

Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

Council Tax Consultation 2020/21



Main Report (V01)
January 2020



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Introduction

The Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold has responsibility for overseeing both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue services. The Commissioner sets the budget for both organisations and holds both the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account on behalf of the public, for the performance of their organisations.

The PFCC's office commissioned Social and Market Strategic Research, an independent research organisation to undertake a consultation to seek the views of residents who pay council tax in Northamptonshire about the 2020/21 council tax level for policing and the fire & rescue service. The consultation also gathered the views of residents on how good a job Northamptonshire Police and Fire & Rescue Service are doing.

Summary of Findings

The majority of residents across Northamptonshire perceive Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue service are doing a good job. Almost two thirds believe the police force do a good or excellent job (65%); including a sixth who specify they do an excellent job (15%).

Positivity increases towards the Fire & Rescue Service; 8 in every 10 residents are of the opinion the service does a good or excellent job. More than a third (35%) agree the services performs an excellent job.

The majority of residents are prepared to pay an increase in council tax towards both Police and Fire & Rescue services. More than two thirds (71%) are prepared to pay some form of increase towards the police force – the most popular choice being the £4 per year increase.

Four-fifths of residents are prepared to pay more towards Fire & Rescue services with more than half prepared to pay the maximum increase of £5 per year.

Report Structure

This report includes headline findings for each question combined with insight based on demographics and geography. It should be noted that when the results are discussed within the report, often percentages will be rounded up or down to the nearest one per cent. Therefore, occasionally figures may add up to 101% or 99%.

Sample / Methodology

An interviewer led telephone questionnaire was designed by SMSR and PFCC office staff, 1250 interviews were conducted using random quota sampling to ensure the sample was representative. Quotas for age, gender and ethnicity were set using mid-2017 census figures the sample included representation from each authority within Northamptonshire. The sample provides a confidence level of 95% with +/- 3% error margin.

The demographic breakdown of users interviewed was as follows:

Gender	Number	% of sample
Male	661	53%
Female	588	47%
Other	1	0%

Age	Number	% of sample
16-24	135	11%
25-34	214	17%
35-44	227	18%
45-54	222	18%
55-64	192	15%
65-74	142	11%
75+	118	9%

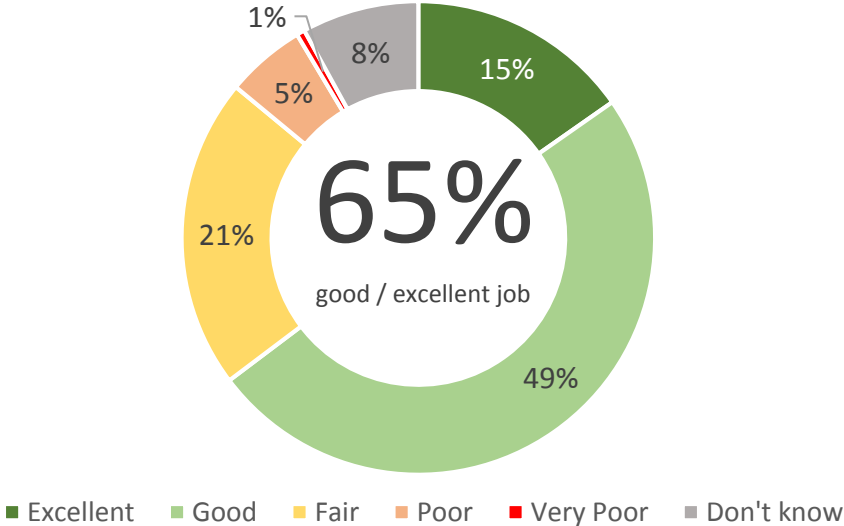
Ethnicity	Number	% of sample
White	1161	93%
BAME	52	4%
Prefer not to say	37	3%

Authority	Number	% of sample
Corby	109	9%
Daventry	139	11%
East Northamptonshire	155	12%
Kettering	167	13%
Northampton	378	30%
South Northampton	152	12%
Wellingborough	150	12%

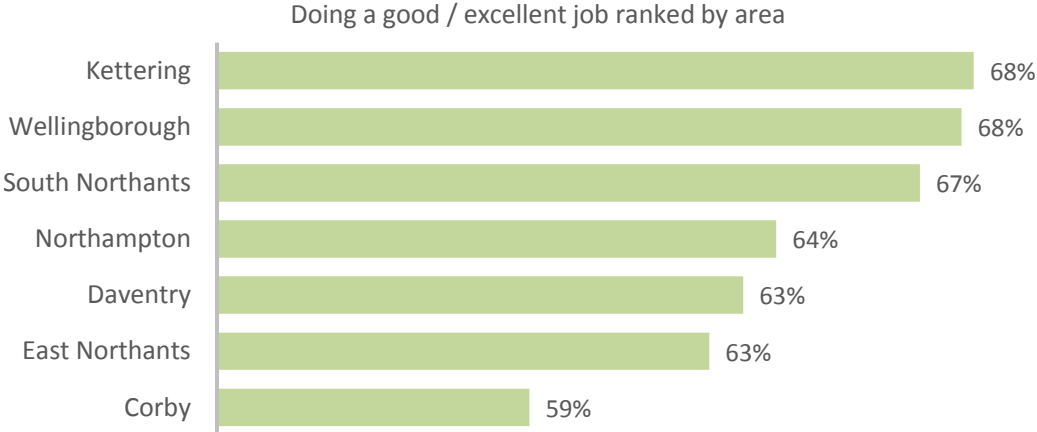
Perceptions overview

Residents were asked to provide their opinion on how good a job they thought Northamptonshire Police and Fire & Rescue service are doing:

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Police are doing? n=1250



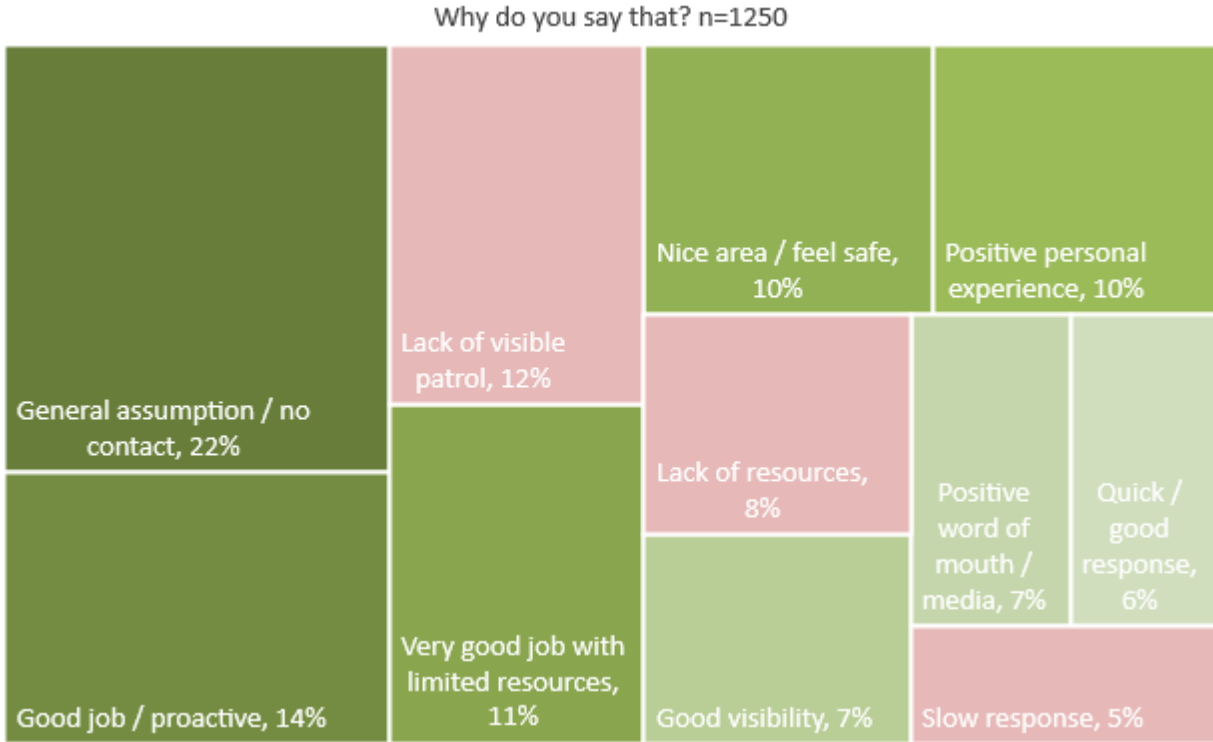
Almost two thirds of residents (65%) across Northamptonshire consider Northamptonshire Police to be doing a good or excellent job. A fifth (21%) believe the force are doing a fair job across the county and 6% feel that Northamptonshire Police are doing a poor/very poor job.



Residents of Kettering (68%), Wellingborough (68%) and South Northants (67%) are most inclined to believe that Northamptonshire Police are doing a good or excellent job, whereas those living in Corby (59%) were the least likely to have said this was the case.

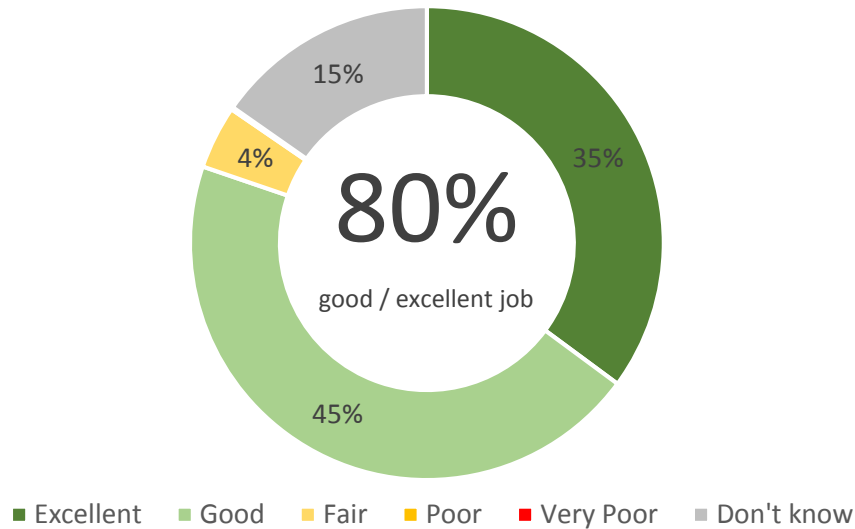
Those aged 18-24 (70%), 25-34 (71%) and 75 and over (70%) are more likely to have say the police are doing an excellent or a good job, whereas only half of those aged 65-74 feel the police are doing an excellent or poor job. Residents who identify as disabled (60%) are less inclined to believe the force are doing an excellent or a good job compared to those without a disability (65%).

Residents were also asked to explain the reasons behind their perception of how good a job Northamptonshire Police are doing. Responses were broken down into key themes:

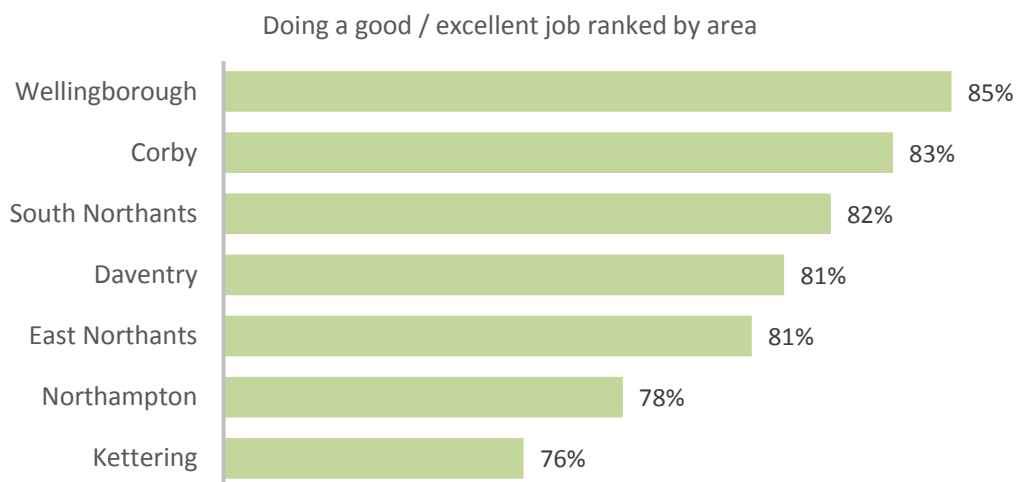


The most prevalent positive themes were a general assumption Northamptonshire Police are doing a good job, despite limited contact with the force and confirmation the police are doing a good job. More than a tenth said their answer was influenced by a lack of visible policing, with just under citing a lack of resources.

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service are doing? n=1250



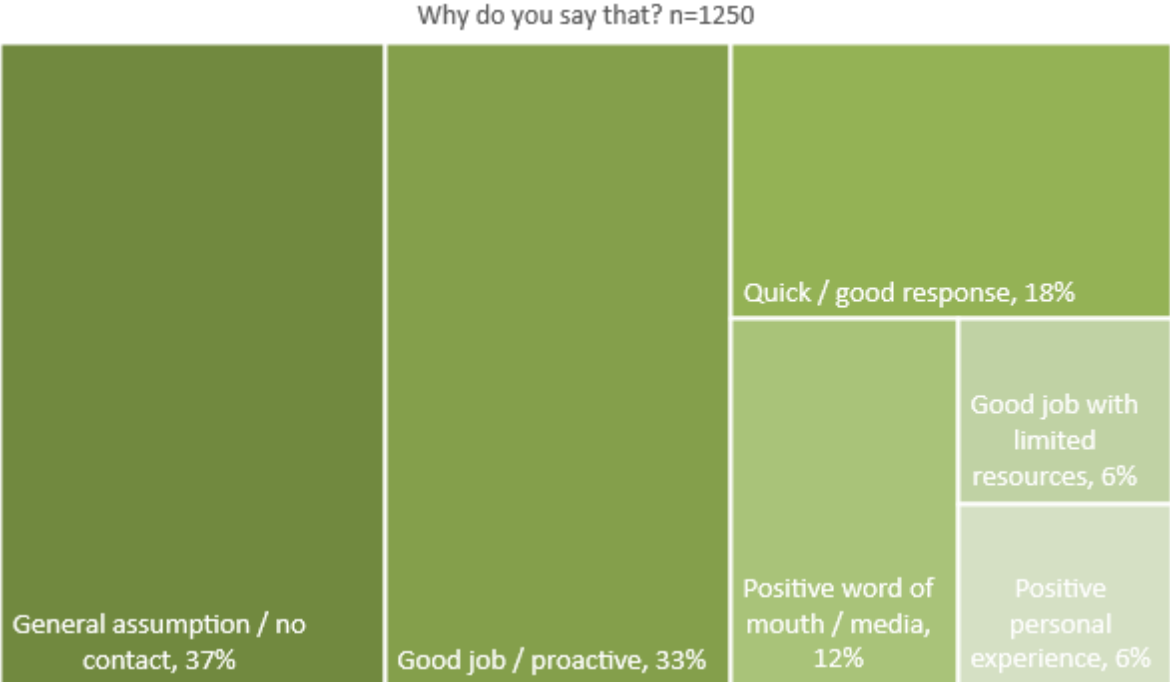
When considering Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service, 8 in every 10 residents believe the service is doing a good or excellent job. Around a sixth do not know how well the service is performing and a small percentage consider Fire & Rescue to be doing a fair job (4%). Virtually no-one agreed the service is performing poorly.



Residents of Kettering (76%) are least likely to believe the Fire & Rescue Service are doing a good or an excellent job, with those in Northampton (78%) slightly more positive towards the provision. Residents in Wellingborough (85%) and Corby (83%) were found to be the most positive.

Those aged 25-34 (83%) and 45-54 (84%) indicate higher levels of approval for the Fire & Rescue Service, whereas less than three-quarters (74%) of those aged 55-54 felt the Fire & Rescue Service is doing a good or an excellent job.

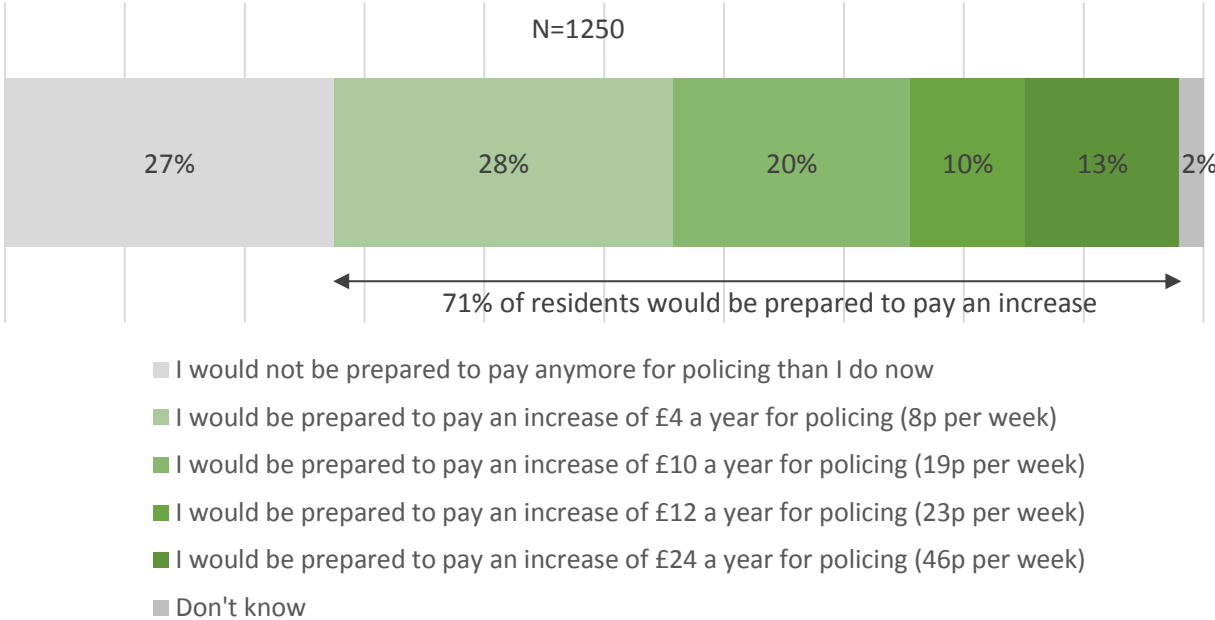
Residents were also asked to outline the reasons behind their perception of how good a job the Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service are doing:



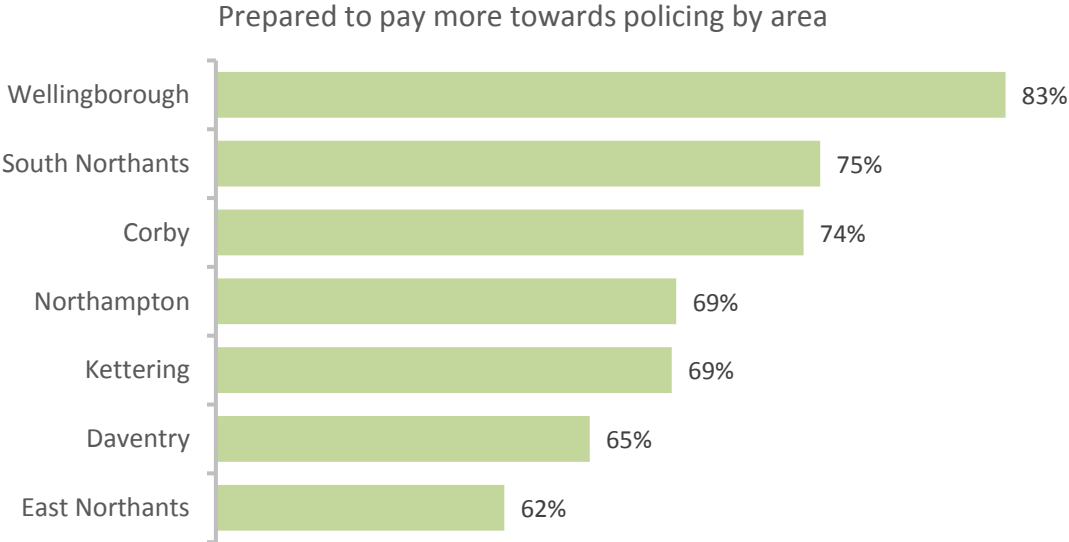
Perhaps, predictably, a significant proportion of residents provided their opinion based on an assumption Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue service are doing a good job due to lack of engagement with the service. A third confirmed they thought the service does a good job and a fifth put their opinion down to a quick response to incidents.

Precept overview

Residents were asked which statement best represented their views towards the level of council tax they pay towards **Northamptonshire police**:



Less than a third of residents (27%) said they were not prepared to pay anymore for policing with the majority (71%) willing to pay some increase. Nearly a third (28%) are prepared to pay a £4 increase per year, a fifth (20%) a £10 increase, a tenth (10%) a £12 increase and 13% are prepared to pay the maximum increase of £24%. A small percentage did not know.



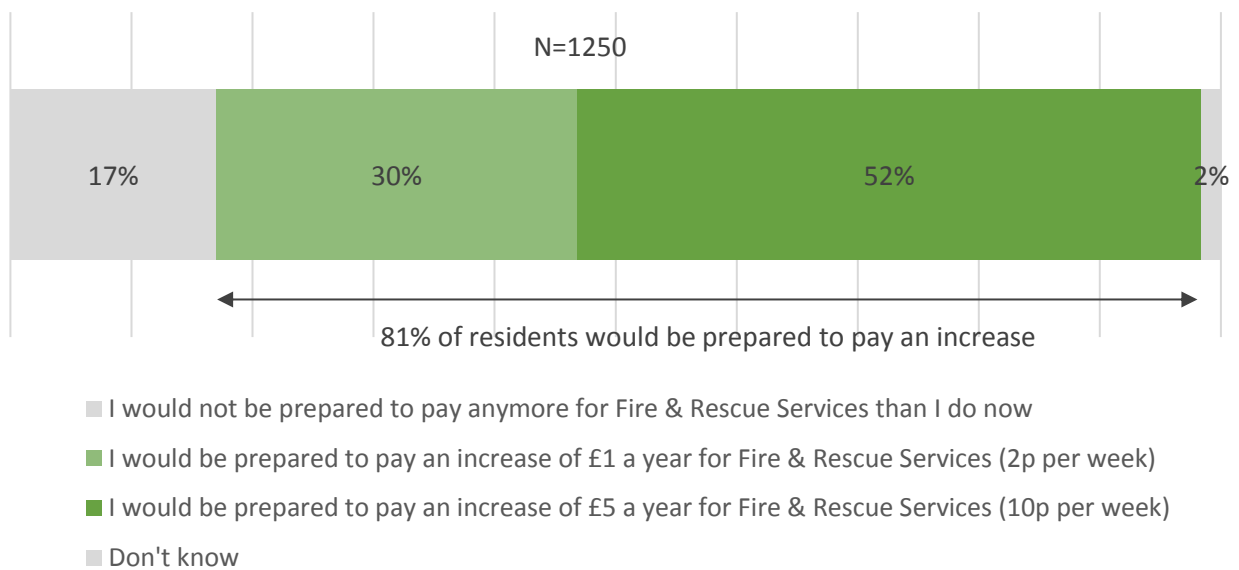
More than four-fifths of those living Wellingborough (83%) and three-quarters (75%) of those based in South Northants (75%) and Corby (74%) are willing to pay an increase towards policing. Less than two-thirds of those from Daventry (65%) and East Northants (62%) are willing to pay the increase. The majority in each area are willing to fund a rise in policing precept.

Females (66%) are nearly a tenth less likely to confirm they would be willing to pay an increase for policing when compared to male respondents (75%).

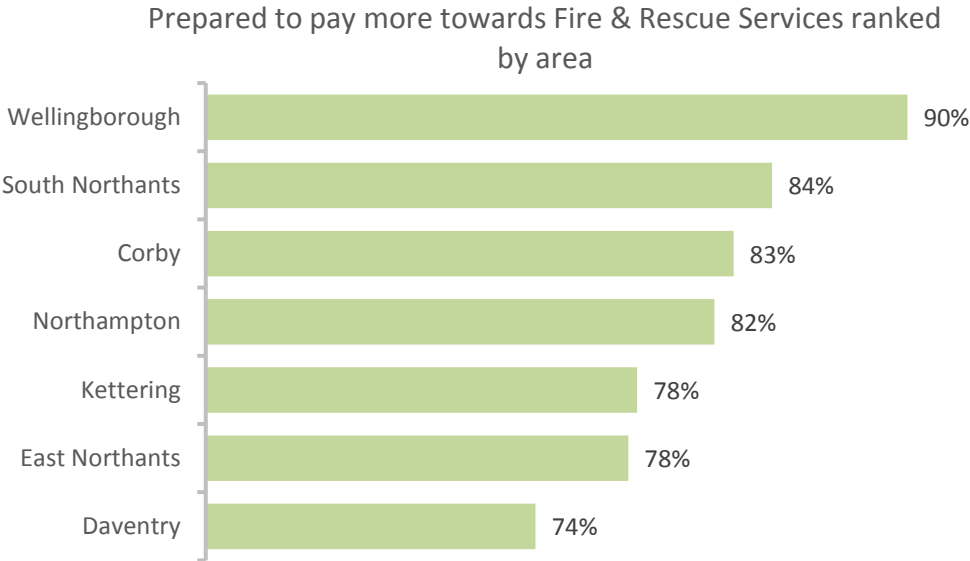
There is a strong correlation between age and willingness to pay an increase for policing; younger respondents are more prepared to pay a rise in precept with this opinion declining the older the respondent is. Four-fifths of those aged 18-24 are willing to pay an increase with willingness declining steadily down to 56% amongst those aged 75 and above.

Respondents with a disability (63%) and BAME respondents (65%) are less inclined to pay an increase towards policing compared to those without a disability (72%) and White respondents (72%).

Residents were also asked which statement best represented their views towards the level of council tax they pay towards **Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service**:



More than 8 in every 10 residents are prepared to pay an increase towards Fire & Rescue Services in Northamptonshire. More than half (52%) indicated they are willing to pay an increase of £5 per year. Less than a fifth (17%) are not prepared to pay anymore towards the service and a small percentage did not know (2%).



Nine out of every ten residents in Wellingborough (90%) are prepared to pay more towards the Fire & Rescue Service. Conversely, residents of Daventry were much less inclined to be willing to fund an increase with less than three-quarters (74%) prepared to pay any kind of increase. Residents in Kettering (78%) and East Northants (78%) were also less inclined to pay an increase towards the Fire & Rescue Service, however the majority in each area support a rise in precept.

As with the policing element of the council tax, there is a correlation between age and willingness to pay more, with younger respondents typically willing to pay more compared to older respondents. Just under nine-tenths of those aged 18-24 (87%) and 25-34 (84%) are willing to pay an increase for the Fire & Rescue Service whereas this dropped to 77% amongst those aged 65-74 and 75% aged 75 and over.

Further comments

Respondents were asked to provide any further comments on Northamptonshire Police and Fire & Rescue Service. Comments were grouped into key themes



Many residents reiterated their view that the police force perform a good job across the county, although residents feel improvements to police visibility are required. A quarter believe in the need for more funding for the service and just under a tenth thought that Northamptonshire Police’s priorities should be reviewed. A small percentage reinforced their preference of not paying more towards policing.

“There is a lack of officers on the street and we've got a problem with homeless people causing nuisance. It has not been dealt with.”

“I would like to see more foot patrols instead of seeing them driving around all day.”

“I think there needs to be a higher presence of police around, I hardly see any police officers in my area.”

“I think they work in very difficult circumstances but still manage to do a good job.”

“I have admiration for them. They do a very dangerous and difficult job.”

Any other comments - Fire & Rescue n=399



The majority of residents commented on the good job that Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue are performing; a fifth mentioning their belief the service should be provided with more funding. A tenth confirmed they do not have contact with the service and a small number chose to remark they do not want to pay any more towards fire and rescue services.

“They do an excellent job with the resources they have.”

“I think the services have a lack of staff in the fire and rescue service and I think it is the same in the police service.”

“I am very satisfied with the service they provide to residents. They are always very quick to respond to any calls and they saved my house when I had a fire.”

“I think they are very good at what they do as they are life savers, they also need more funding.”

“They all do a good job with the level of staff that they have due to cuts.”

“I have been fortunate not to need them but I am happy they are there. From what you see on the TV and radio they have a difficult job and do it very well.”

Appendices
Questionnaire

Council Tax Questionnaire 2020/21
Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

Hello, my name is and I'm calling on behalf of the the Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. I work for SMSR, an independent research company who have been commissioned to conduct an important survey to seek the views of residents who pay council tax in Northamptonshire about the 2020/21 council tax level for policing and the fire & rescue service.

Could you spare a couple of minutes to answer a few questions?

We are looking to speak to residents who pay council tax, please could you confirm that you pay council tax?

REC Interviews are recorded for monitoring and training purposes. Do you give your consent for this interview to be recorded?

Yes
 No

In compliance with GDPR you are able to withdraw your consent at any point during or after the interview and we can provide contact details for both Northamptonshire PCC and SMSR at any point if you so wish. The data is being collected in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct.

Any information you give us will be kept in confidence and only used for the purpose of this consultation. No individuals will be identifiable.

If respondent shows any sign of concern, please offer the following contact numbers: Lee Atkinson on 0800 138045 at SMSR or Helen Cook at Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office on 01604 888113.

The Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold has responsibility for overseeing both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue services. The Commissioner sets the budget for both organisations and holds both the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account on behalf of the public, for the performance of their organisations.

Q1 In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Police are doing?

Excellent.....
Good
Fair.....
Poor
Very Poor
Don't know (do not read out)

Q1a Why do you say that?

Q2 In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service are doing?

- Excellent.....
- Good
- Fair.....
- Poor
- Very Poor
- Don't know (do not read out)

Q2a Why do you say that?

The Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold has the responsibility of setting the budget for both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. The other elements of the council tax you pay, go towards Northamptonshire County Council, your local authority and town or parish council.

Stephen Mold wants to understand your views on the policing and fire parts of the council tax that you pay. Your feedback will help inform the level of council tax the the Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner sets for Northamptonshire.

Q3 Currently the average household (band D) pays £1.16 a week towards Fire & Rescue Services. In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views:

- I would not be prepared to pay anymore for Fire & Rescue Services than I do now
- I would be prepared to pay an increase of £1 a year for Fire & Rescue Services (2p per week)
- I would be prepared to pay an increase of £5 a year for Fire & Rescue Services (10p per week)
- Don't know (do not read out)

- Q4 The average household (band D) currently pays £4.71 a week towards policing. In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views:
- I would not be prepared to pay anymore for policing than I do now
 - I would be prepared to pay an increase of £4 a year for policing (8p per week)
 - I would be prepared to pay an increase of £10 a year for policing (19p per week)
 - I would be prepared to pay an increase of £12 a year for policing (23p per week)
 - I would be prepared to pay an increase of £24 a year for policing (46p per week)
 - Don't know (do not read out)

Q5 Have you got any further comments you would like to make about Northamptonshire Police?

Q6 Have you got any further comments you would like to make about Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Services?

Demographics

Collecting information about you helps us to look at differences in opinion between groups of people. All information provided is strictly confidential. However, if you still feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, please feel free to say 'prefer not to say'.

To find out more about the steps OPFCC takes to ensure your data is safe and how it is held please see our Fair Processing Statement on our website at: www.northantspfcc.org.uk.

- Q7 How would you describe your gender?
- Male
 - Female
 - Trans
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say

Q8 What age were you on your last birthday? (read out bands if necessary)

Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
18-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>
55-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>
75 or above	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 What is your ethnicity?

White British	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed - White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black or Black British - Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black or Black British - African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Black background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British - Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other - Please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other - Please specify:

Q11 Which of the following options best describes you:

- Heterosexual/Straight.....
- Lesbian/Gay woman.....
- Gay man
- Bisexual.....
- Questioning
- Other - Please specify:
- Prefer not to say.....

Other - Please specify:

Q12 Finally, can I just take your postcode please? (This is just to ensure we speak with a mix of people across the area)

Thank you for completing the survey.

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SMSR
RESEARCH