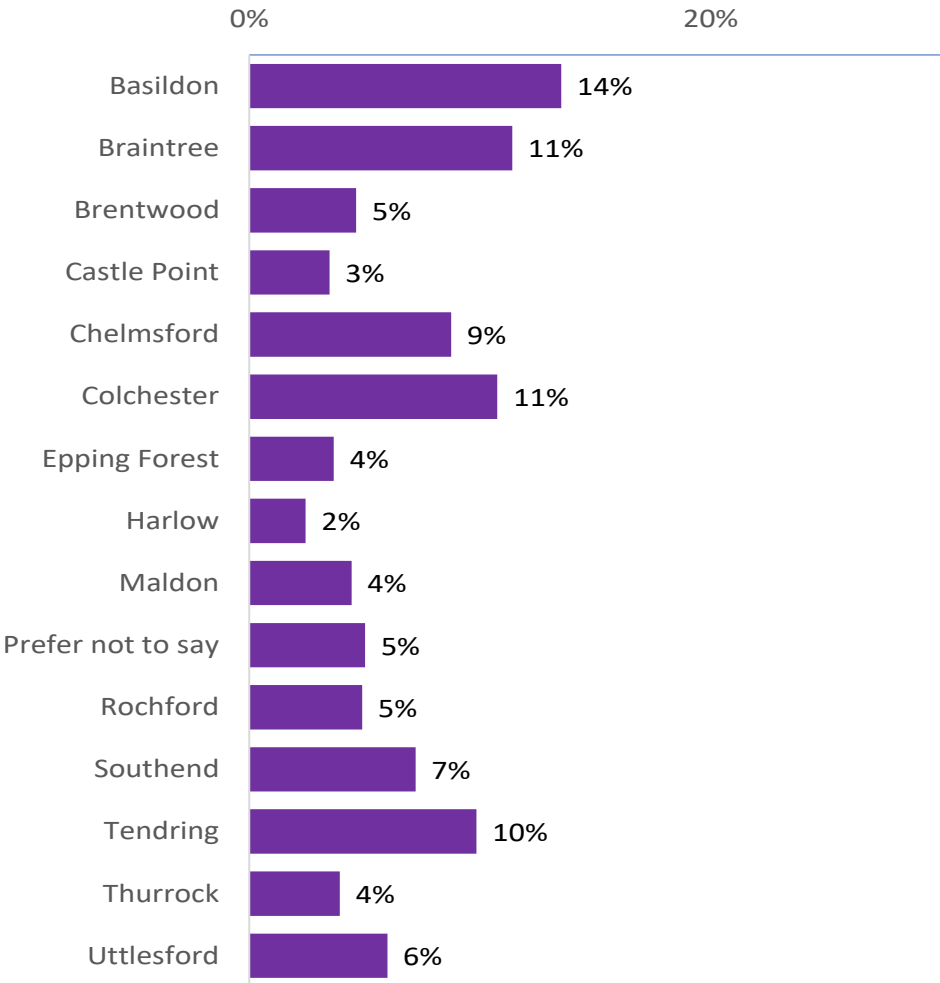
22% of respondents said that they are employed by an emergency service in a paid for or voluntary role. Of these, 29% work for Essex Police and 28% for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Chart 8: Respondents who work for an emergency service



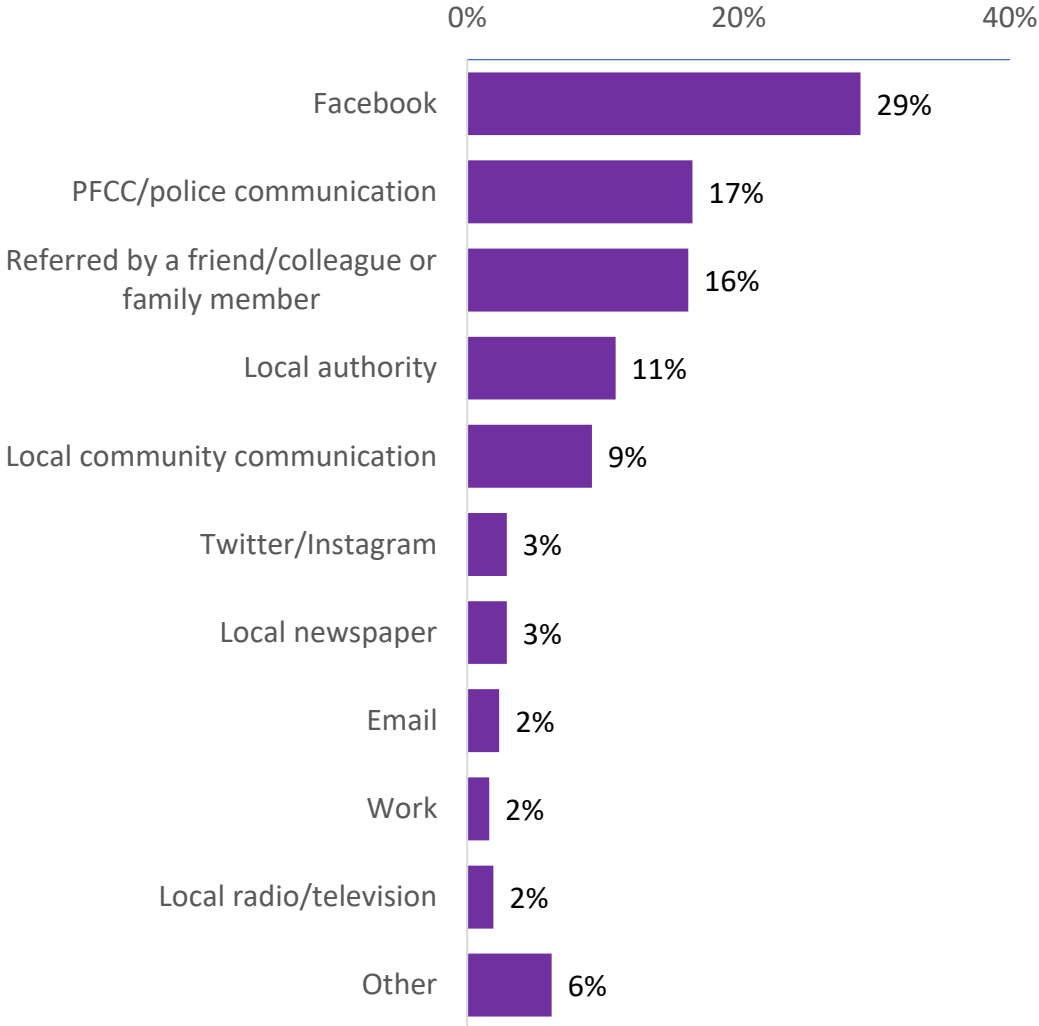
The responses by home district/unitary authority are shown below.

Chart 9: Respondents by home district



29% heard about the survey from Facebook and 17% from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner website or email.

Chart 10: Where respondents heard about the survey?



This report produced in December 2022.

The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.