

## **Police and Crime Plan 2013/14**

### **Research into Public Opinion and Priority and Budget Consultation 2012**

#### **Introduction**

This paper partially meets the requirements of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to consult with residents and stakeholders on policing priorities and budget. The report includes historical data that illustrates high confidence in Surrey Police and the high importance that residents placed on policing priorities in previous Local Policing Plans. It also includes data gathered in autumn 2012 that questions the public on local policing priorities, police performance, council tax levels and strategies for meeting budget reductions. The data should be used to inform the Police and Crime Plan for the forthcoming year as part of planning cycles in late 2012 and early 2013. It should be followed with further research.

#### **The research**

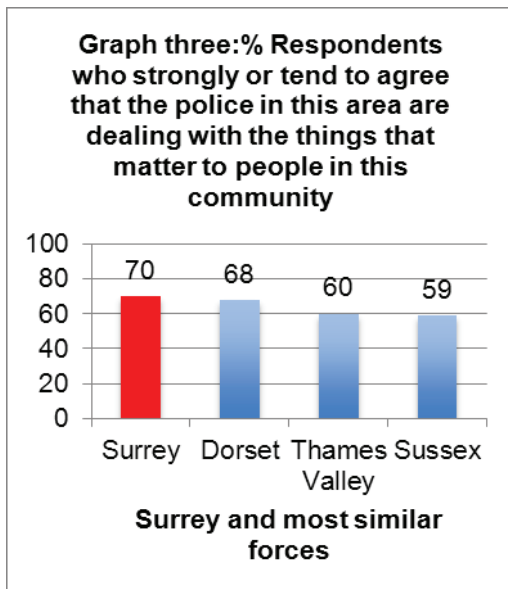
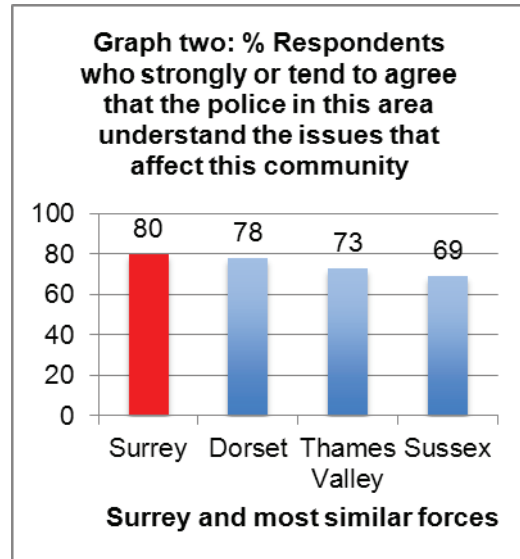
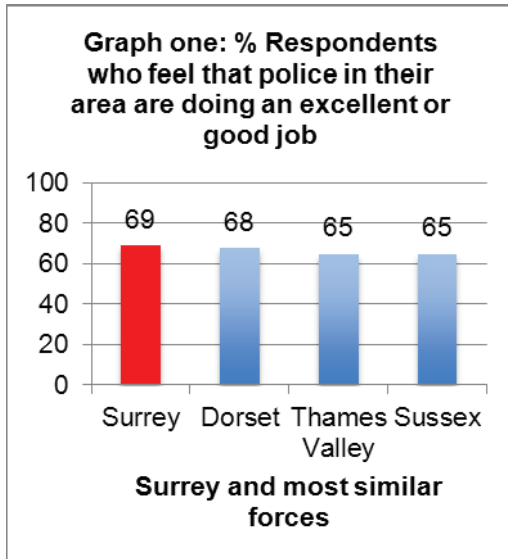
##### Historical data

Surrey Police Authority (SPA), Surrey Police and national bodies have regularly researched public opinions on policing.

##### *British Crime Survey*

The British Crime Survey (called the Crime Survey for England and Wales from April 2012) is a national survey that questions the public on attitudes and experiences on policing and crime and allows comparisons across police forces. It records crimes that may not have been reported to the police so can be used as an alternative to police data. The results are illustrated in graphs one to three below which show data for year to December 2011.

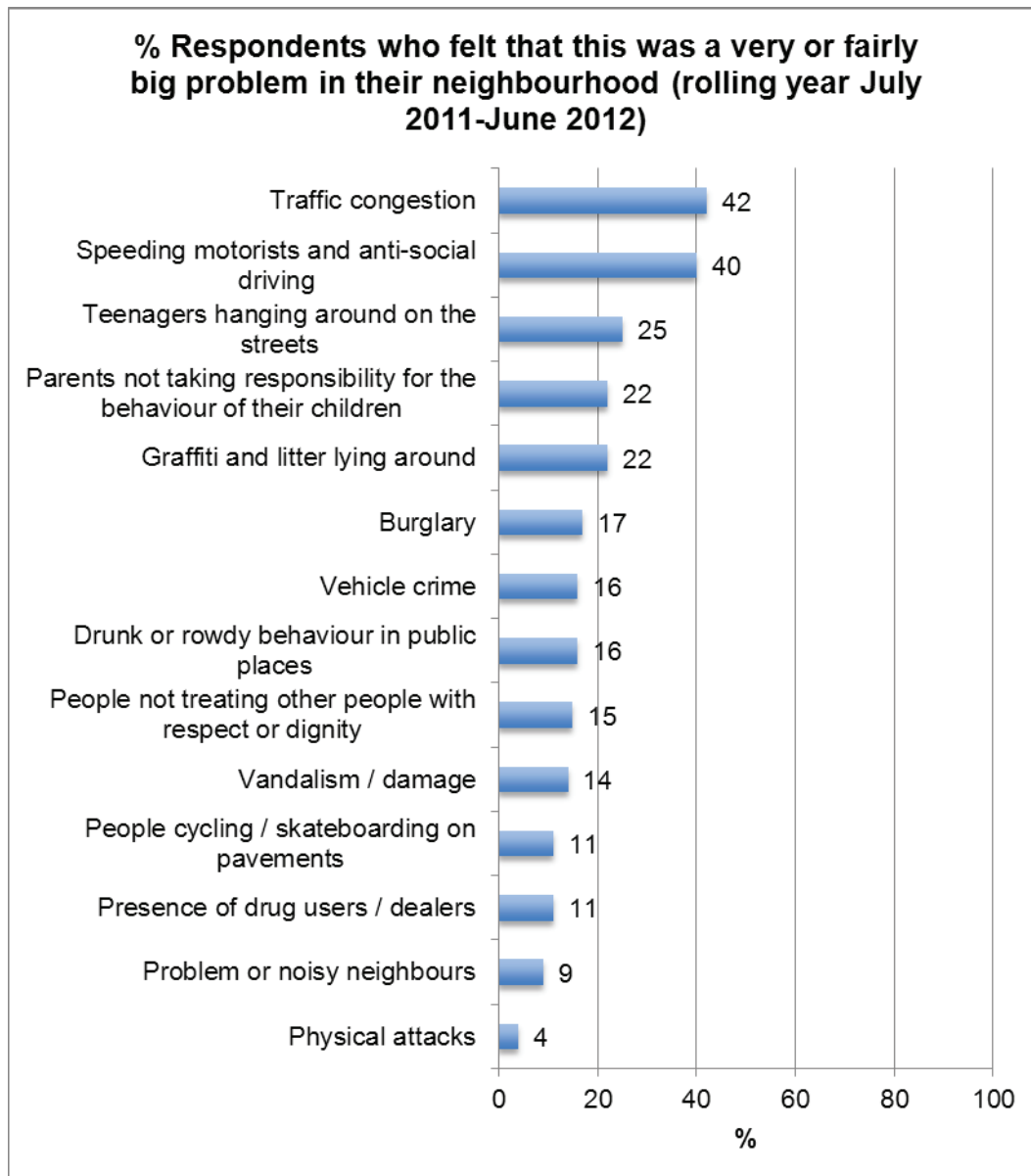
The strong majority of respondents felt that the police were doing a good or excellent job; that the police understand the issues that affect their community and are dealing with them. In the year to December 2011, Surrey Police outperformed its most similar forces and all other forces in these three areas.



*Joint Neighbourhood Survey*

Surrey Police, alongside Surrey County Council, run the Joint Neighbourhood Survey throughout the year. The Joint Neighbourhood for 2011/ 12 saw 90% of respondents stating that they were very or fairly confident in their neighbourhood police. The survey also asked residents about their local area and problems in their neighbourhood, the results are in graph four below. It should be noted that these results represent the perceptions of residents rather than crime levels.

The results illustrate that residents are most likely to state that traffic issues and anti-social behaviour are problems in their neighbourhood. Burglary (17%), vehicle crime (16%) and vandalism / damage (14%) are more commonly stated more serious crimes whilst only 4% of respondents felt that physical attacks were a very or fairly big problem in their neighbourhood.

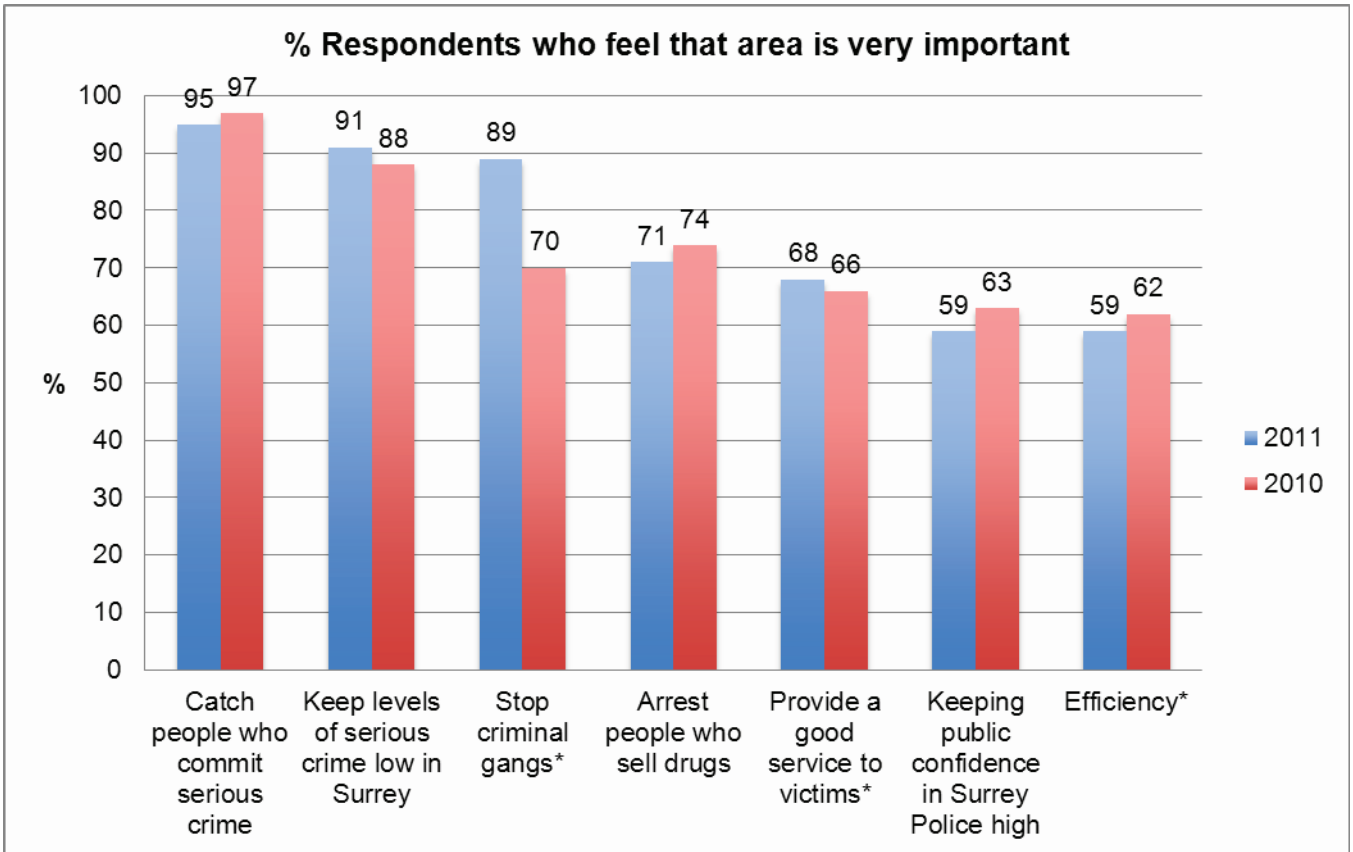


Graph four – Joint Neighbourhood Survey rolling year July 2011-June 2012

*Surrey Police Authority Annual Priority and Budget Consultations*

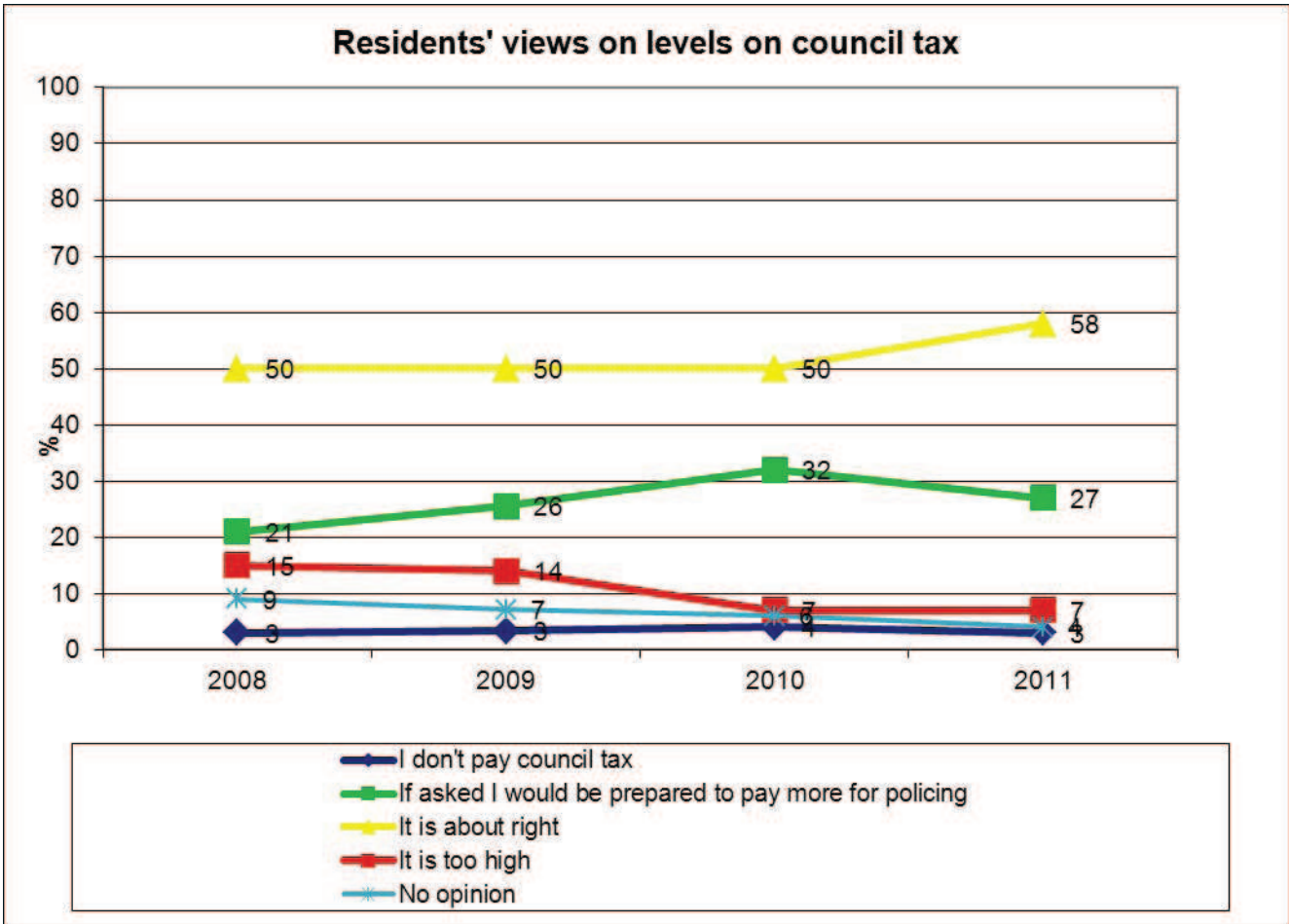
SPA had a similar duty to the PCC to consult with residents on planned priorities and precept level. The Authority conducted an annual consultation to meet its duty. Graph five illustrates the percentage of respondents who felt that each priority area was very important.

These surveys included a closed list of priority areas that the Authority intended to include within its Local Policing Plans. The majority of respondents felt that each area was very important in both 2010 and 2011. The priorities that involved tackling serious crimes were viewed as more important than softer areas such as good service, confidence and efficiency.



Graph five – SPA priority consultation 2010 and 2011. Please note that the areas marked with \* had different wording across the two surveys.

SPA also consulted residents on the amount of council tax that they paid for policing. The survey informed respondents of the council tax for a Band D property and asked them for their views on it. Graph six illustrates the results to these questions. The graph shows that around half of respondents felt that council tax level is about right (with a rise to 58% in 2011) and around a quarter to a third have been prepared to pay more. The remaining respondents felt that it was too high, do not pay council tax or did not give an opinion.



Graph six – SPA priority consultations 2008-2011

*Conclusion*

Surrey residents have consistently demonstrated positive views towards Surrey Police. Surrey Police have been a top performing Force in terms of public perception and residents have felt that the priorities the Force has pursued have been very important. The majority of respondents have also felt that council tax is about right or would be prepared to pay more. This research provides useful context on public opinion over recent years, but must be supplemented with primary research.

Priorities and budget consultation 2012

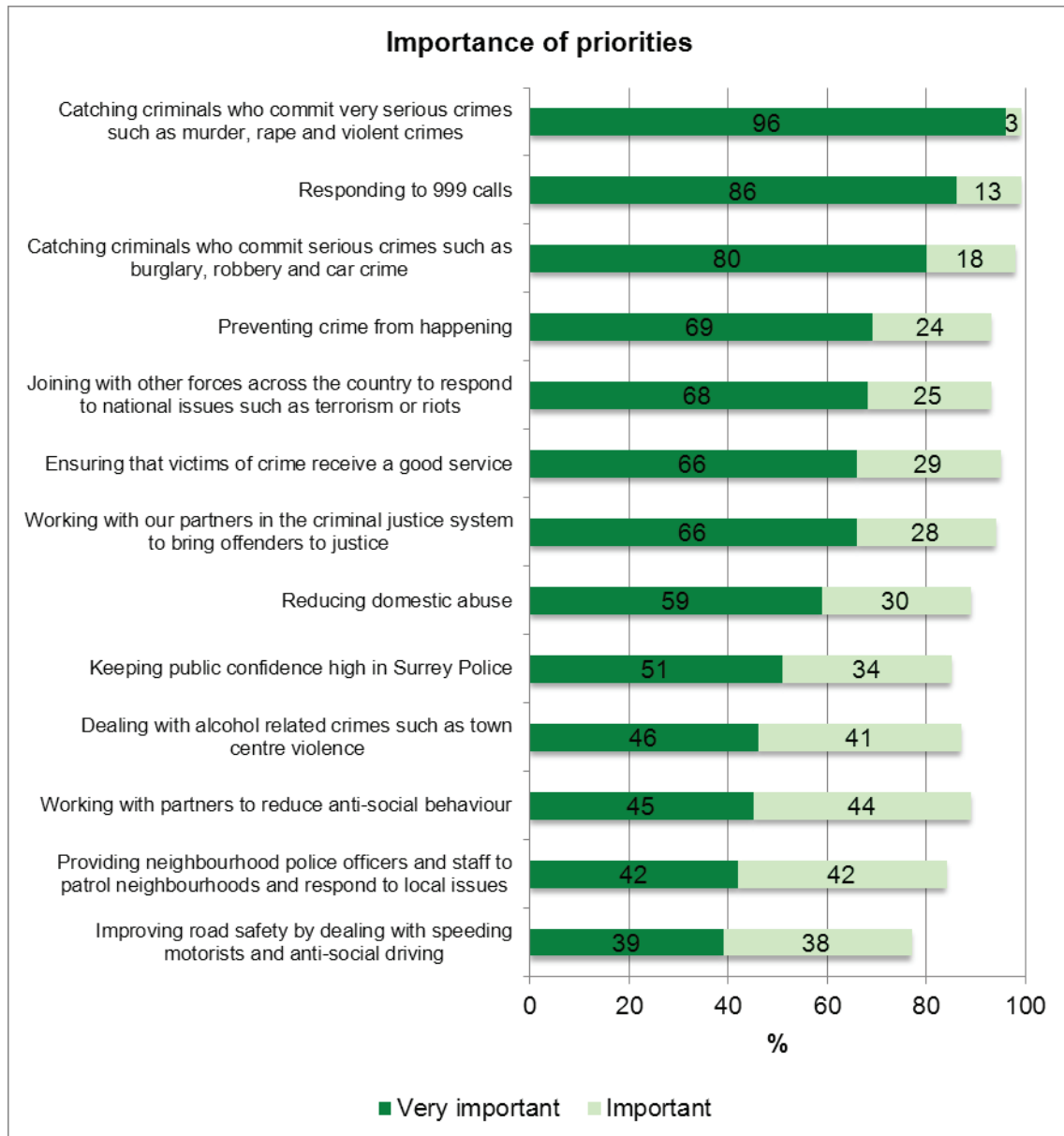
Surrey Police Authority commissioned a bespoke piece of research to inform the Police and Crime Plan for 2013/14. The research covered policing priorities, perceptions of performance in these areas, views on the council tax level, perception of value for money and support or opposition for strategies to meet budget cuts. The research was conducted in autumn 2012.

*Priorities*

The survey asked respondents how important or unimportant areas of policing are to them. Graph seven illustrates the results to this question. All areas were either very important or important to the strong majority of respondents.

'Catching criminals who commit very serious crimes such as murder, rape and violent crimes' was seen as very important to the highest percentage of respondents (96%). This is followed by 'responding to 999 calls' (86%) and 'catching criminals who commit serious crimes such as burglary, robbery and car crime' (80%). In contrast, 'improving road safety by dealing with speeding motorists and anti-social driving' was seen as very important by 39%.

The results show that the public continue to put the highest importance on catching criminals with almost all respondents stating that this is important across the last three years.



Graph seven – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

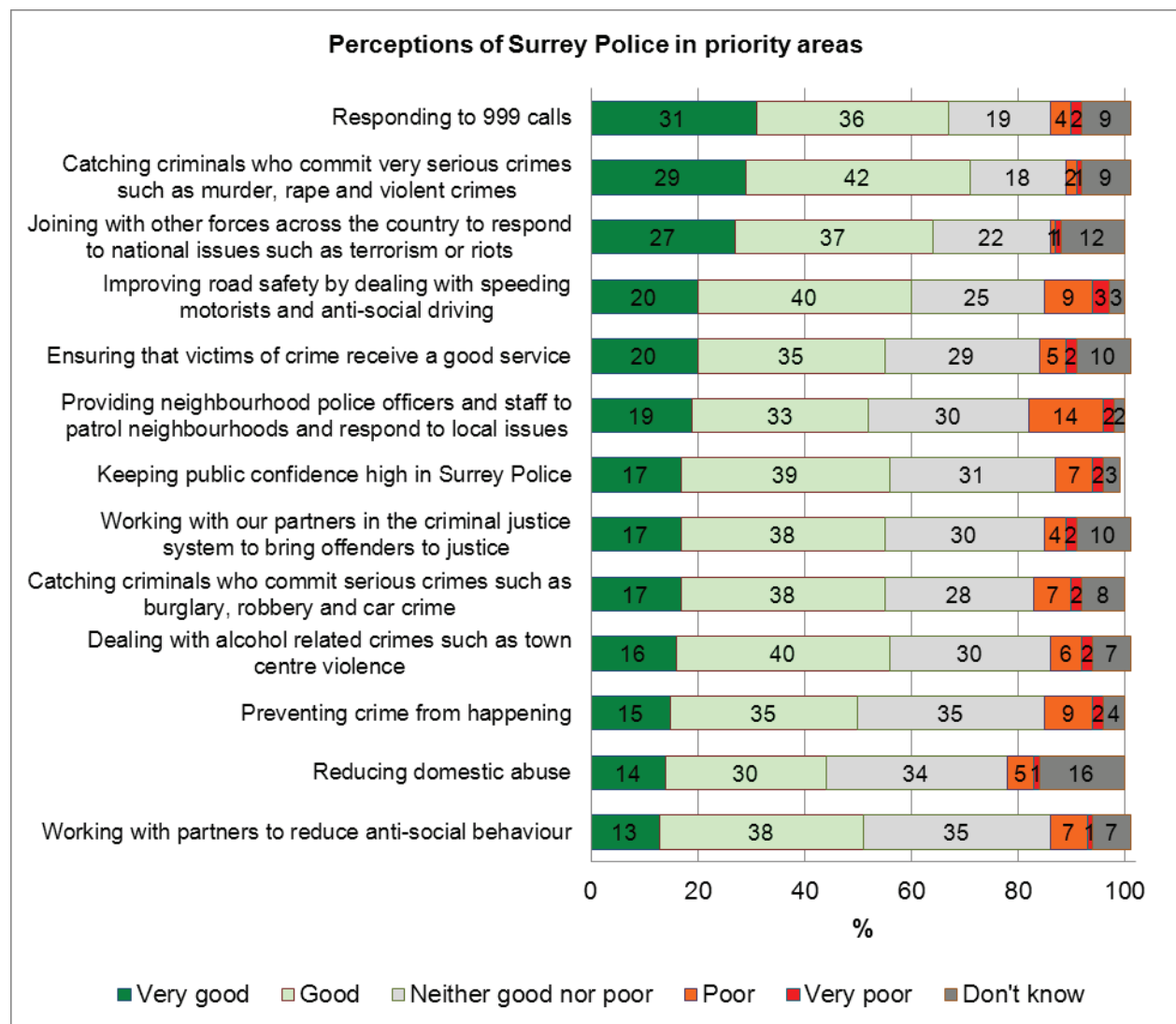
*Other priorities*

The survey asked respondents whether there are any other areas that they felt Surrey Police should be prioritising. The majority of respondents (78%) answered that there were no other areas. 7% answered 'increased police presence / visibility', other answers included 'neighbourhood / community interaction' (2%), 'drugs' (2%), 'vehicle misuse' (2%) and 'working with schools' (2%).

*Perceptions of performance*

The survey went on to ask respondents how well they felt that Surrey Police were performing in these areas. Please note that this question asked respondents for their perception regardless of whether or not they have used the service. Graph eight illustrates the results.

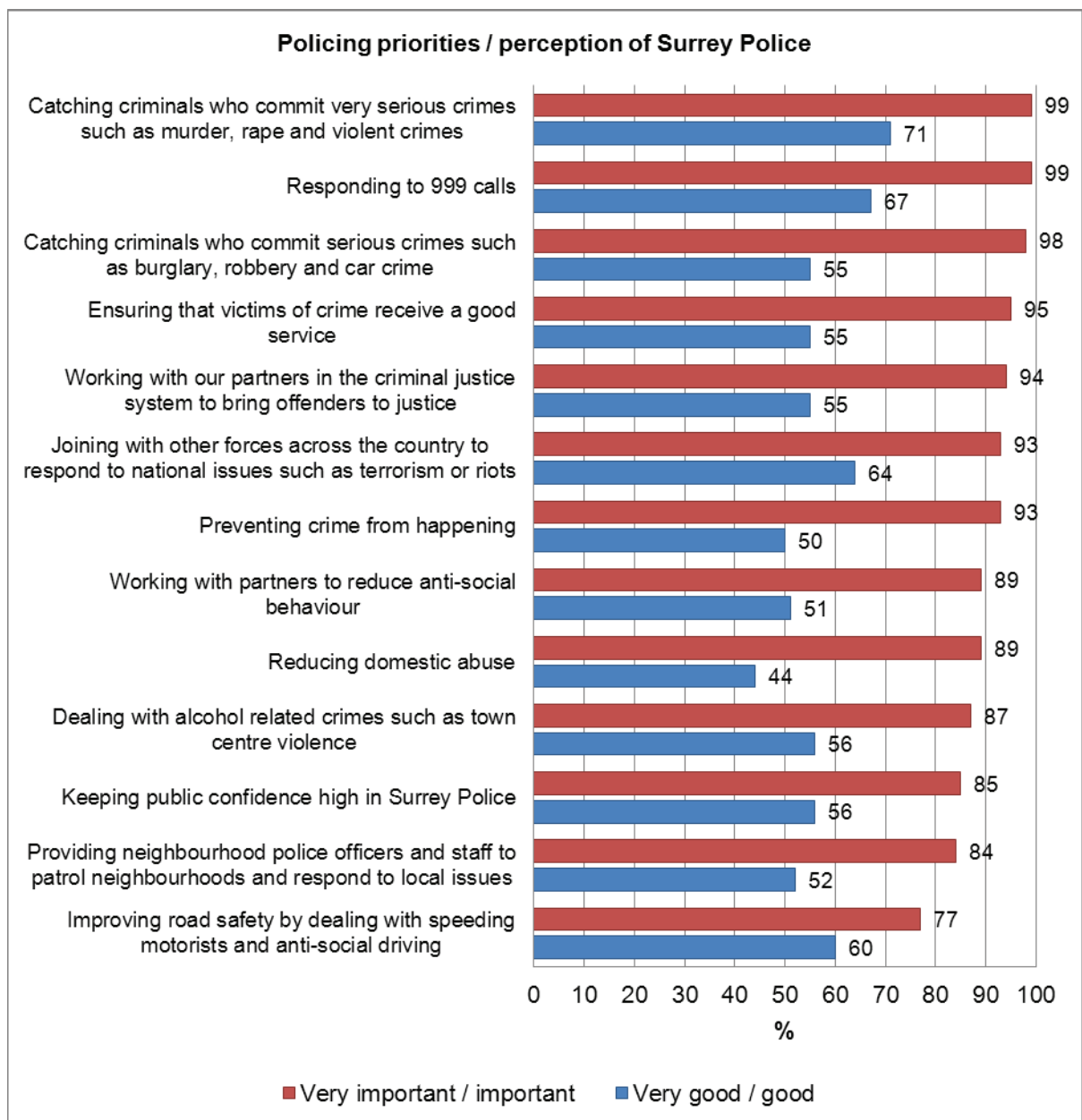
The public tend to feel that Surrey Police perform well with 50% or more respondents stating that Surrey Police are very good or good in each area except for reducing domestic abuse (44%).



Graph eight – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

The British Crime Survey, mentioned earlier, found that 69% of respondents felt that police in their area were doing a good or excellent job in the rolling year to December 2011. It is therefore of note that perceptions of performance are lower than this and requires some further investigation.

The importance placed on policing areas can be compared to the perceived performance of Surrey Police in these areas. The results of this comparison are illustrated in graph nine.



Graph nine – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

The results show that the importance respondents place on policing areas does not correlate with perceived good performance in these areas. 45% more respondents think that 'reducing domestic abuse' is important or very important than think that Surrey Police are going a very good or good job in this area. There are similar gaps in 'preventing crime from happening' (43%),

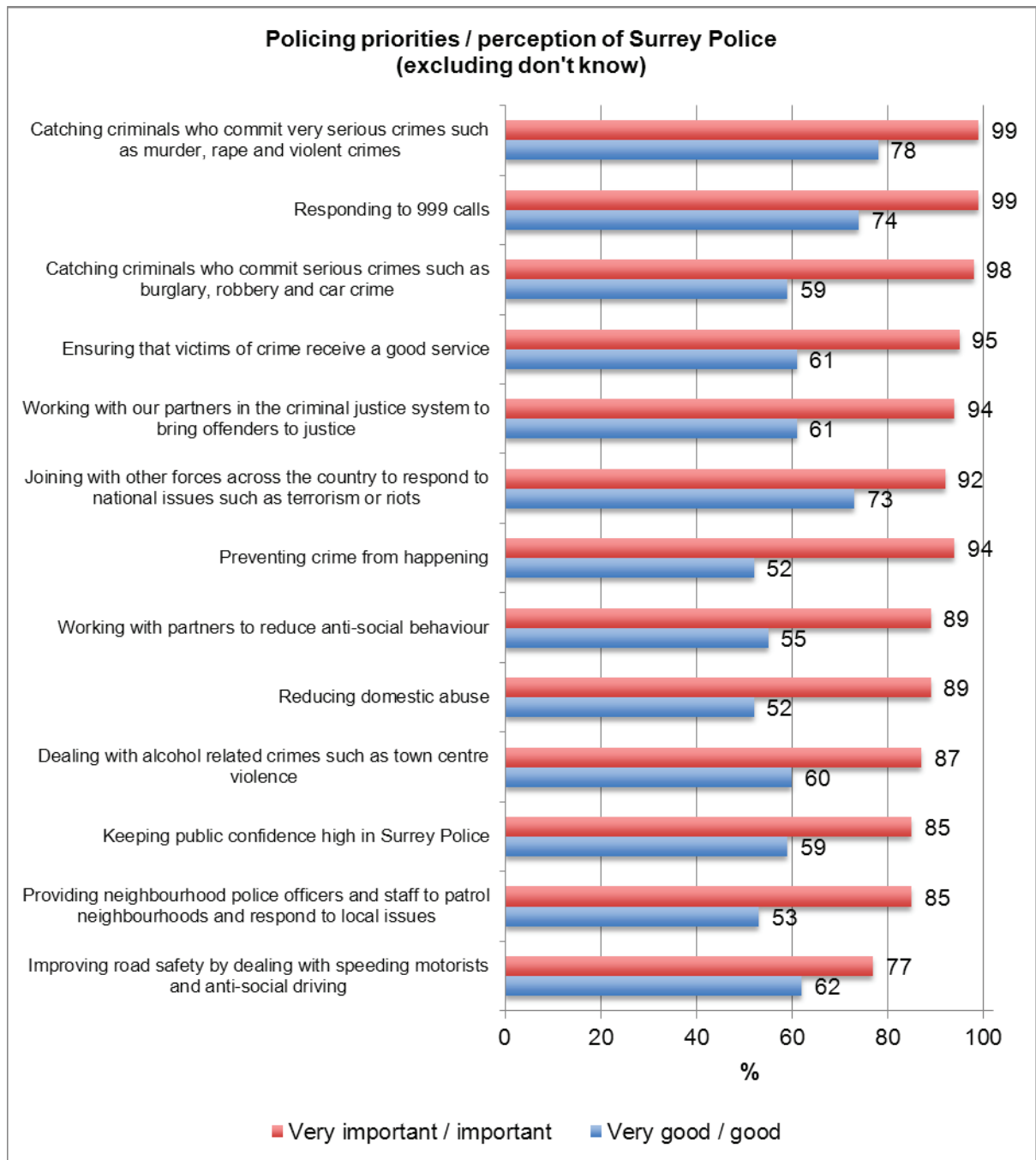


'catching criminals who commit serious crime' (43%) and 'working with partners in the criminal justice system to bring offenders to justice' (40%). In contrast, 'improving road safety' is seen as important by the lowest percentage of respondents, but has the smallest gap with just 17% more respondents seeing it as important than who think that Surrey Police do a good or very good job.

It is useful to analyse the data by removing those who have answered 'don't know' as respondents who have answered this way can skew results. The results are illustrated in graph ten.

We can, again, see a gap between the percentage of respondents who felt that an area was important or very important and those who felt that Surrey Police were good or very good in these areas. Once again, 'preventing crime from happening' has a substantial gap with 42% more respondents stating that it was important or very important than stating that Surrey Police were good or very good in this area. We can again see further substantial gaps in 'catching criminals who commit serious crimes such as burglary, robbery and car crime' (39%) and 'reducing domestic abuse' (37%).

The results prompted officers to consider newer data to see whether there had been a dip in public perception since December 2011. The latest British Crime Survey data (now called the Crime Survey for England and Wales) found that in the year to June 2012, 68.3% of respondents in Surrey felt that police in their area do a good or excellent job. This is in contrast to 69.4% in the rolling year to December. Whilst the drop is small and is not statistically significant, it has occurred whilst other forces have improved public confidence. Surrey Police have therefore dropped from being the highest performing force in this area to coming fifth after Dorset (71%), Cumbria (70%), Northumbria (70%) and Leicestershire (70%). In contrast, the Joint Neighbourhood Survey saw the percentage of respondents saying that they were very or fairly confident in their neighbourhood force rise from 89.8% in the year end 2011/12 to 91.1% in quarter 2 2012/13.

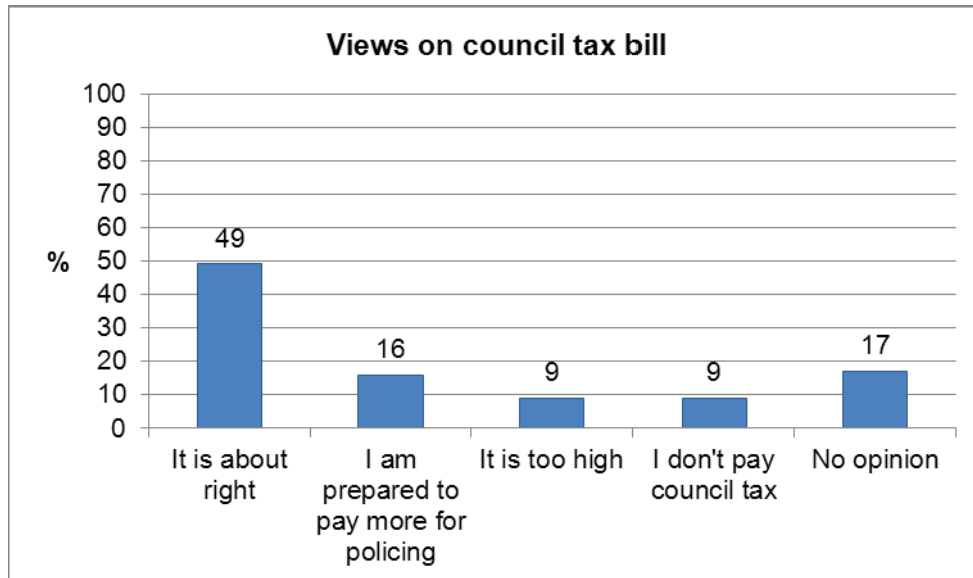


Graph ten – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

These results raise some questions that could be investigated further. The public perception data outlined above could be compared with performance data in order to understand public's perception is correct. The planned qualitative consultation can explore why residents have their perceptions and what could be done to improve them. This additional research would enable the Commissioner to better understand how Surrey Police is performing and how this relates to public perception. This understanding could help to prevent drops in confidence.

## Council tax

The survey, once again, informed respondents of the current amount of council tax on a band D home and asked them for their views on this. The results are illustrated on graph 11 below.



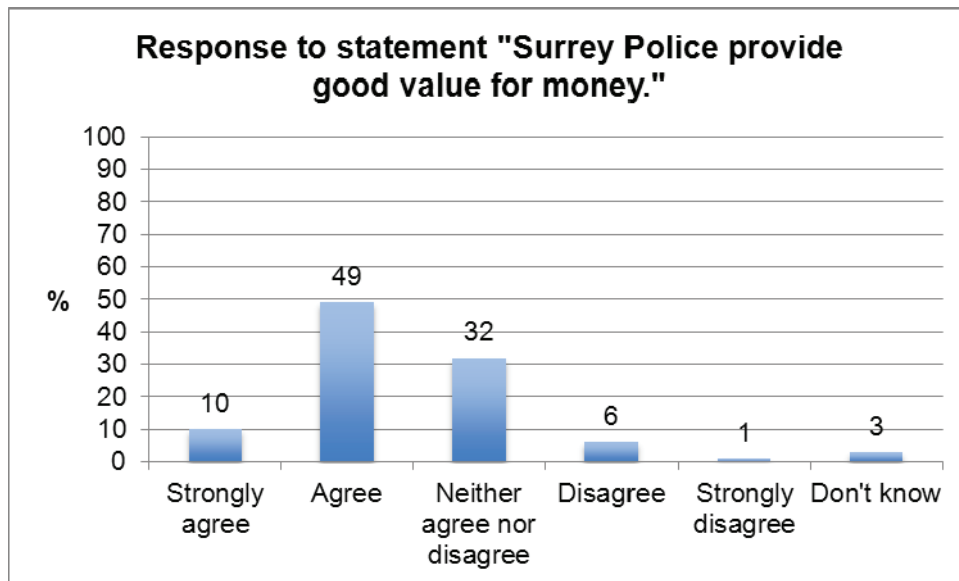
Graph 11 – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

Just under half of respondents said that the level of council tax is about right. This is in line with previous years (albeit with slight increase to 58% in 2011). 16% were prepared to pay more, which is less than previous years where around a quarter of respondents said that they would be prepared to do so. 9% felt that it is too high (a slight increase over the 7% in 2010 and 2011). 17% said that they have no opinion, which is a significant rise over recent years (5% in 2011, 7% in 2009 and 2010).

## Value for money

The survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement “Surrey Police provide good value for money.” Graph 12 illustrates the results.

Respondents were most likely to agree with the statement with just under half (49%) saying that they agree and 10% strongly agreeing. Just under a third (32%) were neutral and only 7% disagreed overall, with just 1% of these strongly disagreeing.

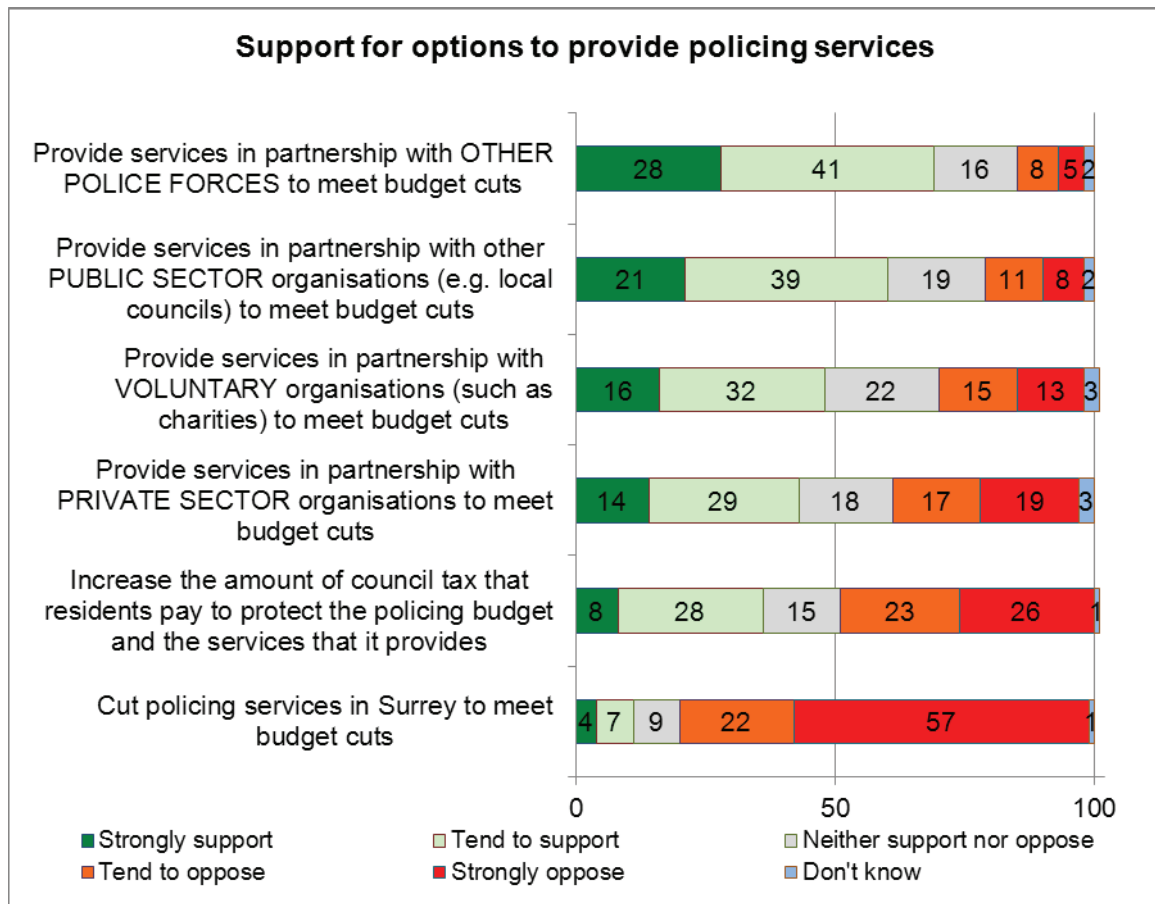


Graph 12 – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

### *Options for providing policing services in the future*

The survey went on to inform respondents that Surrey Police receives around half of its funding through government grant (police grant) and half through its share of locally raised council tax. Further to this, they were informed that the Government has indicated that the funding it provides for Surrey Police will be reduced by around £5 million over the next few years. Respondents were told that Surrey Police were facing a tough financial climate and will face difficult decisions on how to provide policing services and were asking to what extent they would support or oppose a list of actions. The results to this question are illustrated in graph 13.

The results show that the strong majority of respondents would oppose cutting police services in Surrey, with 79% opposing this overall including 57% strongly opposing. The option of increasing council tax is also less popular with just over a third (36%) supporting this option and 49% opposing. The evidence therefore shows that, although the majority of respondents do not want to see services cut, only around a third of them would pay more. It is of note that 36% of respondents stated that they would support increasing council tax in response to this question whilst only 16% stated that they would be prepared to pay more for policing in the first question on council tax. This suggests that more residents would support an increase in council tax if they were provided with information about Surrey Police funding. This is an area that could be explored further in qualitative consultation where respondents' initial opinions on council tax and budget could be challenged and investigated in depth.



Graph 13 – Priority and Budget Consultation 2012

Respondents were most likely to state that they would support Surrey Police working in partnership with other police forces with 69% of respondents saying that they would support this option, 28% of these strongly supporting it. The majority of respondents (60% overall) also support working in partnership with other public sector organisations. The options to work with voluntary organisations and private sector organisations were less popular with 48% and 43% respondents supporting these options respectively. These findings are supported by recent qualitative research conducted for Surrey Police, which found that working with other police forces was the most popular option for the public followed by working with public sector partnerships. Respondents in that research had a number of initial concerns around private sector contractors, but many were open to private sector companies being employed in support services and back office administration.

#### Conclusion

The primary research provides information that should be helpful to the PCC in developing their first Police and Crime Plan. The research demonstrates that the public continue to prioritise catching criminals who commit serious and very serious crimes. It also provides a useful ranking for other policing areas.

The research raises questions to be explored further. This data could be used alongside performance data to gain a clear understanding of public

importance, perception of performance and actual performance. The planned qualitative consultation can be used to understand the gap between the percentage of residents who feel that areas of work are important and those who feel that that Surrey Police are doing a good or very good job. It can explore why the gaps exist and what could be done to close them. This research would uncover areas where the Force are performing well, areas that require further scrutiny and areas for improvement and can inform the development of the Police and Crime Plan.

The research has shown that residents' views on council tax continue to be fairly static. However, the research has also shown that residents do not want to see policing services cut and that more respondents would be prepared to see council tax increase than services cut. The qualitative research should investigate how residents would balance the level of precept with the desire to maintain services.

Finally, the research indicates that working in partnership with other police forces and public sector organisations is more popular than partnerships with the voluntary or private sector. The Commissioner could consider this finding, along with the Force research, when deciding how they may wish to reform services to meet the budget shortfall.

### **Recommendations and next steps**

The Police and Crime Commissioner has a duty to consult with residents and pay due regard to their views in developing police priorities and budget. This paper therefore recommends that the Commissioner take the above information into account when developing their Police and Crime Plan.

The paper also recommends that further research be conducted which contrasts public opinion to actual Force performance. Furthermore, the Police and Crime Commissioner should agree to conduct further qualitative consultation with victims, business and the public in order to fully meet their statutory duties and to explore the questions outlined in this paper.

## **Appendix one – Consultation requirements for the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Surrey has a duty to obtain the views of the people of Surrey (including victims of crime) about police priorities, budget and precept level annually. The PCC has a further duty to consult non-domestic rate payers (e.g. businesses) on the precept level.

## **Appendix two – Notes on methodologies**

British Crime Survey – The British Crime Survey (called the Crime Survey for England and Wales from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012) is a national survey conducted by BMRB Limited on behalf of the Home Office. It is conducted throughout the year and forces are provided with rolling data. The survey provides robust data.

Joint Neighbourhood Survey – The Joint Neighbourhood Survey is conducted by Swift Research on behalf of Surrey Police and Surrey County Council. It is conducted throughout the year and data is provided quarterly. The survey provides robust data.

SPA Priority and Budget Surveys – Surrey Police Authority commissioned annual priority and budget surveys from 2008. The surveys were conducted at a one off point in the year to inform priority setting for the following financial year. The surveys provide robust data.

Priorities and Budget Consultation 2012 – Officers from Surrey Police Authority commissioned Swift Research to conduct a priority and budget consultation in autumn 2012 to inform the development of the first Police and Crime Plan. The survey provides robust data.

**Appendix three – questionnaire and results from Priority and Budget Consultation 2012**

**Priorities & Budget Consultation 2013/14 - Results**

**Borough (605 respondents)**

Elmbridge	North Surrey	11% (66)
Epsom & Ewell	East Surrey	7% (42)
Guildford	West Surrey	12% (73)
Mole Valley	East Surrey	8% (48)
Reigate & Banstead	East Surrey	12% (72)
Runnymede	North Surrey	7% (43)
Spelthorne	North Surrey	8% (48)
Surrey Health	West Surrey	8% (50)
Tandridge	East Surrey	7% (42)
Waverley	West Surrey	11% (66)
Woking	West Surrey	9% (55)

**What is your ethnic group? Are you Asian, Black, Chinese, of a mixed background, White, or of another ethnic group? (605 respondents)**

Asian or Asian British	5% (32)
Black or Black British	1% (6)
Chinese	0% (0)
Mixed	1% (8)
White	90% (545)
Other ethnic group (please specify)	1% (7)
Do not wish to say ( <i>don't read out</i> )	1% (7)

**Age (605 respondents)**

**NB, percentages between 0 & 1% are recorded to two one decimal rather than rounding to a full number for this question (605 respondents)**

16- 17 years	0.3% (2)
18-19 years	0.8% (5)
20-24 years	7% (43)
25-34 years	19% (117)
35-44 years	12% (71)
45-54 years	25% (148)
55-64 years	18% (107)
65-74 years	10% (62)
75+ years	8% (50)



## Gender (605 respondents)

Male	49% (297)
Female	51% (308)

## Priorities

Surrey Police is responsible for keeping Surrey safer by preventing and detecting crime. Surrey Police carries out lots of different work to do this. We would like to understand how important or unimportant each area of work is to you.

I'm going to read out a list and using the scale where 1= very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4=important and 5= very important, how important or unimportant are the following areas to you?

(605 respondents)

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Very Important	Don't know (do not read out)
1. Preventing crime from happening	0%	1%	6%	24%	69%	1%
2. Catching criminals who commit serious crime such as burglary, robbery and car crime	0%	0%	2%	18%	80%	0%
3. Catching criminals who commit <u>very</u> serious crime such as murder, rape and violent crimes.	0%	0%	1%	3%	96%	0%
4. Responding to 999 calls	0%	0%	1%	13%	86%	0%
5. Providing neighbourhood police officers and staff to patrol neighbourhoods and respond to local issues	1%	2%	14%	42%	42%	0%
6. Working with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour	0%	2%	10%	44%	45%	1%
7. Dealing with alcohol related crimes such as town centre violence	0%	2%	12%	41%	46%	0%
8. Improving road safety by dealing with	1%	5%	17%	38%	39%	0%

speeding motorists and anti-social driving						
9. Keeping public confidence high in Surrey Police	1%	2%	12%	34%	51%	0%
10. Reducing domestic abuse	0%	2%	9%	30%	59%	0%
11. Working with our partners in the criminal justice system (Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons and probation) to bring offenders to justice	0%	1%	6%	28%	66%	0%
12. Joining with other forces across the country to respond to national issues such as terrorism or riots	0%	1%	6%	25%	68%	0%
13. Ensuring that victims of crime receive a good service	0%	0%	5%	29%	66%	0%

**Q10. Are there any other areas that you think that Surrey Police should be prioritising? (605 respondents)**

**NB, this table does not include any responses provided by fewer than 1% of respondents.**

No other areas	78%
Increased police presence / visibility	7%
Neighbourhood / community interaction	2%
Drugs	2%
Vehicle misuse	2%
Working with schools	2%
Child safety / protection	1%

**Q11. Based on your current perceptions of Surrey Police, using the scale where 1=very poor, 2=poor, 3=neither good nor poor, 4=good and 5=very good how do you feel that they perform in the following areas? (605 respondents)**

**INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT SAYS THEY HAVEN'T HAD ANY CONTACT WITH SURREY POLICE EXPLAIN THAT THEY DON'T NEED TO HAVE, WE'RE INTERESTED IN THEIR PERCEPTIONS.**

	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good	Don't know (do not read out)
1. Preventing crime from	2%	9%	35%	35%	15%	4%

happening						
2. Catching criminals who commit serious crime such as burglary, robbery and car crime	2%	7%	28%	38%	17%	8%
3. Catching criminals who commit <u>very</u> serious crime such as murder, rape and violent crimes.	1%	2%	18%	42%	29%	9%
4. Responding to 999 calls	2%	4%	19%	36%	31%	9%
5. Providing neighbourhood police officers and staff to patrol neighbourhoods and respond to local issues	2%	14%	30%	33%	19%	2%
6. Working with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour	1%	7%	35%	38%	13%	7%
7. Dealing with alcohol related crimes such as town centre violence	2%	6%	30%	40%	16%	7%
8. Improving road safety by dealing with speeding motorists and anti-social driving	3%	9%	25%	40%	20%	3%
9. Keeping public confidence high in Surrey Police	2%	7%	31%	39%	17%	3%
10. Reducing domestic abuse	1%	5%	34%	30%	14%	16%
11. Working with our partners in the criminal justice system (Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons and probation) to bring offenders to justice	2%	4%	30%	38%	17%	10%
12. Joining with other forces across the country to respond to national issues such as terrorism or riots	1%	1%	22%	37%	27%	12%
13. Ensuring that victims of crime receive a good service	2%	5%	29%	35%	20%	10%

## Budget

**Q12. The current annual council tax bill for policing for an average Band D household in Surrey is £203.49. Which statement best describes how you feel about the amount you pay for policing services in Surrey? (605 respondents)**

I don't pay council tax	9%
I am prepared to pay more for policing	16%
It is about right	49%
It is too high	9%
No opinion	17%

**Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
“Surrey Police provide good value for money.” (605 respondents)**

Strongly agree	10%
Agree	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (do not read out)	3%

**Q14. Surrey is receives around half of it's funding through government grant (police grant) and around half through its share of locally raised council tax. The Government has indicated that the funding it provides for Surrey Police will be reduced by around £5 million over the next few years.**

**Surrey Police are facing a tough financial climate and will face difficult decisions on how to provide policing services. To what extent would you support or oppose the following courses of action being explored?**

**(605 respondents)**

	Strongly oppose	Tend to oppose	Neither support nor oppose	Tend to support	Strongly support	Don't know (do not read out)
1. Increase the amount of council tax that residents pay to protect the policing budget and the services that it provides.	26%	23%	15%	28%	8%	1%
2. Cut policing services in Surrey to meet budget cuts.	57%	22%	9%	7%	4%	1%
3. Provide services in partnership with <u>private sector organisations</u> to meet budget cuts.	19%	17%	18%	29%	14%	3%
4. Provide services in partnership with <u>voluntary organisations</u> (such as charities) to meet budget cuts.	13%	15%	22%	32%	16%	3%
5. Provide services in partnership with <u>other police forces</u> to meet budget cuts	5%	8%	16%	41%	28%	2%

6. Provide services in partnership with other <u>public sector organisations</u> e.g <u>local councils</u> to meet budget cuts.	8%	11%	19%	39%	21%	2%
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### Demographics (DNRO)

Finally, just a few more questions about you. These questions are designed to ensure that Surrey Police meet the needs of all sections of the community. If there are any questions which you do not wish to answer, please tell me.

**Q15. Do you have any long-standing illness, or disability? Long-standing means anything that has troubled you over a period of time, or that is likely to affect you over a period of time? (605 respondents)**

Yes	18% (110)
No	81% (487)
Do not wish to say	1% (8)

**Q16. Do you consider you belong to any of the following groups: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual? (605 respondents)**

Yes	1% (8)
No	97% (589)
Do not wish to say	1% (8)

**Q17. Which, if any, of the following best describes your religion or belief? NB, percentages between 0 & 1% are recorded to two one decimal rather than rounding to a full number for this question (605 respondents)**

Do not wish to say	5% (30)
No religion or belief	32% (195)
Buddhist	0.3% (2)
Christian	58% (349)
Hindu	2% (11)
Jewish	0%
Muslim	2% (12)
Sikh	0.2% (1)
Other	0.8% (5)

**Q18. And have you been a victim of crime or antisocial behaviour in the last 12 months? (605 respondents)**

Yes, victim of crime	16% (96)
No – not a victim	83% (500)
Don't know/can't remember / do not wish to say	2% (9)

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