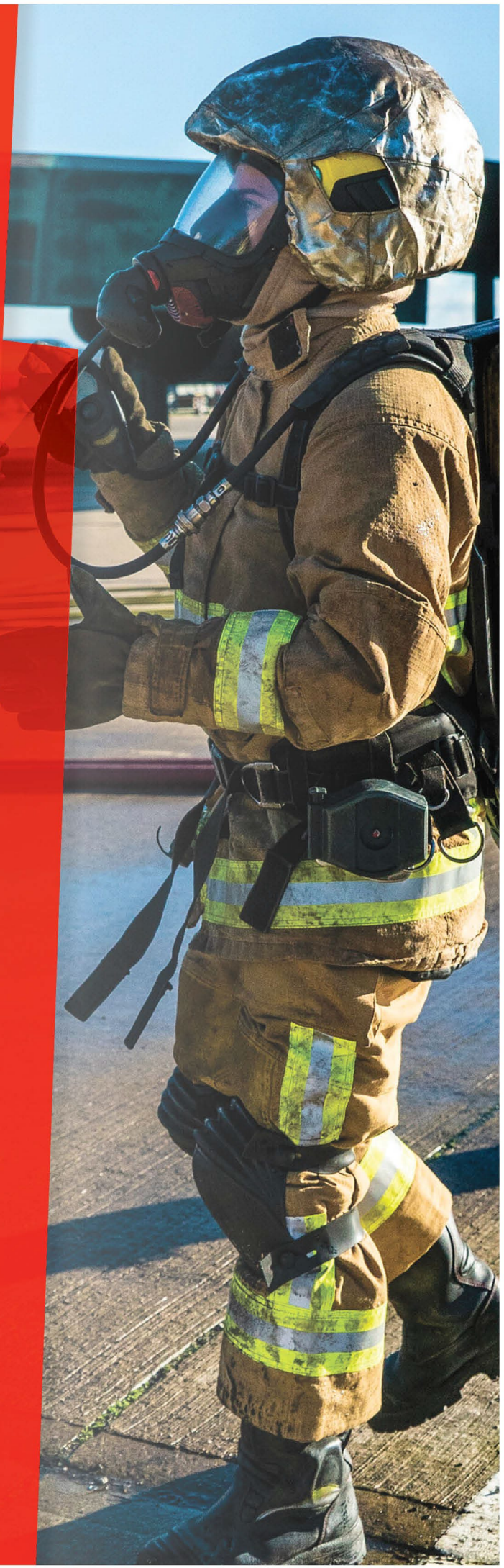




**Cheshire**  
Fire Authority



## **2024-2025 Budget (Precept) Consultation**

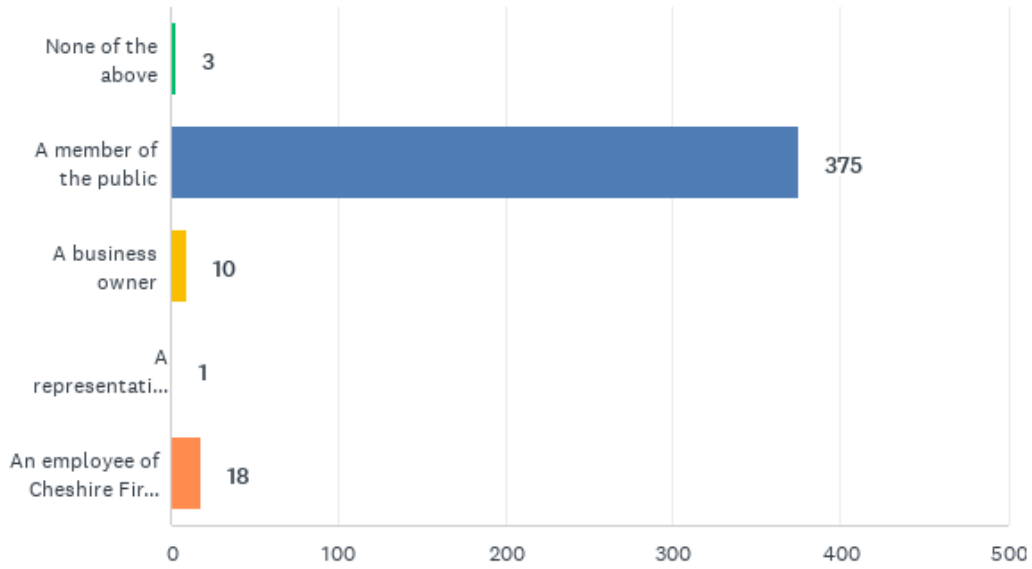
**Appendix 1: Consultation  
Feedback Report**

.....  
[www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

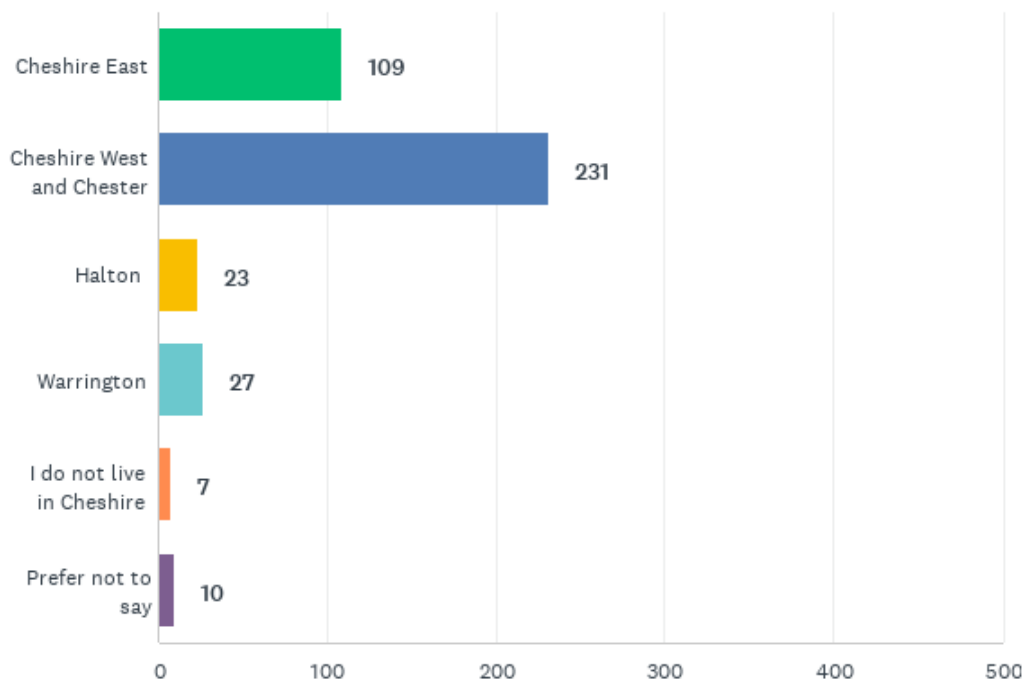
## Profile of respondents

Responses: 407

### Type of respondent



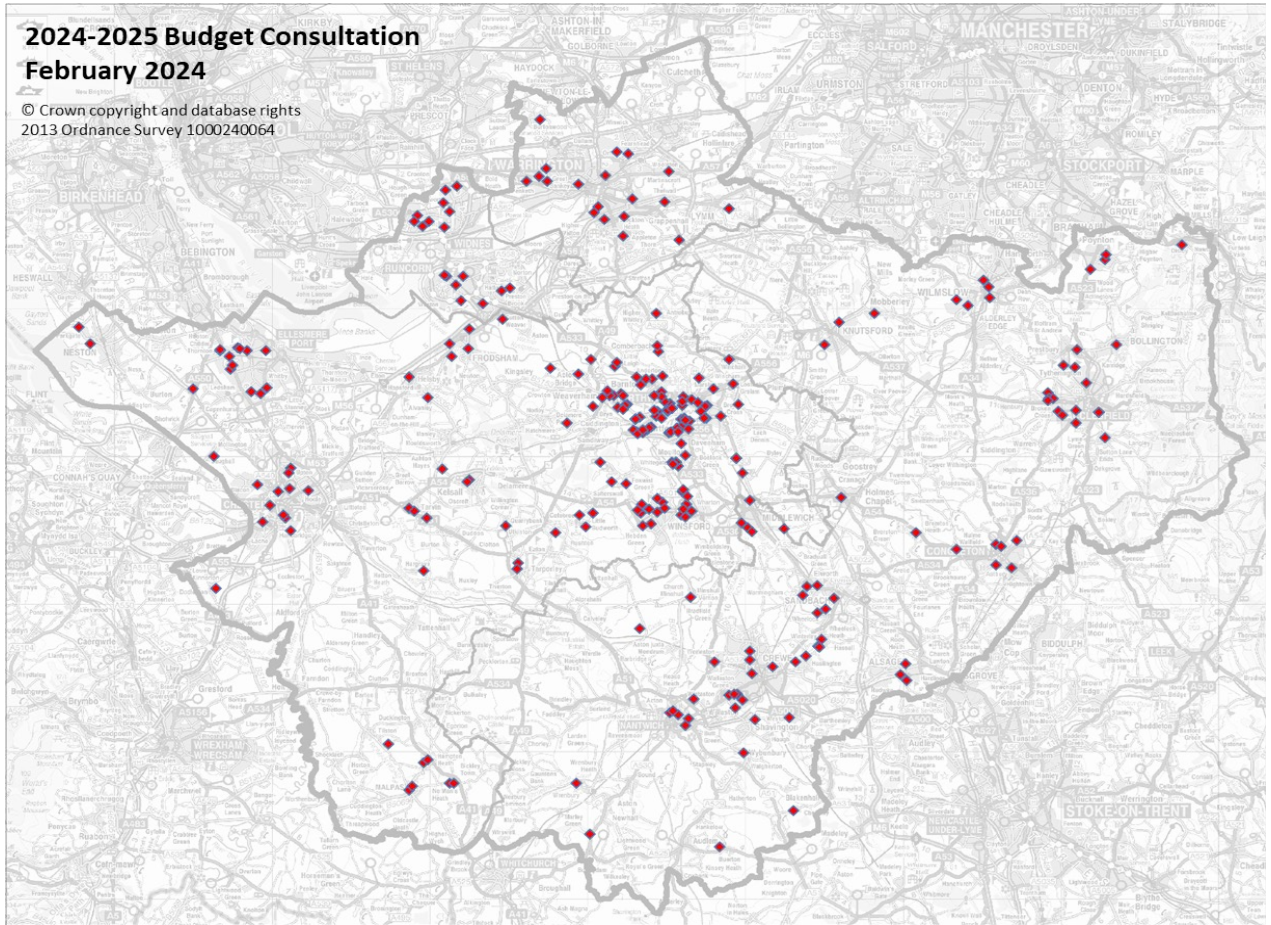
### Respondents by unitary area





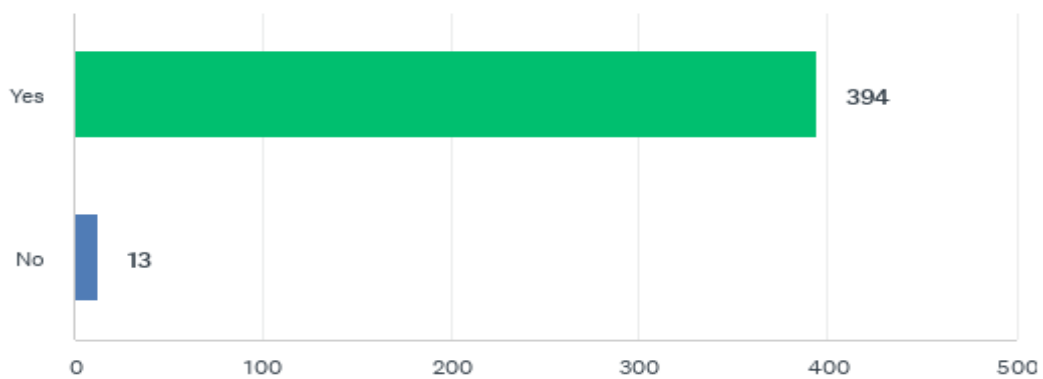
## Respondents by postcode

Responses: 379



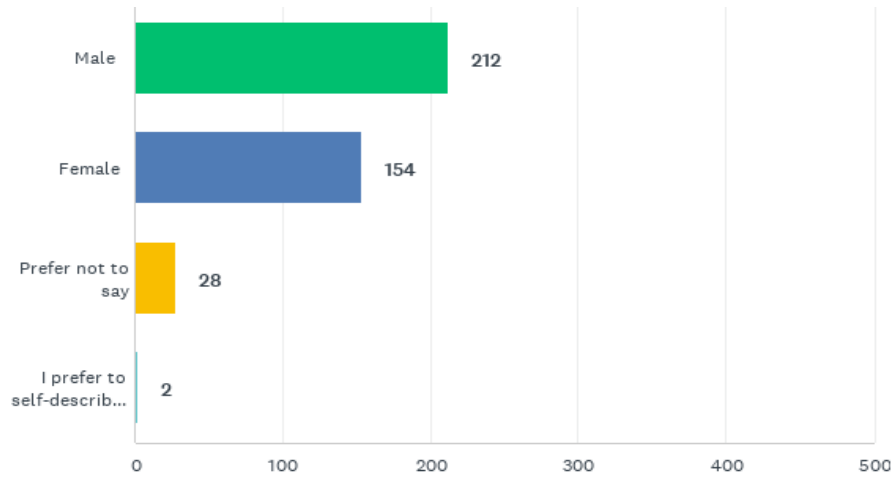
## Respondents by council tax paying status

Responses: 407



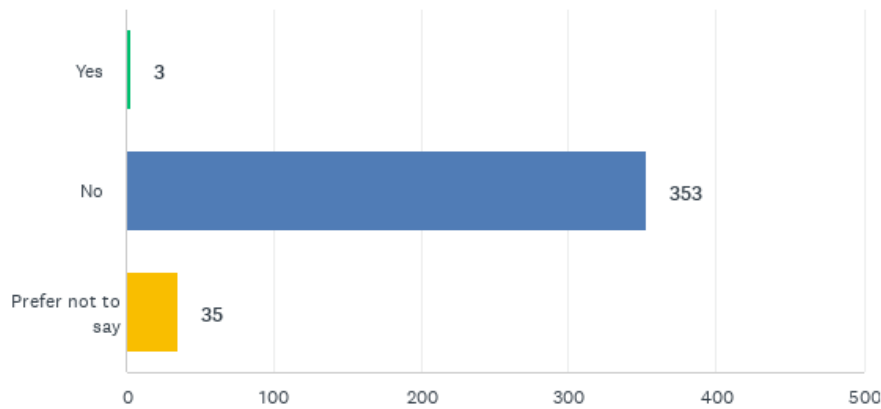
### Respondents by gender

Responses: 396



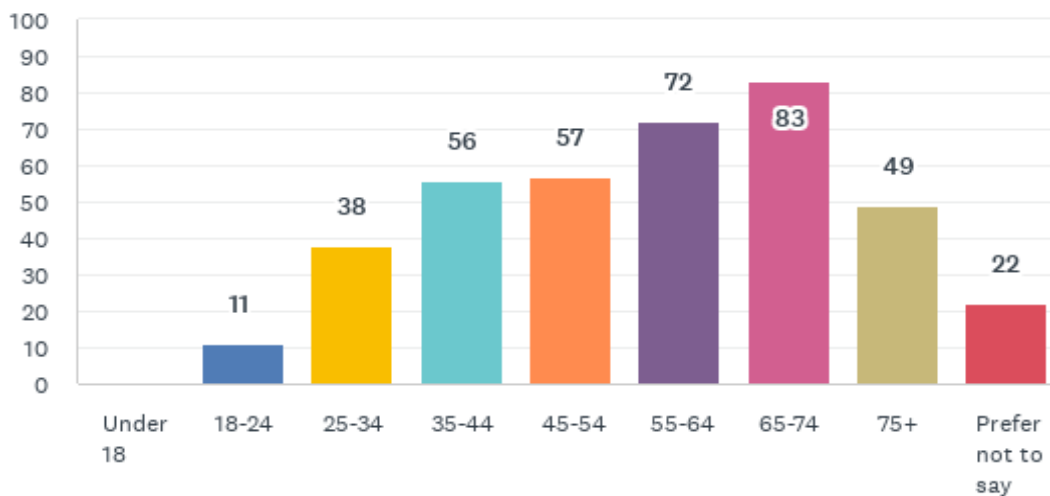
### Respondents by trans identity

Responses: 391



### Respondents by age

Responses: 388



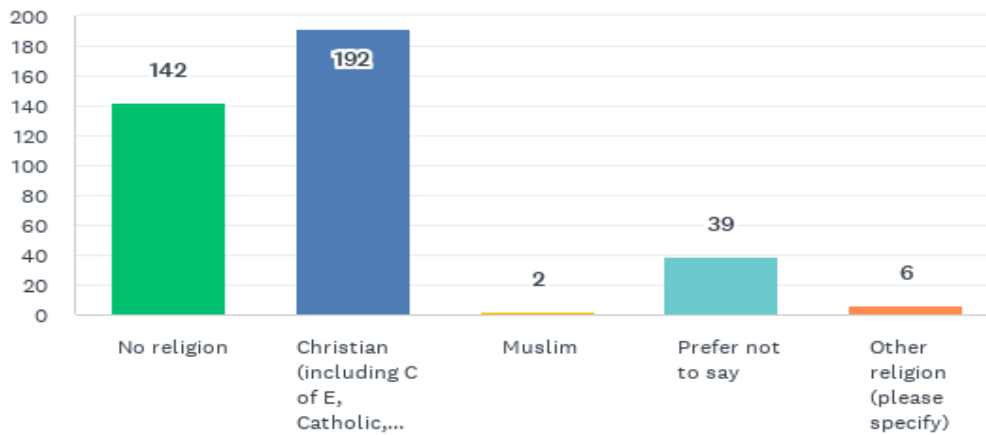
### Respondents by ethnicity

Responses: 388



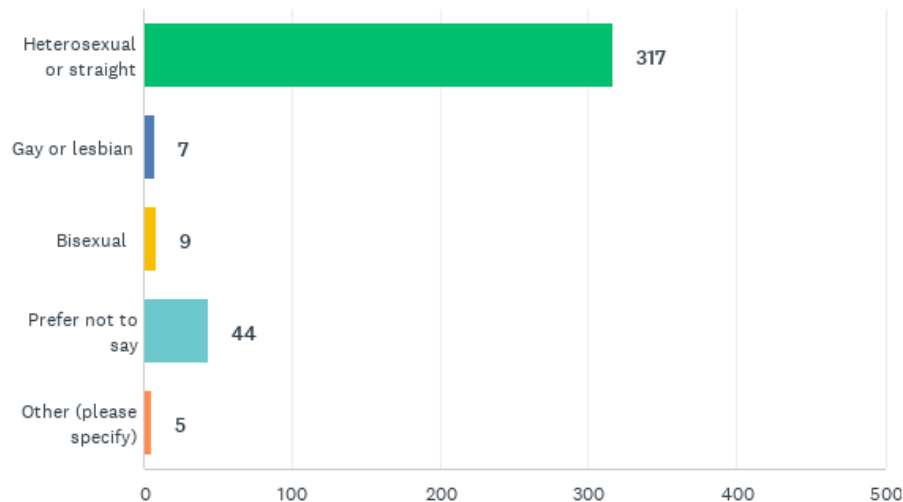
### Respondents by religion

Responses: 381



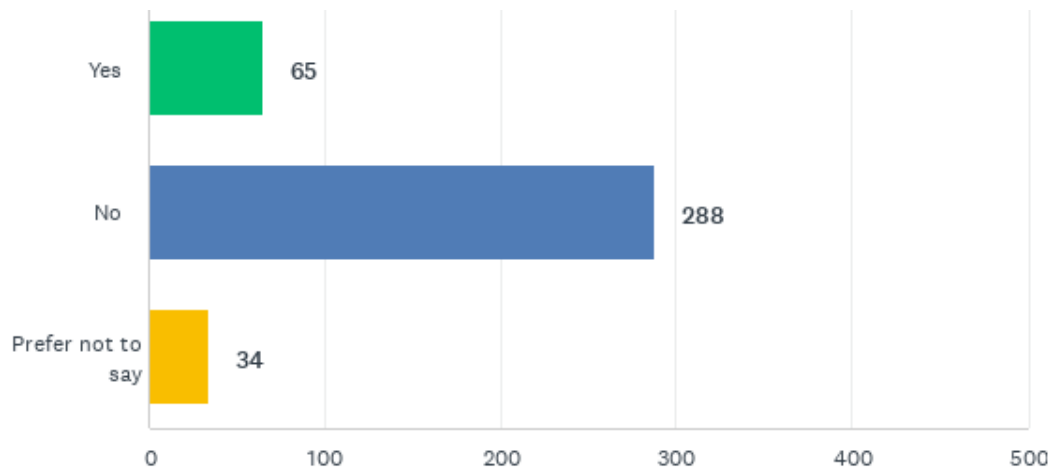
### Respondents by sexual orientation

Responses: 382



### Respondents by disability status

Responses: 387



## Free text comments

A total of 216 free text comments were received through the course of the consultation process. Of these, 33 stated the respondent had no further comment to make and these have not been included within the list of comments below.

- Pay staff more! Life savers!
- The proposed increase is miniscule to each rate payer. The overall operational response needs improvement which only increase in funding will provide.
- If the service need money to make proposals happen throughout the county, then that's how it is, it's a growing economy and the responsibilities of the service only grow by each year so the budget should reflect that and a public service such as the fire service shouldn't be scrapping the bucket to make the necessities happen.
- An increase in funding is vital to provide class a fire service to the every growing residents & visitors of Cheshire. Whether it be pay increases to attract top talent to fill positions; to provide up to date modern equipment & vehicles.
- I believe funding needs to be increased to ensure the fire service has up to date equipment and the ability to provide a quick response service to the public. I'm aware of the pressures on on-call stations to be available but feel the wage and benefits do not encourage enough new staff due to the current cost of living.
- A much needed service, invaluable.
- We need our fire service so am happy to pay this.
- Considering how well the finances have been managed since 2014, it's quite low percentage increase! Well done.
- This is such an important service and needs to be able to keep up with improvements.
- If only people knew the full extent of the cuts over the past few years. Having a family member firefighter, I hear things most people don't. Can't begrudge a small increase.
- The service provides a great deal of preventative advice and measures which is as important as the day to day tasks. Hence we need more investment in this area.
- Essential service that has been underfunded for a decade.
- This is a vital service and we the public all rely on you being there when we are in danger. If help is needed to raise the funds to continue with your vital work then I believe we should agree to help.
- Its a small increase for a very valuable service.
- More investment.
- Everything costs more and we need a good service.
- With fire nothing is too high a price to pay.
- The Fire Service is crucial and should be properly funded.
- Don't think anyone would notice such a small amount - could be more for me
- One day I might need the Fire and Rescue Service. I am happy to pay for that eventuality
- Although I have answered "strongly agree" there is actually not enough information in the statement for me to give a more nuanced answer. My response assumes pay awards will be greater than 2.99%, although there will be some efficiencies to be made there will also be cuts which will impact possibly on the most vulnerable.
- The fire service needs help to keep the people of Cheshire safe, I think what ever the proposal is it should be granted. A few extra pounds a year is nothing considering the work that the fire service do.
- You should be asking for at least a figure that does not make the authority worse off in real terms.
- You deserve more.
- It's a. Investment into health and safety.
- We need to stay protected and so if CT needs increasing, it has to be done rather than risk lives.
- The increase should be 50% more.

- Investment in such an essential service deserves strong public input to strengthen this resource.
- If the increase is necessary to keep the level of service, then a no-brainer. It should increase.
- For the small increase I think the gain is substantial enough to warrant it. It's an emergency service designed to save lives and property.
- It is an emergency service & the funds need to be available to ensure this important service continues.
- Fire Police and Ambulance service all need support.
- People's safety is worth more than money.
- It's a no-brainer for a few pounds a year. I witnessed a house fire and it is a terrible experience.
- Only that to invest in something as essential as fire and rescue is worth paying slightly more for.
- With the amount of extra houses being built the revenue surely is also increasing. We need more emergency services not less
- The fire brigade is an essential service and to reduce this will put lives at risk. I do not begrudge paying extra for this service.
- The security of the local people is worth the cost.
- The fire and rescue services require pay increases alongside the rest of the emergency service services.
- I don't mind paying the increase in tax, but strongly oppose reducing fire engines. Look to improve efficiencies by reducing admin and sharing IT systems
- Fire service, along with all Emergency Services, need to be properly funded. Particularly when dealing with such a wide and diverse geographical area.
- If we want a service for a first world economy we have to pay for it.
- It's such a trifling amount for such a vital life saving service. Just do it
- Yes up the rate if we keep the same amount of fire engines
- For the sake of a few pound a year it isn't worth losing a fire engine anywhere
- I think you could have asked for more than 2.99%
- You all deserve a better pay rise for doing the remarkable job that you do
- We need an efficient, well funded and well equipped fire and rescue service.
- I strongly agree to pay more to keep the service.
- Good for people safety
- We must ensure we have a Fire Service which has the ability to meet all current and future demands and requirements!
- My daughter needed assistance and I agree to paying a little extra
- a small increase to keep vital services is okay with me. The key is that if you are increasing it for this service then the money should go to the service, and not get watered down, or used in other areas if there are gaps.
- I would support an increase in line with RPI increase.
- It seems reasonable
- Seems reasonable
- It is a service which we cannot lose!
- Cheshire fire authority are a vital service and must be able to continue to maintain their high standards and protect the People of Cheshire
- Would be nice for the government to support more but support the need for a budget increase
- Emergency Services deserve our support. We hope never to need them but their presence is essential!
- We need a good fire and rescue service. Our current service is well run so the increase should be supported.
- No, it's a reasonable increase. Well done for managing your budget so well and providing transparency.
- No, I support the increase
- We need to recognise rising costs impact the service provided and investment is needed.



- As long as the increase is considered fair and reasonable when compared directly to UK's annual CPI inflation rate. Also the amount or percentage provided by Government does not reduce. This existing Government has unfairly reduced the amount of money it provides to all public sector budgets causing the ratepayers to make up the budget gap by increases majority of Council's Pre-cepts charges. This is a very underhanded method of this Government increasing taxation for all.
- I recognise the need for the budget to increase given the effects of inflation.
- An unavoidable need but a comparatively small increase compared to the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Absolutely agree
- The Fire Authority has to cope with inflationary pressures that we all do, it is sensible to maintain the precept in line with inflation and hence the efficiency of the Brigade.
- Very important to increase income to improve services
- With arson attacks on the increase like recent wheelie bin fires we need to support our fire & rescue services & make sure they have everything they need to do their job properly
- Providing that service quality is maintained at a high level and, assuming the tax payer wants that service, we should be prepared to pay what is necessary for that service to be provided.
- It's an essential service which needs full support.
- How much money has been wasted on shared services with the Police? How much did the failed On Call program cost? These would have covered any precept increase for several years
- Senior management teams wages are astronomical!
- Giving valuable equipment to Ukraine for virtual signal projects without approval from the public
- Turn down heating in council offices
- Do away with EDI positions; they are not necessary. Spend on quality frontline equipment and not on speciality items such as rainbow lanyards/pins/banners, etc. Spend on training and frontline pay, not managers.
- I would like to see the pay scales of managers at CFRS and a list of their roles before I made a decision. In my experience the emergency services have too many management posts and need streamlining
- Cut seniors officers
- Lack of availability at your retained stations
- I would accept this increase if Cheshire fire was increasing the amount of wholtime pumps to 24/7 cover. You have closed two stations 50% of the time. If the on call was incentivised correctly to at least 50% of a whom time firefighters salary you would get retention and increase recruitment for those stations.
- I hear your cutting fire engines at night
- Lack of fire cover in my area
- My local area is set to see a reduction in fire engine cover
- Total lack of investment in the next generation of fire and rescue personnel. Large number of on-call roles pushes people to look at other full time roles. Changes are being made hopefully to replace with full time week crews which we support
- I would support an increase in tax if they were not cutting the number of fire engines
- Support but only in the condition that there are no cuts to the number of engines at Northwich
- Fire Services are an essential service and should be treated as such. There should be two fire engines per large town to ensure full coverage and support as well as rural communities.
- It's vital to keep all the engines we have, these have all been drastically cut previously.
- I feel that increasing the council tax 2.99% would be OK if Northwich wasn't at risk of losing 1 of the fire engines they have. It seems slightly odd you would increase the cost yet take some of the service away... It's a big town which often floods and needs all the help it can get on occasions. The fire service is an amazing emergency service. But there's more and more houses being built here, with a possibility of less fire engines - how could an overstretched watch get round it all?

- CWAC residents have seen numerous increases in recent years across a range of services and seeing a decline in service delivery everywhere. This feels like a further burden at a financially difficult time for all whilst a potentially reduced number of vehicles is in the offing.
- I will only support an increase if it means we retain rural fire services and not just ploughed into city and town centre fire stations.
- You can't get rid of fire engines and expect an increase in spending. Other brigades manage it on similar budgets.
- No change to number of engines at Northwich
- Don't reduce fire engines in Northwich please
- We must not lose any engines.
- It's an excessive increase to loose and engine in Northwich
- Loss of on call station recruitment is dire
- You are closing Northwich
- Our village is 'supported' by an on call fire service who due to other jobs are unable to be on call in the working day. If we have to rely on services coming from much further for the working day, why can't we rely on them in the evening and not have an on call service or have a 'hub' between some of the more rural on call stations so that not as many staff are required
- Do NOT reduce the number of fire engines from Northwich fire station
- Do NOT reduce the number of fire engines out of Northwich.
- The payment of council tax would increase and yet Northwich and other areas would loose a fire engine. With 4 fire engines not being available evenings and weekends
- Pay more for less?
- Is it not possible to budget to maintain current resources opposed to taking even more services and jobs from the community? Appalling that we are to lose resources and pay for the privilege.
- It's a joke, council tax going up, yet the fire engine at Birchwood is being cut 50 percent
- Pay retired firefighters the pension they are owed under immediate detriment
- Pay the pension money that you owe the recently retired firefighters
- Fire authorities are overpaid for the work they do
- We are already taking a big hit as tax payers
- The Fire Authority needs to streamline its services by sharing with neighbouring authorities to reduce costs, achieve economies of scale along with efficiency savings. It is totally unacceptable to keep making residents pay more during a cost of living crisis. The old adage 'cut your cloth according to your pocket' is pertinent to the Fire Authority.
- Costs and Budgets can not keep going up year on year to pay for pay deals and pension costs. I haven't received any pay increases in the private sector since 2021 but still need to meet the rises in the cost of living. Concentrate on working leaner and not just using council tax as a get of jail card.
- Fire authority members happy to increase their expenses claims whilst saying a precept increase is required for council tax. Not acceptable
- Happy for percentages to be adjusted within the council tax I pay however not to an increase in payment from me.
- Don't agree with the proposal at all.
- Council Tax is paid to provide all services. Any additional funding requested suggests mismanagement by the Council of such funds.
- More payment less service? Quite literally doesn't add up.
- Not needed, make savings internally
- There has been increases every year and we pay enough money for the council tax
- The Fire Service have done very well to maintain/further improve service levels etc over the past year but it must work within the finances available and fund continuing improvement through increased efficiencies as most businesses in the Private Sector would do.
- Don't agree with the proposal. Less appliances at night and at weekend within my area and an increase in council tax. Absolutely not.

- Reduce management costs though.
- I'm not getting any more money during this 'cost of living crisis' and have to make sacrifices to survive! but it seems that police, fire, council can just increase their demands every year.
- With inflation at its current high level the average rate payer could also be queuing at a food bank !! We cannot stand any more rate increase you must for once cut your own costs accordingly
- we are paying too much has it is
- In the current financial climate all changes should be done within existing budgets
- You continually waste money on unnecessary items. To name a few the joint shared services scheme with Cheshire police, how much did that cost? Support staff uniform? Fire bikes for road safety initiatives that do not target the young and those just hitting the roads. There is no accountability for the money you spend and I would love to see more transparency.
- Absolutely disgusting. There is no logic or rationale to these decisions. More crews and services are required to accommodate the increased housing. How is it allowed for more houses to be built without the necessary infrastructure? Increases should only be allowed when a increase in service is provided. The emergency service resources are stretched enough. Disgusting.
- I understand the number of machines are to be reduced, so we pay more for less. People only have so much money, no doubt Cheshire Police will demand an increase again. Council Tax is already like a 2nd mortgage for very poor returns.
- Cut something non safety and useless from the budget instead like flowers on roundabouts
- We are all suffering with the cost of living and unfair we have to pay more because the government can't see how the poor live! They don't understand as they have money!!!
- Council tax is already too high.
- The increase in cost and reduction in service isn't acceptable
- households are under even further financial problems so if fires are not put out on properties the council will have to home people & eventually the Government would have to step in
- Already paying too much in council/local taxes.
- People are already struggling
- It is utterly immoral to request people pay more when they are struggling to make ends meet.
- I'm an OAP and can't afford increase
- I and my family didn't receive any increases in salary in the last year but have seen all our costs go up, find savings in other areas, like not painting fire engines with rainbow flags etc.... spend less money on DE&I and that way as a resident in Cheshire I don't have to pay for the pandering Cheshire Fire brigade does!!
- Including other services wanting more it's too much
- Cost of living, find ways to save money
- Sick of everybody trying to inflate prices higher than budget ! I do not receive more !
- With the council tax going up so much it is becoming less and less defensible.
- You can't keep putting council tax up.
- It's an absolutely disgraceful to even think of putting the charges up And I strongly along with a lot of people disagree stop taking increases from people ,If you really care don't do it .
- Cost of living already a problem
- First it's fire ... then it's police ... then it summit else...in these times I wouldn't expect an increase.
- I haven't received a pay rise for two years, when you pay your chief over 125k per year I wonder what the wage bill is for senior managers , let's see some cost savings internally
- Fire houses are closing therefore no increase is needed
- Like all public sector organisations, there is still too much waste and there are other areas that this money could be saved to prevent further increases to the precept year on year when everyone is struggling to pay a mortgage and bills
- The cost of living is currently hurting everyone this would just be the proverbial straw that breaks the camels back
- Why increase year on year ?people can no longer afford heat and food !

- We all have to tighten our belts I'm afraid, this includes the fire service
- Cost of living crisis. Every little helps.
- A fire engine is being removed from my area there is no way I would support an increase for a reduced service
- Far too much increase we pay taxes towards this service, now they are going to cut men and engines what are we paying for?
- People are struggling already with bills
- It is not fair to increase this budget as the police are increasing there's too and it will affect a lot more people
- It's an open book and honest insight for a service which is highly thought of and respected within the community.
- They put their lives at risk, to save others.
- I live in a small village far away from immediate help. The fire service provide advice and free smoke alarms.
- Maintain enough fire engines to deal with fires and rescues in Cheshire. Save money by investing in computer systems that replace back room staff.
- I think everybody paying council tax should pay the same amount.
- I already get very little from my council tax
- There should be greater cooperation with the Police and other organisations in the investigation of possible cases of arson. An example is the recent fire that destroyed the disused Birchfield Park clubhouse in Tuson Drive, Widnes.
- The council tax raises yet we revive less services each year and even worse contact and completed jobs from CWAC. Just look at the disgrace of the potholes all over our roads that are never repaired!
- What % of budget is funded by commercial/industry?
- Yes I know what it like to be looking for a fire engine people
- If the fire service were given this rise the firefighters would agree not to strike in this authority
- We need them
- It's a tricky one. The fire service is one of those services that seems invisible- but is crucial when needed!
- What happens if there is an emergency on the M6 or M56 requiring a fire engine. We also have numerous industries.
- Important to make some statement of accounts, so that citizens can clearly see where the money is going.
- Yet again rate payers or expected to be an everlasting source of fiancé !!!
- Ellesmere Port second fire engine moved to Chester the previous year reducing the cover but there was no reduction in tax
- I would fully support this increase IF all the Private Schools in Cheshire Paid their share in Council Tax for all the buildings and grounds they own but due to a ancient charity status they pay next to nothing....
- Please keep redundancies to a minimum
- Safety is of the utmost importance in our community
- Public services have been under funded for years.
- Everything is going up this should be subsidised by the government as they get enough taxes out of us
- Should be funded by central government by increasing tax on higher earners
- Government should being more to support local councils instead of reducing their funding