



Priorities 2009/10

Results of residents and stakeholder consultations

Report for Surrey Police Authority
February 2009

Katie Kempen, Partnerships Policy Officer

Introduction

Surrey Police Authority (SPA) has a duty to consult with residents to identify their policing priorities and make sure that council tax money is being spent effectively. The results of the consultation should inform the setting of priorities and help to monitor the performance of Surrey Police.

SPA is one year into a three-year policing plan which comprises priorities for this period. The Authority is reviewing the plan and therefore had the following objectives for the consultation:

- To test whether the current priorities are still important in order to ensure that the Local Policing Plan meets the needs of local residents and stakeholders.
- To test whether any priorities were missing in the current Local Policing Plan in order to ensure that it covers all of the policing priorities for Surrey.
- To test how satisfied residents and stakeholders are with the way that Surrey Police are performing in priority areas in order to help SPA to monitor performance.
- To test whether Surrey Police are doing the right things to improve confidence in order to help SPA monitor performance in this key area.
- To test the views of residents and stakeholders on the amount they pay for policing from council tax in order to ensure that it is set at the correct level.
- To test the perceptions of residents and stakeholders on the value for money that Surrey Police provide in order to help make sure that council tax money is being spent effectively.

The consultation consisted of a set of survey questions. These questions were sent to a database of over 1,000 stakeholders via web survey and postal survey. It was also sent to 10,000 households in Surrey to capture the views of residents. SPA received 300 responses to the stakeholder survey and 1,854 responses to the residents' survey.

Priorities

Importance of current priorities

The survey considered the priorities currently included in the Local Policing Plan and asked respondents how important these priorities were to them. The results are shown in graph one and graph two.

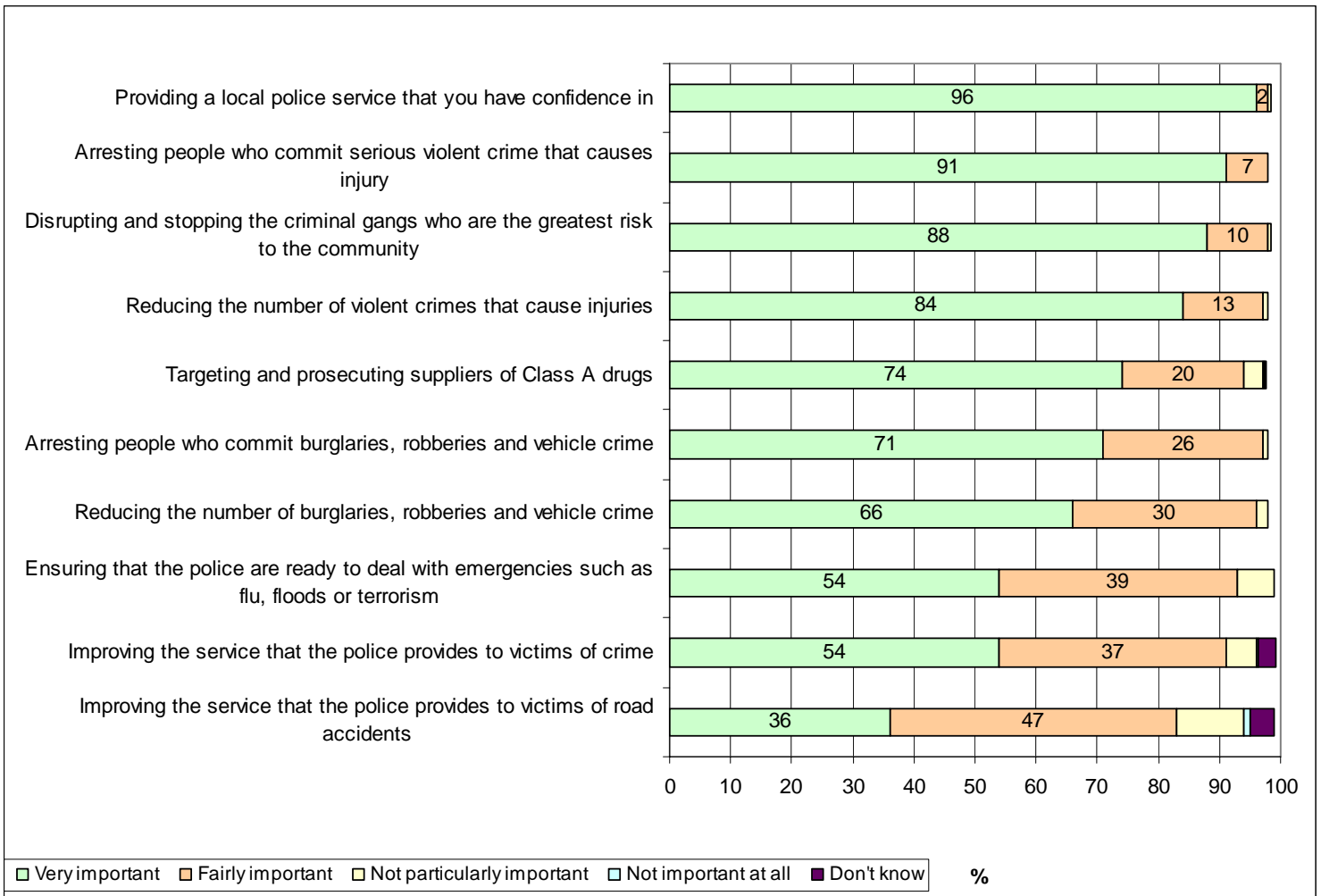
Graph one: current priorities (residents)

The following list includes a list of things that we think are important for policing in Surrey. Please have a look at the list below and let us know how important, if at all, they are to you.



Graph two: current priorities (stakeholders)

The following list includes a list of things that we think are important for policing in Surrey. Please have a look at the list below and let us know how important, if at all, they are to you.



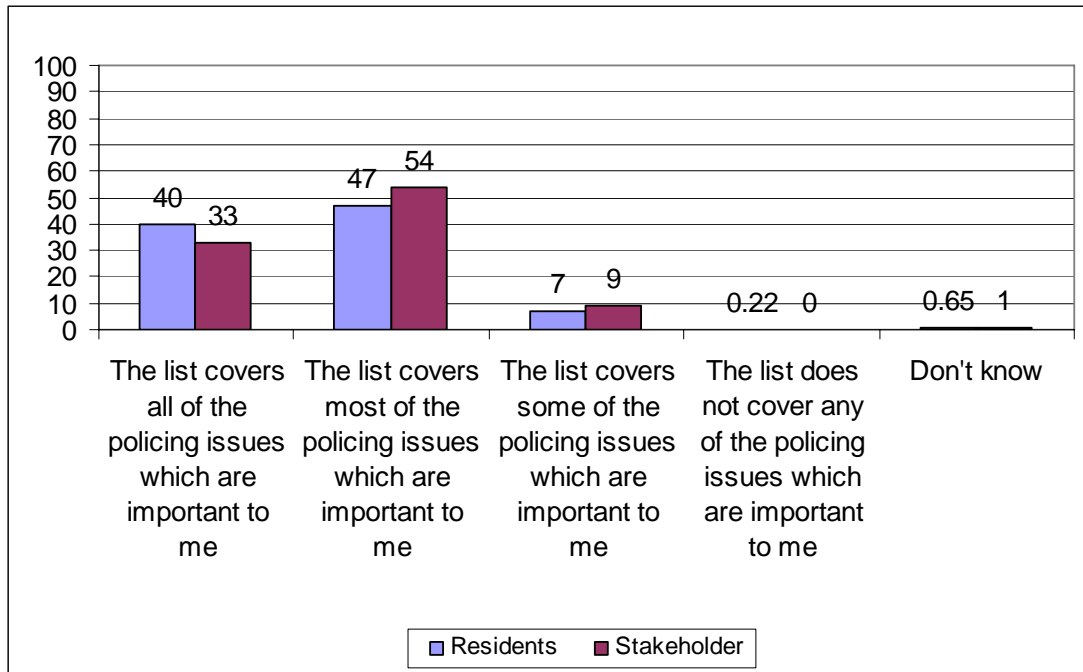
The results show consensus that the current priorities are still important for Surrey. The vast majority of respondents feel that each priority is very or fairly important to them. On the basis on this consultation, all priorities remain relevant for 2009/10.

Missing priorities

SPA wanted to test whether the Local Policing Plan is missing any priorities for local stakeholders and residents. The survey asked respondents to what extent the listed priorities covered the issues which are most important to them. The results are illustrated in graph three. The survey also gave respondents an opportunity to list any important local policing issues which they felt were missing. The results are illustrated in graph four.

Graph three: coverage of policing issues (residents and stakeholders)

To what extent does this list cover the policing issues which are most important to you?



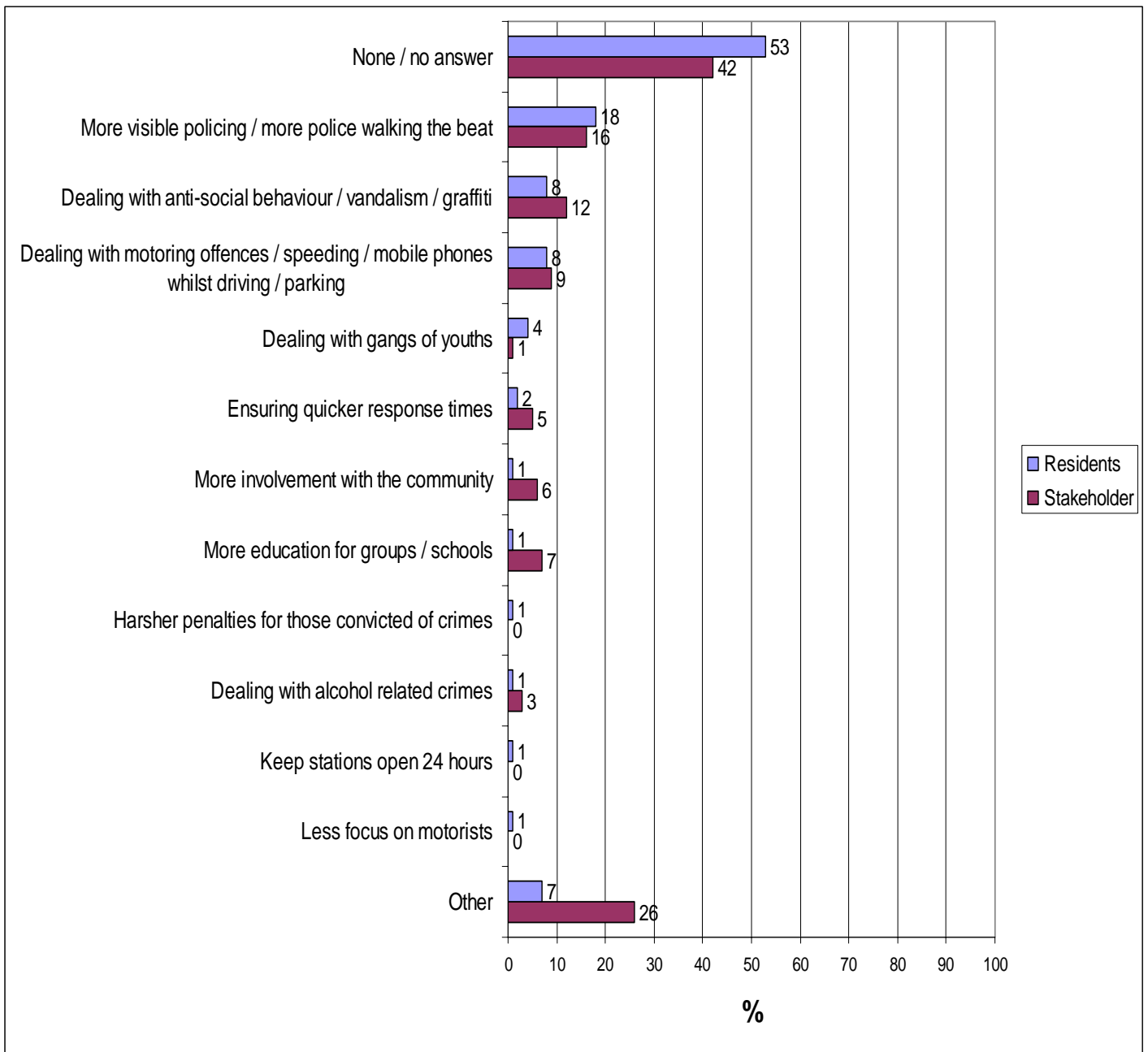
The majority of respondents felt that SPA's current list of priorities covered all or most of the issues that are most important to them. Very few respondents (0.22% of residents) felt that the list does not cover any of the policing issues that are most important to them. These results indicate that the Local Policing Plan does include the right priorities. Respondents were asked what, if any, priorities were missing from the list.

Almost one fifth of residents (18%) and 16% of stakeholders would like to see more visible policing. Other priorities include dealing with anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti; dealing with motoring offences and dealing with gangs of youth.

The number of respondents providing these answers is relatively low. However, SPA should use these results alongside other research to explore what priority these issues are. It should explore whether they should be added to the Local Policing Plan, what work its currently carrying out, how it can work with partners and whether further communication is required with the public on these issues.

Graph four: missing priorities (residents and stakeholders)

What, if any, important local policing issues are missing from this list?



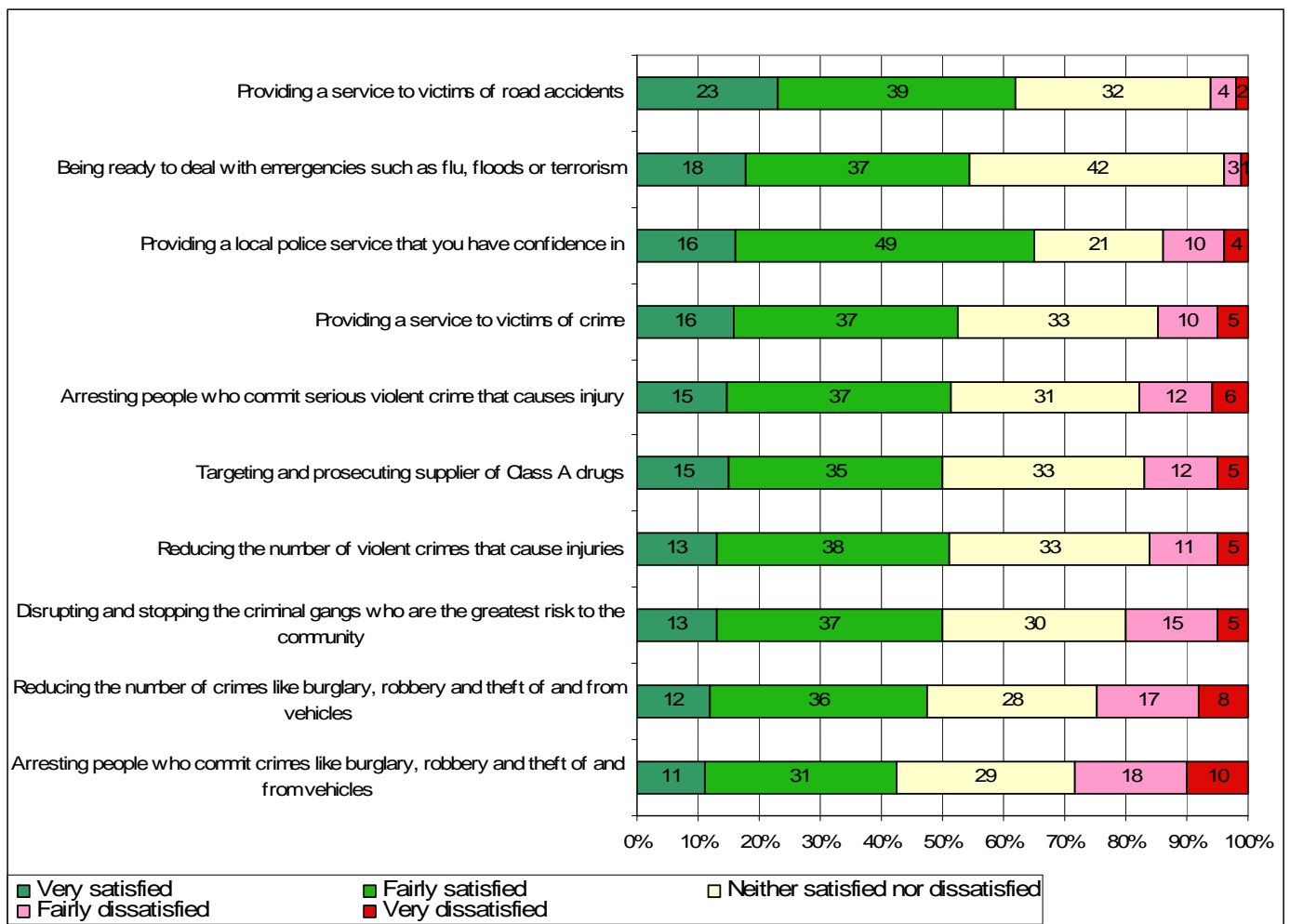
Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction

The survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with the priority areas. The results are shown in graphs five and six.

Graph five: satisfaction (residents)

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied, are you with the way that Surrey Police are currently performing in the following areas? (**Excludes don't know / have not used this service and not answered**)



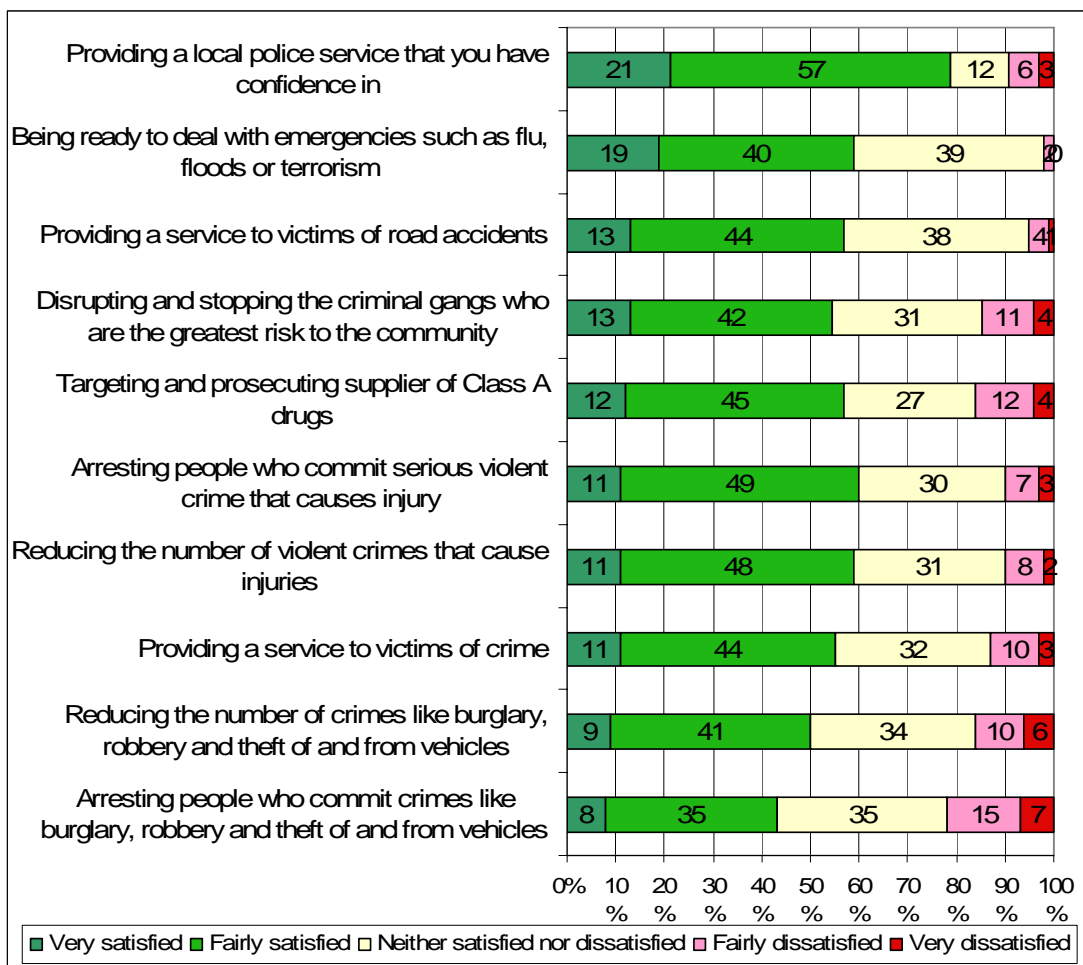
More residents are satisfied than dissatisfied in all priority areas. Residents give the highest satisfaction rating to 'providing a local police service that you have confidence in' (65%) followed by 'the service that the police provides to victims of road accidents' (62%) and 'being ready to deal with emergencies such as flu, floods or terrorism' (55%). On the other hand, residents are least satisfied with 'arresting people who commit burglaries, robberies and vehicle crime' (42%), 'reducing the number of burglaries, robberies and vehicle crime' (48%), 'targeting and prosecuting suppliers of Class A drugs' (50%) and

‘disrupting and stopping criminal gangs who are the greatest risk to the community.’

More stakeholders are satisfied with priority areas than residents. The results show that they are also most satisfied with ‘providing a local police service that you have confidence in’ (78%) and least satisfied with ‘arresting people who commit crimes like burglary, robbery and theft of and from vehicles’ (43%).

Graph six: satisfaction (stakeholders)

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied, are you with the way that Surrey Police are currently performing in the following areas? **(Excludes don't know / have not used this service and not answered)**

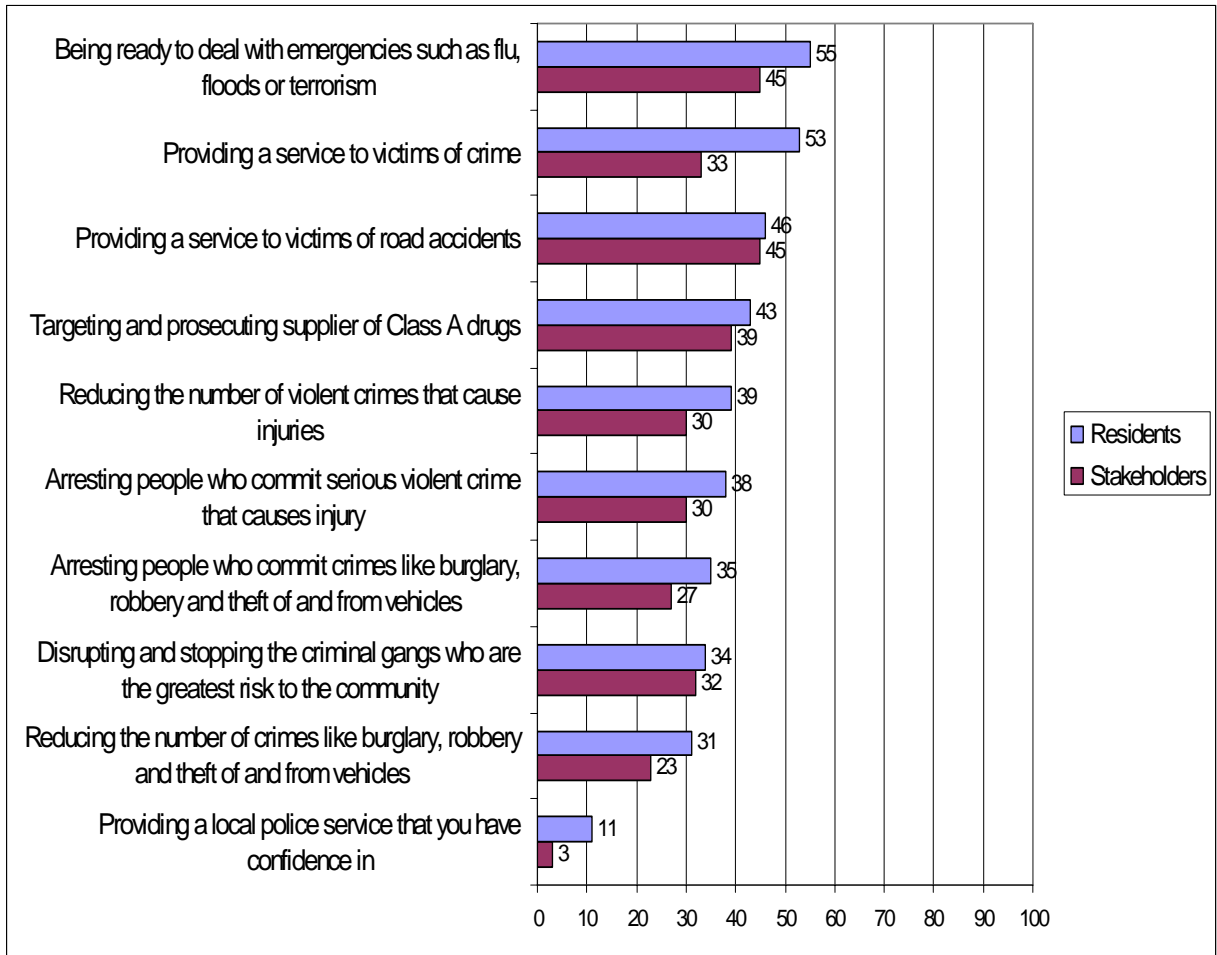


Respondents who cannot provide an answer

A high number of respondents stated that they did not now how satisfied they were with priority areas or that they had not used the service. These results are illustrated in graph seven.

Graph seven: satisfaction (stakeholders)

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied, are you with the way that Surrey Police are currently performing in the following areas? (**Only shows those who answered don't know / have not used this service**)



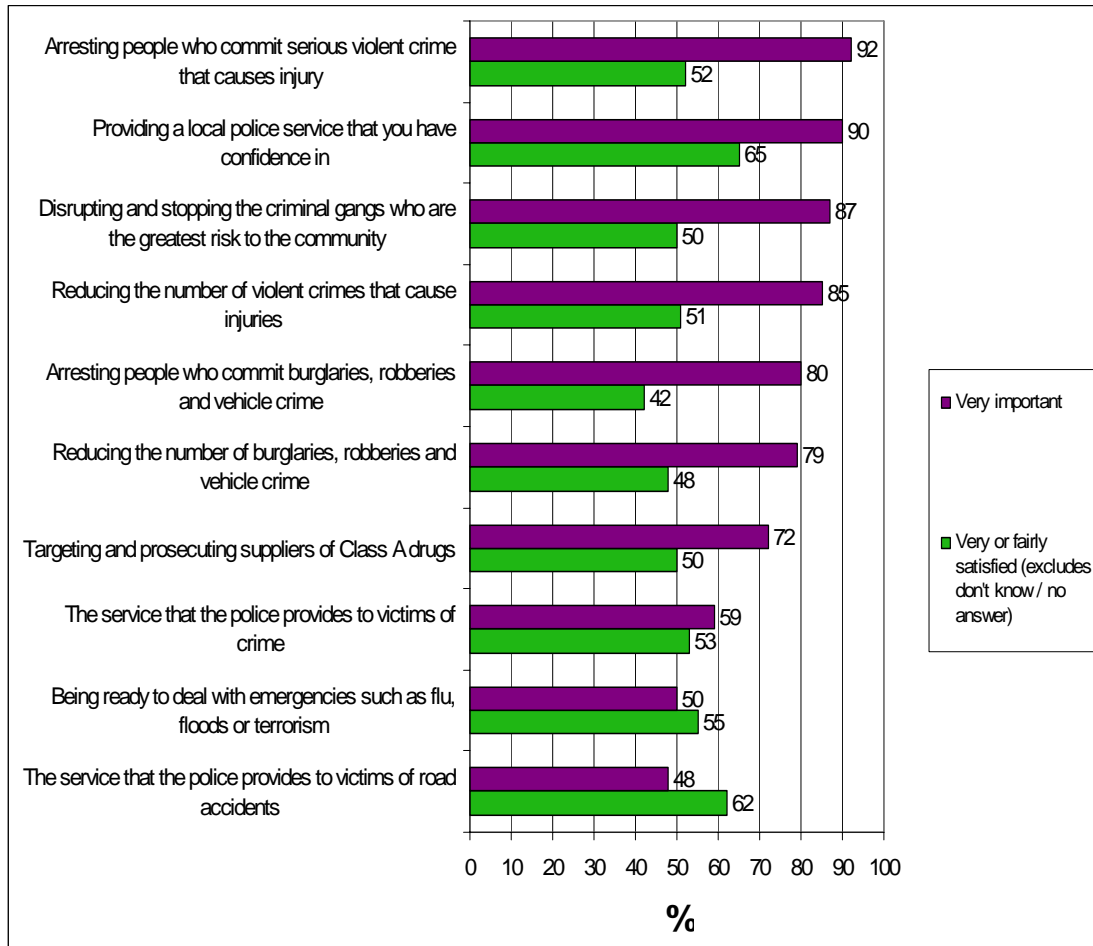
SPA may expect that high numbers of respondents would provide this answer on some areas. However, it is worth questioning whether the Authority is content that residents cannot state how satisfied they are with others. As these are priority areas for Surrey Police, it is likely that many of them have an impact on how confident residents are in Surrey Police. For example, the Authority may wish to see more residents able to state that they are satisfied with how Surrey Police are performing in targeting and prosecuting suppliers of Class A drugs. It should be noted that the large majority of respondents were able to state how satisfied they were with ‘providing a local police service that you have confidence in.’

Importance compared to satisfaction

The survey returned further interesting results when it compares how important priorities are to residents against how satisfied they are with these priorities. The results of this analysis can be found in graphs seven and eight.

Graph seven: importance vs. satisfaction (residents)

The following list includes a list of things that we think are important for policing in Surrey. Please have a look at the list below and let us know how important, if at all, they are to you. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied, are you with the way that Surrey Police are currently performing in the following areas? **(Excludes don't know / have not used this service and not answered)**

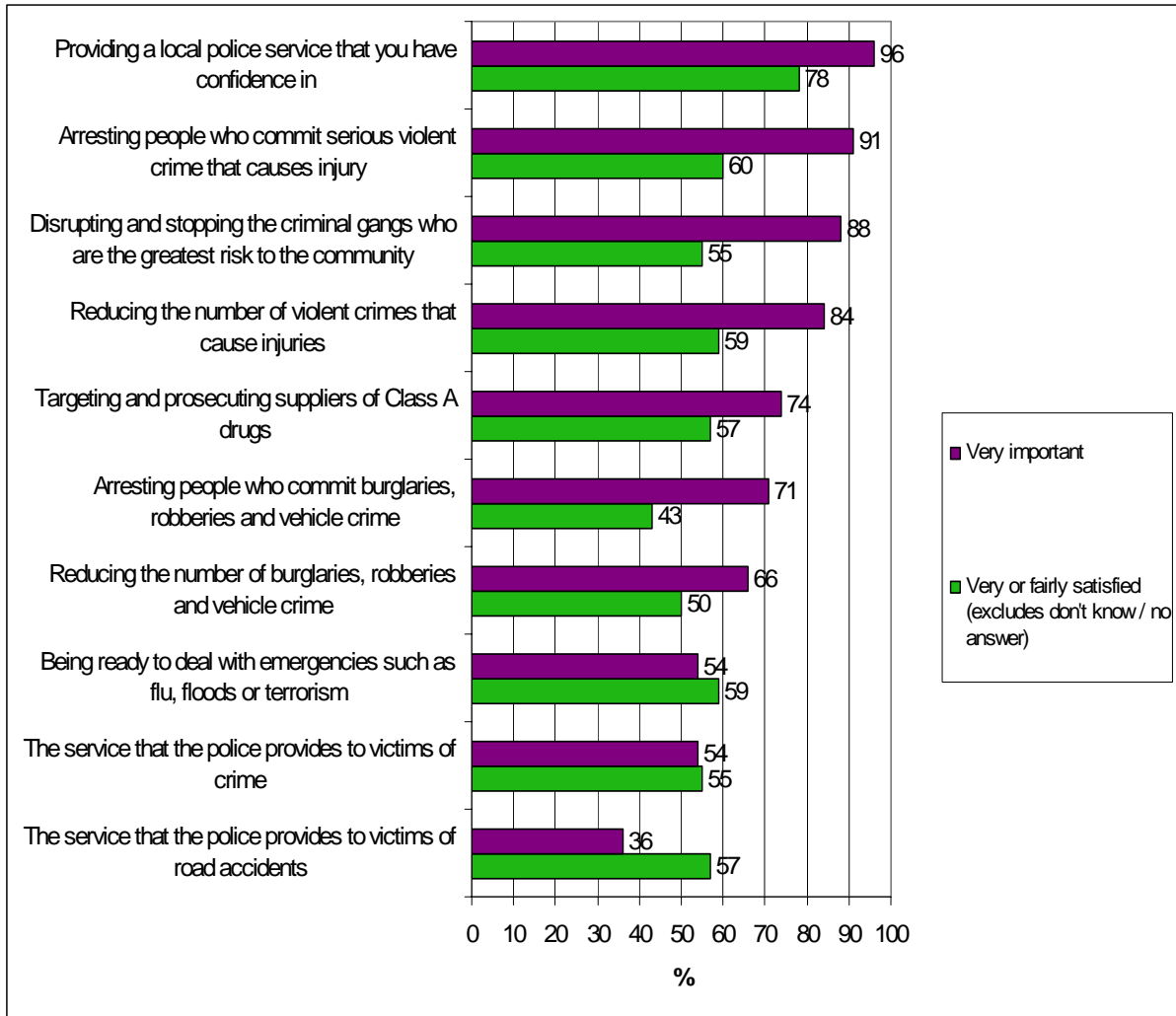


The graphs show a general pattern that the more important a priority is, the less satisfied residents are with how Surrey Police are performing. For example, 40% fewer residents are satisfied with the way Surrey Police arrest people who commit service violent crime than those who think that it's very important. On the other hand, only 48% of respondents think that the service that the police provide to victims of road accidents is very important whereas 62% residents are satisfied with the way that Surrey Police perform in this area.

The results of the stakeholder survey show a similar pattern. The results of this survey do not indicate why this is the case. It may be that residents have lower expectations of performance in areas that are less important to them. However, it may also indicate that Surrey Police should reconsider how they distribute resources over these priority areas.

Graph eight: importance vs. satisfaction (stakeholders)

The following list includes a list of things that we think are important for policing in Surrey. Please have a look at the list below and let us know how important, if at all, they are to you. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied, are you with the way that Surrey Police are currently performing in the following areas? **(Excludes don't know / have not used this service and not answered)**

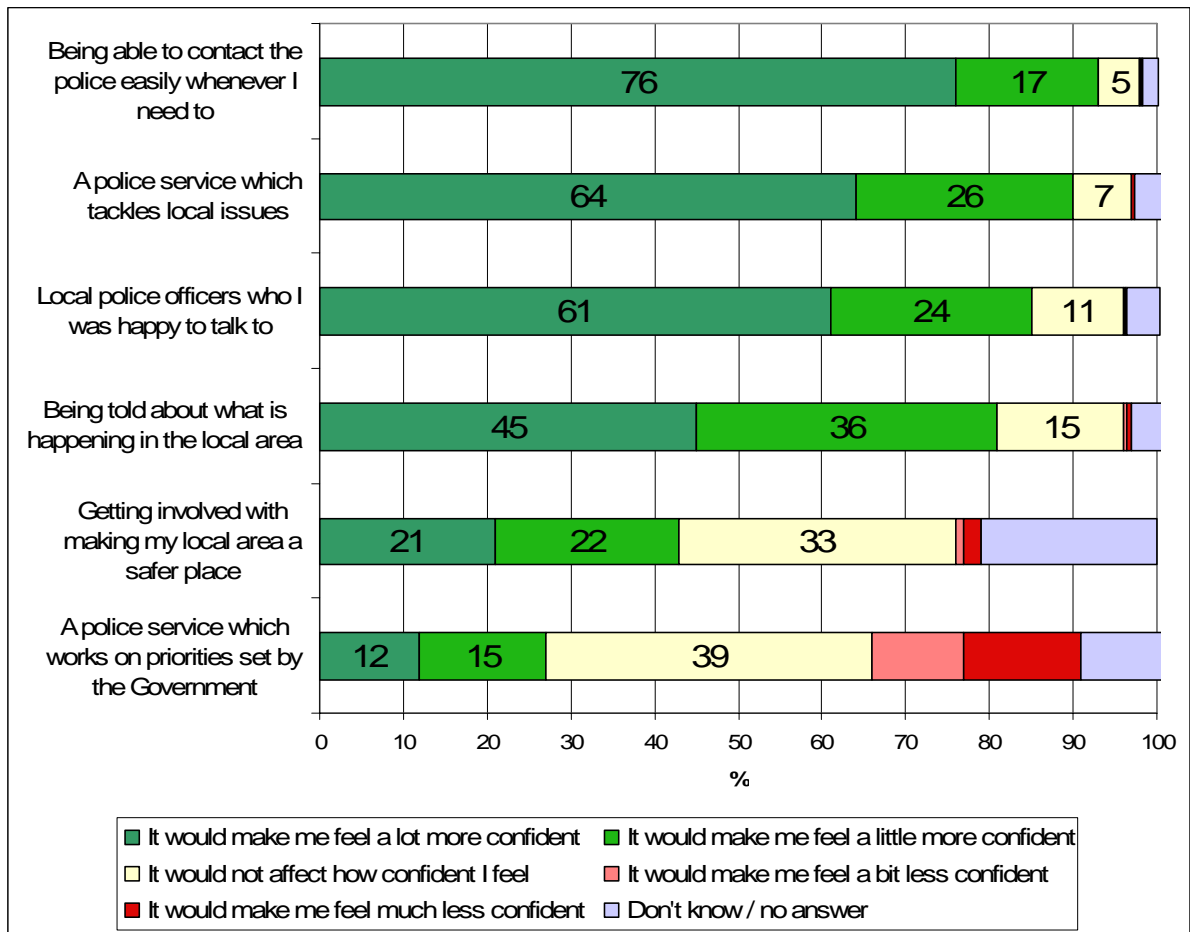


Improving confidence

The consultation considered whether Surrey Police are doing the right things to improve confidence. It asked respondents how different actions from the Local Policing Plan would affect their confidence. It also questioned respondents on how working on priorities set by the Government would affect their confidence. The results are illustrated in graphs nine and ten.

Graph nine: actions to improve confidence (residents)

How much, if at all, would the following things improve your confidence in Surrey Police?



Proving a local police service that residents have confidence in is an important priority for respondents and an area that returns high satisfaction ratings.

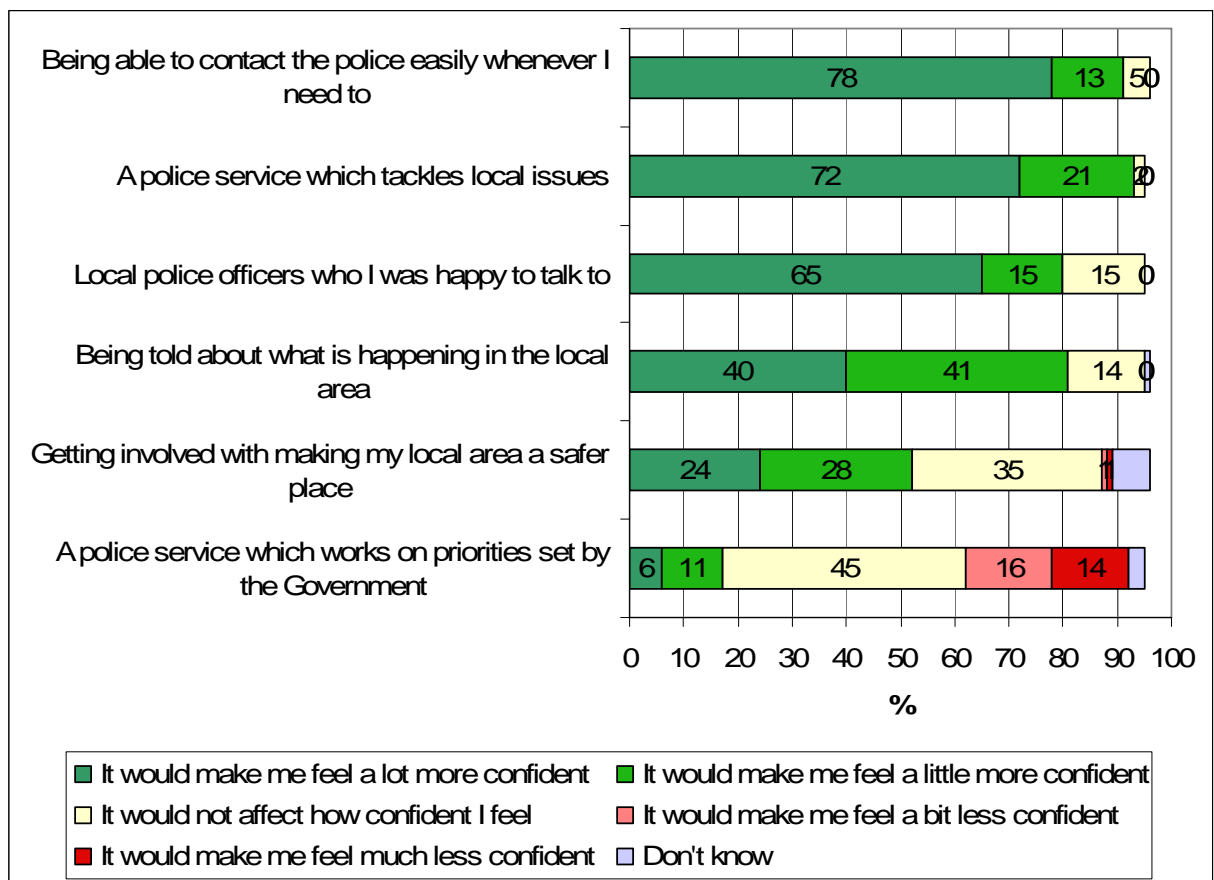
The results show that respondents feel that most of the actions included in the Local Policing Plan would improve their confidence in Surrey Police. There are only two areas where fewer than half of residents felt that it would make them feel more confident – ‘getting involved with making my local area a safer place’ and ‘a police service which works on priorities set by the Government’. These results can be expected as national research has shown that few people want to get involved in making their local area a safer

place. Furthermore, the results vindicate the 'Surrey Public First' agenda and a focus on local issues rather than Government priorities.

Stakeholders returned very similar results to residents, with more respondents stating that getting involved in making their area a safer place would make them feel more confident. This can be explained as many member of the stakeholder database already do so.

Graph ten: actions to improve confidence (stakeholders)

How much, if at all, would the following things improve your confidence in Surrey Police?



Finance

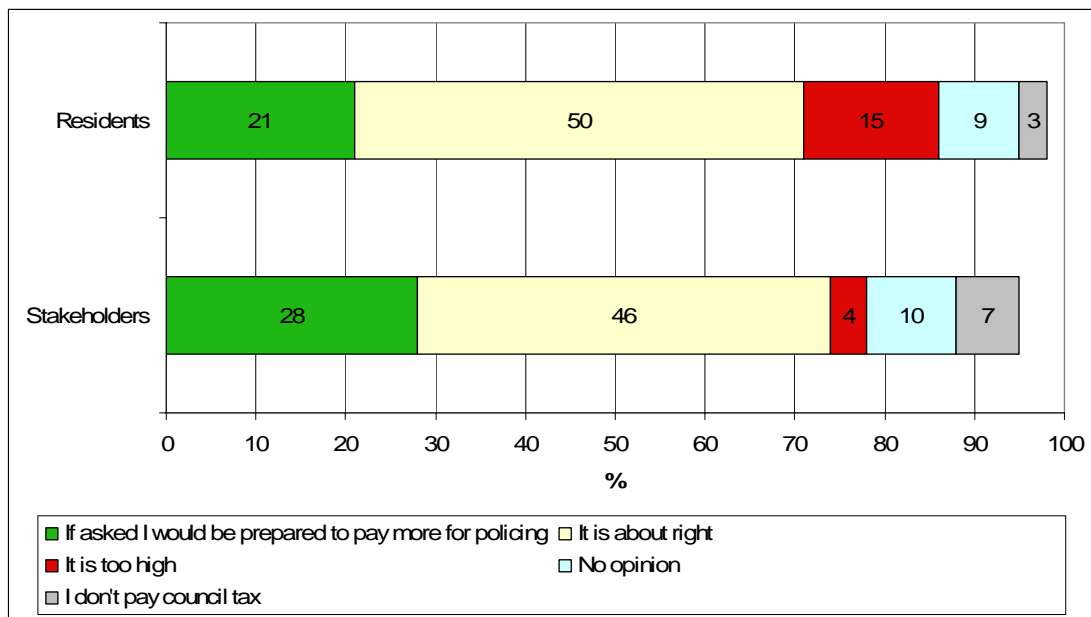
The consultation aimed to find out the views of residents and stakeholders on the amount that they pay for policing from council tax and the value for money that they receive from Surrey Police.

Council tax

The survey told respondents that the average house has to pay £187 each year for policing and asked respondents how they felt about the amount they pay from their council tax. Graphs 11 and illustrate the response.

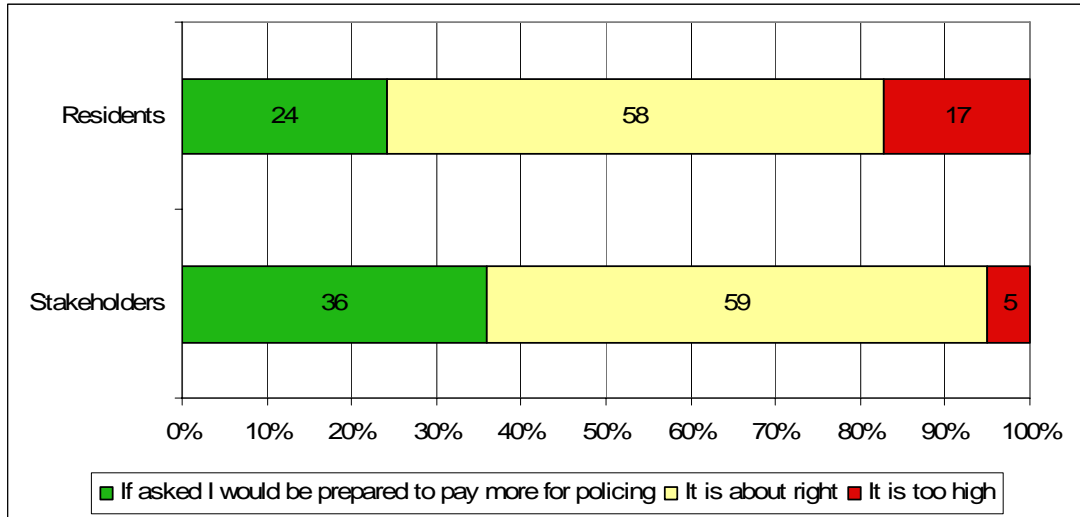
Graph 11: council tax paid (residents and stakeholders)

In order to pay for the priorities that are listed above, an average house (Band D) has to pay £187 each year for policing. Which statement best describes how you feel about the amount you pay for policing services in Surrey from your council tax? (Includes 'no opinion' and 'I don't pay council tax, does not show not answered')



Graph 12: council tax paid (residents and stakeholders)

In order to pay for the priorities that are listed above, an average house (Band D) has to pay £187 each year for policing. Which statement best describes how you feel about the amount you pay for policing services in Surrey from your council tax? (Excludes 'no opinion', 'I don't pay council tax' and not answered)



The most popular response was that the amount paid is about right and smaller proportions were either prepared to pay more or felt that the amount was too much. More stakeholders than residents were prepared to pay more for policing. It is worth noting that about one in ten respondents do not have an opinion on the amount that they pay for policing. The results indicate that keeping council tax at about the same level would be the most popular option.

Value for money

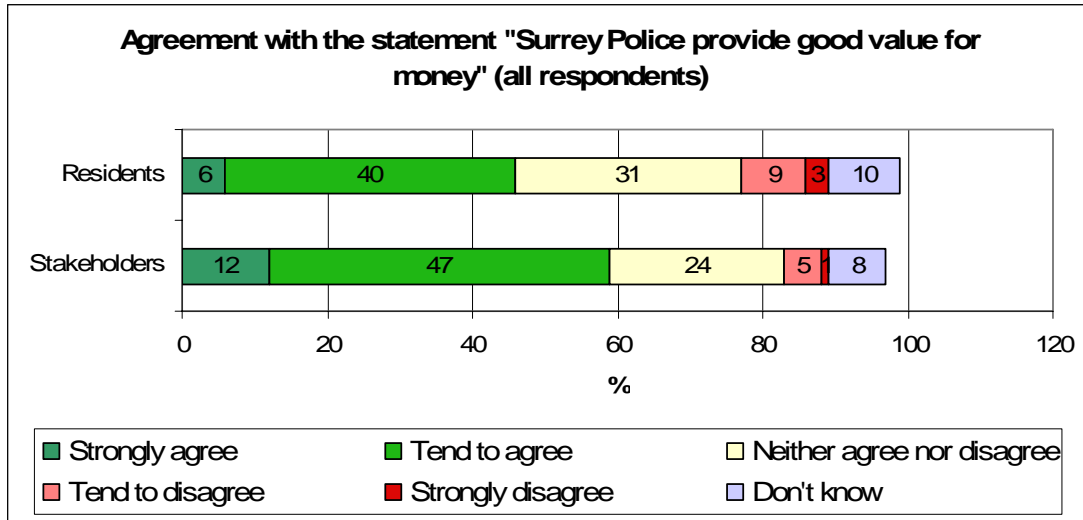
The survey also checked whether respondents felt that Surrey Police provide good value for money. The results are illustrated in graph 13.

About one in ten respondents were not able to answer the question and just under a third of residents and a quarter of stakeholders stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. However, more respondents agreed with the statement than disagreed with it and more respondents stated that they agreed that gave any other answer. Stakeholders were more likely to state that they agreed than residents.

Fewer than a half of respondents agreed that Surrey Police provide good value for money. This is an important indicator of public opinion and it may be an area that SPA and Surrey Police try to improve in the future.

Graph 13: value for money (residents and stakeholders)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Surrey Police provide good value for money." (does not show not answered)



Conclusion

The survey produced many interesting findings for SPA. It found that current priorities are still important to residents, however there are additional areas like motoring offences which are a priority and have not been included.

Overall, more respondents are satisfied than dissatisfied with the way that Surrey Police is performing in priority areas. However, many of the most important priorities returned lower satisfaction results than the priorities which are less important to respondents. Furthermore, many respondents are not able to give an opinion on how satisfied they feel. Respondents like this can be influenced and become easily dissatisfied; Surrey Police need to convince these residents to become satisfied in order to keep up good confidence ratings.

Surrey Police are focussing on the right actions to improve confidence and this is reflected in the high satisfaction ratings for this area. Surrey Police should continue this work.

Finally, residents are broadly happy with the amount of money that they pay for policing. Few feel that it is too much or disagree with the statement that Surrey Police provide good value for money. The most popular option will be for SPA to keep council tax at about current rates.

SPA has raised public expectations by consulting about its priorities. It has a duty and an expectation to use the results of this consultation to inform the Local Policing Plan. SPA should also feed back how it used the results of this consultation to residents and stakeholders, especially those who took part.