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# **Consultation Report: Precept 2026/2027**

## **Fire & Rescue**

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January 2026

Version 2.0

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# 1.0 Background and Consultation Approach

## 1.1 Background

Annual council tax bills inform residents about their contributions to local council services and other essential public services across York and North Yorkshire, including policing and fire and rescue. These contributions, known as ‘precepts’ vary according to a property’s council tax band.

The Mayor is legally responsible for setting both the policing precept and the Mayoral General Precept, which includes the portion that funds fire and rescue services. National referendum principles, set by the Government, limit how much council tax can increase before a public vote is required. These limits apply to the policing precept but do not apply to the Mayoral General Precept.

When determining the policing precept, the Mayor must take into account the views of council tax payers across York and North Yorkshire. While consultation on the Mayoral General Precept is not a legal requirement, it supports transparency, accountability, and public involvement in decisions that affect local taxation and public services.

For 2026/2027, the Mayor will not increase any non-fire elements of the Mayoral General Precept and will only seek an increase to the fire and rescue element.

## 1.2 Consultation Approach

The Mayor’s precept consultation aimed to understand how much more the public would be prepared to pay via their council tax for policing and separately for fire and rescue services in 2026/2027.

Between 17 November 2025 and 5 January 2026, an online, self-completion survey was open to the public of York and North Yorkshire with paper copies offered on request or available to download. The survey combined questions relating to both precepting areas into a single questionnaire. The order of the questions was rotated: half of respondents answered the policing precept question first, while the other half began with the fire and rescue precept question.

To achieve a more representative sample, targeted community engagement activities were undertaken to boost participation. These included outreach events on high streets and at leisure centres, engagement with local businesses, and email communications to seldom-heard communities.

The survey was extensively promoted, including via two media releases and additional reminders to reporters – particularly in under-represented areas – and via social media including Facebook and Nextdoor (reaching up to 107,000 households in 592 neighbourhoods). All users of the Community Messaging system in North Yorkshire and the City of York (18,704 people) were notified about the survey and an email was sent to local MPs and councillors to raise community awareness.

Posters and leaflets were distributed to North Yorkshire and City of York libraries, to raise awareness of the survey, while stakeholders were provided with a toolkit to help promote the survey and asked to engage their staff in the consultation.

The Deputy Mayor for Policing, Fire and Crime recorded a video to help promote the consultation via her channels, and an additional explainer video was produced to provide further context.

During the consultation period, responses were reviewed and targeted social media posts and adverts were used to increase responses from underrepresented areas and communities.

The consultation yielded 2,926 responses; an increase of over 600 responses compared to the previous year.

## 2.0 Respondent Profile

The following tables present a profile of survey respondents. Response percentages may not always total 100% due to rounding.

The survey was open to any individual who pays council tax in York or North Yorkshire. Where possible, response data has been compared with 2021 Census information. Overall, a good level of representation was achieved across geography, gender, disability, and ethnic group.

Respondents aged over 55 are overrepresented, while those under 25 are notably underrepresented compared with the general population. This is expected, as most individuals in this younger age group do not pay council tax and were therefore not eligible to participate in the consultation.

**Table 1: Respondent demographics vs 2021 Census**

Characteristic		Count	% responses	*Population 18+ %
AGE	18-24	13	0.5%	10%
	25-35	133	5%	15%
	36-45	248	9%	14%
	46-55	364	14%	17%
	56-65	634	24%	17%
	66-75	773	29%	15%
	Over 75	481	18%	12%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,646</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
GENDER	Male	1459	55%	49%
	Female	1185	45%	51%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2644</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
ETHNIC GROUP	White	2598	98%	96%
	Other Ethnic Group	50	2%	4%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2648</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
DISABILITY (self-defined in survey)	Yes	673	26%	17%
	No	1941	74%	83%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2614</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2: Responses by location vs 2021 Census**

Location	Count	% responses	*Population %
Craven	265	9%	7%
Hambleton	421	15%	11%
Harrogate	482	17%	20%
Richmondshire	379	14%	6%
Ryedale	188	7%	7%
Scarborough	296	11%	13%
Selby	269	10%	11%
York	489	17%	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2789</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Data Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

The report includes subgroup analysis of support for each precept increase option, broken down by age, gender, ethnic group, disability status, and geographic location.

## 3.0 Main Findings

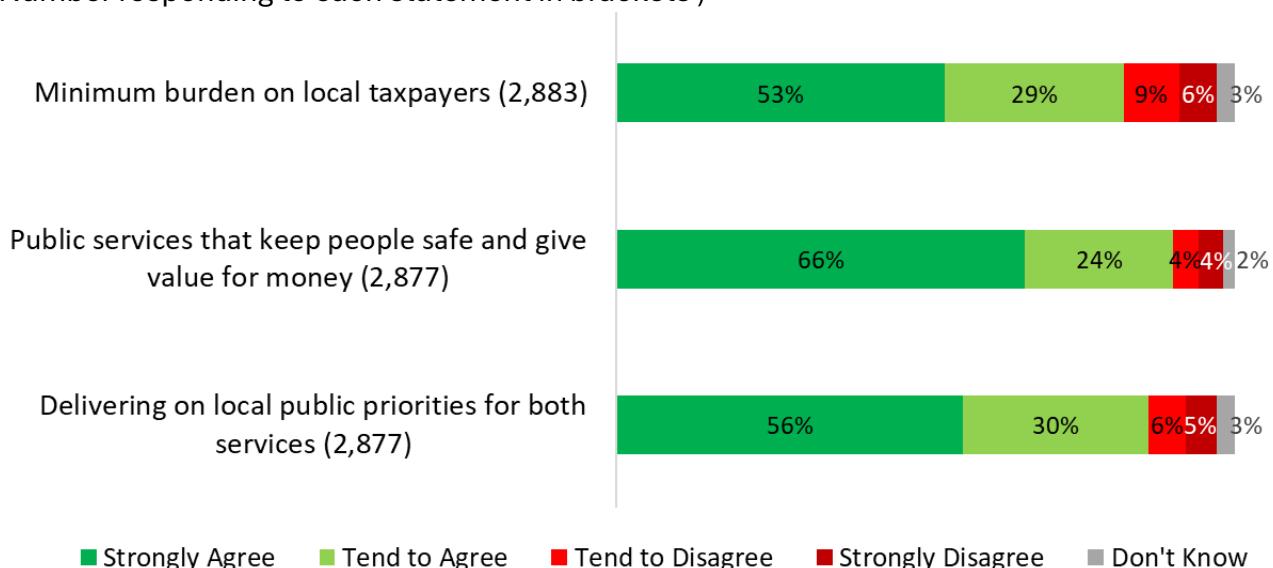
This chapter provides an analysis of the responses to the fire and rescue section of the precept consultation. Base sizes vary by question due to non-response to some questions; percentages are calculated on the valid base for each question.

### 3.1 The Mayor's Precepting Principles

Respondents were asked for their views on the principles guiding the Mayor's final precept decision. Over 80% agreed with each of the three principles which collectively seek to deliver efficient and effective public services that meet local priorities while keeping the burden on taxpayers to a minimum.

**Figure 1: Do you support the Mayor's core principles in making this decision?**

(Number responding to each statement in brackets )



### 3.2 Level of Support for Precept Increase – Fire & Rescue

The survey included background information on the funding and budget of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (see Appendix 1 for full details) to enable respondents to provide an informed answer to the precept question. The exact wording of the question is shown below.

#### **Survey Extract:**

The following options are based on the amount of council tax an average Band D property would pay for fire and rescue services. This is currently £107.02 per year.

The options show the maximum increase you might pay. The Mayor will reduce these amounts in line with the level of funding received from Government.

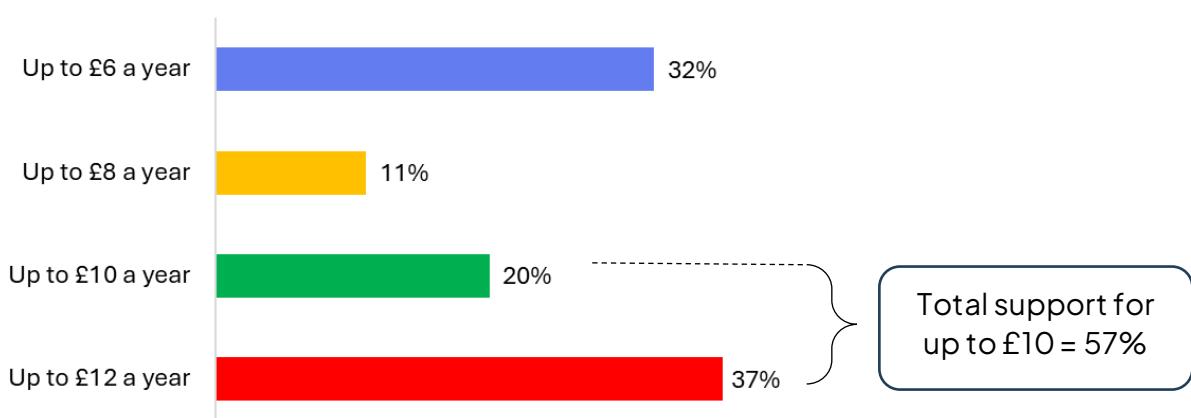
**Q. How much more do you think it is reasonable to pay each year for fire and rescue services in York and North Yorkshire?**

- Up to £6 a year (50 pence per month)**
  - Raises around £2 million
  - Any changes to the current funding formula will risk current levels of service delivery and the financial security of the service
  - No scope for additional service investment
- Up to £8 a year (67 pence per month)**
  - Raises around £2.6 million
  - May allow limited investment in road safety if no changes to the funding formula
  - Any changes to the current funding formula will result in increases in debt and reduce future capital investments
- Up to £10 a year (83 pence per month)**
  - Raises around £3.3 million
  - Allows for investment in road safety
  - Minimises impact of significant changes to the funding formula
  - Maintain current levels of service delivery and the financial security of the service
- Up to £12 a year (£1 per month)**
  - Raises around £3.9 million
  - Allows for investment in road safety
  - Minimises impact of significant changes to the funding formula
  - Allows limited investment in other areas of service delivery. For example, in operational training and equipment

Figure 2 illustrates the public's response to the fire precept question. Around one-third of respondents (32%) felt that an increase of up to £6 per year would be reasonable, while a further 11% supported an increase of up to £8. Overall, the majority (57%) favoured a higher uplift of up to £10 - comprising 20% who supported an increase of up to £10 and an additional 37% who backed an increase of up to £12.

**Figure 2: Q. How much more do you think it is reasonable to pay each year for fire and rescue services in York and North Yorkshire?**

Those answering (2,637)



### 3.3 Subgroup Analysis

Table 3 below shows the total level of support by characteristic for an increase of up to £10 in the council tax contribution to fire and rescue services. These figures represent a combined percentage of respondents who selected 'up to £10' or the highest option of 'up to £12'.

There is a positive correlation between household income and willingness to pay more, with higher-income respondents more likely to support larger increases. Respondents with a household income less than £20,000 were much more likely to choose the lowest increase of up to £6, while those with an income above £20,000 were more likely to choose the higher increase options of up to £10 or £12.

Across all former district areas, age groups, genders, and disability statuses, over half of respondents supported an increase in the precept of up to £10. Respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds were less likely to support this level of increase; however, this finding should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of responses within this subgroup.

**Table 3: Variation in total support for up to £10 increase by subgroups**

(bases in brackets)

Sub-group	% total support for up to £10 *	Sub-group	% total support for up to £10*
<b>TOTAL (2637)</b>	<b>57%</b>		
<b>AREA</b>		<b>AGE</b>	
Craven (252)	62%	18-35 (124)	51%
Hambleton (379)	52%	36-45 (217)	50%
Harrogate (447)	58%	46-55 (338)	59%
Richmondshire (336)	57%	56-65 (587)	53%
Ryedale (173)	59%	66-75 (736)	61%
Scarborough (266)	58%	Over 75 (445)	62%
Selby (245)	51%	<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>	
York (457)	60%	Less than £20,000 (385)	48%
<b>GENDER</b>		£20,001 - £40,000 (654)	56%
Male (1347)	55%	£40,001 - £60,000 (484)	64%
Female (1104)	61%	£60,001 - £80,000 (236)	62%
<b>DISABILITY (Self-defined)</b>		£80,001 - £100,000 (142)	70%
Yes (617)	56%	More than £100,000 (128)	67%
No (1806)	59%		
<b>ETHNIC GROUP</b>			
White (2416)	58%		<b>KEY</b>
Other Ethnic Group** (44)	36%	Under 40%	Orange
		40-49%	Yellow
		50-60%	Light Blue
		Over 60%	Dark Blue

\*% total support = combined percentage of respondents selecting 'up to £10' or 'up to £12'

\*\* Interpret results for 'Other Ethnic Group' with care due to small base

### 3.4 General Comments

Respondents were invited to share comments on the fire and rescue precept to provide context for their views. The main themes identified from these comments are outlined below. Most respondents referred to multiple themes within a single response.

#### 1. Opposition to increases / affordability (c170 references)

Cost-of-living pressure, ‘no increase’/‘£0’ preferences, pensioner affordability concerns, the perception of already high council tax, not wishing to pay more to cover government shortfalls in funding.

*...the government should see this as a priority too not just to put the financial burden on residents.*

*This should be supported more by central government.*

*I am a pensioner - I just can't afford anymore.*

*Everything is going up and the community are struggling with rising costs.*

#### 2. Funding & investment support (c100 references)

Many describe fire and rescue services as *vital/essential*, willing to pay a small uplift (often framed as an ‘insurance policy’) to maintain or improve service. Support is frequently contingent on frontline focus and visible outcomes.

*North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service must prioritise protecting frontline fire and rescue capabilities when determining the Council Tax precept. This is vital to ensuring rapid emergency response and effective community safety provision across North Yorkshire.*

*I would pay more for fire and rescue services, they are like an insurance policy – you need them to be there for when you need them and do so much more like prevention work and advice.*

#### 3. Equipment, training & resilience (c100 references)

Repeated references to wildfire events (e.g. moors/Langdale), water supply capabilities, PPE, fleet reliability, and specialist training for climate-related incidents (wildfires, floods, storms) and emerging risks such as BESS (battery storage).

*The fires on the North Yorkshire moors in the summer showed only too well why our fire and rescue service needs not only proper funding but up to date PPE and equipment to do their job.*

*Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) have a high risk of fire, toxic fumes and contaminated water – if Councils are approving these schemes, we must ensure our fire services are funded to address any impacts.*

#### 4. Efficiency & transparency (c90 references)

Requests to cut waste, improve productivity, publish clear plans/targets, and ring-fence spending for frontline.

*We need to see evidence that current funding is being spent wisely and efficiently before increasing it. If funding can be shown to be spent on front line staff then an increase can be better justified.*

*Whilst I agree with funding NYFRS I feel you need to look at the money wasted within the organisation.*

#### 5. Road safety (c70 references)

General support for investment in road safety but some confusion about why this sits under fire and rescue rather than policing/highways. Clearer explanation and accountability requested.

*Maintaining the services we have is important and further investment in road safety is needed as well as retaining staff which means they must be given the training and resources they need.*

*This is confusing. Why is Road Safety part of the Fire and Rescue element? ... surely a job for North Yorkshire Police.*

#### 6. Rural cover & response / on-call staffing (c70 references)

Concerns about on-call crew availability, standby at other stations leaving areas uncovered, and longer response times in rural locations.

*My station is short of retained fire people which impacts response times.*

*We are very happy with our local fire and rescue service but there are times when they don't have enough manpower for call-outs.*

# Appendix 1 – Precept Survey 2026/2027



## York and North Yorkshire Precept Survey 2026/2027 (Policing and Fire & Rescue)

David Skaith, the Mayor for York and North Yorkshire, is asking for your views before setting the amount that goes to North Yorkshire Police and, separately, to North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service from your council tax bill. This is known as a Precept.

Principles on which the Mayor will make his final decision are:

1. The minimum possible burden on local taxpayers
2. Having effective, well managed public services that keep people safe & deliver value for money
3. Delivering on local public priorities for both services, including improving the safety of our region's roads

Around 80% of police and fire and rescue budgets are spent on staff who need and deserve a pay rise. The Mayor also has to balance inflation pressure with increasing demand for both emergency services. Unlike most areas, York and North Yorkshire are able to fund the fire and rescue service beyond the national cap of £5 because of devolution arrangements.

Separately, changes to the formula that sets these budgets are anticipated soon which may affect the core funding for these services in our region. The options presented here therefore include the range of options we need to consider because of that uncertainty.

Before setting the levels of precept for the two services, the Mayor would like to know your views on the possible options. When an option might impact on service to the public that is made clear.

- The survey will take no longer than 7 minutes to complete.
- The survey will close at 10am on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

Information should be accessible for all. If you require this information in a different language or format, please contact the Policing, Fire and Crime Team at [info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk](mailto:info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk) or call us on 01423 569 562 to request a copy.

Our privacy notice about how we use and protect your data can be found here: [Survey Privacy Notice](#)

**Q1. Do you pay council tax in York or North Yorkshire?**

- Yes
- No – sorry, you need to pay council tax in York or North Yorkshire to take part in this survey

**Q2. Do you support the Mayor's core principles in making this decision?**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Minimum burden on local taxpayers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public services that keep people safe and give value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Delivering on local public priorities for both services	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## POLICE

North Yorkshire Police currently has a budget of £232 million. Around £104 million of this (45 per cent) comes from your council tax and the other 55 percent mainly comes from the Government.

North Yorkshire Police has worked hard to increase the efficiency of how it delivers its services to ensure the public get value for money. To maintain the current level of service, the Police need an extra £12 million to cover inflation and other ongoing costs. About £4.5 million of this would need to be raised through the council tax, with the remainder delivered from savings and increases in Government funding.

The Government is likely to set a national limit allowing a council tax increase of up to £14 towards policing for an average Band D property. Each £1 raises approximately £325k. The £14 increase would raise about £4.5 million for policing.

**The following options are based on the amount of council tax an average Band D property would pay for policing. This is currently £320.86 per year.**

**Q3. How much more do you think it is reasonable to pay each year for policing in York and North Yorkshire?**

- Up to £12 a year (£1 per month)**
  - *Raises around £3.9 million*
  - *Below the organisation's inflationary pressures*
  - *Would likely lead to reductions in current levels of service delivery unless significant further savings could be delivered*
- Up to £14 a year (£1.17 per month)**
  - *Raises around £4.5 million*
  - *Matches the organisation's inflationary pressures.*
  - *Maintains current levels of service delivery*
- Up to £16 a year (£1.33 per month)**
  - *Raises around £5.2 million*
  - *Likely to be higher than the organisation's inflationary pressures*
  - *Allows some investment. For example, in neighbourhood policing, early intervention and prevention activities and tackling violence against women and girls.*
- Up to £18 a year (£1.50 per month)**
  - *Raises around £5.9 million*
  - *Higher than the organisation's inflationary pressures*
  - *Allows more significant investment. For example, in neighbourhood policing, early intervention and prevention activities and tackling violence against women and girls*

**Q4. Do you have any comments about the policing council tax that may help us understand your response?**

## FIRE & RESCUE

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service has an annual budget of £51.6 million. Around £35 million of this (67 per cent), comes from your council tax and the remaining 33 percent is funded mainly by the Government and Business Rates.

Last year's council tax increase provided much needed financial stability and allowed for important investment in North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The Mayor would like to see this work continue and to invest in road safety in line with agreed public priorities.

In 2026-27 it is estimated £3-4.5 million more is needed to maintain current service levels and deliver planned improvements, depending on the final funding formula which determines the level of Government funding we receive. £2-3 million of this would need to come from council tax, with the rest from savings and increased Government funding.

Each £1 raises approximately £325k . An increase of £6 for a Band D property would raise about £2 million.

**The following options are based on the amount of council tax an average Band D property would pay for fire and rescue services. This is currently £107.02 per year.**

**The options show the maximum increase you might pay. The Mayor will reduce these amounts in line with the level of funding received from Government.**

**Q5. How much more do you think it is reasonable to pay each year for fire and rescue services in York and North Yorkshire?**

- Up to £6 a year (50 pence per month)**
  - Raises around £2 million
  - Any changes to the current funding formula will risk current levels of service delivery and the financial security of the service
  - No scope for additional service investment
- Up to £8 a year (67 pence per month)**
  - Raises around £2.6 million
  - May allow limited investment in road safety if no changes to the funding formula
  - Any changes to the current funding formula will result in increases in debt and reduce future capital investments
- Up to £10 a year (83 pence per month)**
  - Raises around £3.3 million
  - Allows for investment in road safety
  - Minimises impact of significant changes to the funding formula
  - Maintain current levels of service delivery and the financial security of the service
- Up to £12 a year (£1 per month)**
  - Raises around £3.9 million
  - Allows for investment in road safety
  - Minimises impact of significant changes to the funding formula
  - Allows limited investment in other areas of service delivery. For example, in operational training and equipment

**Q6. Do you have any comments about the fire and rescue council tax that may help us understand your response?**

## ABOUT YOU

We have a duty to promote equality and ensure all parts of the Community are included in this consultation, but the following questions are optional.

**Which area do you live in?**

- Craven
- Hambleton
- Harrogate
- Richmondshire
- Ryedale
- Scarborough
- Selby
- York

**How would you describe your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

**What is your age?**

- 18-24
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 76-85
- Over 85
- Prefer not to say

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term health issue?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**What is your ethnic group?****White:**

- English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White background

**Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups:**

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background

**Asian or Asian British:**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian or Asian British background

**Black or Black British, Caribbean or African:**

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background

**Other ethnic group:**

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
  
- Prefer not to say

**Which of these best reflects your total household income?**

- Less than £10,000
- £10,001 - £20,000
- £20,001 - £40,000
- £40,001 - £60,000
- £60,001 - £80,000
- £80,001 - £100,000
- More than £100,000
- Prefer not to say

**Finally, how did you hear about this survey? *Please select all that apply.***

- Community Messenger
- Nextdoor
- Social media
- Email
- Website
- Through staff of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Through the Mayor (David Skaith) or Deputy Mayor (Jo Coles)
- Word of mouth
- Advert/Poster
- Local newspaper
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_