



West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Town and Parish Council Survey

2023





Introduction

Since 2018 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has published an annual Town and Parish Council Survey. The survey is designed give Town and Parish Council's from Herefordshire, North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin the opportunity to share their views on key areas of local policing namely police visibility, contact and engagement and crime and antisocial behavioural issues. The responses help to inform the priorities of both the PCC and wider West Mercia police force, as well as highlighting what's working well, and where changes need to be made in order to consistently deliver an efficient and effective police service.

This year's survey ran from 22nd June 2023 to the 18th August 2023 and was the 6th annual town and parish council survey, published by the (PCC) for West Mercia. This report details the findings from the survey at a force and local policing area level. It also includes analysis of survey responses over the last five years to give a view of trends.

Executive Summary

182 completed responses were received this year which is the highest response rate since the survey's inception in 2018.

Local Policing

- The largest proportion of respondents (45%) believe the police are doing a fair job.
- 29% believe the police are doing a good/excellent job.
- 60% of councils believe that police visibility in their area was poor/very poor.
- 48% tend to agree or strongly agree that the police work well with them to address local crime issues, 24% disagreed.
- When asked if the council has confidence that the police to address crime issues raised over a third (39%) strongly agree or tend to agree.
- 42% of parish councils contact the police to raise concerns about crimes or incidents every 2-6 months.
- The majority of respondents (57%) rated the police response to crime and disorder issues or incidents raised by them as fair or good.



Contact and Engagement

- 80% of town parish councils say they have been contacted by the police to identify their priorities.
- 50% of those who had been contacted by the police to identify their priorities say that the police have acted upon the priorities they set out.
- 85% of respondents believed they saw no reduction in crime or increased feelings of safety following the launch of West Mercia Police's Local Policing Charter in 2021.
- 67% of town and parish councils believed that it was fairly or very easy to access local policing teams.
- The majority of respondents (58%) rated their contact with the police as good or fair.
- 93% of councils contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information or invite to meetings via email.
- Most councils (46%) contact the police every 2-6 months to discuss local issues, seek information or invite to meetings.
- The majority of councils (65%) would rate the police response for information or meetings as fair or good.
- 25% of councils stated that the police never proactively contact the council to raise awareness of local issues or share information.
- Most councils (67%) are somewhat or very familiar with their local Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Crime and antisocial behavior

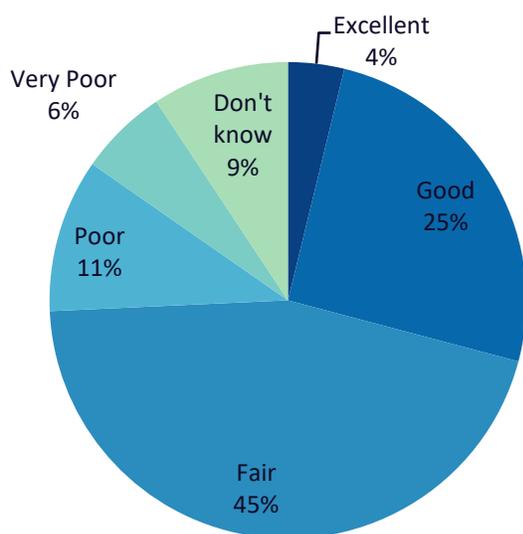
- 68% of councils believe anti-social behavior was not a very big problem or not a problem at all in their local area.
- Rural crime (53%) and road safety (79%) were the crimes which the councils perceived as being the biggest problems in their areas.

“It is my responsibility to ensure, everyone from all corners of our communities, has a voice and it’s heard at the highest level”

Findings

Local Policing

1. In the Council's opinion, how good a job do you think the police are doing in your town / parish?



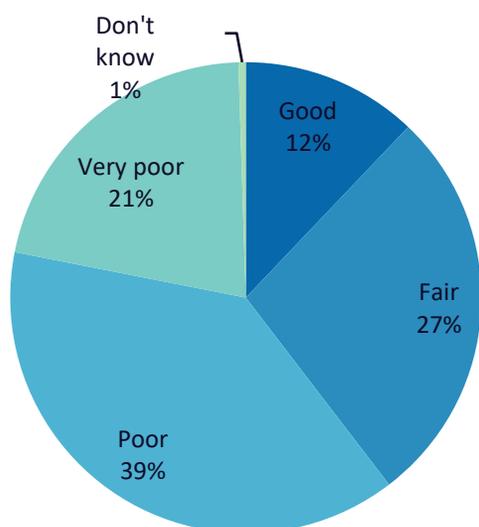
Key points

45% of respondents believe the police are doing a fair job. Despite minor fluctuation, this has been the case since 2019 (46%).

Respondents who answered good/excellent peaked in 2020 (40%). This has since fallen to an all time low of 29% in 2023.

Respondents who answered poor/very poor was lowest in 2020 (11%). In 2023, 17% believe they are doing a poor/very poor job which is consistent with previous years.

2. In the Council's opinion, how would you rate the visibility of police in your town parish?



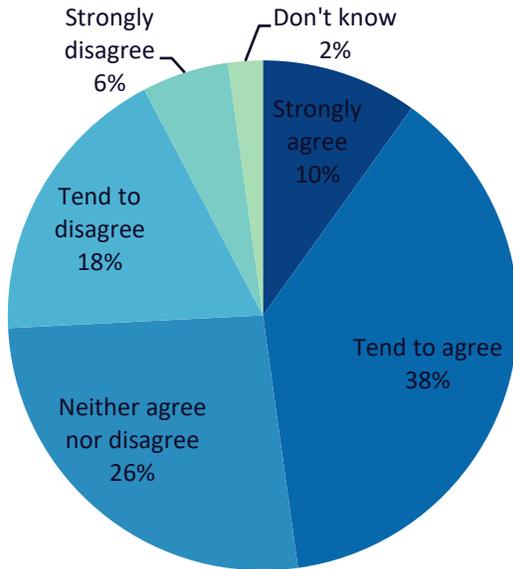
Key points

The majority of respondents (60%) believed police visibility is poor/very poor. This has increased from 56% in 2019.

12% believed police visibility was good, this is a slight decrease from 14% rating it as good/excellent in 2022.

27% of respondents believed police visibility to be fair, this was 31% in 2019 and was steadily increasing until 2022 (34%), it has since decreased.

3. The police work well with the Council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues

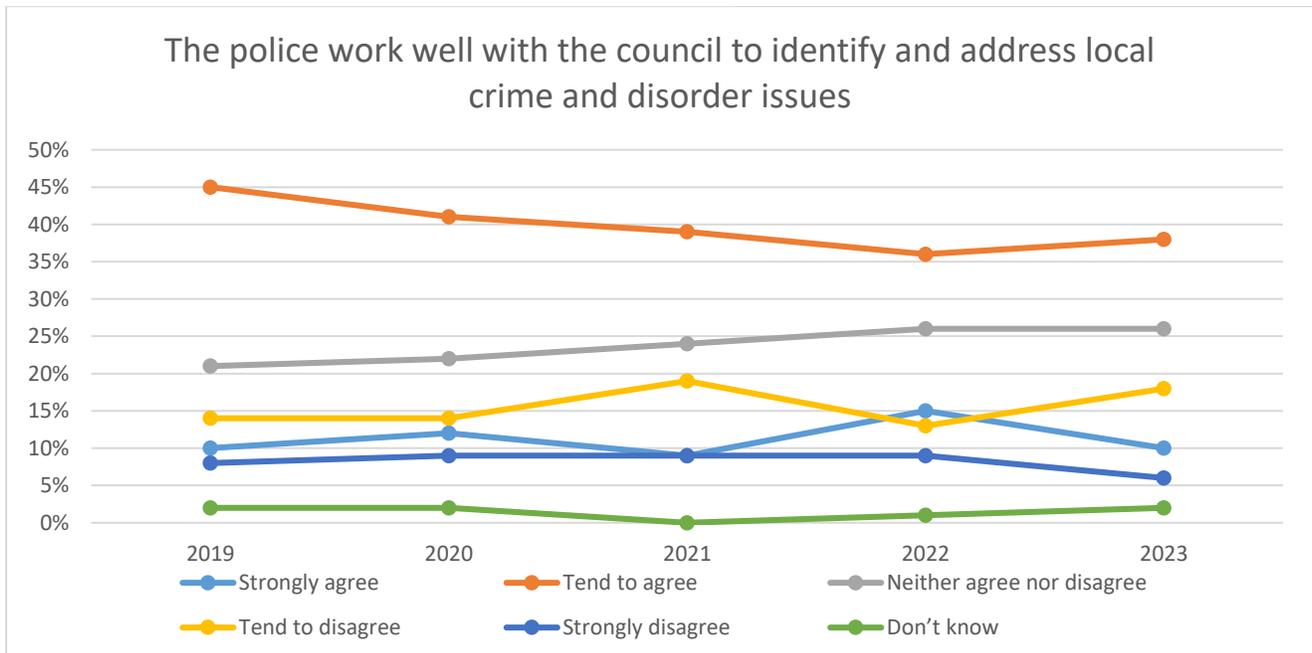


Key points

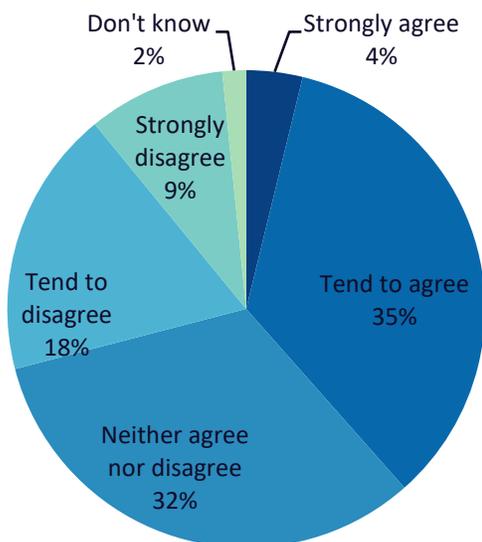
Nearly half of respondents (48%) tend to agree/strongly agree that the police work well with the Council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues. However, this is a decrease from 2019 (55%).

Those who neither agree nor disagree has steadily risen since 2019 (21%) to 26% in 2023.

24% tend to tend to/strongly disagree, which has fallen since 2021 (28%).



4. The Council has confidence in the police to resolve crime and disorder issues raised within the local community.



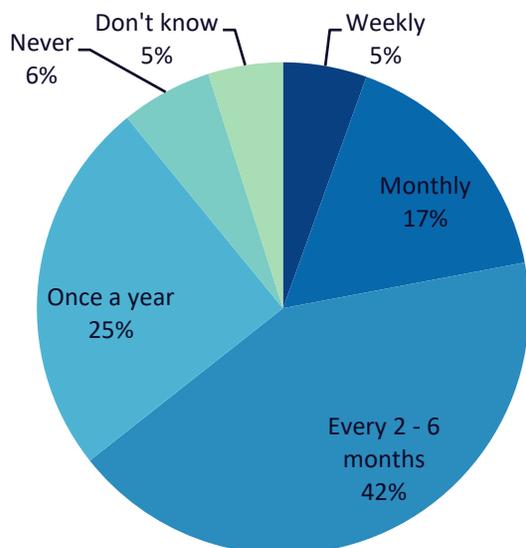
Key points

39% of respondents have confidence in the police to resolve crime and disorder issues raised within the local community. This peaked in 2020 (51%) and has declined since.

27% of respondents tend to disagree/strongly disagree, which has fluctuated since 2019 (29%), but is an improvement compared to 2020 (23%).

Those who neither agree nor disagree with the statement was 32%, which has risen since 2020 (24%).

5. On average, how often does the Council contact the police to raise concerns about crimes or incidents?



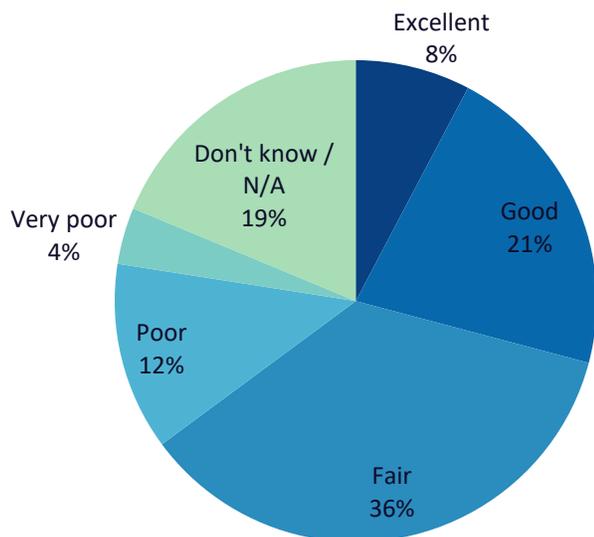
Key points

Those who contact the police weekly (5%) or monthly (17%), has remained consistent of the past five years.

The greatest percentage increase (6%) has been seen in councils contacting the police every 2-6 months and once a year.

The greatest percentage decrease has been for those never contacting the police, down from 12% in 2019 to 6% in 2023.

6. Overall, how would you rate the police response to crime and disorder issues or incidents raised by the Council?

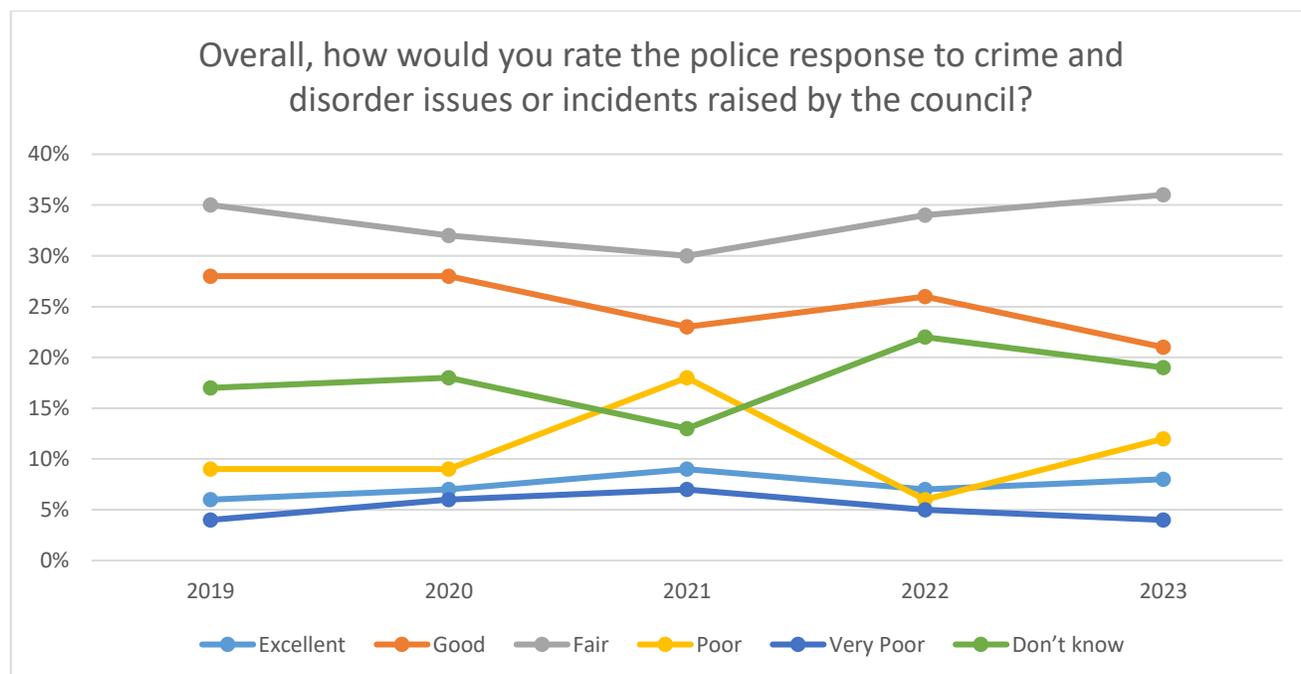


Key points

29% of respondents rated the police response to crime and disorder issues raised by the council as excellent/good. This is the lowest it has been since 2019, reaching its highest in 2020 (35%).

16% of councils thought that the police response was poor/very poor. Although this is an increase since last year (11%), it is significantly less than 2021 (25%).

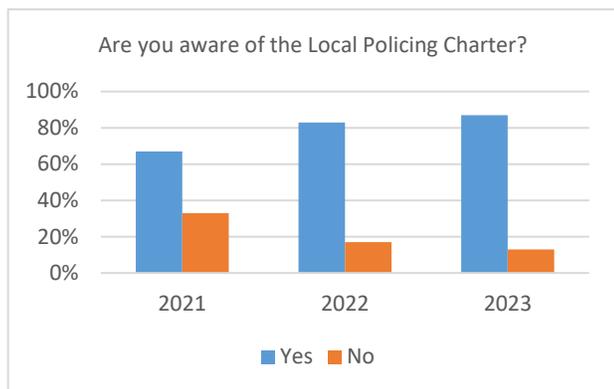
Over a thirds of respondents rated the police response as fair (36%), this is an increase compared to 2021 (30%) but comparable to 2019 (35%).





Contact and Engagement

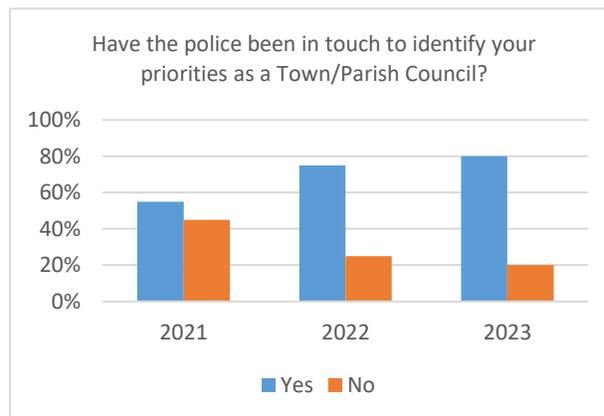
7. Are you aware of the Local Policing Charter?



Key point

Awareness of the local policing charter has steadily increased since 2021 from 67% to 83% in 2023.

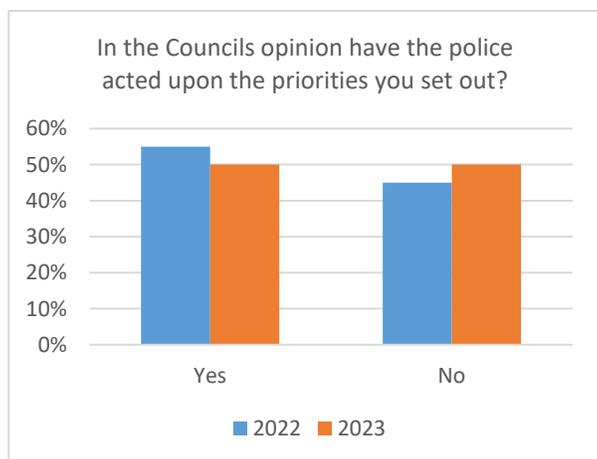
8. Have the police been in touch to identify your priorities as a Town/Parish Council?



Key point

There has been a considerable increase in the police getting in touch with town/parish councils to identify local priorities, increasing from 55% in 2021 to 80% in 2023.

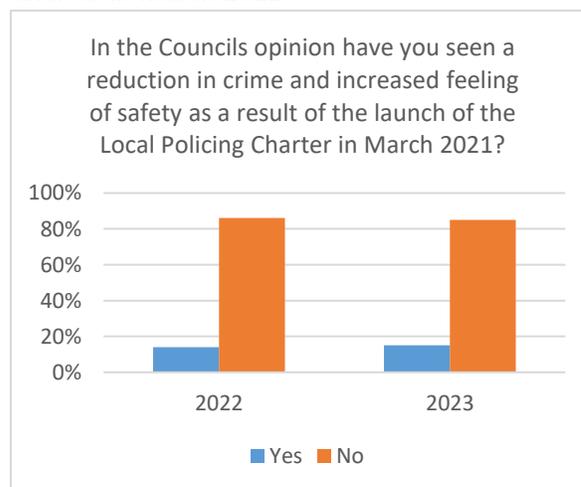
9. In the Councils opinion have the police acted upon the priorities you set out?



Key point

Although there has been increased engagement in identifying local priorities, the rate of councils who believe police are acting on these priorities has fallen slightly since last year from 55% to 50%.

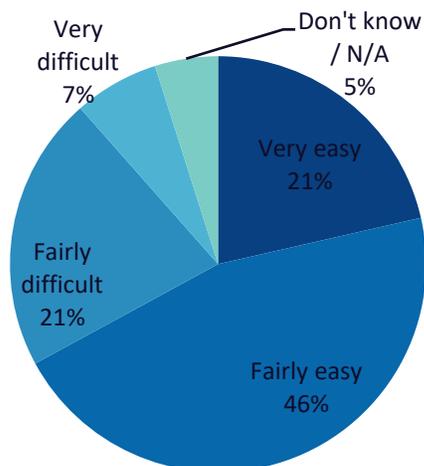
10. In the Councils opinion, have you seen a reduction in crime and increased feeling of safety as a result of the launch of the Local Policing Charter in March 2021?



Key point

Those who believe the launch of the Local Policing Charter led to a reduction in crime and increased feelings of safety remain consistent with last year.

11. In the Council's opinion, how easy and convenient is it to access your local policing teams? (This may be in any form - face to face, email, telephone etc)

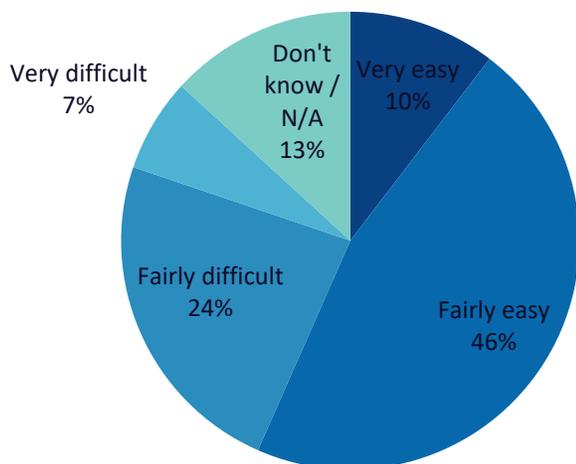


Key points

The majority of respondents believe it is fairly easy/very easy to access their local policing teams (67%). However, this is a considerable decrease since 2022 (81%).

28% of councils believe that it is difficult/fairly difficult to access their local policing teams. This is the highest it has been in the last 5 years, increasing from 17% in 2022.

12. In the Council's opinion, how easy and convenient is it to access relevant information for the local community from the police?



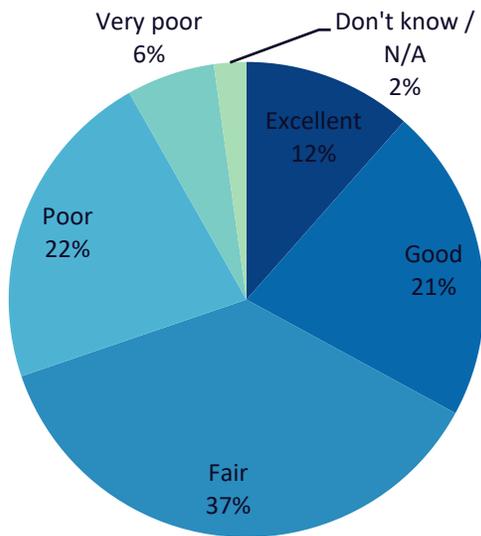
Key points

The majority of councils (56%) believe it is very/fairly easy to access relevant information for the local community from the police. This has increased since 2019 (51%), however is a fall since it peaked in 2022 (61%).

31% of respondents found it fairly/very difficult to access information from the police for their local community, this has risen from 24% in 2022.



13. In the Council's opinion, how would you rate the level of contact you have with the police?

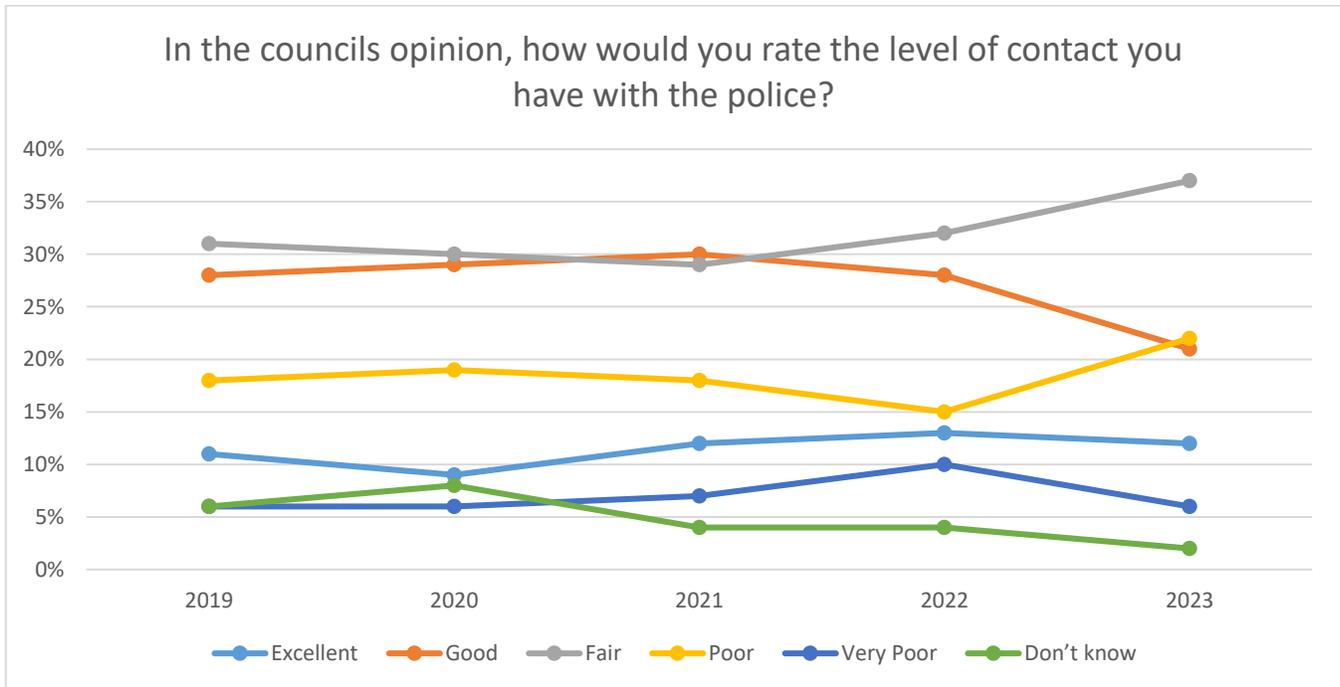


Key points

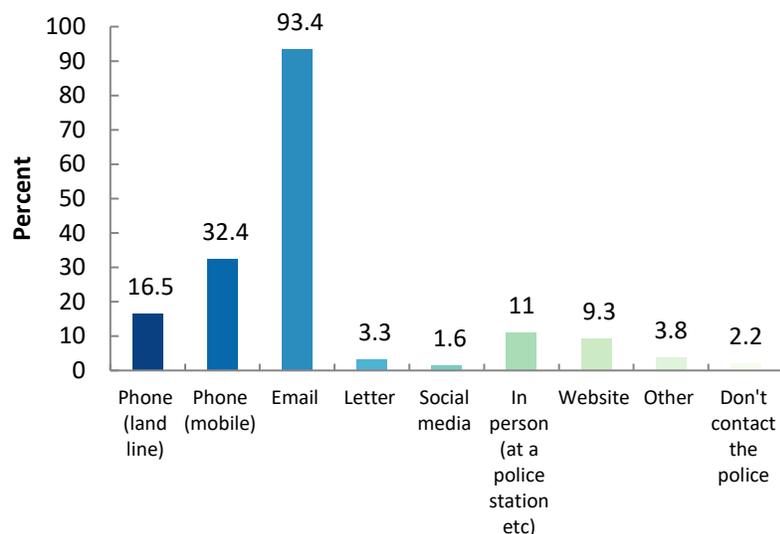
33% of councils rated the level of contact they have with the police as excellent/good. This is the lowest it has been in five years, peaking in 2021 at 42%.

Over a third of respondents felt the level of contact was fair (37%), which is the highest in five years.

28% of respondents felt that the level of contact was poor/very poor. This is a slight increase from last year at 25%.



14. How does the Council contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information or invite to meetings / community events? (Not including reporting crimes)



Key points

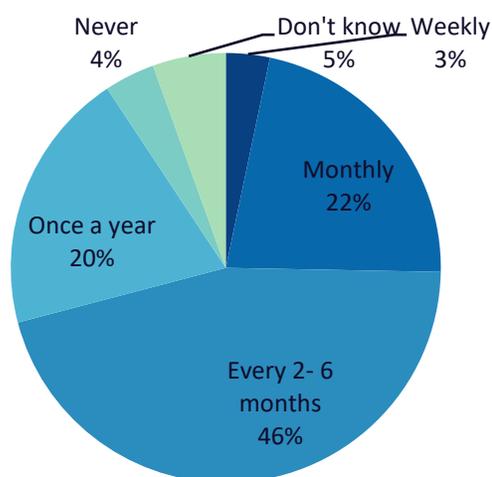
The vast majority of councils (94%) contact the police via email.

Although the next most popular means of contact is mobile phone (32%) and landline (17%), use of these methods has been decreasing since 2019.

Those contacting via social media (2%) has also decreased since its highest in 2020 (7%)

Those contacting via the website (9%) has steadily increased since 2019 (5%)

15. How often does the Council contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information or invite to meetings / community events? (Not including reporting crimes)



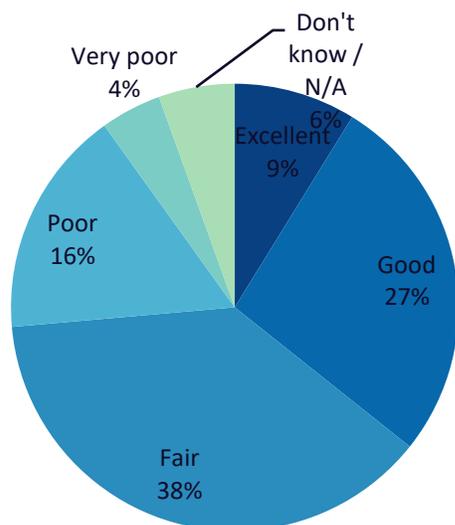
Key points

Almost half of respondents (46%) contact the police to discuss local issues every 2-6 months. This is the highest in the last five years, and the greatest percentage increase since 2019.

20% of respondents contact the police to discuss local issues once a year, this is the greatest percentage decrease since 2019.

22% of councils contact the police monthly, this has dropped since 2021 (28%)

16. How would the Council rate the police response to requests for information / meetings etc?



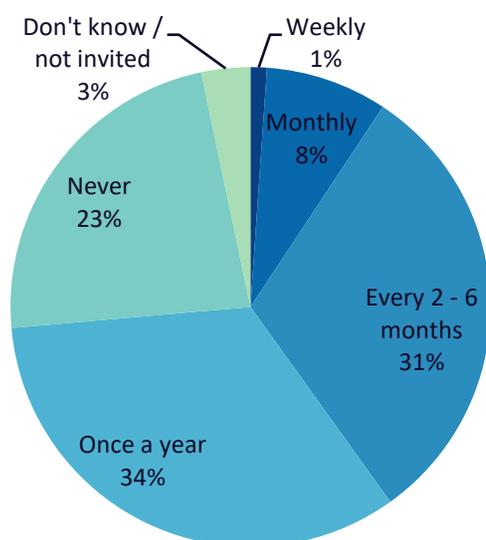
Key points

Over a third of respondents (38%) believe the police response for information/meetings is fair. This is the highest in the past five years.

36% of councils rated the police response for information/meetings etc to be excellent/good. This is the second lowest rating in the past five years, with 46% of respondents rating it excellent/good in 2020.

20% of respondents rated the police response to be poor/very poor. This is the highest percentage in the last five years.

17. How often do the police attend Council meetings or other community events in your town or parish area?

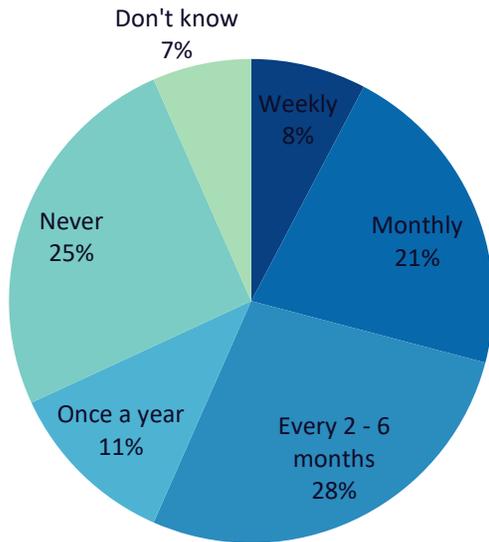


Key points

34% of councils stated that the police attend council meetings/community events once a year. Responses to this question have fluctuated, peaking in 2021 (44%), however 2023 is an increase from the previous year (26%).

31% of respondents stated that the police attend council meetings/community events every 2-6 months. This is a decrease from last year (38%).

18. How often do the police proactively contact the Council to raise awareness of local issues, share information etc?



Key points

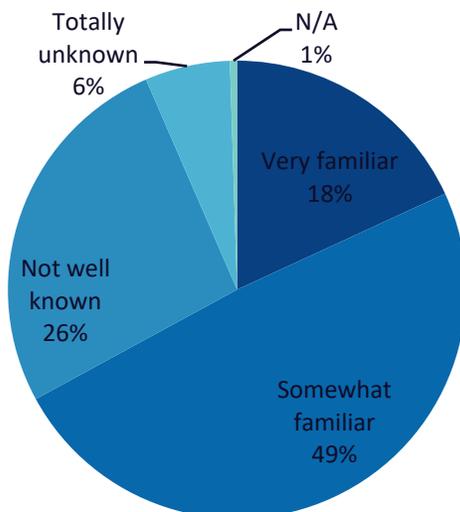
The largest proportion of respondents stated that the police contact councils every 2-6 months to raise awareness of local issues/ share information etc. This has increased since 2019 (22%)

21% of respondents answered monthly, also an increase from 16% in 2019.

8% of respondents answered weekly and increase from 4% in 2019.

11% of respondents answered once a year, which represents the greatest decrease from 2019 (23%)

19. Does the Council know the members of the police's local Safer Neighbourhood Team? These teams include Inspectors, Sergeants, PCs and PCSOs



Key points

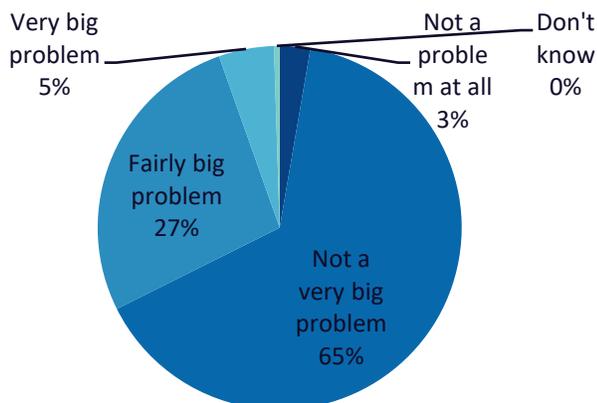
Almost half of respondents (49%) were somewhat familiar with the police's local Safer Neighbourhood Team, the highest it has been in five years.

18% of councils responded that they were very familiar with their local Safer Neighbourhood Team. This has dropped from 28% in 2021.

6% of respondents stated that their local Safer Neighbourhood Team was totally unknown, this is an improvement compared to 2021 (16%)

Crime and Anti-social

20. In the Council's opinion, how much of a problem, if at all, would you say that crime and anti-social behaviour is in your town / parish area?

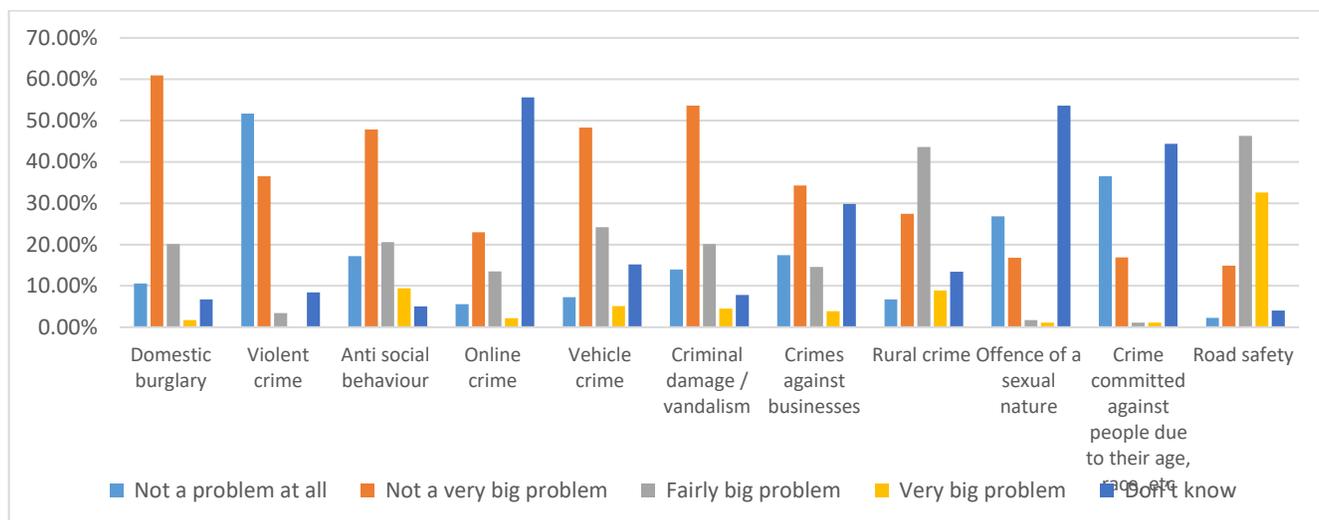


Key points

68% of respondents believe that crime and ASB is not a very big problem/not a problem at all. This is the lowest it has been, falling from 73% in 2022.

32% of councils believe that crime and ASB are fairly big/very big problems in their area. This is the highest it has been in the last five years.

21. Which if any of the following issues would you say are currently a problem in and around your council area?



Key insights

- 88% of respondents believe that **violent crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is an increase from 2022 (83%).
- 65% of respondents believe that **ASB** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is an increase from 2022 (60%)
- 56% of respondent believe that **vehicle crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is the lowest in five years with a peak in 2021 (71%)
- 52% of respondents believe that **crimes against businesses** is not a problem/not a very big problem. This is the lowest rate for the past five years. The percentage of respondents who believe it is a fairly big problem/very big problem was 19% in 2023, a considerable increase since 2022 (9%)
- The majority of respondents (53%) believe that **rural crime** is a fairly big/very big problem. This is the highest it has been in five years and an increase since 2022 (44%).
- The majority of respondents (79%) believe that **road safety** is a fairly big problem/very big problem. This is consistent an increase since 2022 (71%).



LPA Findings

Herefordshire

Local Policing

- 59% of respondents believed the police were doing a fair job, compared to 45% West Mercia wide. 14% of respondents believed the police were doing an excellent/good job in Herefordshire, this is lower than the West Mercia average (29%).
- 75% of respondents rated the visibility of police as poor/very poor in Herefordshire which is significantly higher than the West Mercia wide average (60%).
- 39% of respondents in Herefordshire believe the police work well with the council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues. This is lower than the West Mercia wide average (49%).
- Respondents in Herefordshire contact the police to raise concerns about crime or incidents less regularly than those West Mercia wide. 4% said they get in touch monthly, compared to 17% across West Mercia. 34% in Herefordshire said they get in touch once a year compared to 25% West Mercia wide.

Contact and Engagement

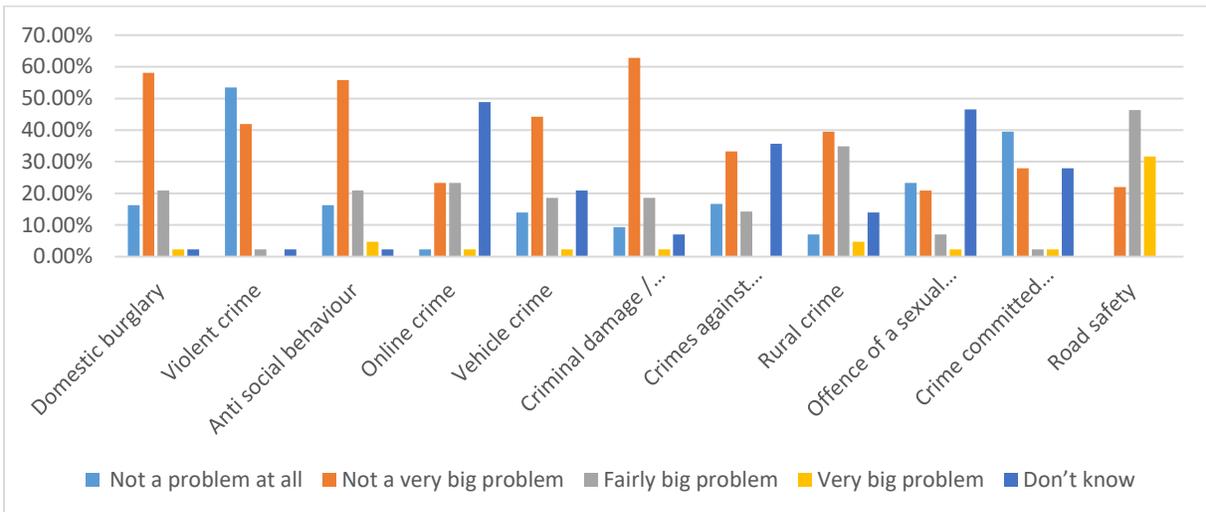
- 79% of respondents in Herefordshire were aware of the West Mercia Police Local Policing Charter, compared to 87% West Mercia wide.
- 67% of respondents in Herefordshire said the police had been in touch to identify priorities as a Town/Parish Council, which is lower than the West Mercia average of 80%.
- 31% of respondents said the police had acted upon priorities that had been set out, which is lower than the West Mercia average (50%).
- 61% of respondents rated the level of contact with the police as good/fair. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average 33%.
- Police generally attend council meetings or other community events less regularly in Herefordshire. 32% of respondents said that police never attend, compared to 23% West Mercia wide.
- Respondents in Herefordshire were less familiar with members of the police's Safer Neighbourhood Team. 52% said they were very/somewhat familiar, compared to 67% West Mercia wide.

Crime and anti-social behaviour issues

- 21% of respondents in Herefordshire believe that crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area was a fairly/very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (32%)



Which if any of the following issues would you say are currently a problem in and around your council area? (Town and Parish Council Survey 2023)



Key insights

- 95% of respondents in Herefordshire believe that **violent crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (88%).
- 72% of respondents in Herefordshire believe that **ASB** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (65%).
- West Mercia wide, 16% of respondents believe **online crime** was a fairly/very big problem whereas in Herefordshire this is higher at 26%.
- The majority of respondents (67%) believe that **crime committed against people due to their age, race, ethnicity, disability or sexuality** believe that it is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is considerably higher than the West Mercia average (53%).

Shropshire

Local Policing

- There was no significant difference between views on local policing between councils in Shropshire and the wider West Mercia region.

Contact and Engagement

- 90% of respondents in Shropshire said the police had been in touch to identify priorities as a Town/Parish Council, which is higher than the West Mercia average of 80%.

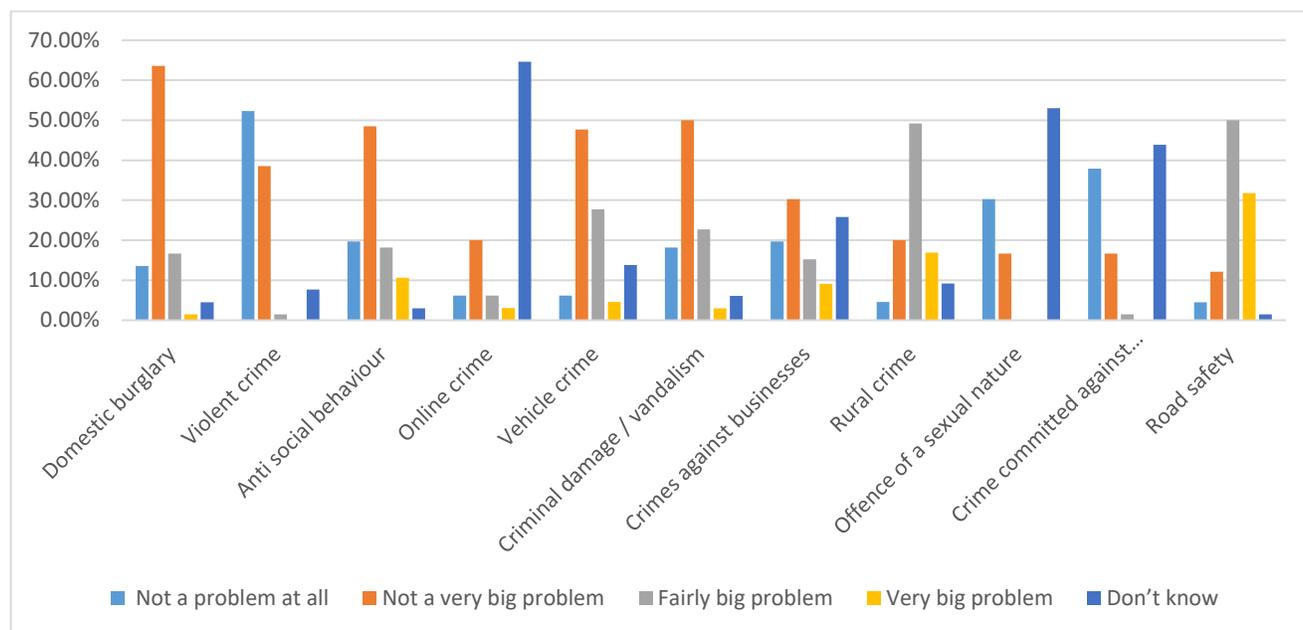


- There was no significant difference between views on contact and engagement between councils in Shropshire and the wider West Mercia region.

Crime and anti-social behaviour issues

- 37% of respondents in Shropshire believe that crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area was a fairly/very big problem. This is slightly higher than the West Mercia average (32%)

Which if any of the following issues would you say are currently a problem in and around your council area? (Town and Parish Council Survey 2023)



Key insights

- There was no significant difference between views on most crime types between councils in Shropshire and the wider West Mercia region.
- The majority of respondents (66%) believe that **rural crime** is a fairly big/very big problem. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (53%).



Telford and Wrekin

Local Policing

- 53% of respondents believed the police were doing an excellent/good job in Telford & Wrekin, this is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (29%).
- 20% of respondents rated the visibility of police as poor, which is significantly lower than the West Mercia wide average (60%).
- 87% of respondents believe the police work well with the council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia wide average (49%).
- 73% of respondents have confidence in the police to resolve crime and disorder issues raised within the local community. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (38%).
- Respondents in Telford & Wrekin contact the police to raise concerns about crime or incidents more regularly than those West Mercia wide. 53% said they get in touch weekly/monthly, compared to 22% across West Mercia.
- 53% of respondents rated the police response to crime and disorder issues or incidents raised by the council as excellent/good, which is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (29%).

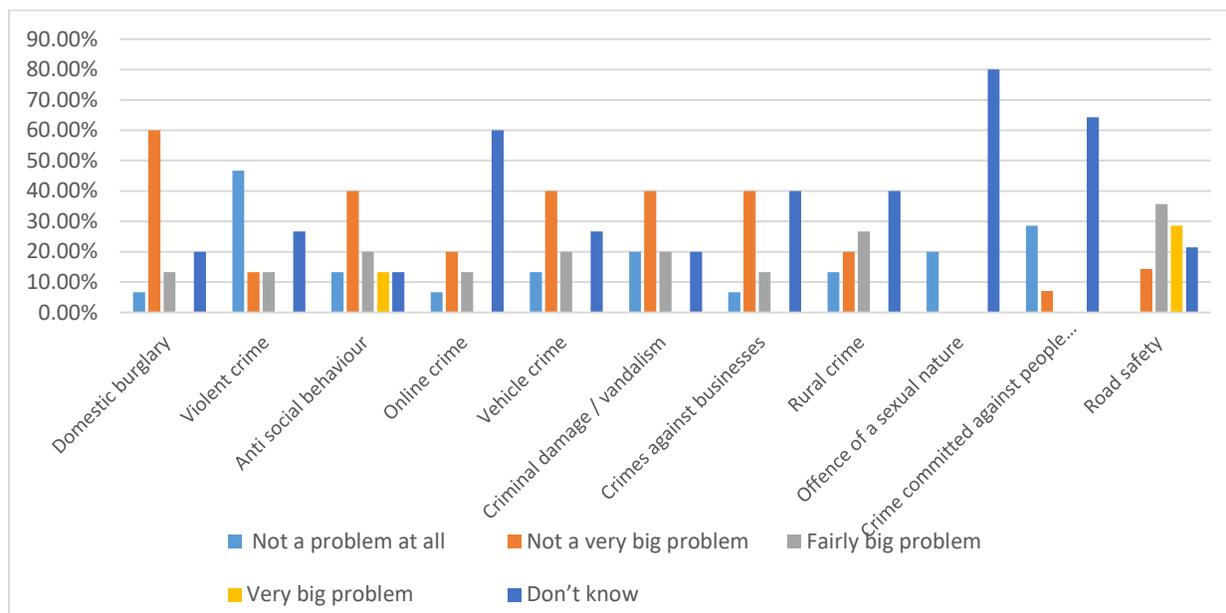
Contact and Engagement

- 86% of respondents said the police had acted upon priorities that had been set out, which is considerably higher than the West Mercia average (50%).
- 100% of respondents believed it was fairly easy/very easy to access their local policing teams. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (67%).
- 87% of respondents believed it was very/fairly easy to access relevant information for the local community. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (57%).
- 87% of respondents rated the level of contact with the police as excellent/good. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average 33%.
- 67% of respondents in Telford and Wrekin stated they contact the police to discuss issues, seek information or invite to meetings/community events weekly/monthly. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (25%).
- 80% of respondents rated the police response to requests for information/meetings as excellent/good. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (36%).
- 33% of respondents said that police attend council meetings or other community events weekly/monthly which is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (9%).
- Respondents in Telford and Wrekin were more familiar with members of the police's Safer Neighbourhood Team. 93% said they were very/somewhat familiar, compared to 67% West Mercia wide.

Crime and anti-social behaviour issues

- 20% of respondents in Telford and Wrekin believe that crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area was a fairly big problem. This is lower than the West Mercia average (32%)

Which if any of the following issues would you say are currently a problem in and around your council area? (Town and Parish Council Survey 2023)



Key insights

- 60% of respondents in Telford and Wrekin believe that **violent crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (88%). A considerable percentage from Telford & Wrekin (27%) responded 'don't know' to this question which is higher than the West Mercia average (8%)
- 43% of respondents in Telford and Wrekin believe that **ASB** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (65%).
- Only 27% of respondents in Telford & Wrekin believe that **rural crime** is a fairly big/very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (53%).
- The majority of respondents (64%) don't know whether **crime committed against people due to their age, race,**
- The majority of respondents (64%) believe that **road safety** is a fairly big problem/very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (79%).



North Worcestershire

Local Policing

- 44% of respondents believed the police were doing an excellent/good job in North Worcestershire, this is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (29%).
- 43% of respondents rated the visibility of police as poor/very poor in North Worcestershire which is significantly lower than the West Mercia wide average (60%).
- 75% of respondents in North Worcestershire tend to agree/strongly agree that the police work well with the council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia wide average (49%).
- 38% of respondents rated the police response to crime and disorder issues or incidents raised by the council as excellent/good, which is higher the West Mercia average (29%).

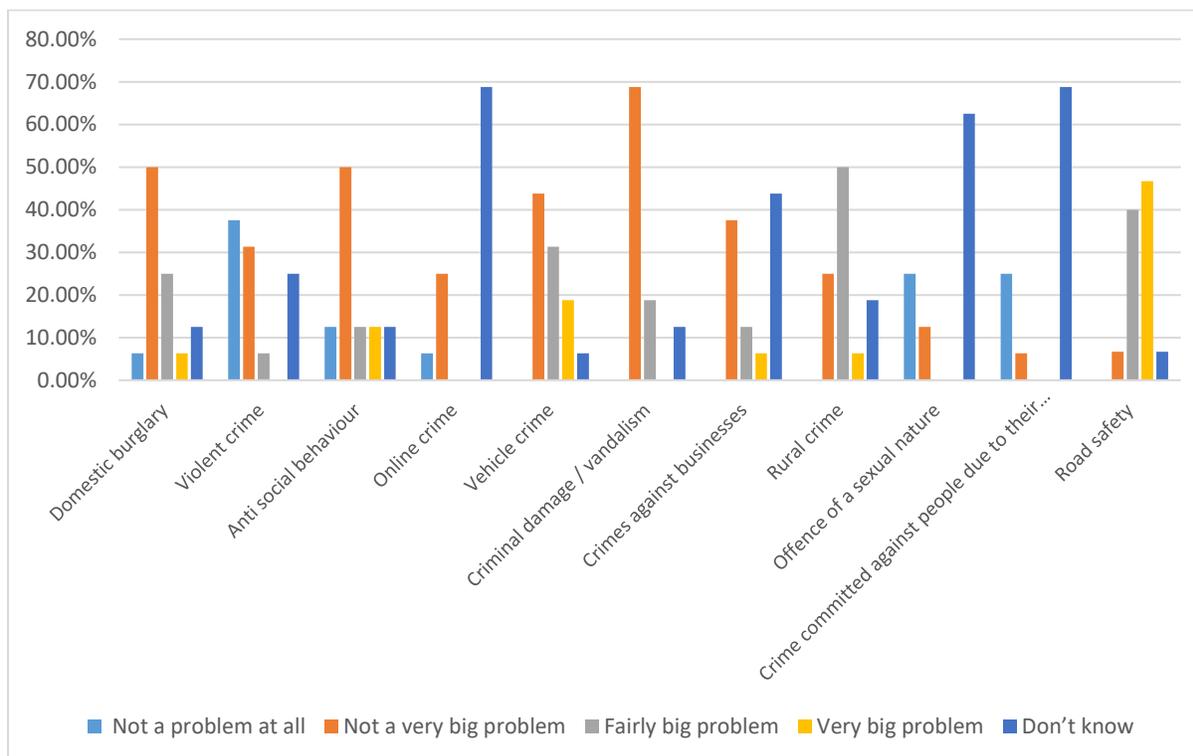
Contact and Engagement

- 75% of respondents said the police had acted upon priorities that had been set out, significantly higher than the West Mercia average (50%).
- 73% of respondents believed they had not seen a reduction in crime and increased feeling of safety as a result of the launch of the Local Policing Charter. This is lower than the West Mercia average (85%).
- 81% of respondents believed it was fairly easy/very easy to access their local policing teams. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (67%).
- 43% of respondents rated the level of contact with the police as excellent/good. This is higher than the West Mercia average 33%.
- 25% of respondents said that police attend council meetings or other community events weekly/monthly which is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (9%).
- Respondents said that the police proactively contact the council to raise awareness of local issues, share information etc more often in North Worcestershire. 56% said they were contacted weekly/monthly compared to 29% West Mercia wide.
- Respondents in North Worcestershire were more familiar with members of the police's Safer Neighbourhood Team. 81% said they were very/somewhat familiar, compared to 67% West Mercia wide.

Crime and anti-social behaviour issues

- 38% of respondents in North Worcestershire believe that crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area was a fairly/very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (32%)

Which if any of the following issues would you say are currently a problem in and around your council area?



Key insights

- 56% of respondents believe that **domestic burglary** was not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (72%). 31% believed it was a fairly big/very big problem in North Worcestershire compared to 22% West Mercia wide.
- 69% of respondents believe that **violent crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (88%). A considerable percentage from North Worcestershire (25%) responded 'don't know' to this question which is higher than the West Mercia average (8%)
- 53% of respondents believe that **ASB** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is lower than the West Mercia average (65%).
- 38% of respondents believe that **crimes against businesses** is not a problem/not a very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (52%).
- The majority of respondents (87%) believe that **road safety** is a fairly big problem/very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (80%).



South Worcestershire

Local Policing

- 33% of respondents in South Worcestershire tend to agree/strongly agree that the police work well with the council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia wide average (49%).
- 28% of respondents in South Worcestershire tend to agree/strongly agree that they confidence in the police to resolve crime and disorder issues raised within the local community. This is lower than the West Mercia average (38%).
- 13% of respondents rated the police response to crime and disorder issues or incidents raised by the council as excellent/good, which is significantly lower the West Mercia average (29%).

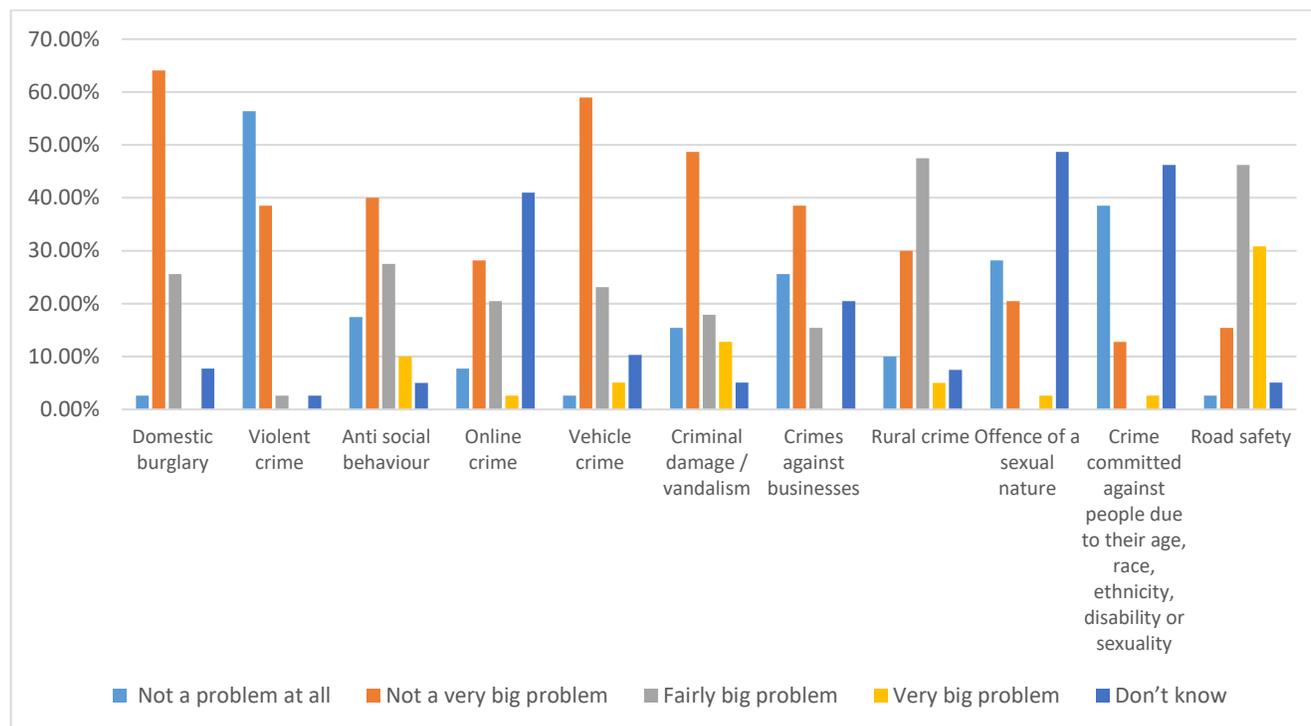
Contact and Engagement

- 72% of respondents in South Worcestershire said the police had been in touch to identify priorities as a Town/Parish Council, which is lower than the West Mercia average of 80%.
- 43% of respondents said the police had acted upon priorities that had been set out, lower than the West Mercia average (50%).
- 50% of respondents believed it was fairly easy/very easy to access their local policing teams. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (67%).
- 47% of respondents believed it was very/fairly easy to access relevant information for the local community. This is lower than the West Mercia average (57%).
- 19% of respondents rated the level of contact with the police as excellent/good. This is lower than the West Mercia average 33%.
- 23% of respondents rated the police response to requests for information/meetings as excellent/good. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (36%).
- Over a third of respondents (38%) said that police never attend council meetings or other community events which is higher than the West Mercia average (23%).
- 35% of respondents in South Worcestershire said that members of the police's Safer Neighbourhood Team were not well known to them, this is higher than the West Mercia average (26%).

Crime and anti-social behaviour issues

- 38% of respondents in South Worcestershire believe that crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area was a fairly/very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (32%)

Which if any of the following issues would you say are currently a problem in and around your council area?



Key insights

- 95% of respondents in South Worcestershire believe that **violent crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (88%).
- 58% of respondents in South Worcestershire believe that **ASB** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is lower than the West Mercia average (65%).
- 62% of respondent believe that **vehicle crime** is not a problem at all/not a very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (53%).
- 31% of respondents believe that **criminal damage/vandalism** is a fairly big/very big problem. This is higher than the West Mercia average (25%).
- 64% of respondents believe that **crimes against businesses** is not a problem/not a very big problem. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (52%).



Methodology

The Town and Parish Council Survey consists of 21 questions covering three question areas; 'Local policing', 'Contact and Engagement' and 'Crime and Anti-social Behavioural Issues'. Most questions used a Likert scale for responses.

Councils were given the option of completing the survey online or completing an electronic version and returning it via email or post to the PCC's office. The survey was distributed via direct emails to town and parish councils, and via the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC), the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC) and the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC). Additionally, the survey was promoted by the Police and Crime Commissioners Office via social media and local media outlets.

Instances where percentages on charts, graphs and tables do not add up to 100% is a product of rounding.

Demographics

West Mercia is covered by three unitary councils Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin and two-tier council of Worcestershire. Within these counties there is a total of 470 town and parish councils. A total 336 responses were received, with 154 partial and 182 complete. Partial responses were excluded for the purpose of consistency and comparison with previous years.

POLICING AREA	COUNT	PERCENTAGE %*
HEREFORDSHIRE	44	24%
SHROPSHIRE	67	37%
TELFORD & WREKIN	15	9%
NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE	16	9%
SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE	40	22%

*Figures have been rounded so may not add up to 100%