

**2018/19 PRECEPT CONSULTATION ONLINE SURVEYS**

**1. ONLINE SURVEY**

- 1.1. The online survey was available from 15 November – 18 December 2017. The consultation period was promoted through our website, Facebook and Twitter. An example of the advert can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.2. In that period a total of 51 responses were received. As only one of these responses represented the business sector, the results have not been separated. The results are as follows.

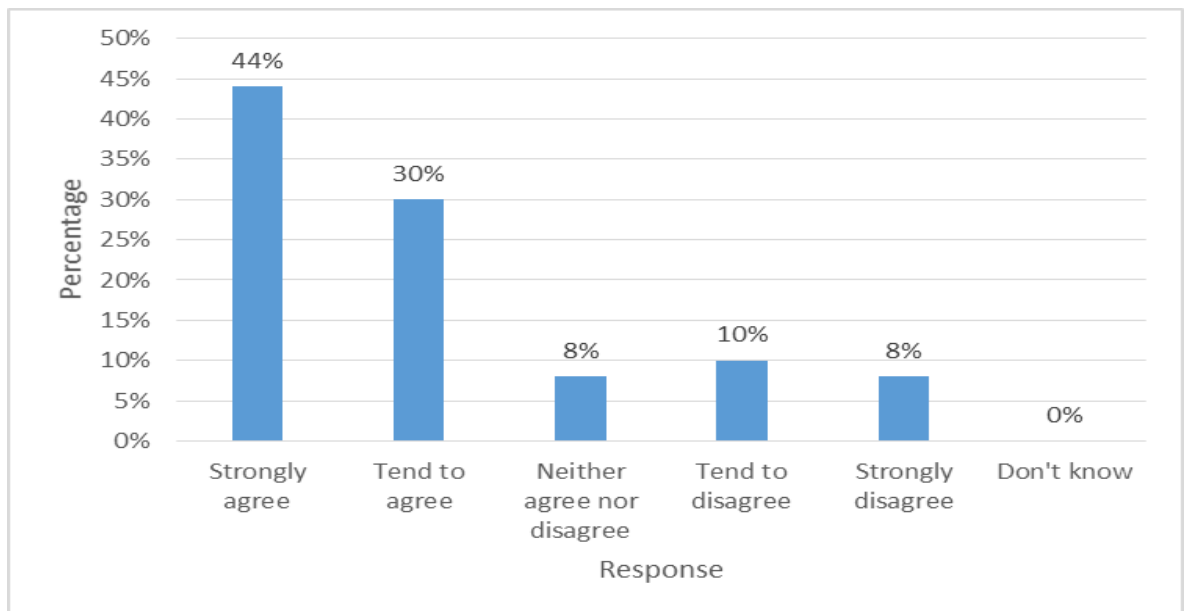
**Results**

**Q1. How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is reasonable for the Authority to consider increasing its council tax charge for 2018/19 to lessen the impact of the funding cuts?**

Table 1: Responses to Question 1

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Strongly agree	22	44.00
Tend to agree	15	30.00
Neither agree nor disagree	4	8.00
Tend to disagree	5	10.00
Strongly disagree	4	8.00
Don't know	0	0.00
Total	50	

Chart 1: Results of agreement to consider increasing the precept



- 1.3. The results indicate that 74% of respondents agree that the Authority should consider increasing its charges.

**Q2. Of the following options, what increase would you consider it reasonable for the Authority to make to its element of the council tax?**

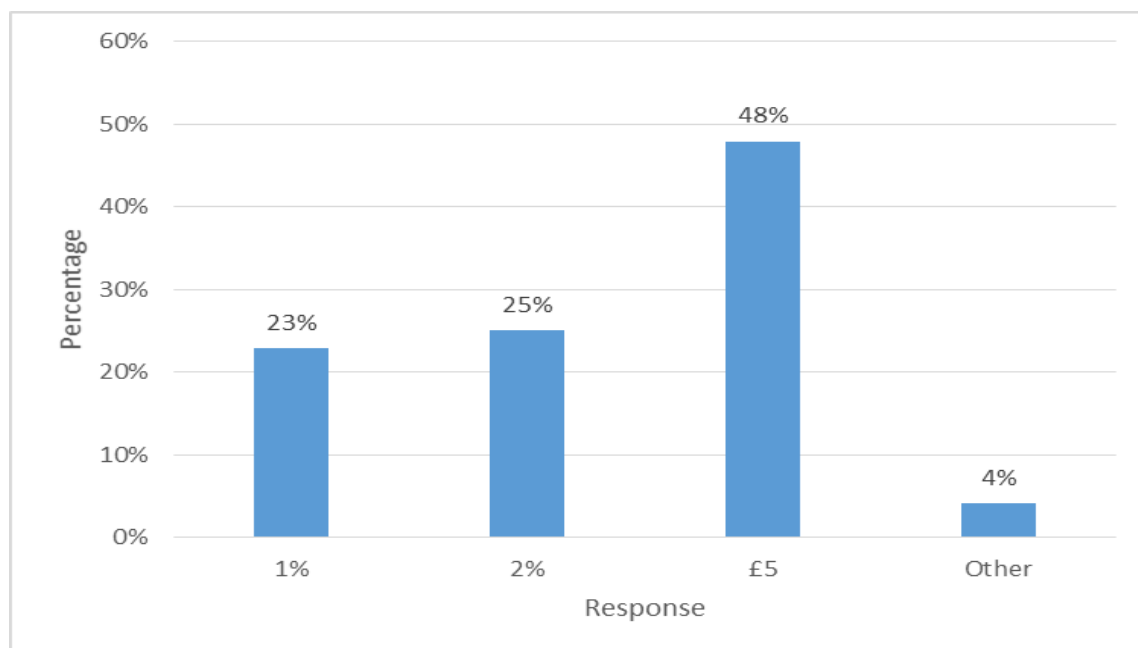
Table 2: Responses to Question 2

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
1% (An increase of 82p per year for a Band D property, increasing the total charge to £82.39)	11	22.92
2% (An increase of £1.63 per year for a Band D property, increasing the total charge to £83.22)	12	25.00
£5 (An increase of £5.00 per year for a Band D property (pro rata for other bands), increasing the total charge to £86.57)	23	47.92
Other	2	4.17
Total	48	

1.4. Those respondents who responded 'Other' were asked to provide comments. Comments made by respondents are below.

- should be across all property types in Devon and Somerset
- none

Chart 2: Results of options to increase the precept



1.5. The results indicate that 48% of respondents are in support of a £5 increase.

**Q3 If you disagreed to Q1, why do you think it is not reasonable for the Authority to increase its element of the council tax charge?**

1.6. Those respondents who disagreed that it is reasonable for DSFRS to consider increasing its element of the Council Tax charge for 2018/19 were asked why they disagreed. Comments made by respondents are below.

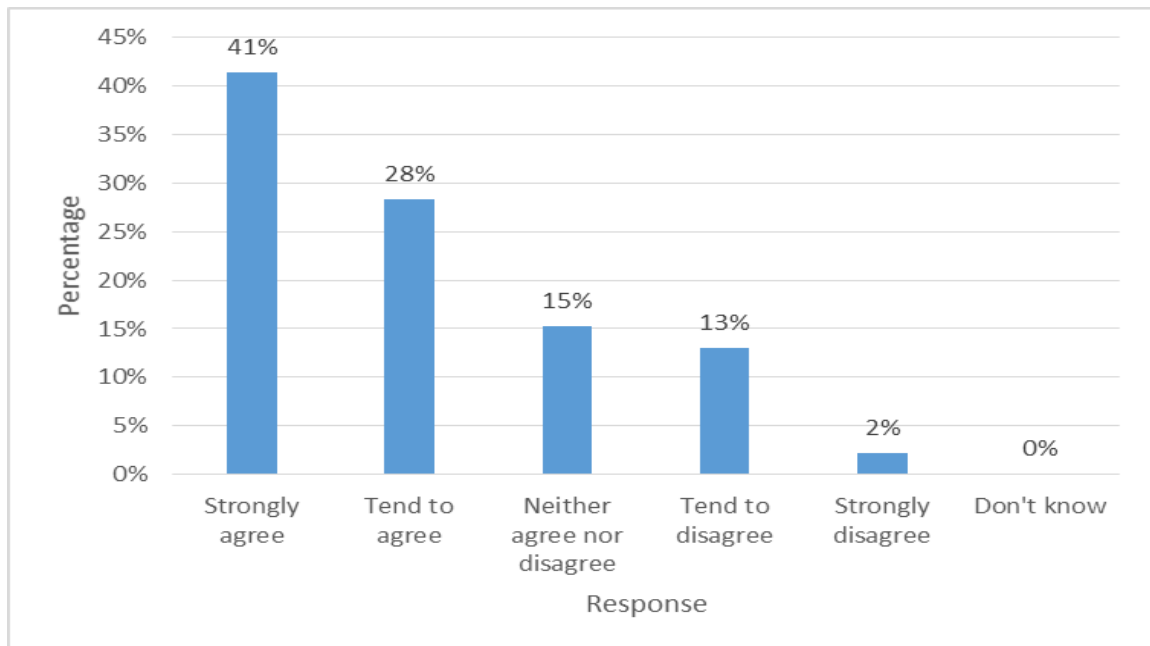
- The Service should make efficiencies to manage the impact of government reductions.
- I feel they should cut costs by reducing MP wages as they are overpaid.
- Any increase should be ring fenced to front line services only and not for increasing any backroom support services.
- Running costs should be lower with your intention to reduce the size of fire appliances and the number of crew on board. You seem to have money to spend on all the PC projects required by central government but cut front line appliances. Why should we pay more for less?
- Account should be taken of the Authorities reserves. With 1% public sector pay cap increase should be not more than 1%. All grades including executive officers pay should be capped at 1%. Ensure that no employees get pay rises above national rates.
- The local housing increases such as Cranbrook must be providing additional funding which will offset government cuts
- Savings should be made elsewhere.
- Our wages are not rising enough to cover our costs.
- All govt organisations need to cut waste and deliver services more efficiently. DSFRS should cope with less funding and explore options to overhaul their support services.

**Q4. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Service provides value for money?**

Table 3: Response to Question 4

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Strongly agree	19	41.30
Tend to agree	13	28.26
Neither agree nor disagree	7	15.22
Tend to disagree	6	13.04
Strongly disagree	1	2.17
Don't know	0	0
Total	46	

Chart 3: Results of value for money question



1.7. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (69%) agreed that the Service provides value for money at £42 per head.

**Q5. If you disagreed to Q4, why do you think that the Service does not provide value for money?**

- 1.8. Those who disagreed that DSFRS provides value for money were asked why they disagreed, and, where provided, their reasons for this are listed below.
- I think the Service could do with modernisation, I believe many out of date practices still operate such as firemen being paid to sleep and exercise.
  - resources aren't being used to the best possible way
  - Expenditure should only be on statutory duties and not things that are nice to do. E.g road safety and first responder unless fully funded outside FRA budget.
  - How does this compare to other Fire and rescue services in other parts of the country.
  - lack of wholtime stations and relaying on retained crews who possibly could not be available witch impacts on the fire service turning up in a reasonable time
  - The amount you can write in this box needs to be amended as it doesn't allow me to get my point across. Thank you.
  - The amount of pumps of the run

**Q6. Have you received any of the following Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services?**

- 1.9. To contextualise the findings reported above, all respondents were asked if they had used any of ten specific services provided across Devon and Somerset.

Table 4: Responses to Question 6

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Emergency response – house fire	2	4.88
Emergency response – road traffic collision	0	0.00
Emergency response – flooding	0	0.00
Emergency response – co-responder	2	4.88
Emergency response – other rescue	1	2.44
Community use of fire stations	2	4.88
Home fire safety visit / smoke alarm fitting	1	2.44
Youth education	5	12.20
Fire safety audit / check in a business	1	2.44
Community event	4	9.76
Other fire safety advice	0	0.00
I have not used a DSFRS service	22	53.66
Other	1	2.44
Total	41	

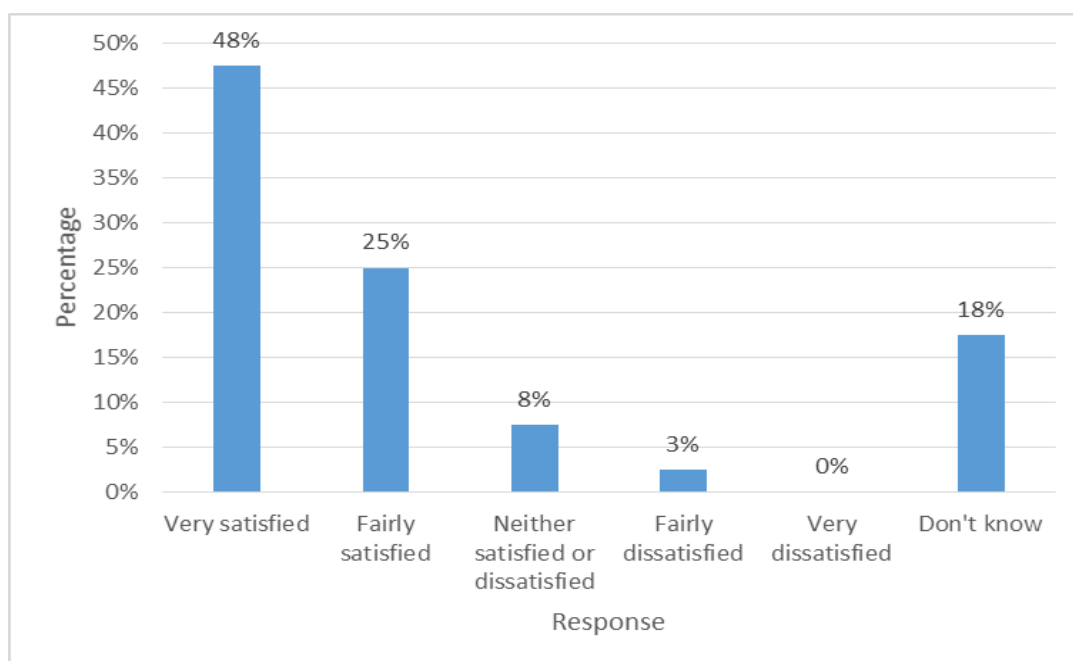
- 1.10. Those responses to those who responded ‘Other’ are listed below.
- I’m a firefighter

**1.17 Q7. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service?**

Table 5: Responses to Question 7

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Very satisfied	19	47.50
Fairly satisfied	10	25.00
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3	7.50
Fairly dissatisfied	1	2.50
Very dissatisfied	0	0.00
Don't know	7	17.50
Total	40	

Chart 4: Results of levels of satisfaction with the service provided by DSFRS



1.11. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (73%) are satisfied with the level of service received by DSFRS.

**Q8. Why are you dissatisfied with the service provided by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service?**

1.12. Of the respondents who expressed dissatisfaction, their reasons for doing so were as follows:

- Fire cover in some towns served by on-call staff is being compromised by the relocation of special appliances. E.g. Totnes which at times has no fire crew because a special has been mobilised on a brigade basis out of station ground.
- Not used it.
- lack of wholetime firefighters

**Breakdown of respondents**

1.13. The following questions were asked to ensure that a cross section of people responded to the survey and to see if there were any trends by demographic groups. The sample size is too small to conduct any trend analysis or determine whether the sample is representative of Devon and Somerset.

Table 6: Responses to Question 9 – Are you...?

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
A member of the public	38	97.44
Representing a business	1	2.56
Total	39	

Table 7: Responses to Question 10 regarding age

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
16-24	4	10.26
25-34	10	25.64
35-44	8	20.51
45-54	7	17.95
55-64	6	15.38
65+	4	10.26
Prefer not to say	0	0.00
Total	39	

Chart 5: Results of question regarding age

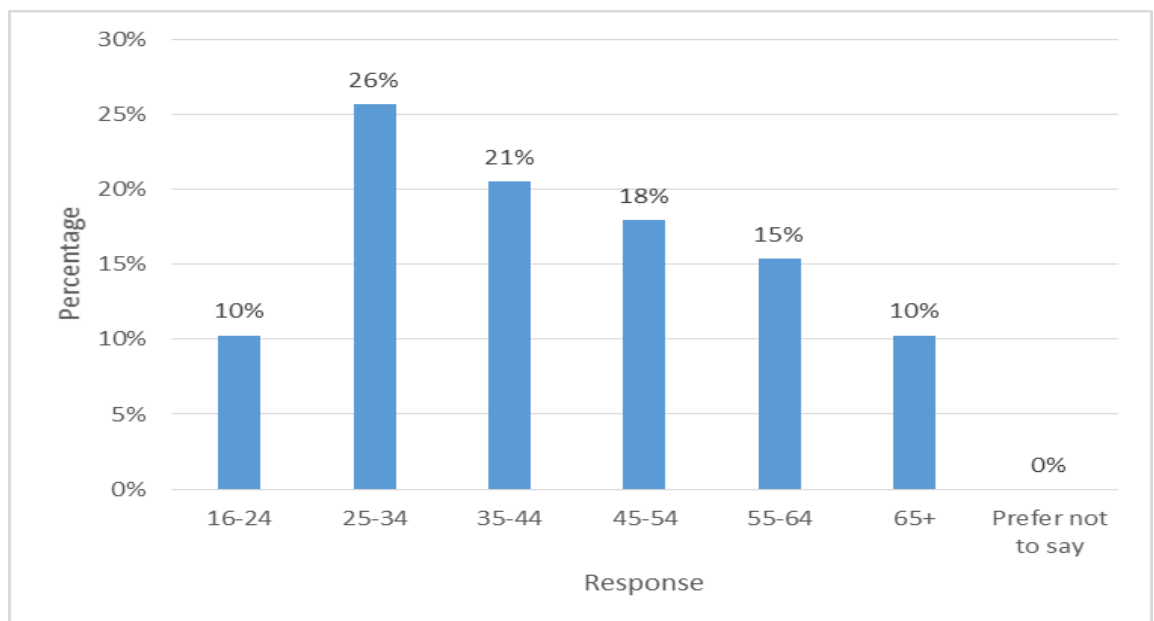
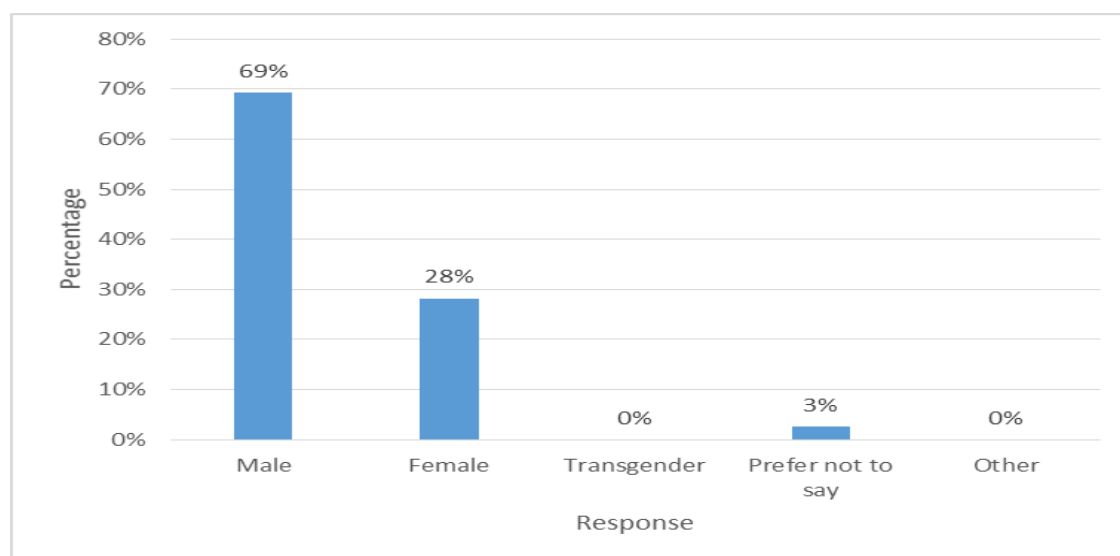


Table 8: Responses to Question 11 regarding gender

Answer Option	Response #	Response %
Male	27	69.23
Female	11	28.21
Transgender	0	0.00
Prefer not to say	1	2.56
Other	0	0.00
Total	39	

**Chart 6: Results of question regarding gender**



**Table 9: Results of Question 12 regarding ethnic origin**

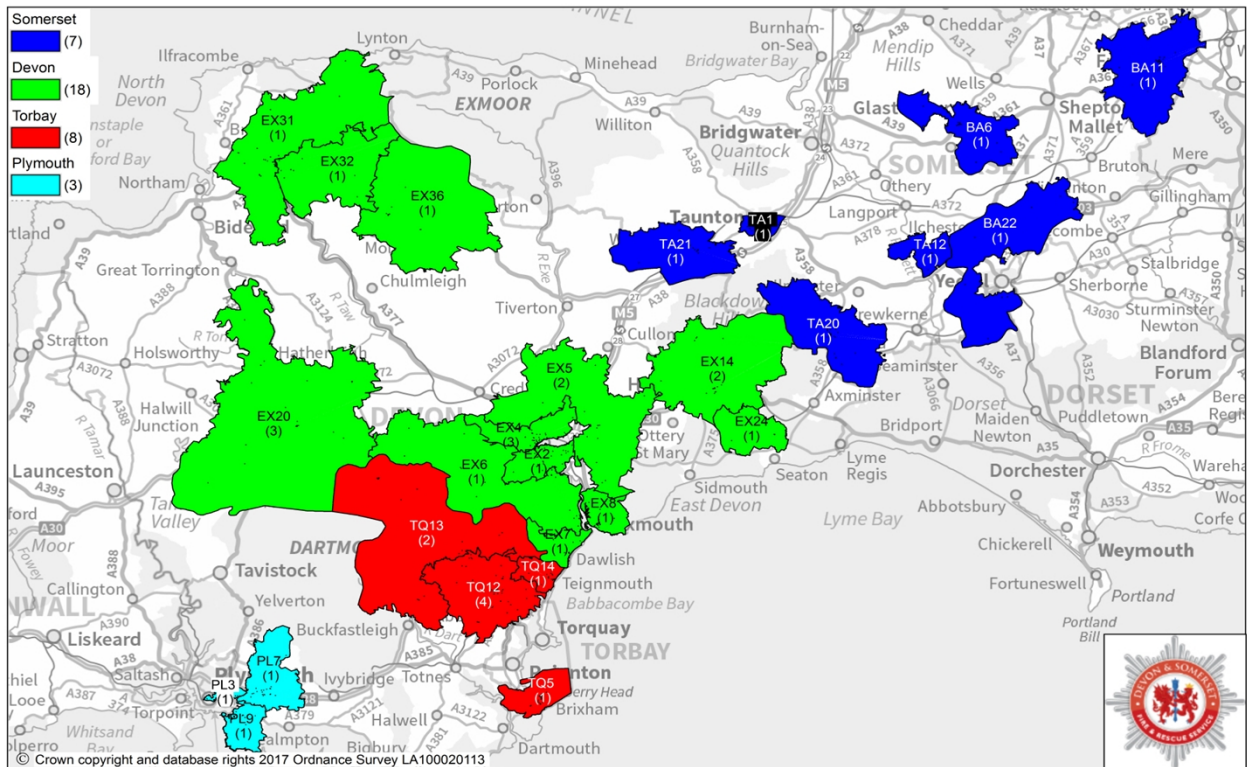
Answer Option	Response #	Response %
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	35	89.74
White - Irish	2	5.13
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.00
Black or Black British - African	0	0.00
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1	2.56
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0	0.00
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0	0.00
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0	0.00
Other ethnic group - Arab	0	0.00
Prefer not to say	1	2.56
Other	0	0.00

- 1.14. Respondents were asked this question to ensure we had a cross section of responses from across Devon and Somerset. 36 respondents provided a postcode and these have been displayed on the map overleaf and grouped in the four constituent authorities.



## Map displaying respondents' postcode areas

Postcode Areas responding to Precept Consultation (Online)



## 2. TWITTER POLL

- 2.1. The Fire Authority requested that social media be used as part of the consultation. Therefore it was agreed to undertake a Twitter poll – whilst there are some limitations to a Twitter poll, it has the advantage of being quick and easy to answer and may reach a different demographic group.
- 2.2. An example of the twitter poll has been provided in Appendix A. As with all Twitter posts the number of characters is limited, therefore the question and information provided was required to be shortened. Additionally, Twitter restricts the length of a poll to a week meaning a new poll had to be created to extend the response period. Once an individual has voted they are restricted on submitting another vote per poll – however unfortunately there is nothing to stop them voting again when a new poll is created.
- 2.3. The poll ran for two and a half weeks with three separate polls created. The Service received the following number of responses.

Table 10: Responses to Twitter poll

Week	# of responses	# of views	# of engagements*
Week 1	64	1945	99
Week 2	78	4245	104
Week 3	36	2,950	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>9,140</b>	<b>47</b>

\*Twitter engagements include replies, retweets, mentions, likes etc.

2.4. The table above indicates that the Service received 178 responses, however it is not possible to determine whether any of the responses have been submitted by the same person.

### **Results**

2.5. The question posed on Twitter:  
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority is considering its Council Tax charges for 2018/19. The current charge is £81.57 a year for a Band 'D' property. What level of increase would you consider reasonable? For more information visit our website [dsfire.gov.uk/consultation](http://dsfire.gov.uk/consultation).

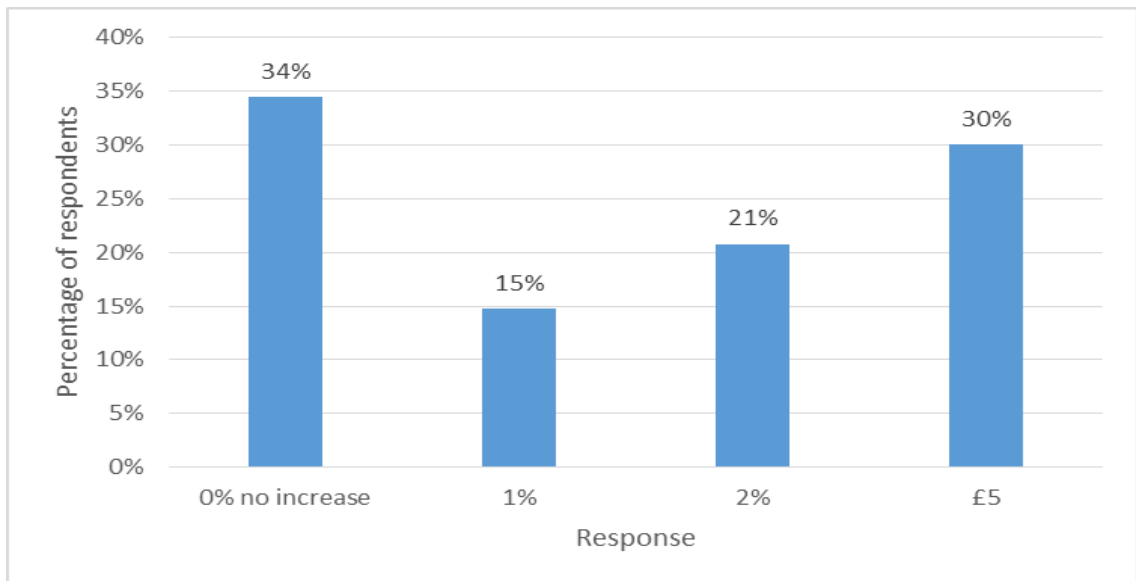
- 0% no increase
- 1%
- 2%
- £5 for band D (pro rata)

2.6. The results provided by Twitter include the total number of respondents and the percentage of responses per choice – therefore the number of per answer can be calculated to provide the total response rate.

Table 11: Responses to Twitter poll

Twitter poll	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Totals
<b>0% no increase</b>	33%	35%	36%	<b>34%</b>
<b>1%</b>	16%	14%	14%	<b>15%</b>
<b>2%</b>	17%	27%	14%	<b>21%</b>
<b>£5</b>	34%	24%	36%	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total (#)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>178</b>

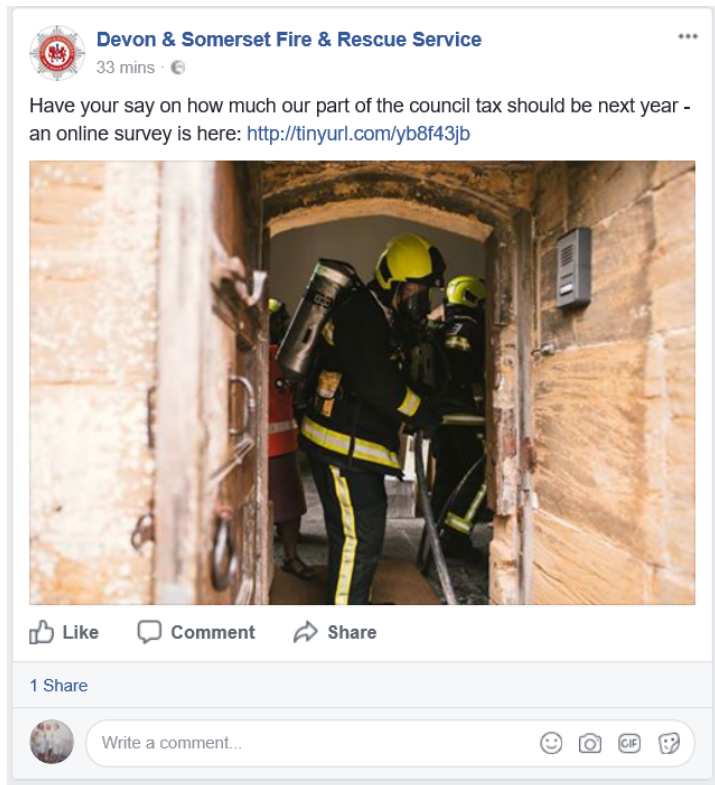
Chart 7: Results of Twitter poll



- 2.7. The chart above indicates that the highest number of responses received (34%) was for the option of no increase to the council tax charges.

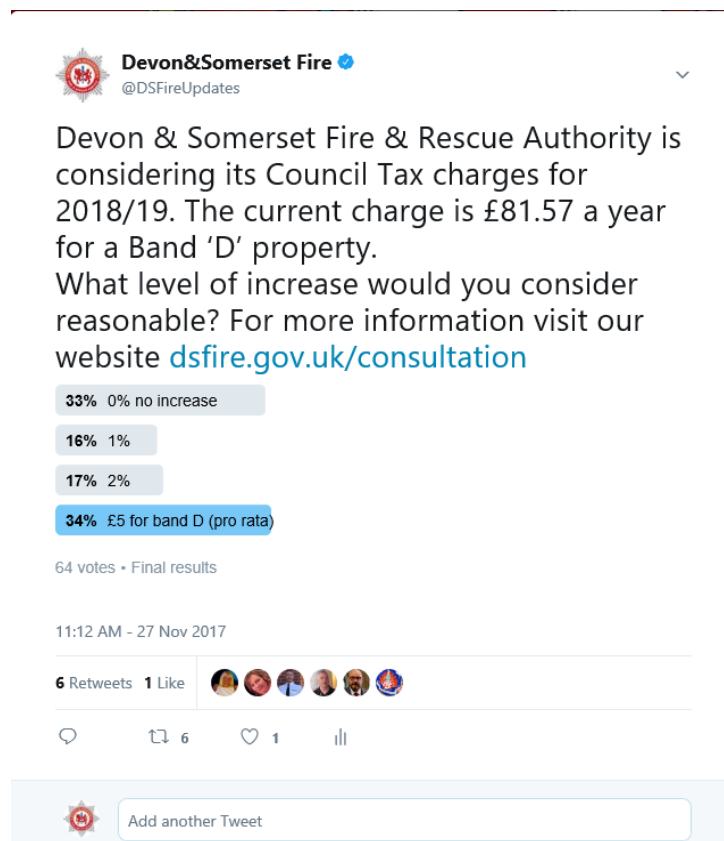
## APPENDIX A

Example of post shared on Facebook advertising the online survey.



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post from the 'Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service'. The post is 33 minutes old and contains the following text: 'Have your say on how much our part of the council tax should be next year - an online survey is here: <http://tinyurl.com/yb8f43jb>'. Below the text is a photograph of firefighters in full gear, including helmets and oxygen tanks, standing in a narrow, arched stone doorway. The post has 1 share and a comment box with the text 'Write a comment...'. The interaction bar shows 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share' buttons.

Example of the Twitter poll.



The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter poll from the account 'Devon&Somerset Fire' (@DSFireUpdates). The tweet text reads: 'Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority is considering its Council Tax charges for 2018/19. The current charge is £81.57 a year for a Band 'D' property. What level of increase would you consider reasonable? For more information visit our website [dsfire.gov.uk/consultation](http://dsfire.gov.uk/consultation)'. Below the text is a horizontal bar chart showing the poll results. The results are: 33% for '0% no increase', 16% for '1%', 17% for '2%', and 34% for '£5 for band D (pro rata)'. The poll has 64 votes and shows 'Final results'. The tweet was posted at 11:12 AM on 27 Nov 2017. The interaction bar shows 6 retweets and 1 like. At the bottom, there is a text input field with the placeholder 'Add another Tweet'.

Option	Percentage
0% no increase	33%
1%	16%
2%	17%
£5 for band D (pro rata)	34%