

**Report of Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria**

**Report on Proposed Precept for 2026/27**

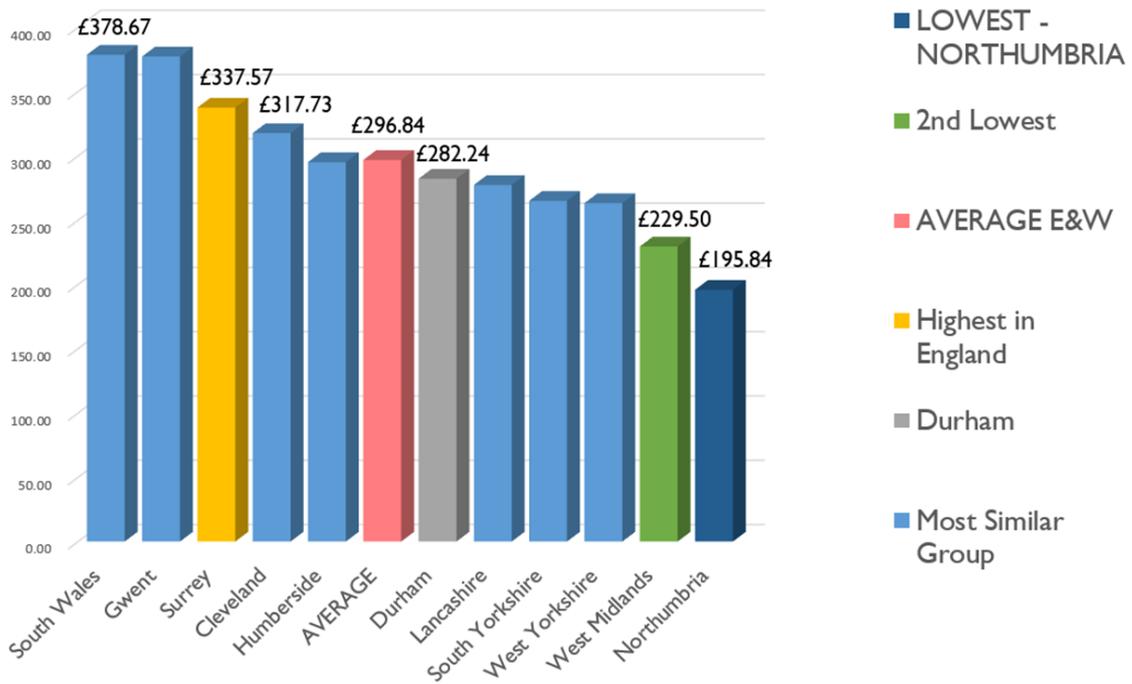
**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report sets out my proposed Council Tax Precept for the policing area covered by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Northumbria for the 2026/27 financial year, with a recommendation to agree to the proposal.
- 1.2 I am seeking agreement on a Precept increase of £18.50 per year for a Band D property to better fund a vital public service. Band A households make up the largest share of properties in the Northumbria force area, and for them the increase is 24p per week (£12.33 per year).
- 1.3 The proposed increase would raise an additional £7.958m income, which will allow us to remain resilient while continuing to invest in improvements and services that matter most to our communities:
  - reducing crime and antisocial behaviour across all our communities through multi-agency hubs and strengthened offender management;
  - enhancing our ability to tackle motorcycle-related ASB and neighbourhood drug crime through drone capability;
  - investing in a single communications centre that will drive efficiencies and improve local responsiveness; and
  - strengthening our safeguarding of women and girls through increased preventative activity and investigative capacity, particularly in relation to domestic abuse.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 Schedule 5 states that, “A Police and Crime Commissioner may not issue a precept under section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for a financial year until the end of the scrutiny process is reached.” The first stage of the scrutiny process is that I must notify you of the precept I am proposing to issue for the financial year 2026/27.
- 2.2 The Council Tax Precept is a source of revenue for policing in Northumbria; the following graph shows a comparison of Northumbria’s position to other force areas for the current financial year 2025/26:

## Band D Precept 2025/26



- 2.3 As is clear from the graph above the Northumbria Band D precept charge of £195.84 for 2025/26 is the lowest of any PCC in England and Wales. The Band D precept charge is the contribution paid toward policing by a homeowner in that category and is the common criteria by which information and comparison is based. It should be noted that the majority of properties in the Northumbria area are Band A, i.e., the lowest banding for which the charge is £130.56. For 2025/26 20% of our core resource funding is derived from the Council Tax Precept, with the majority (80%) being through government grant.
- 2.4 I have to set the scene here – the budget will be tight and there are difficult choices to be made – raising a precept being one. Sustaining current police levels by slightly increasing the police element of the council tax is what we need to happen if we are going to protect and sustain current policing levels – and we are all keen for that.
- 2.5 Since 2010, the former government’s austerity drive saw unprecedented cuts to the funding provided to policing, with Northumbria being the hardest hit of any force in England and Wales. Central Government formula funding for policing in Northumbria was reduced by more than 31% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2018/19, as confirmed independently by the National Audit Office (NAO). As a result, police officer numbers in Northumbria reduced by more than 1,100 between March 2010 and March 2019. By March 2021 the force had made £148.000m of cuts and efficiencies to manage the reductions imposed by government.
- 2.6 In considering the right precept proposal for 2026/27 I was mindful that Northumbria Police has the lowest precept in the country and is as a result very reliant upon central government funding, over which I have no control.

- 2.7 Local precept income is therefore essential to maintain spending power and make sure the force has the resources it needs to keep our neighbourhoods safe. The Council Tax Precept raised £82.885m towards the total funding requirement for Northumbria in 2025/26. Residents in Northumbria have provided additional funding to support Northumbria Police year-on-year and that support has been vital to help the force deliver the Police and Crime Plan priorities.
- 2.8 This is why I have asked how much people are willing to pay to be able to help support our region's efforts to deliver safer streets and stronger communities.

### **3. Police Settlement 2026/27**

- 3.1 The provisional police grant settlement for 2026/27 was published on 18 December 2025 and set out force-level funding for the 2026/27 financial year only. There was no detail set out with the provisional settlement which provided one figure for each force in respect of total government grant. There was no information on individual grant amounts for Core Grant, Legacy Council Tax Grant, Special Pension Grant, National Insurance Grant, Uplift Maintenance and Uplift Overshoot Grants or NPG funding.
- 3.2 On 28 January 2026 publication of the Final Police Grant Report 2026/27 confirmed that the main elements of the 2026/27 Home Office settlement included:
- Total funding for police forces including Counter Terrorism is 'up to' £19.6 billion, an increase of £848m.
  - Total funding to territorial forces will be 'up to' £18.4 billion, an increase of £796m.
  - Of the £796m increase, £432m is from government grant and 'up to' £364m from Council Tax precept income.
- 3.3 The Final Police Grant Report includes an additional £50m of grant funding, which has been provided to deliver further national investment in Neighbourhood Policing of 1,750 officers and PCSOs, which means 54 additional posts in Northumbria.
- 3.4 It further confirms that previous specific grants for Uplift, Uplift Overshoot and Year 1 NPG have been removed, and replaced with one conditional grant for NPG delivery – the Neighbourhood Policing Ring Fence Grant. Alongside this, all headcount targets for officer numbers are removed, replaced by an NPG target.
- 3.5 Prior to the recent funding settlement, our financial planning was based on a £15 precept increase, which would have enabled essential investment and growth across key areas of policing capability.
- 3.6 However, despite a national increase in police funding, the settlement for Northumbria delivers a significant shortfall due to the withdrawal of the Home Office overshoot grant, combined with the redistribution of national funding. This has created a gap that cannot be sustainably bridged locally.
- 3.7 The Home Office has acknowledged this challenge by granting us exceptional precept flexibility of £18.50. This will allow us to remain resilient while continuing to invest in the improvements that matter most to our communities.

3.8 The attached report at Appendix I sets out the proposed revenue budget and capital programme for 2026/27 including my precept proposal, together with a review of the current year's budget position and future funding.

#### 4 Precept Proposals

4.1 The funding available through the £18.50 per year precept increase would provide an additional £7.958m in 2026/27. It would also increase the underlying precept base and provide continued financial benefit in future years. For context, this is 24p a week for a Band A property.

4.2 Northumbria Police is committed delivering on my Police and Crime Plan - Safer Streets and Stronger Communities but does so against a backdrop of ongoing financial pressures. As Police and Crime Commissioner it is my job to seek the views of the public and work with the Chief Constable to set a force budget on behalf of our communities and ensure police officers and staff have what they need to keep us safe.

4.3 On 7 January 2026 I launched a public consultation asking residents whether they would support an increase to their police precept contribution.

4.4 The consultation came in two forms, online and telephone, and sought residents feedback on a range of proposals: to increase the precept by 19p, 28p or 37p per week for a Band A property or to maintain the current precept contribution.

- For the telephone survey, 612 residents were contacted at random, with a minimum of 100 completed per Local Authority.
- The online consultation was shared over social media and by email to our resident's database of over 4,000 contacts, received 332 responses from across the force area.

These two approaches gave an overall sample of 942 residents.

4.5 Residents were informed that the proposed increase would help the force meet budget pressures and continue to deliver investment in tackling ASB, new technologies and safeguarding women and girls.

4.6 I understand the importance of residents seeing value for their precept increase, and so through my ongoing scrutiny process I will provide regular updates and communication on how these are being delivered by the Chief Constable, and the impact being made within our communities. The following table provides the results of both surveys

	Yes - 19p	Yes - 28p	Yes - 37p	No	Unsure	Total
Phone	131	131	125	165	60	612
Online	60	35	71	132	32	330
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>942</b>
	20%	18%	21%	31%	10%	100%

4.7 Analysis of responses shows support from respondents. In total 59% of residents were supportive of an increase in precept of 19p or above. Of those supportive 33.9% were in favour of an increase of 19p per week. The remaining 66.1% supported an increase of either 28p or 37p.

4.8 The government has confirmed that Northumbria may set a precept of £18.50 for a Band D Property and residents backing for this can be seen in the survey findings.

- 4.9 For context, £18.50 per year increase for a Band D property equates to approximately 36p per week. For the majority of residents in Northumbria, those in a Band A property, the actual increase will be approximately 24p per week (£12.33 per year).
- 4.10 The funding available through the £18.50 per year precept increase would provide an additional £7.958m in 2026/27 and provide continued financial benefit in future years.
- 4.11 Those who chose the option to increase the precept covered the following themes:
- Support for the police; supporting the increase would be good value for money if it helps to ensure the police are adequately resourced.
  - Willingness to support an increase in funding if it's invested in the areas specified
  - Willingness to support an increase in funding if it means increased police visibility and improvements to the service.
- 4.12 Of those who said they were not willing to pay more than they currently do, the most common reasons for this were;
- Any increase to the current council tax contribution is not affordable; we already pay enough council tax.
  - The current service provision does not justify an increase in funding.
  - Funding the police should not be the responsibility of the local taxpayer; the increase in funding should be sourced from elsewhere.

## **5 Proposals**

- 5.1 The Chief Constable and I are wholly committed to delivering safer streets and stronger communities across the force area, but without the appropriate funding, we will face significant financial pressures ahead.
- 5.2 I propose that the precept is increased by £18.50 per year for a Band D property which equates to an increase of 9.45%.
- 5.3 Whilst the £18.50 increase appears high in percentage terms when compared with other forces, the reason for this is that the Northumbria Police precept is already the lowest of any force in England and Wales as highlighted earlier in this report. Even with the proposed increase, the 2026/27 precept of £214.34 per year for a Band D property will remain the lowest in England and Wales by a long way.
- 5.2 The impact of this decision in 2026/27 will allow for an additional and recurring £7.958m contribution to resources.
- 5.3 This proposal is made in the context of the budget needed to invest in policing resources, with essential expenditure to deliver the Police and Crime Plan.

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 The Police and Crime Panel are asked to:
- I. Review the recommended precept proposal.
  - II. Make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed precept for the forthcoming financial year.