

REPORT OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

Report title: Annual Survey Findings

The public consultation on the potential rise in precept is a requirement of section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must include the views of local people, as well as the representatives on the Police and Crime Panel.

Within the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 it states:

14 Arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing

(1B) Those arrangements must include, in the case of a police area listed in Schedule 1, arrangements for obtaining, before the first precept for a financial year is issued by the police and crime commissioner under section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the views of—

(a) the people in that police area, and

(b) the relevant ratepayers' representatives, on the proposals of the police and crime commissioner for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in that financial year.

To this end the Commissioner launched his consultation on the 2024/2025 budget on 19 December 2023, and it ran for three weeks and three days. The OPCC used a mixture of social media and mainstream media to bring the survey to local residents' attention. The OPCC created a QR code for easy access to the survey, this was added onto our monthly newsletter, sent out to all individuals on our database and sent out via Beds Alert, which reaches over £14,000 members of the public across Bedfordshire.

A total of 1274 people completed the survey; this is an increase of **133%** from last year, where only 545 people completed the survey.

The **press release** that was added on to the Bedfordshire OPCC Website stated:

Bedfordshire PCC consults with residents about police precept for 2024/25

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Bedfordshire, Festus Akinbusoye, has released the police precept survey for the financial year 2024/25. The PCC must consult with local residents on any changes that he is considering to the police precept. For 2024/25, the PCC wants to propose an increase to the police precept of £13 a year for an average Band D property.

The PCC said, “Over the last year I have spoken to hundreds of residents and community representatives about what they want from their police force. I am also very conscious of the demands and financial pressures that Bedfordshire Police is under, and the areas that His Majesty’s Inspectorate have identified for improvement. I am also acutely aware of the pressures on people’s own finances, so appreciate any rise in council tax will have an impact. This all means that difficult decisions need to be made around the precept.

Even with an increase of £13 in the police precept, the Chief Constable would still need to make savings to try to maintain the current level of service being provided. Every unit and department of Bedfordshire Police is being examined to identify where these savings can be made and where costs can be reduced.

The Chief and I have agreed that by increasing the precept next year we will be able to close some of the gap created by the outdated funding formula but will still require further innovation and use of technology to support the fight against crime in our county.”

In 2024/25 the focus will be on:

Retail crime – We want to work with retailers and partners to improve the investigation of retail crime by using artificial intelligence linked to CCTV technology. We want to put CCTV in real time in the hands of police officers and support the identification of suspects through facial recognition.

Force control room – The Control Room continues to experience high levels of demand, with a total of 23,000 emergency and non-emergency calls received in November 2023. To respond to this demand the Force will increase the level of resourcing and use a mixed workforce of police staff and police officers. Chat and voice bots will help with non-emergency demand. This will free up officers and staff to deal with police incidents.

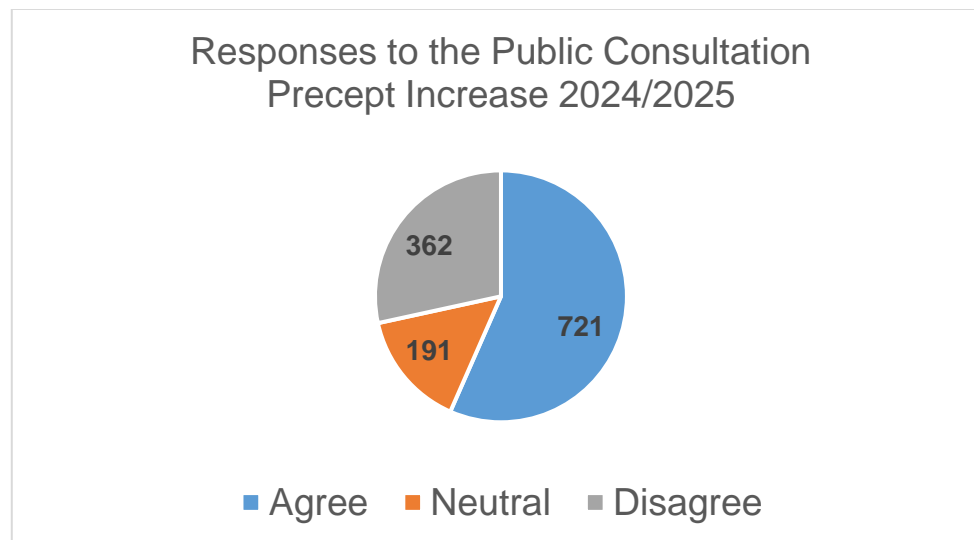
Crime prevention – Bedfordshire continues to be impacted by knife crime and serious youth violence. We want to bring in a dedicated Superintendent role to develop a countywide crime prevention strategy with a specific focus on preventing serious youth violence and reducing knife related crime.

Improved outcomes for victims through immediate justice – We want to make more and better use of alternative ways of dealing with offenders by increasing our use of processes like out of court disposals. This will help us to speed up resolution for some victims of crime and help to shape offender behaviour to prevent further victims of crime.

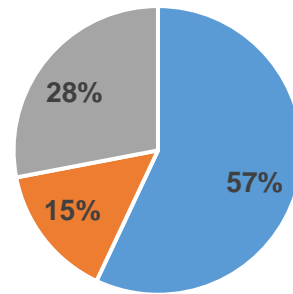
Speeding – We want to train and equip our Special Constables with monitoring and enforcement techniques to reduce speeding in key areas across our county at periods of high road use. During 2024/25 there will be a sustained campaign throughout the year to recruit more Specials in the Force as part of our commitment to Community Policing.

The police precept survey will close at 5pm on 12 January 2024 and will form part of the report to the Police and Crime Panel that will meet to consider recommendations from the PCC on 6 February 2024.

Of those 1274 responses, 721 (57%) people voiced their support, 191 (15%) voiced that they were neutral, and 362 (28%) people didn't support the proposal.



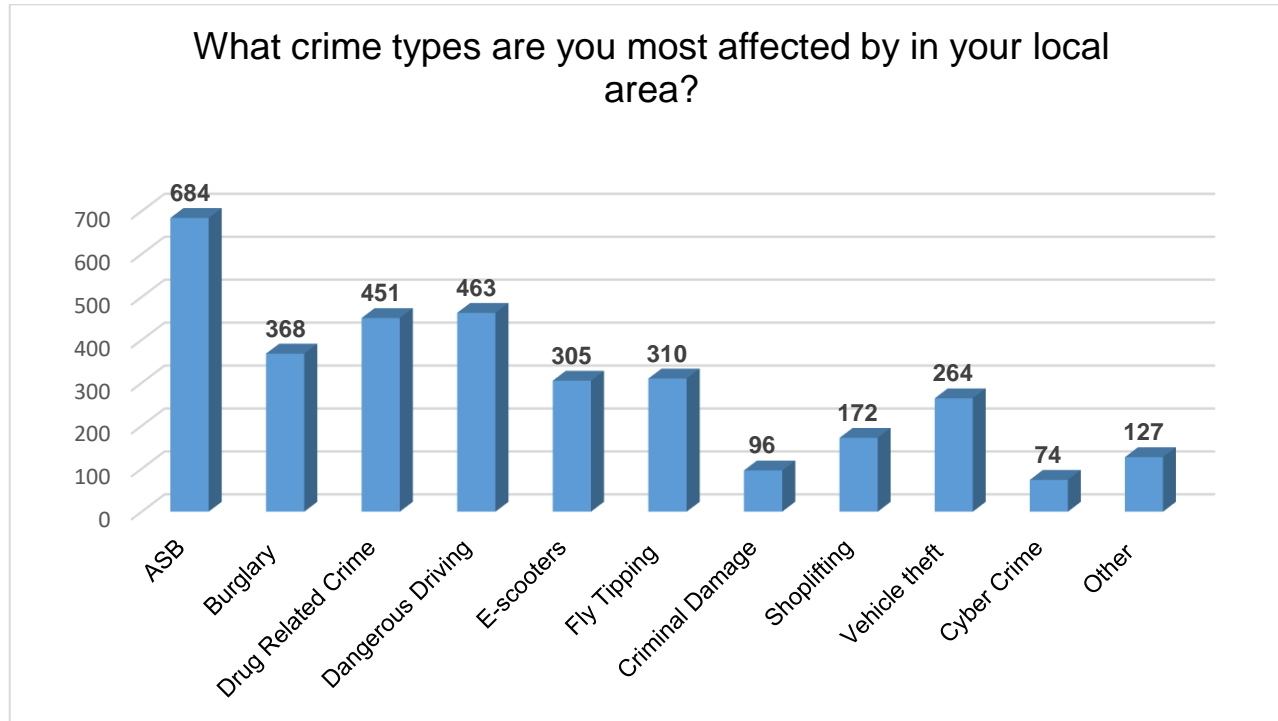
Responses to the Public Consultation
Precept Increase 2024/2025



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

A number of questions were asked to the public and the below highlights the responses:

Question One - What crime types are you most affected by in your local area?

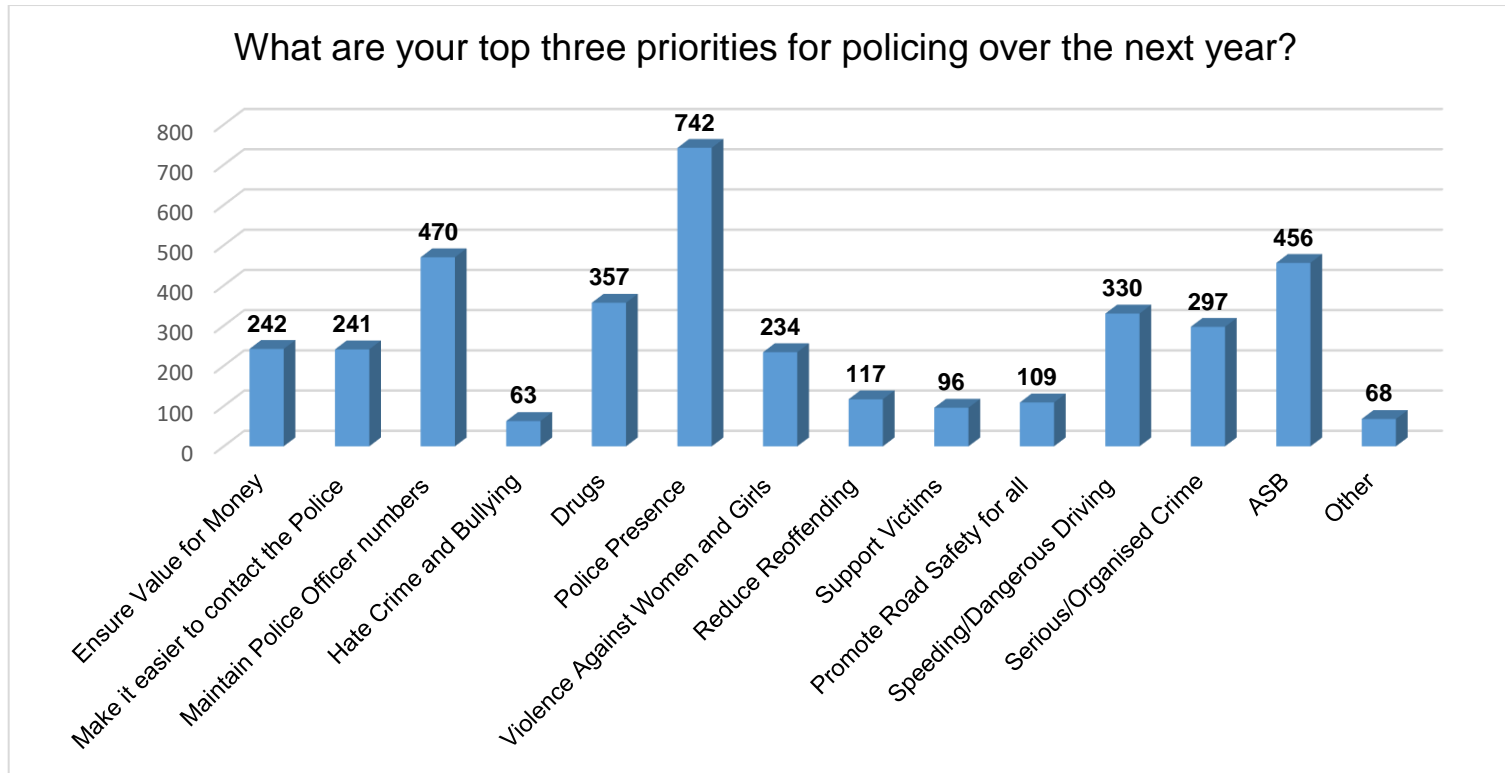


Top 3 answers:

1. Anti- Social Behaviour
2. Dangerous Driving
3. Drug Related Crime

These responses will be shared with Bedfordshire Police.

Question Two – What are your top three priorities for policing over the next year?

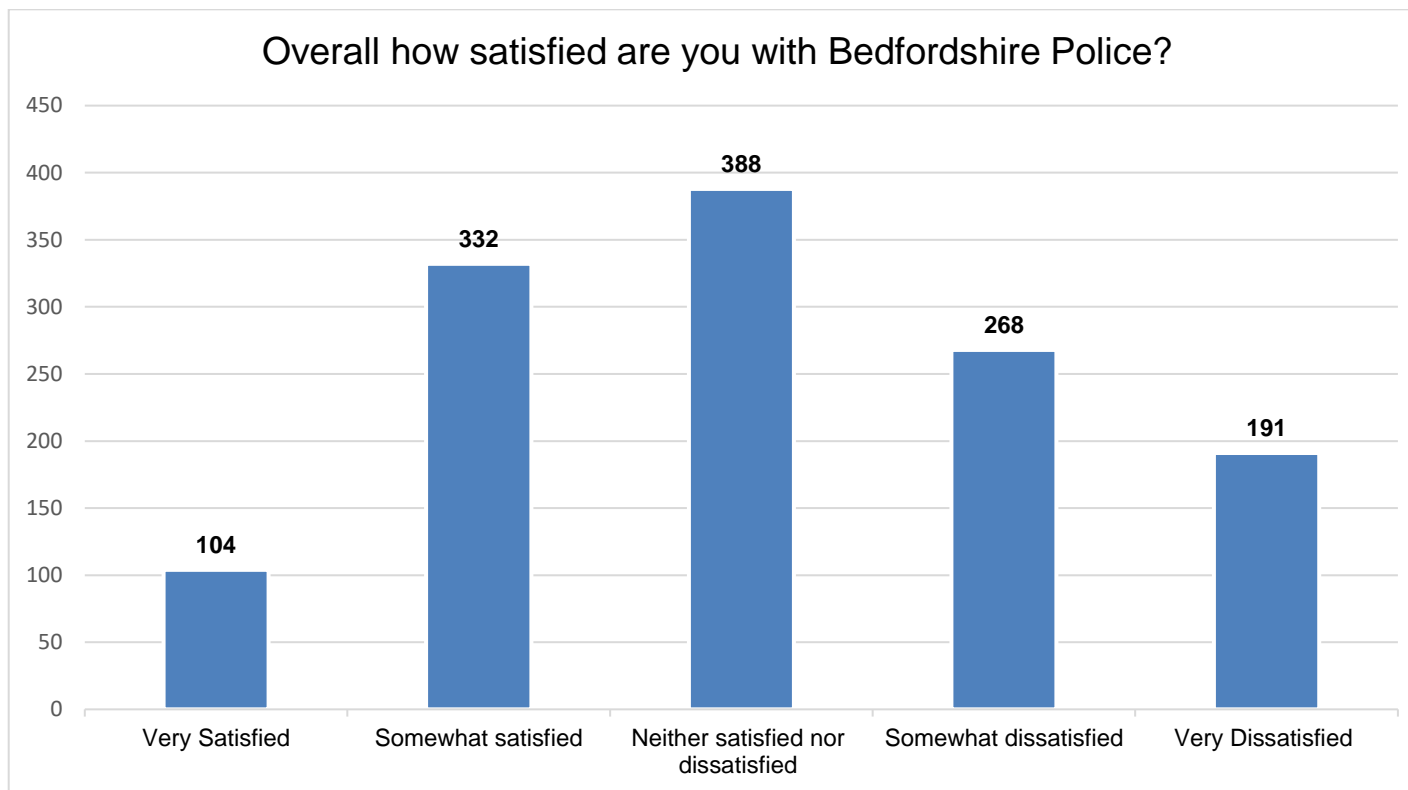


Top 3 answers:

1. Police Presence
2. Maintain Officer Numbers
3. Anti-Social Behaviour

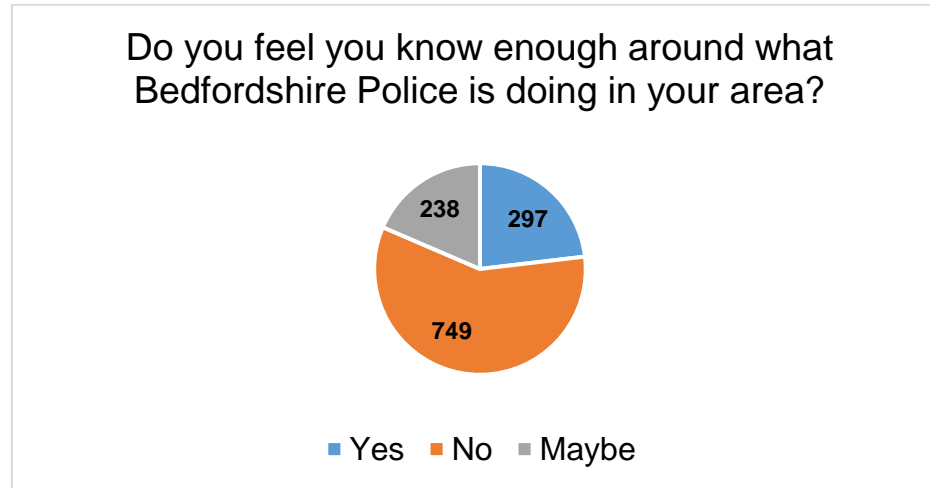
These responses will be shared with Bedfordshire Police.

Question Three – Overall how satisfied are you with Bedfordshire Police?

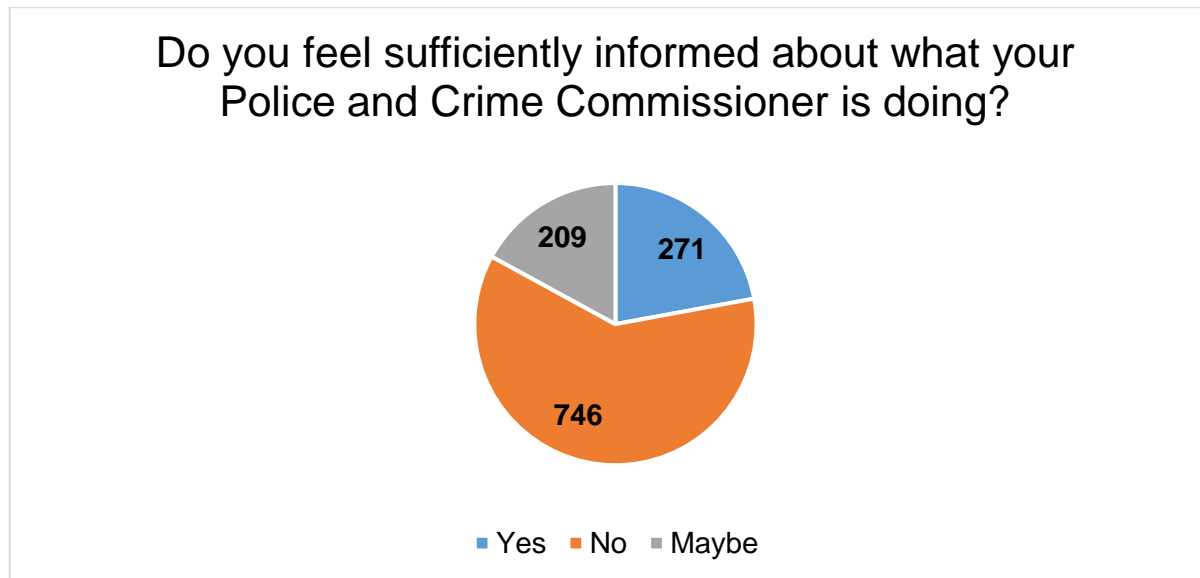


These responses will be shared with Bedfordshire Police.

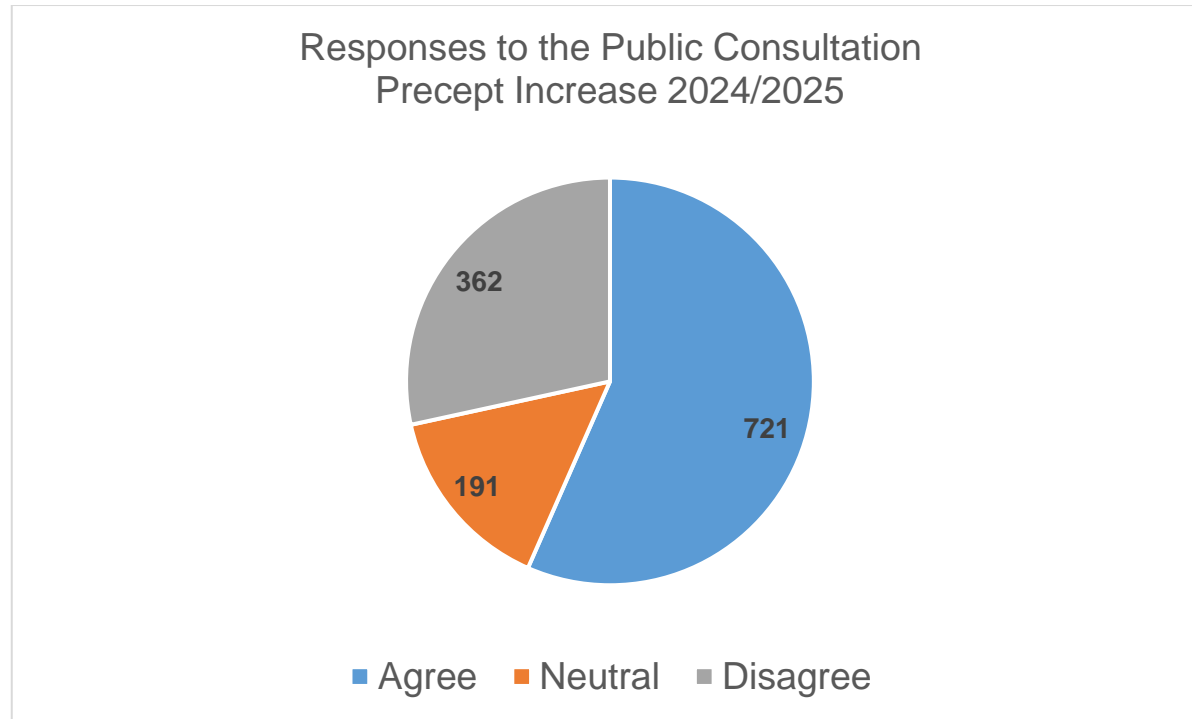
Question Four - Do you feel you know enough around what Bedfordshire Police is doing in your area?



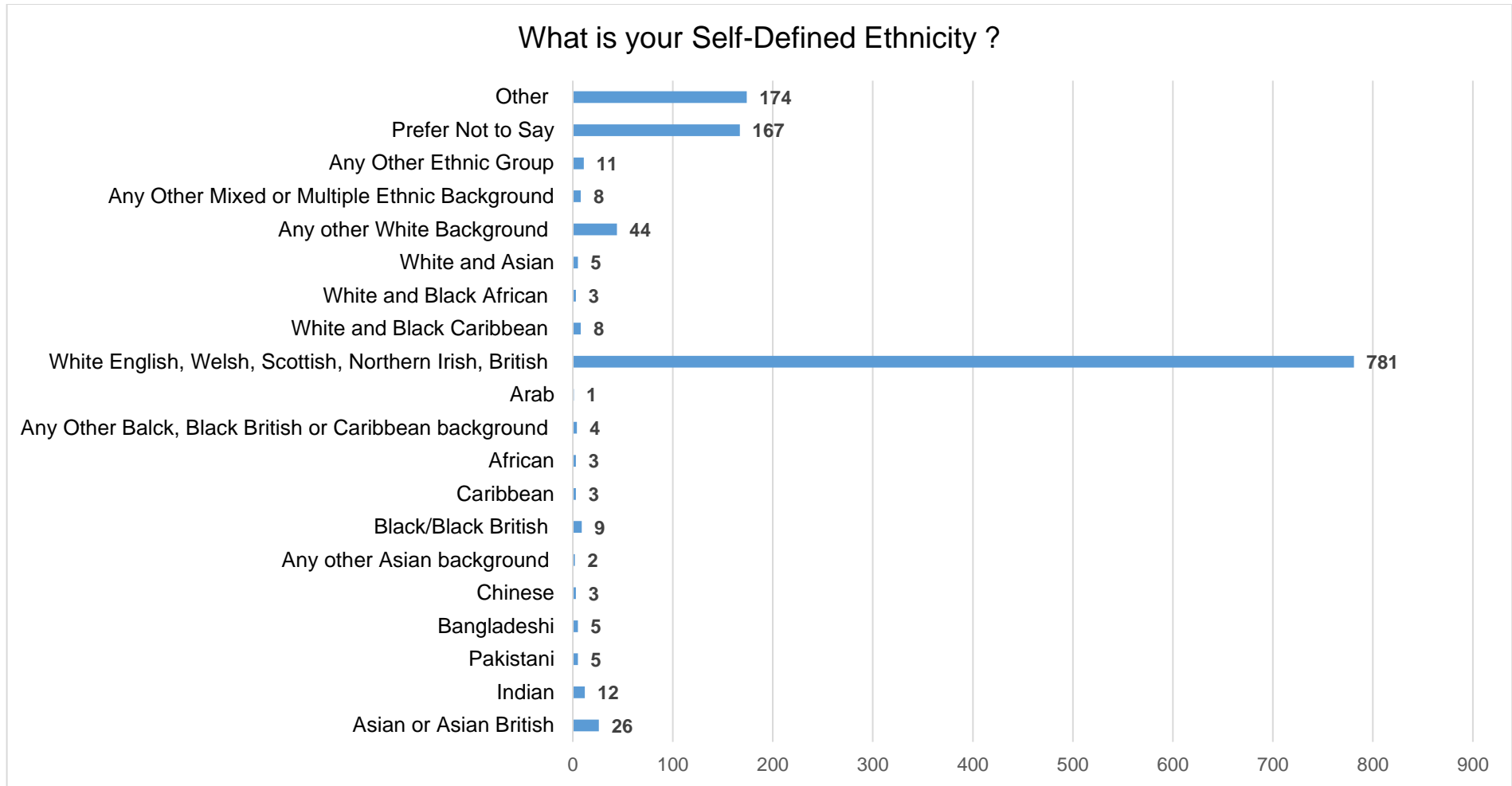
Question Five - Do you feel sufficiently informed about what your Police and Crime Commissioner is doing?



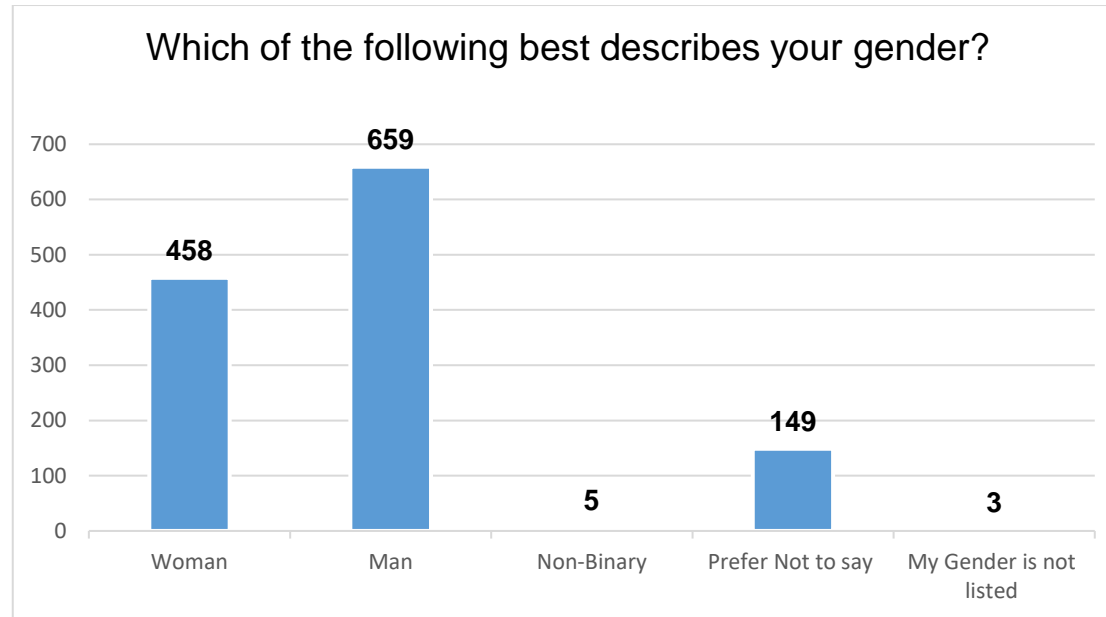
Question Six - Looking at the table below please indicate if you would agree or disagree with next year's 2024/25 police precept increase?



Question Seven - What is your self-defined ethnicity?



Question Eight - Which of the following best describes your gender?

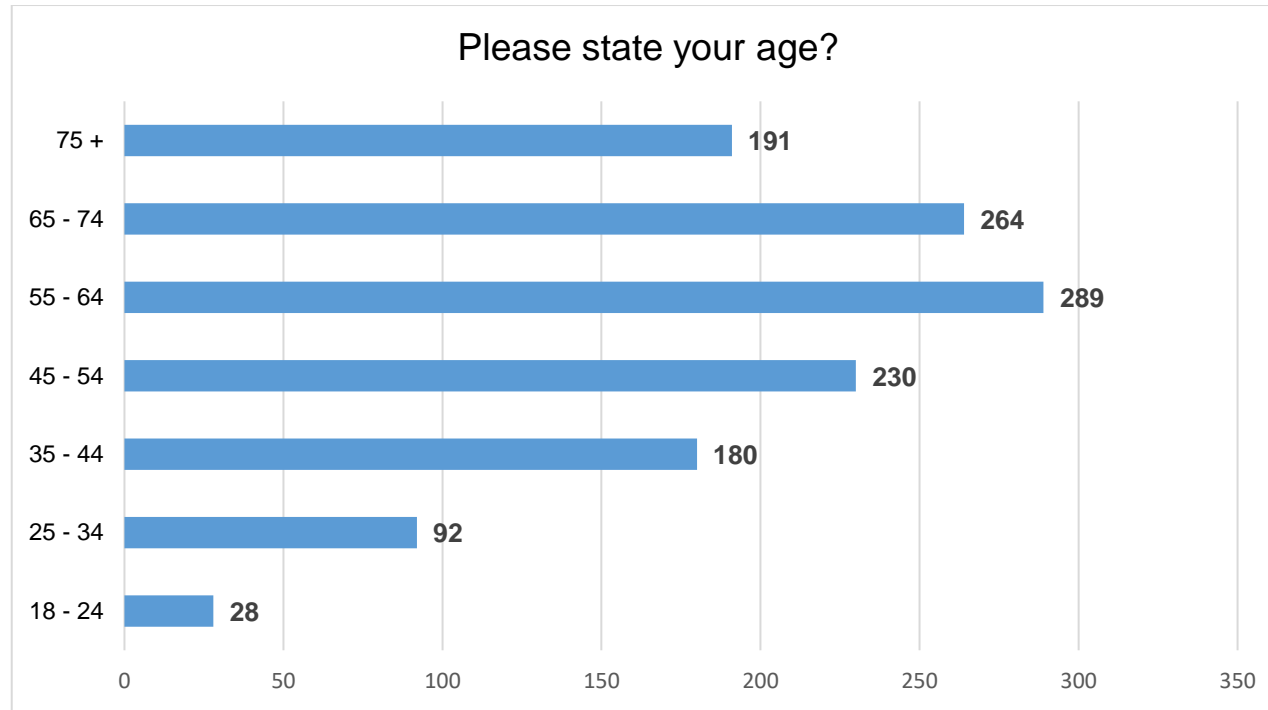


Question Nine - Please let us know your gender?

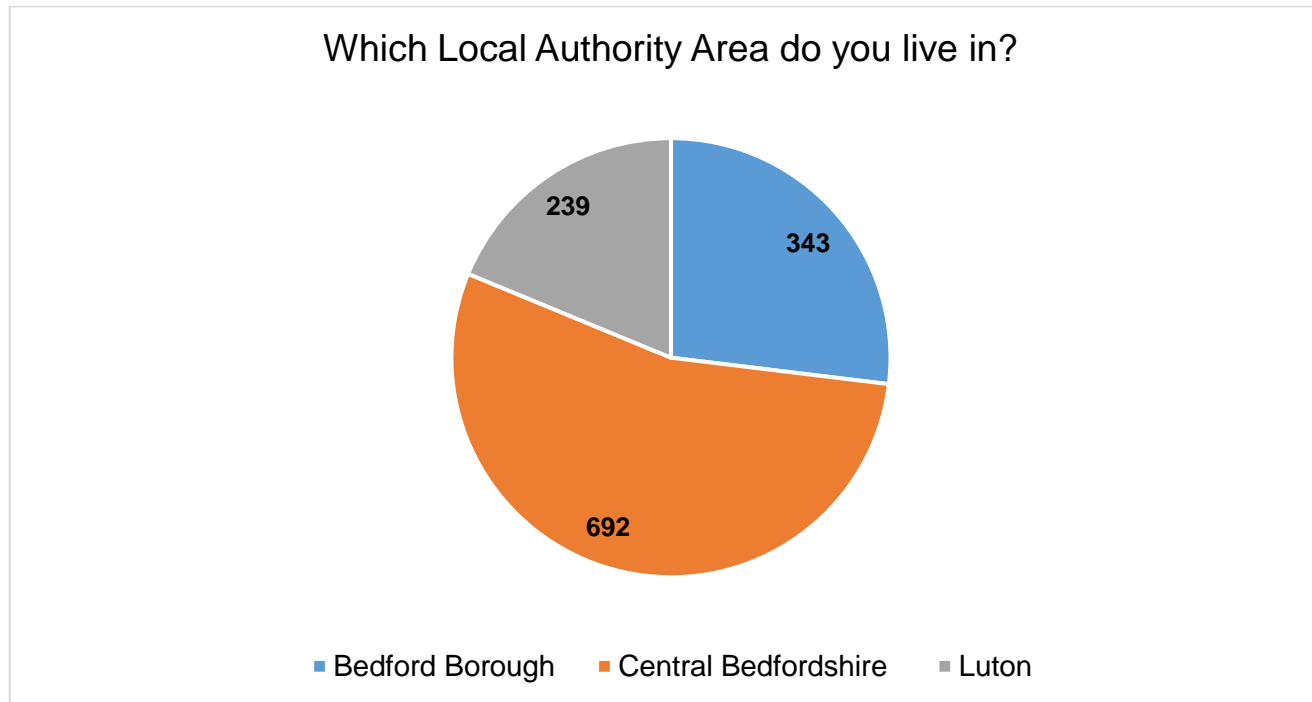
Responses

1. Sex not Gender.
2. Transgender

Question Ten – Please state your age?



Question Eleven - Which Local Authority area do you live in?

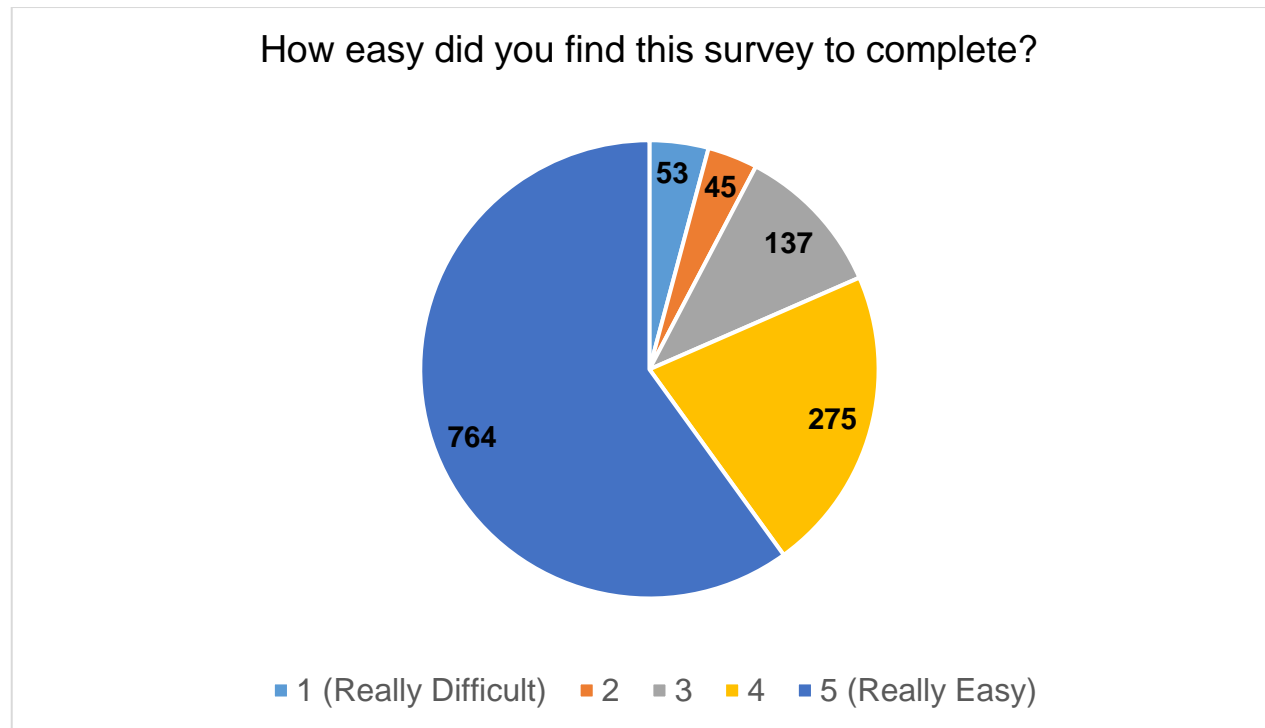


Question Twelve - Please provide the start of your postcode (this will enable us to understand specific area priorities)

1274 Responses.

A word cloud of postcode prefixes. The text is arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with the largest text at the top and smaller text towards the bottom. The colors of the text vary, including shades of blue, red, yellow, green, and purple. The prefixes include: mk43, sg17, mk44, mk41, lu7, nn10, sg15, mk45, mk40, lu1, lu5, lu15, lu2, lu3, al3, sg18, sg19, mk42, sg5, and lu6.

Question Thirteen - How easy did you find this survey to complete?



Conclusion

The OPCC has reviewed the findings which will be shared with Bedfordshire Police, we recognise that the response is 133% greater than the previous year and have received a 57% supportive response.

The PCC recommends that the Police and Crime Panel agree the increase to the police precept of £13 a year for an average Band D property.

Public Access to Information	
Information in this report is subject to publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation. Any information that should not be made publicly available should be included in an appendix to this report and the reason for restriction given.	
Is any 'restricted' information appended to this report? No If 'yes' please advise reason for restriction.	
Report Author	Katie Beaumont – Head of Governance and Transparency
Date of report	15.01.2024
Appendices	