

The Citizens' Panel

Newsletter

June 2010



Hello everyone and welcome to the June 2010 edition of the Surrey Police Authority Citizens' Panel Newsletter. Can we first begin with an apology for the delay with this newsletter, which will update you on what's happening with the results of our surveys on young people, police priorities and changes to Surrey Police.

As you will have seen in recent months, major plans for change to Surrey Police have been put forward and our efforts have been focused on getting the consultation for that underway as quickly as possible so that your views can feed into the process from the beginning. This meant that we had to delay this newsletter to focus on getting a questionnaire ready and off to print as quickly as we could, then analysing the data and reporting it back to the Authority for their consideration. We were then further delayed by the General Election, which brings restrictions on communications from public sector bodies.

The next thing we'd like to say is thanks to all of you for taking part in our surveys over the last year. We have experienced fantastic response rates every time, in total generating more than 7,000 responses. This is more information on public views than the Authority has ever been able to generate before. None of this would have been possible without you and we are very grateful.

Moving on, this newsletter will update you on three of our surveys. In summer 2009 we asked you a range of questions about young people, crime and policing in Surrey. In autumn/winter 2009, we asked about your priorities for policing for the year ahead. Most recently, we asked you about the planned changes to Surrey Police. There's a lot to get through and you can find out some of the key things we learned and what is being done about them in the pages that follow. You can find more detailed reports into the findings on the Citizens' Panel page on our website www.surreypa.gov.uk/citizenspanel.asp. Alternatively, if you would like these reports in hard copy, please contact our office using the contact details below.

Looking to the year ahead, we are now finalising the first survey for this year and it will be with you in the next few weeks.

We are also planning to 'refresh' the Panel by removing some people who have not completed any surveys for us during the year and recruiting new participants to fill these places. If you know anyone who would like to take part in the Panel, please contact us and we can post recruitment questionnaires out to them.

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Young people and Surrey Police

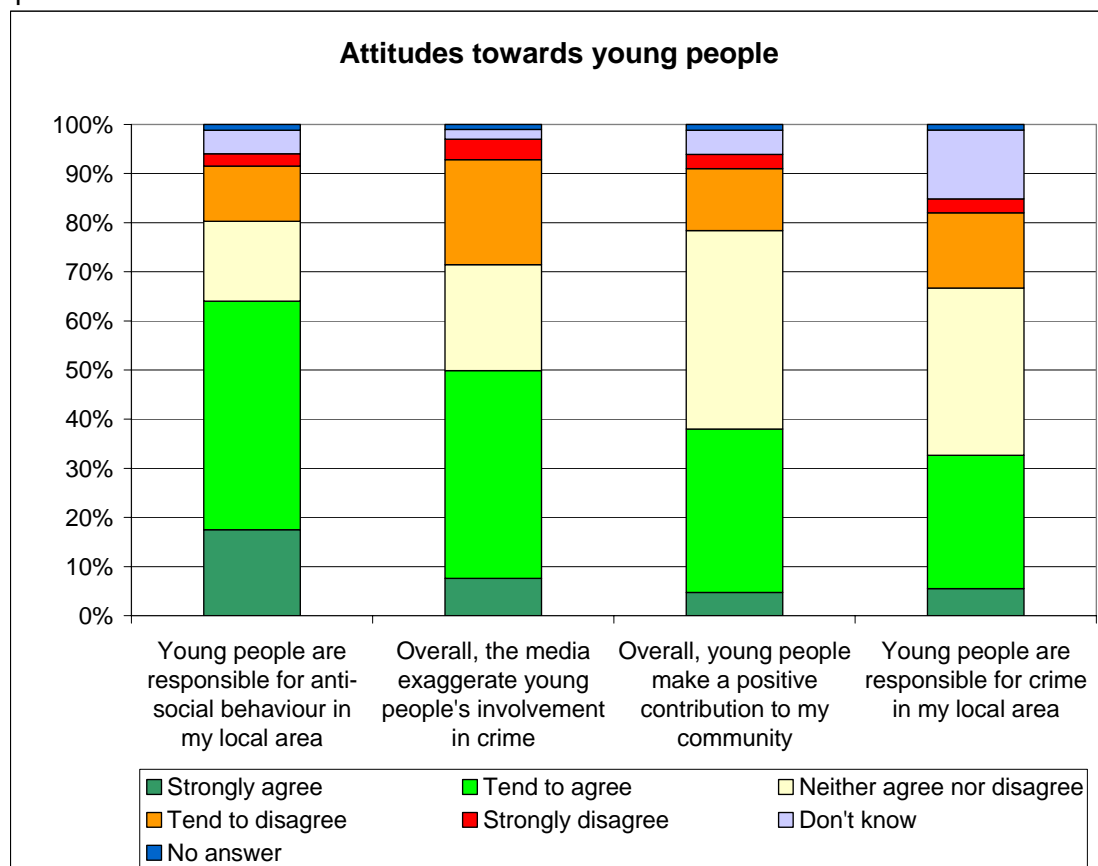
Why did we ask these questions?

The relationship between young people and crime/antisocial behaviour is frequently in the news. We knew from surveys conducted before this Panel was established that it was a subject that was very much on the minds of Surrey residents too. Surveys conducted by Surrey Police in 2008 showed that around a third of respondents believed that young people hanging around on the streets were a problem.

This was something we had never explored in depth with local people and we wanted to find out more about how Surrey residents felt about young people generally, and young people in their area. By doing so, the Police Authority could identify the key issues and ask Surrey Police to look at how to tackle them.

What did we find out?

We began by asking what you thought about the involvement of young people in anti-social behaviour and crime. The table below shows how you responded to this question:



Most people (64%) agreed that the anti-social behaviour in their area was caused by young people. However, only 32.7% felt that young people were responsible for crime in their local area.

49.9% of respondents felt that young people's involvement in crime was exaggerated by the media. 38% felt that young people make a positive contribution to their communities.

The perception gap

We went on to ask about your perceptions of young people's involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour in the country as a whole, in Surrey, and also in your local neighbourhood. What we found out by comparing these results was extremely interesting:

Considered to be a very or fairly big problem in the United Kingdom

Young people committing violence (eg knife crime) – 87%

Young people committing anti-social behaviour – 85%

Young people committing other serious crime (eg theft) – 70%

Considered to be a very or fairly big problem in Surrey

Young people committing violence (eg knife crime) – 26%

Young people committing anti-social behaviour – 63%

Young people committing other serious crime (eg theft) – 35.96%

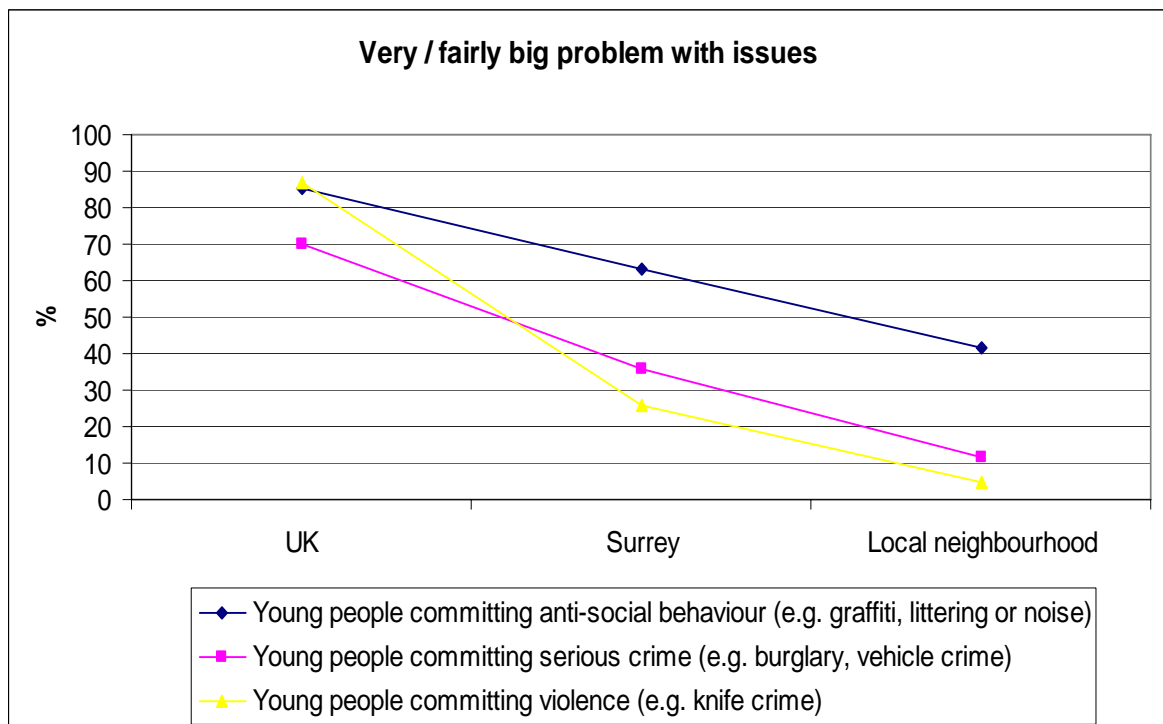
Considered to be a very or fairly big problem in your local neighbourhood

Young people committing violence (eg knife crime) – 5%

Young people committing anti-social behaviour – 41%

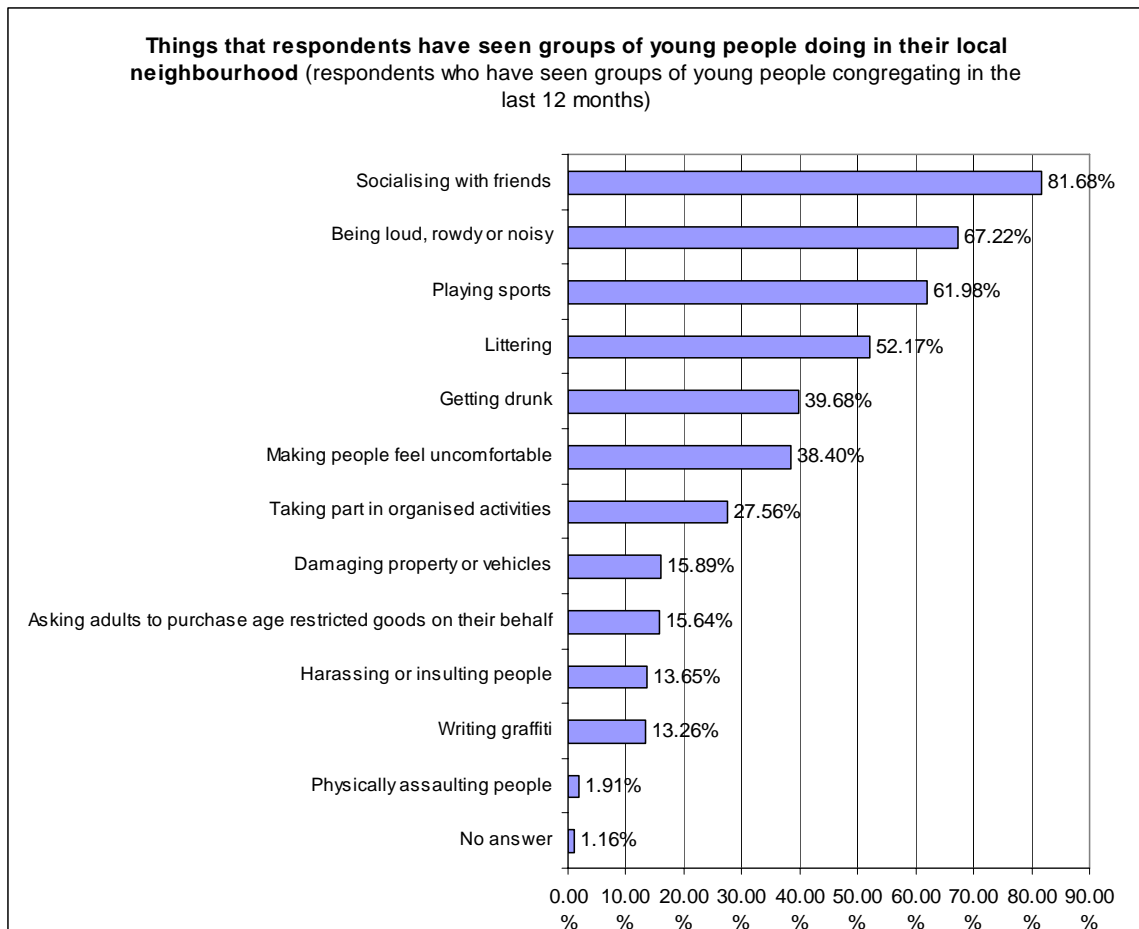
Young people committing other serious crime (e.g. theft) – 12%

The table below illustrates the findings. The closer to home we get, the lower the perception of young people committing crime or antisocial behaviour:



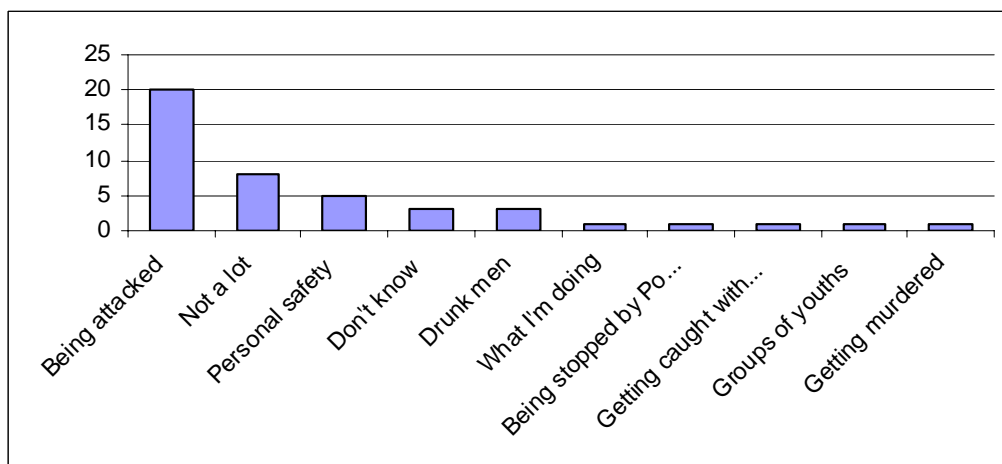
What do young people do?

We asked those of you who had seen groups of young people congregating in your area in the last year exactly what you had seen them doing:



What do young people think?

Surrey Police conducted face-to-face research in the summer of 2009 with young people in Woking. They were asked what concerned them:



Clearly young people have concerns of their own about serious crime and antisocial behaviour. When asked what could be done differently to improve Surrey Police, the biggest suggestion was for more police officers. When asked what was most

important to them, responses included 'more police outside', 'make us feel safer', 'more patrols', 'stop attacks against us' and 'keep people off the streets'.

What are Surrey Police going to do with this information?

The big question! Surrey Police Authority put these research findings to Surrey Police late last year. In particular, we talked to the team of officers and staff responsible for Operation QUAKE, which is the heading for a series of operations run by Surrey Police to tackle priority issues in our communities. There have been four QUAKE campaigns to date:

QUAKE 1 – In a week of action in the North of the county, Surrey Police canvassed residents' opinions and set about tackling their concerns by mounting high-visibility patrols and executing warrants in the area. Speeding, criminal damage, graffiti and antisocial behaviour were amongst the priorities addressed.

QUAKE 2 – two days of multi-agency action to tackle antisocial driving in Ashford North and Stanwell during May 2009. In the space of the two days, 108 vehicles were stopped, 23 drivers received warnings, 4 arrests were made, 47 speeding motorists were detected, 25 motorists were fined, 12 vehicles were seized and 12 vehicles were found not to be roadworthy. Stolen property was also recovered.

QUAKE 3 – working with local councils, the fire service and trading standards, Surrey Police targeted antisocial behaviour 'hotspots' and reassured elderly and vulnerable residents during Halloween and Bonfire Night 2009.

QUAKE 4 – in partnership with trading standards, Surrey Police cracked down on alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour over the Christmas period in 2009 by carrying out high-visibility patrols and sending Christmas cards with a message of warning to repeat offenders and licensed premises identified as having the potential to fuel antisocial behaviour by selling either to underage drinkers or those already drunk.

Operation **QUAKE 5** will be based around what we have found out from this research. This initiative will not only focus on the enforcement aspect of crime and antisocial behaviour, but will also seek to deter young people from entering the criminal justice system. By doing so, we hope to improve public confidence, reduce fear of young people and increase awareness of the positive activities undertaken by young people in Surrey. It will concentrate on the following priority areas identified by Surrey Police and its partner agencies: Merstham; Stanwell and Ashford North; Westborough; Maybury and Sheerwater; and the Old Dean.

Partners involved will include: Surrey County Council, Surrey Fire and Rescue, Surrey Trading Standards, the Youth Justice Service, Youth Services, Youth Focus (voluntary youth services), Borough & District Councils.

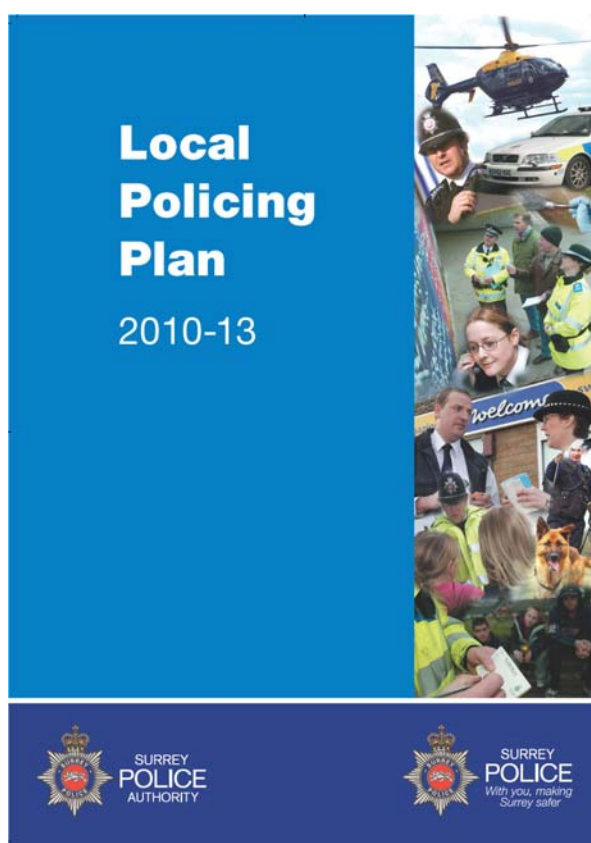
At the time of writing, QUAKE 5 is beginning to get underway. We will be sure to update you all with more information about the campaign and its results in future newsletters.

We take the issues of anti-social behaviour, theft and violent crime in our communities very seriously. Over the next few pages, you can see how this is reflected in our planning for this year.

Strategic Priorities for Surrey Police

Why do we ask these questions?

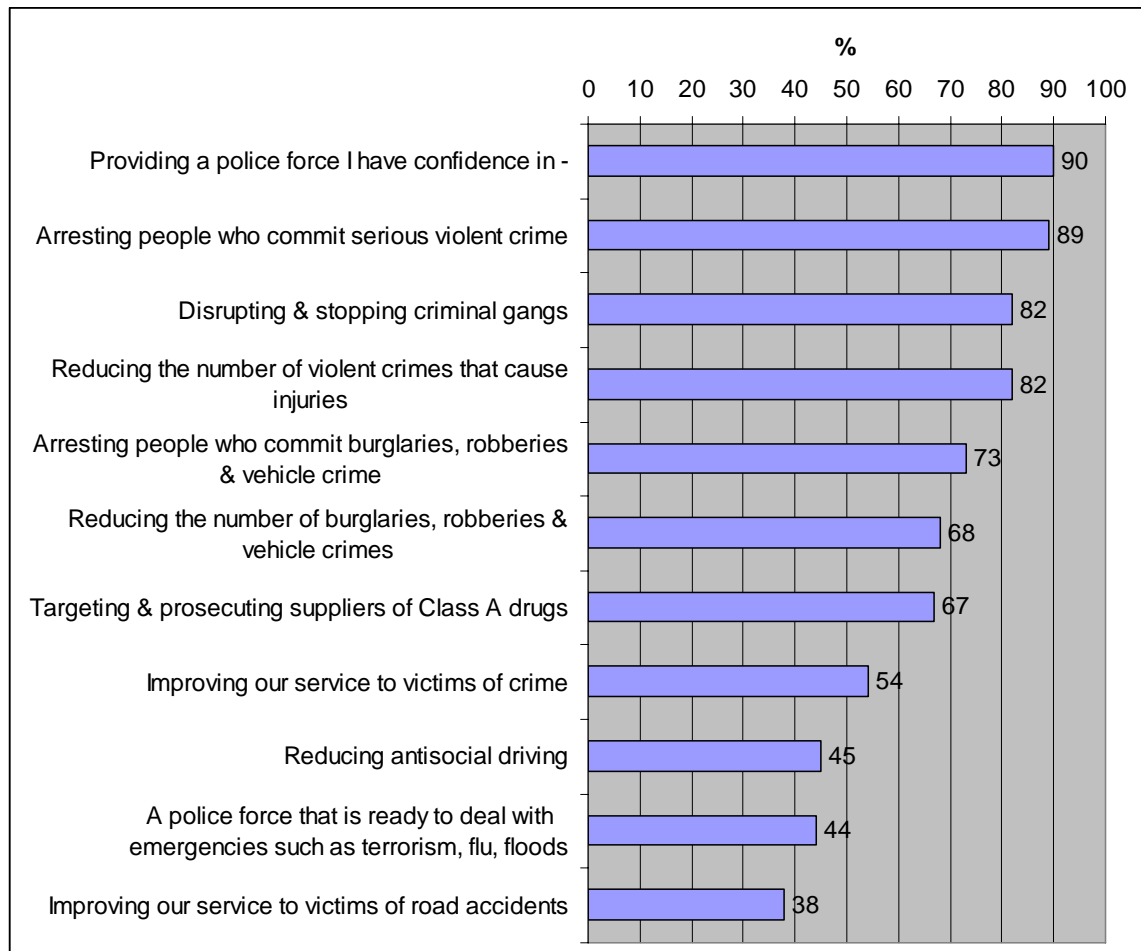
Police Authorities set the strategy - known as a **Local Policing Plan** - which their Force must work towards. We set these plans to cover a three-year period, and reassess it every year to make sure that we remain on the right track. There are a number of things which the Police Authority must take into account when devising this plan – the major policing issues and criminal threats facing the county, the budget available to provide policing for the year, the policies of the current government and, above all, the views of residents about what they would like to see from their local Force.



The survey you took part in formed part of our research for Surrey's Local Policing Plan. As well as surveying you, we ran a survey for the organisations that we work with, such as local councils and schools; and we conducted specialised consultations with people from sections of the community who are less likely to take part in our wider surveys, including school-aged young people, lesbian and gay people and people from ethnic minorities.

Your biggest priorities

We set out a list of the existing key priorities set out in the previous year's Local Policing Plan. We also added in antisocial driving, which was identified by our surveys last year as a missing priority for local residents. The following table shows the percentage of respondents who rated each priority as 'very important'.



We also provided space for you to fill in any priorities that you felt were missing from the list. Needless to say, we had many suggestions – the most common being antisocial behaviour (18%) and more police on the beat (12%). The issue of antisocial behaviour echoes what we found in our survey about young people that this is a major issue that should be included in the Local Policing Plan.

On the basis of what we learned, and taking into account the advice of the Chief Constable, the Police Authority has set the following headline measures for this year's Local Policing Plan:

	Delivered by Surrey Police	Delivered with our Partners
<i>Confidence and Satisfaction</i>		
1	Keep public confidence in Surrey Police high	
2		Ensure people are confident that Surrey Police and local councils can deal with crime and anti-social behaviour in their area (with local councils)
3	Provide a good service to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour	
<i>Safety</i>		
4	Working with other forces to stop criminal gangs from operating across the region and impacting on Surrey	
5		Arrest people who sell illegal drugs (with the CPS)
6	Keep levels of serious crime in Surrey low	
7		Catch people who commit serious crimes like burglary, car theft, mugging, serious violence, rape and sexual abuse (with the CPS)
<i>People and Resources</i>		
8	Save money by being more efficient	
9	Encourage the best police officers and police staff to stay working for Surrey Police	

As you can see, these priorities focus on those identified as most important by you. They are now the most important things that Surrey Police must do this year.

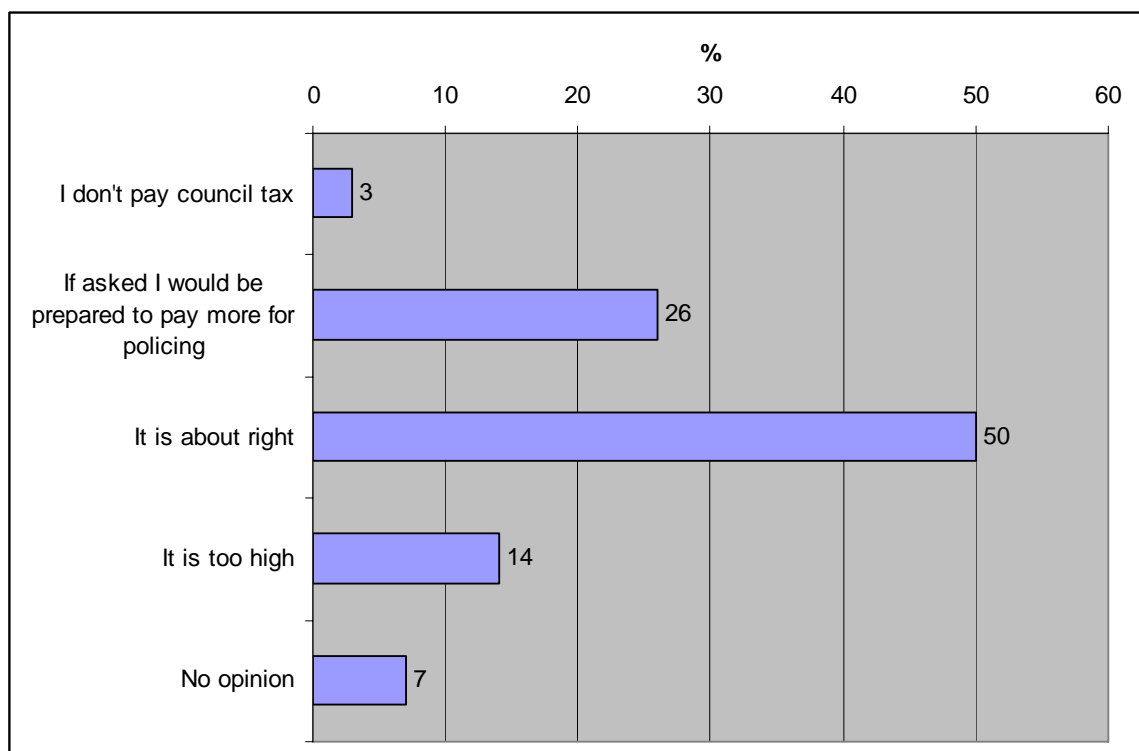
As you will be aware, plans are in place to recruit up to 200 more constables for Surrey Police. As this means the Chief Constable will have more resources at his disposal, the Authority has set challenging targets in support of these priorities. These include:

- Public confidence in Surrey Police to remain at or above 80%
- Confidence in the way Surrey Police works with partners to tackle antisocial behaviour to reach 63.9% from its current level of 58.6% by 2013
- Victim satisfaction with Surrey Police's response to serious crime and antisocial behaviour to increase to 80% by 2013
- To disrupt or dismantle more criminal gangs each year, reaching a target of 17 in 2013 (From a 2009/10 target of 10)
- To arrest more Class-A drug dealers each year, reaching a target of 210 for 2013 (from a 2009/10 target of 135)
- To achieve a 15% reduction in serious violent and acquisitive crime by 2013
- To improve detection rates for serious crimes to 21.3% by 2013

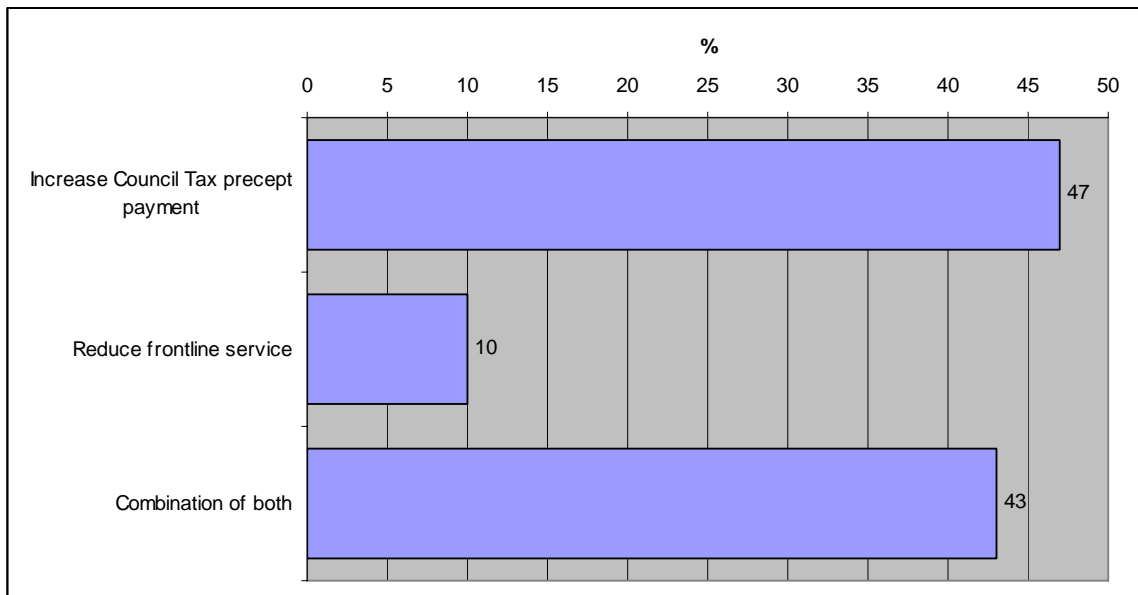
Paying for Policing

Police forces have two main sources of funding – a grant from the Government and a share of local council tax. Whilst Government funding for police nationally has increased significantly over the last decade, the complicated formula used to allocate that money has meant that some areas have benefited a great deal whilst others have received less. Surrey receives one of the lowest levels of grant funding from the Government (the equivalent of £93 per person in 2009, against a national average of £150 per person). Indeed, we received more funding per person in 1996 than we do today. This means we are more reliant on our share of the council tax than other forces as it is our only means of making up what we do not receive in Government grant.

We wanted to know how you felt about the amount of council tax you pay for policing:



We also asked what you felt we should do if faced with a decision between cutting frontline services and increasing the amount of council tax we raise. Unfortunately this is a decision the Authority has had to face a number of times in recent years. This is how you would have made the decision:



This year, Surrey Police Authority set an increase in its share of Council tax of 2.5%, the lowest increase since the Authority was established in 1996.

Surrey Police Authority continues to argue that local people are expected to provide too much for their police force through Council Tax. We continue to press for a review of the way in which Government police grant is divided up to get a fairer deal for Surrey that would reduce what we need to raise from you.

Changes to Surrey Police

The financial pressures facing the force have, over recent years, forced us into a series of difficult and unwanted cuts. Further cuts in the years ahead were inevitable and likely to go further, given the impact that reducing the national budget deficit is sure to have on the amount of money available to pay for public services like policing.

In late 2009 - a year which saw more than 140 jobs lost at Surrey Police - the Authority asked the Chief Constable to look for ways – no matter how radical – by which Surrey Police could move away from the scenario of annual ‘salami-slicing’ cuts, protect the front line services that people want and put itself on a better financial footing for an uncertain future. After careful consideration, he put forward a package of measures:

- Reduce the number of senior police officers at the force by 50 posts
- Reorganise the force on the basis of its main functions, rather than by geographical divisions
- Replace some of the Force’s most expensive and least used stations and buildings with more accessible and cost-effective alternatives

The money released by these changes would allow the Force to:

- Close the ‘budget gap’ – the £25m difference between the amount of money that it would cost to police Surrey for the next three years and the amount of money available to us to do so.
- Base policing teams in council offices to make it easier to work with councils to tackle anti-social behaviour, an often complex issue that requires close working between police and councils
- Halt a planned reduction of 96 police constables in 2010/11
- Recruit up to 200 additional police constables by 2012

The Police Authority’s responsibility is for the efficient and effective running of the Force, and gave its in-principle support to the overall suggestion, with a few caveats.

The Chief Constable agreed that no police station should be closed unless better alternatives can be provided. Moreover, Surrey Police have committed to undertake a comprehensive process of briefing and consultation with the public and partners in Boroughs & Districts to discuss better and more practical alternatives for each community before any of the police stations affected by these plans can be replaced.

The survey of the Police Authority’s Citizen’s Panel was an initial step in this process, helping us to gain a general understanding of the public view of the changes being put forward and point the Force in the right direction in its planning for potential new police locations. Surrey Police is now beginning its consultations with communities at meetings and events around the county. If you would like to take part, you can find details about the consultations happening in your area by visiting Surrey Police’s website www.surrey.police.uk or by calling their non-emergency line on 0845 125 22 22.

Do people support changes to Police buildings to protect the front line?

We knew that the subject of police stations was an emotive one for many, just as the number of police officers is. We had never asked about the relationship between the two however. We wanted to know if residents would support changes to the police estate if it would mean more officers on the beat. We asked if you would support relocating the part of police stations open to the public - the front counters - to help provide more officers on the beat:

Front line policing is what matters most to me. I would support relocating front counters to provide more officers on the beat

Agree - 84.8%
Disagree - 5%
Don't Mind - 6.4%

We then asked about police stations as a whole – would you prefer to keep existing police stations even if it meant fewer front line officers or to protect front line strength even if it meant losing current police stations?:

Keeping my current local police station is what matters most to me, even if it means fewer police officers on the street

Agree - 18.8%
Disagree - 55.6%
Neither - 18.2%

The results show that, when asked to make this difficult decision, the majority of respondents choose to put front line officer numbers before keeping their current police stations.

Analysing the data in more detail, we found that respondents over the age of 65 – and particularly those over the age of 75 - were more likely to want to keep their existing police station:

Keeping my current local police station is what matters most to me, even if it means fewer police officers on the street

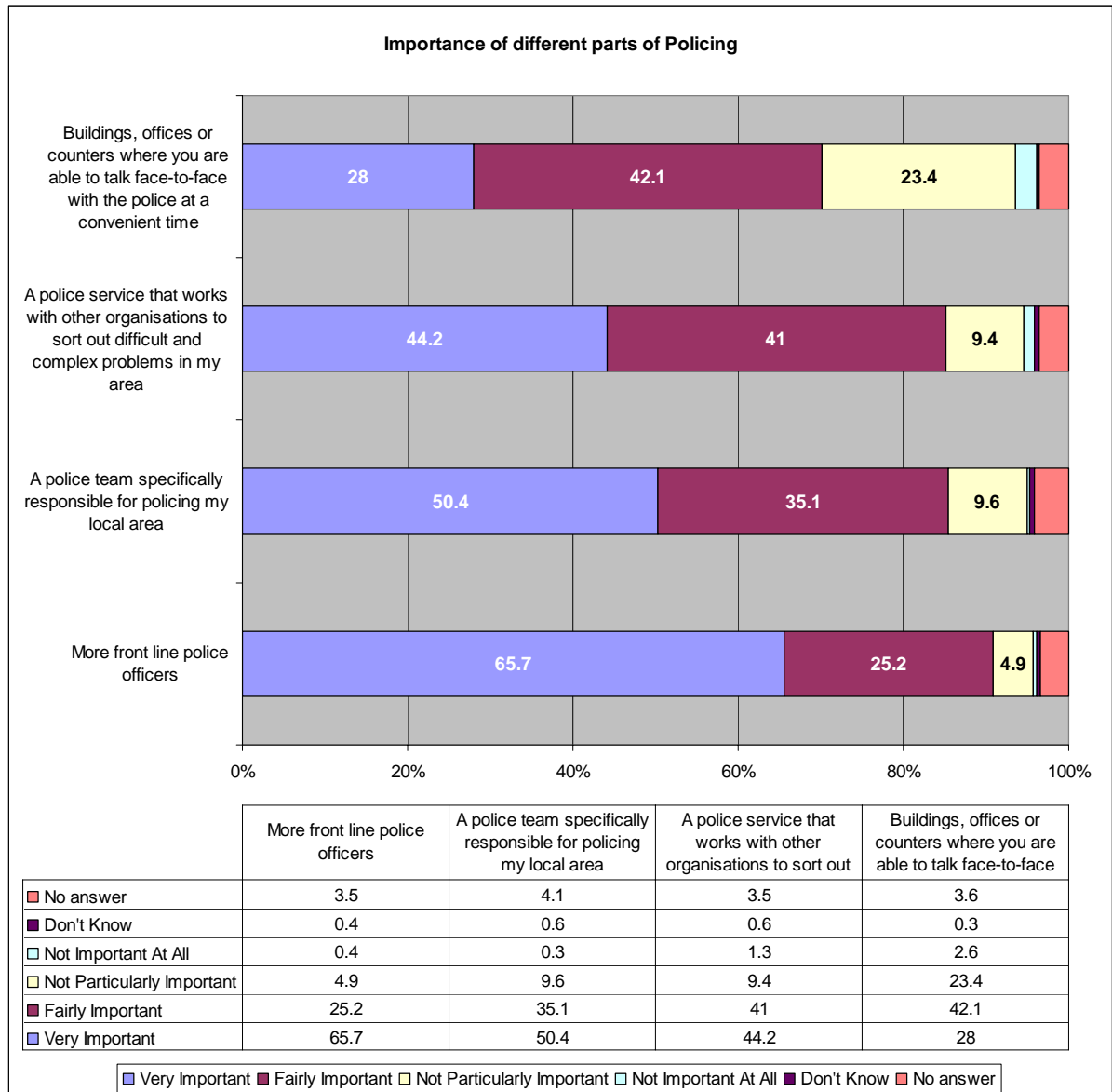
	17 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75+
Agree	18.09%	16.95%	17.68%	18.41%	27.73%	35.08%
Disagree	61.74%	66.17%	61.64%	63.05%	55.40%	37.90%

This is an important finding and shows that Surrey Police must make careful consideration of the views of older residents, particularly those over the age of 75, in any process of change.

Which parts of policing matter most to people?

We wanted to explore in more detail how people prioritised the different parts of the police service being considered in the changes, and which elements mattered most to you.

The chart below shows how you responded:



As you can see, you felt that every one of the areas was important. When we look at the percentage of 'Very Important' responses (in blue), it is clear that more front line officers is the most important element.

Working with partners

This is an area of our work that continues to grow in importance. From the Authority's perspective, working with partners makes sense in helping us to deliver more effective and cost-effective services. We wanted to know what you think:

I expect Surrey Police to work with partners to...

Solve local problems

Agree - 93.3%
Disagree - 0.9%
Neither - 2.8%

Save money

Agree - 64%
Disagree - 8%
Neither - 23.7%

Make services easier for the public to access

Agree - 82.7%
Disagree - 2.6%
Neither - 11.2%

We agree with your view that Surrey Police must work with its partners in all of the ways mentioned. We will continue to work hard to help the police link in with other agencies in Surrey.

Ideas for new police locations

The survey asked for your opinions on some of the ideas put forward by the Force for possible new locations where you could speak face-to-face with the police and access the kinds of services currently available at the front counter of some police stations, such as handing in documents, reporting lost property and asking for help and advice.

Opinion varied – whilst support outweighed opposition for all the suggestions, many of you were ‘on the fence’ about the proposals. We have asked the force to look at how they can communicate what these potential new meeting places and stations might look like so that people get a better view of what is proposed and are more able to decide on which they like best.

A front counter based in council offices

Support – 42.8%
Oppose – 25.8%
Neither - 27.5%

A front counter based on the high street

Support - 64.1%
Oppose - 12.8%
Neither - 19.9%

Regular police surgeries in local halls

Support - 39%
Oppose - 14.9%
Neither - 40.6%

Regular police surgeries in shopping centres/supermarkets

Support - 40.3%
Oppose - 23.7%
Neither - 30.9%

Regular police surgeries in local libraries

Support - 38%
Oppose - 20.2%
Neither - 36.9%

The Force’s own consultation which focuses on the new police locations that will work best for each community is now underway. This is a great opportunity to influence the location of an important public service in our towns and villages and we would warmly encourage you to get involved with the meetings and consultations planned by the Force when they begin to help them make the decisions on where to base themselves in future.

Have your say on Surrey's health and social care with Surrey LINK

Surrey LINK (Local Involvement Network) is a consultation network of local people, organisations and groups from across the community that want to improve health and social care services. Their aim is to provide a stronger voice for the local people in the planning, design, commissioning and provision of all care services.

The Surrey LINK is inviting Surrey residents to share experiences and ideas on health and social care services at a Consultation Open day at Denbies English Vineyard, Dorking on Saturday 26th June. They have asked us to extend this invitation to Members of the Surrey Police Authority Citizens' Panel, which we are pleased to do.

Surrey LINK will use what they find out during the consultation event to feed back to health and social care providers, helping them to plan and deliver better services that reflect the wishes of Surrey residents.

The event agenda is outlined below:

10am	Tea and coffee on arrival
10.30am	Anne Milton MP, Minister for Public Health
11am	Launch of the Surrey LINK Annual report and achievements of the Surrey LINK
12pm	Sandwich lunch
1pm-3:30pm	Consultation with Surrey residents. Talks focusing on community care, mental health and stroke awareness amongst others.

There will also be an exhibition of stands from local health and social care organisations.

You are welcome to join Surrey LINK at the event for the whole day or part.

If you would like more information on the event and how you can take part, please contact Hilary Lombard on 0208 541 8966