



2023/24 Budget Engagement results summary

Using qualitative and
quantitative research
methods to inform
decision-making

Introduction

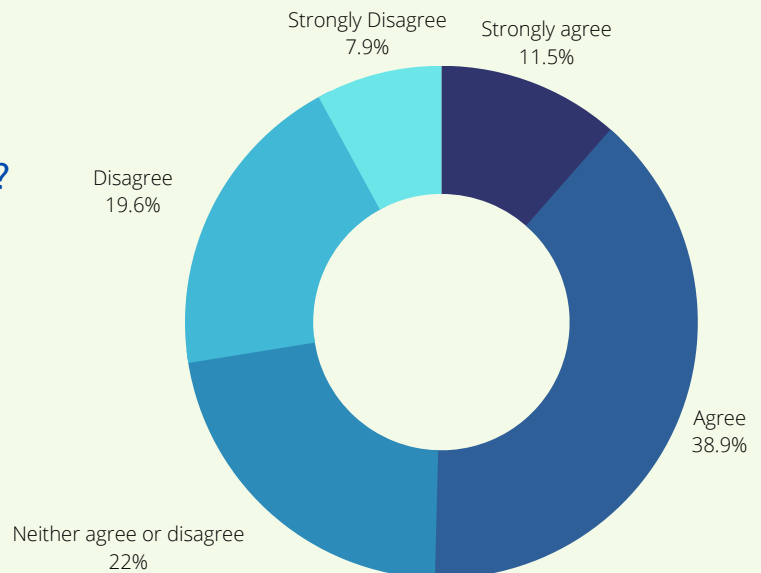
The Police and Crime Commissioner engages annually with the public on the totality of the policing budget in advance of setting the policing element of the council tax (police precept). A quantitative survey run by the OPCC between December 7, 2022, and January 9, 2023, collected 2,617 responses from members of the public.

Quantitative survey results

Year-on-year comparisons have been included where applicable. Full quantitative survey results can be found under 'Key Documents' at www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk

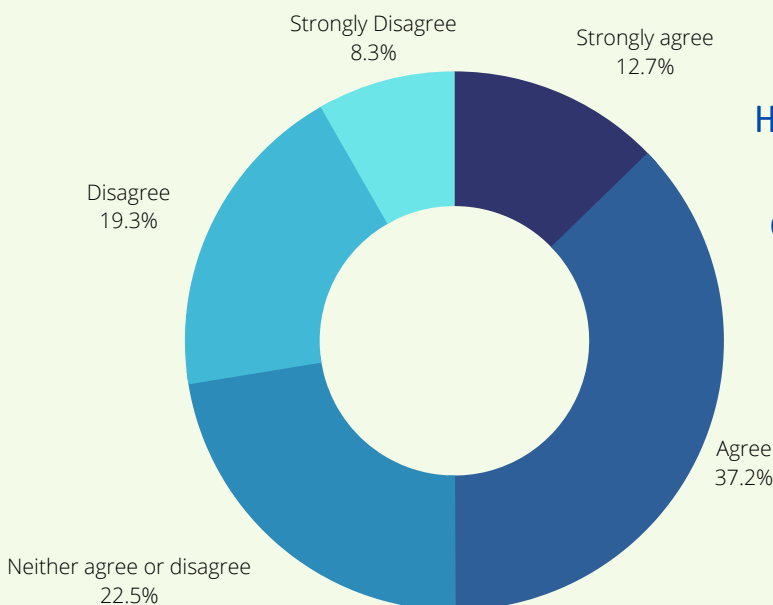
How much do you agree with the statement 'all things considered I generally have confidence in **the police**'?

This year: 51% agree, 28% disagree
Last year: 49% agree, 12% disagree



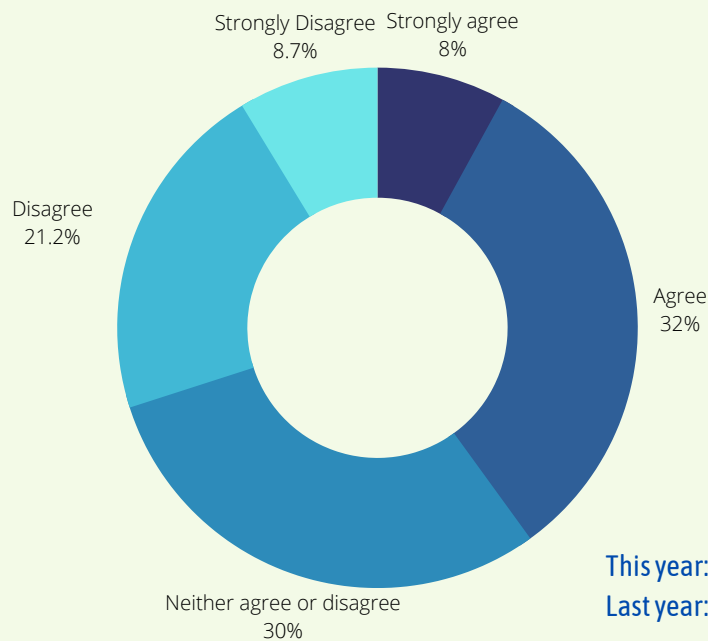
How much do you agree with the statement 'all things considered I generally have confidence in **Devon and Cornwall Police**'?

This year: 50% agree, 27% disagree
Last year: 46% agree, 32% disagree



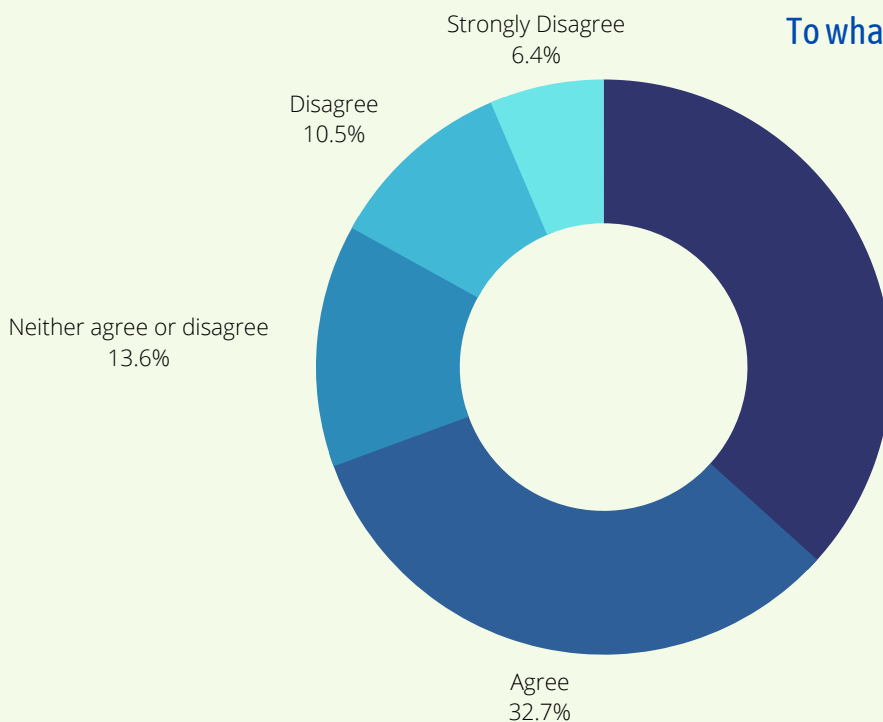
Quantitative survey results (cont)

All things considered, to what extent do you think that the 2022/23 precept (see table) represents value for money?



This year: 40% agree, 30% disagree
Last year: 34% agree, 39% disagree

| Council tax band | Total due 2021/22 | Total due 2022/23 | Annual Increase |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| A | £157.71 | £164.38 | £6.67 |
| B | £183.99 | £191.77 | £7.78 |
| C | £210.28 | £219.16 | £8.89 |
| D | £236.56 | £246.56 | £10.00 |
| E | £289.13 | £301.35 | £12.22 |
| F | £341.70 | £356.14 | £14.44 |
| G | £394.27 | £410.93 | £16.67 |
| H | £473.12 | £493.12 | £20.00 |



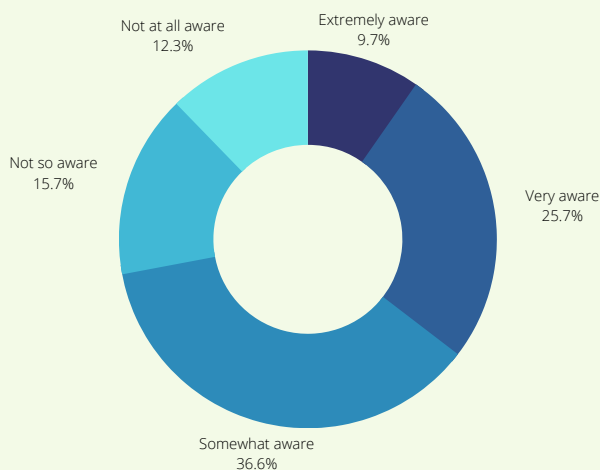
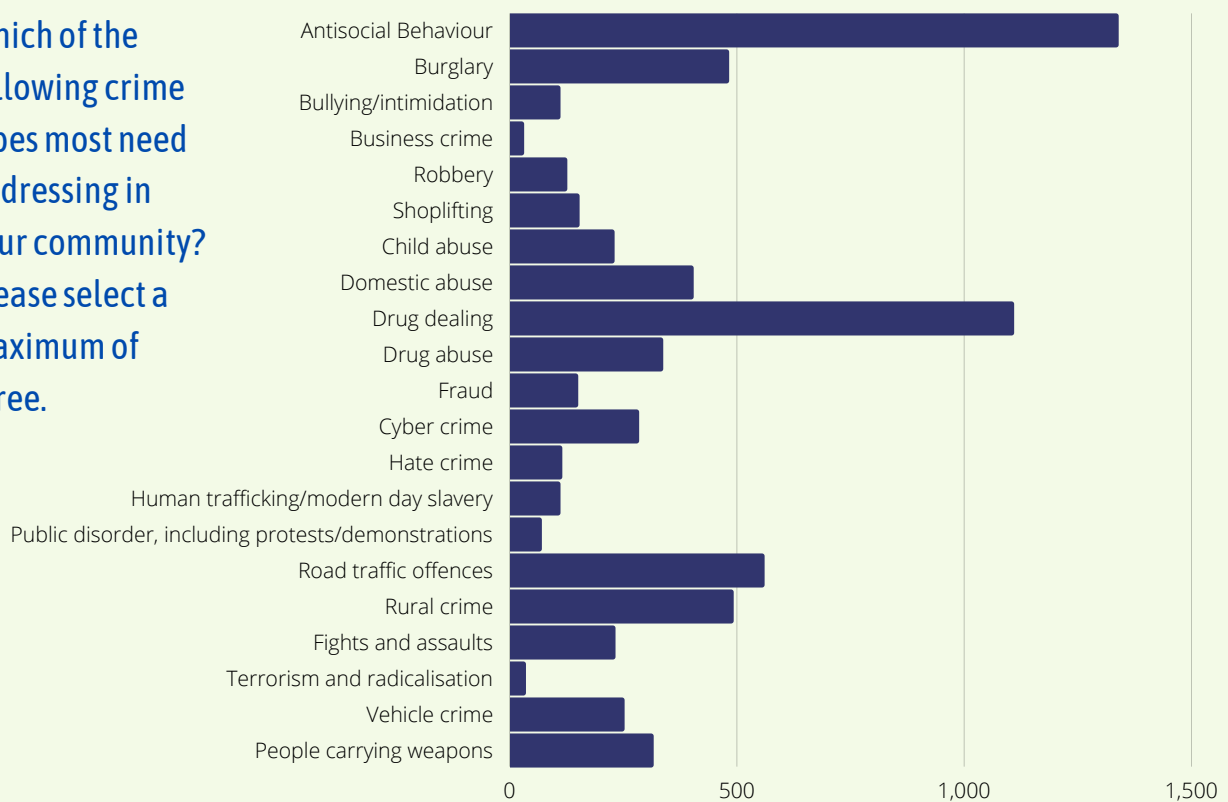
To what extent do you agree that investment should be made to open more police stations to the public?

Strongly agree
36.7%

This year: 70% agree, 17% disagree
Last year: 75% agree, 12% disagree

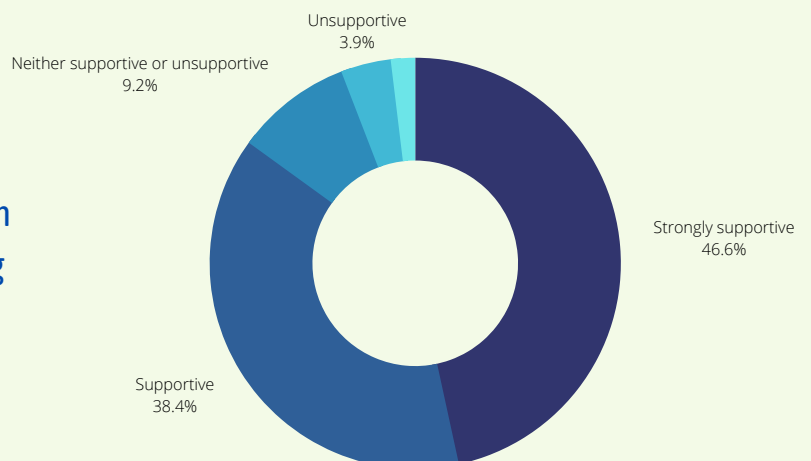
Quantitative survey results (cont)

Which of the following crime types most need addressing in your community? Please select a maximum of three.



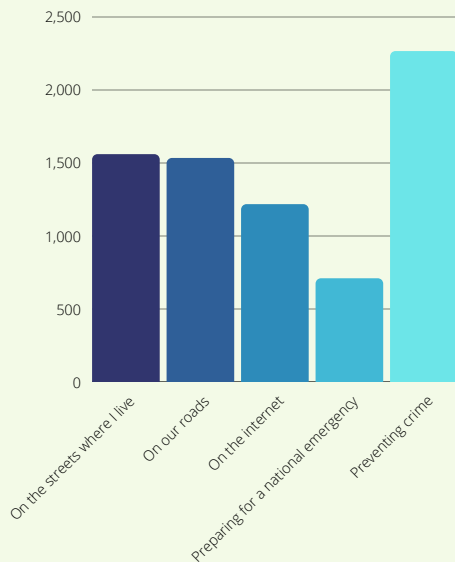
How aware are you of the fact that police and crime commissioners and their respective forces are collaborating to tackle drugs in the region (Operation Scorpion)?

How supportive are you of further investment in joint operations between South West police forces to tackle drug dealing in the region?

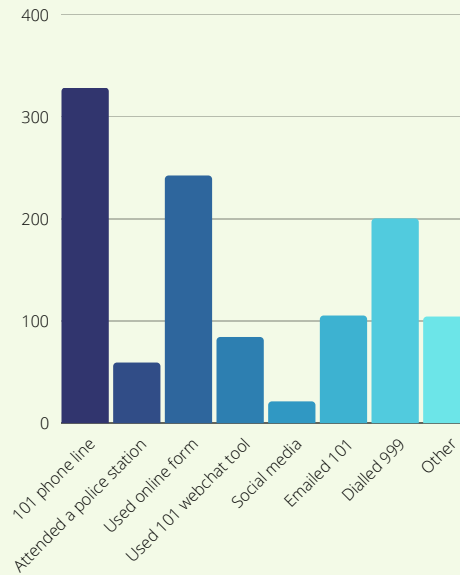


Quantitative survey results (cont)

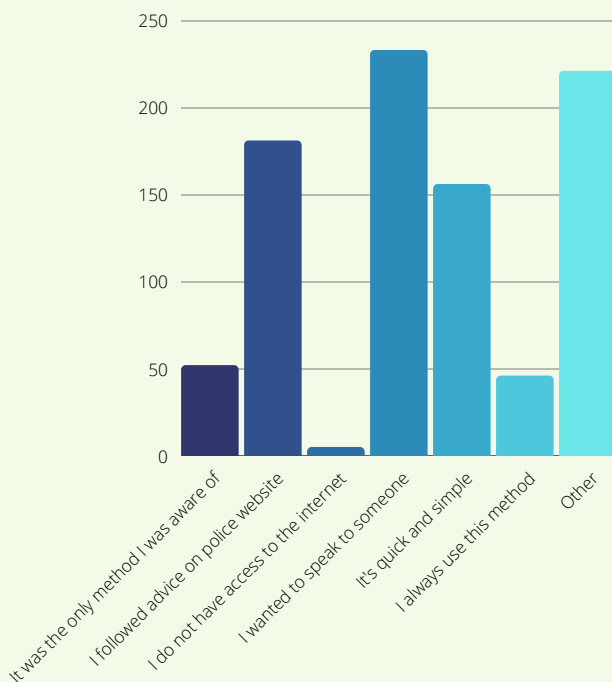
Where do you perceive that policing needs greater investment? Please select three from the following options:



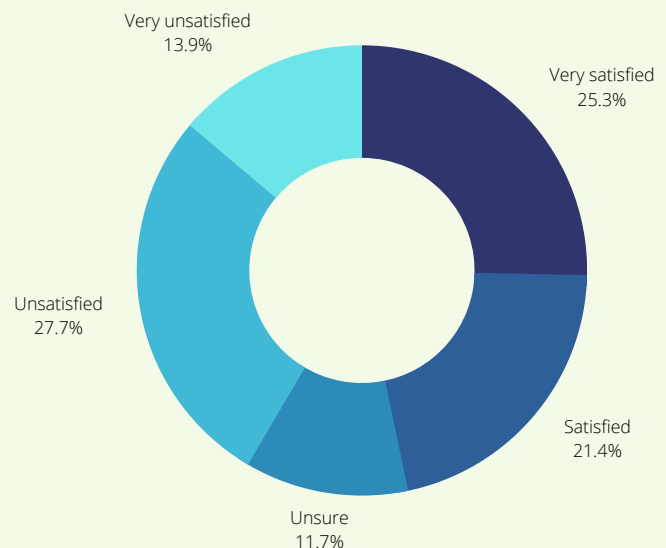
If you have contacted police in the last 12 months what method did you use?



Why did you choose your preferred contact method?



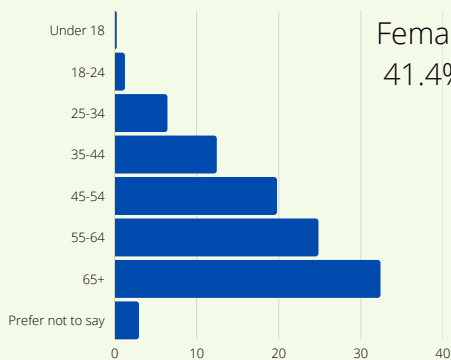
How satisfied were you with this chosen method?



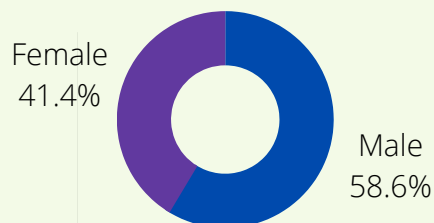
Who completed our quantitative survey?

The survey was self-selecting and participants were offered the opportunity to skip questions relating to their personal details.

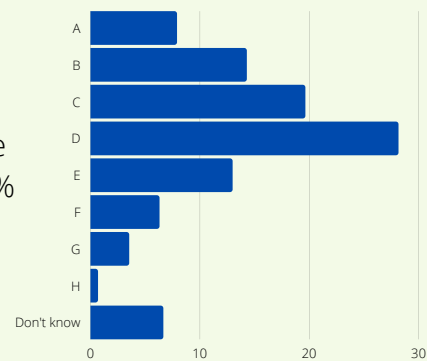
Age:



Sex:



Council tax band



Ethnicity (%)

| | |
|---|-------|
| White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish | 88.49 |
| White - Irish | 0.53 |
| White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 0.18 |
| Any other White background - please specify below | 4.37 |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean | 0.13 |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African | 0.18 |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian | 0.40 |
| Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background - please specify below | 0.31 |
| Asian/Asian British - Indian | 0.09 |
| Asian/Asian British - Pakistani | 0.09 |
| Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi | 0.00 |
| Asian/Asian British - Chinese | 0.00 |
| Any other Asian background - please specify below | 0.00 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African | 0.13 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean | 0.09 |
| Any other Black/African/Caribbean background - please specify below | 0.00 |
| Other ethnic group - Arab | 0.04 |
| Any other ethnic group - please specify below | 3.97 |

Market Research Society

Industry regulator the Market Research Society (MRS) promotes best practice in market research standards. Both qualitative and quantitative surveys were completed in line with its [Code of Conduct](#).

Qualitative findings

Focus groups provide rich information on how policing is perceived across Devon and Cornwall and how connected the public feel to their local policing teams. Two groups, one representing urban communities and one rural, were made up of community-minded volunteers from across Devon and Cornwall.

Areas of consensus

Communication and engagement

There was a strong desire for greater communication and engagement from the force, particularly at a local level. There was a perception that officers no longer informally spoke to small businesses, lower tier authorities and other organisations and as a direct consequence of this opportunities to prevent crime were missed. There was a strong desire for communities to be told of criminal justice outcomes. There was a sentiment expressed in one focus group that the force's corporate voice on key issues was lost because of officers' use of social media and this was inconsistent across the force area, sometimes providing an informative and useful service to the public, and sometimes completely absent.

Confidence

There was a feeling that confidence in the police was generally lower than it should be because people were aware of perceived service failures in their communities. Lengthy waits to contact the police via the 101 non-emergency contact centre were a theme throughout both sessions. There was consensus that the police rarely 'come to us' and the onus is on residents to seek out officers. Participants said there was an opportunity to raise the profile of policing teams by improving visibility, engaging with community groups, local authorities and schools and updating residents in a timely fashion about criminal activity and prosecutions. High profile police failings such as the decision by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service to place the force on 'Engage' status were not offered as reasons for falling confidence levels. Both focus groups advocated a return to traditional levels of discipline and standards.

Income and expenditure

There was support for additional investment in the Police and Crime Plan areas of dealing with antisocial behaviour, drugs harm, road safety and violence.

Prevailing attitudes towards proposals to increase the band D council tax precept payment by £15 for 2023/24 were that this increase would be better accepted by communities in exchange for improvements to neighbourhood policing, contact and communication. Although there was an acceptance of inflationary pressures on the force this was tempered by a

concern that residents did not always feel they were getting value for money from the police. There was a strong desire for a public statement of service standards that the force could be held accountable for in exchange for additional investment. The recent commitment to attend every burglary was given as a positive example of a service level agreement by members of both groups.

The approach of maintaining police officer numbers by filling roles recently occupied by police staff with sworn officers was explored but did not garner support. There was general, but not total, support for exploring whether savings could be made by reducing the number of senior officers in the force.

Visibility

There was a strong desire for more high visibility foot patrols in communities and attendance at events such as council meetings. Anecdotes about officers who used to spend productive time engaging with young people on the fringe of criminality were given at both focus group meetings and held up as an approach which could 'deal with crime before it happened'. There was a feeling that neighbourhood officers were sometimes reluctant to take informal action in their communities because they were uncertain that activity would be supported by their superiors and agreement that those holding the rank of Constable should have greater autonomy. Several focus group members from rural communities used the word 'abandoned' to describe how their communities felt about their relationship with Devon and Cornwall Police.

What they said:

verbatim quotes from focus group participants

On income and expenditure:

"If the new Chief Constable was going to come out and say, 'look, council tax is going up, but there will be more patrols in our communities', then that would be acceptable."

"Everybody is always talking about, in the communities I work in, that visibility piece, so if that's (the additional monies) turned into actually seeing police in our communities then I think the public would live with it. In some respects it could be a quick win for the Chief Constable, to actually make that a priority to get that visibility."

"Nobody knows what the expectation is, what the service level should be. I think a big drive needs to happen from the police on this - if you ring them, this is the minimum service you should get. I've got no problem paying whatever it takes (relating to precept) but until we're clear what the offer is we're not going to have confidence in it."

On police officers in frontline roles recently occupied by police staff:

"[To have a warranted officer doing a job that could be done by a civilian member of staff] is a total waste of a very valuable resource."

"We've been urging the force to put officers out there and now we're saying 'let's tuck them away behind a desk for some of that time'. That to my mind is totally retrograde."

"[To have a warranted officer doing a job that could be done by a civilian member of staff] is a total waste of a very valuable resource."

"If you had to do it, rather than take young officers who should be out on the street you could take those officers with 29 years of experience or those on light duties."

"This is a strategy to get over bureaucracy and would damage frontline policing so I would be very much against it, and I would think most of the public would be as well."

"A lot of people, and older people especially, want that contact, they don't care if it's a police officer or a member of police staff."

On improving confidence in policing:

"It's a lack of visibility, if the children saw officers in uniform they might think again."

"Somebody needs to come out and tell the public what they should expect. Mark Rowley has come out and said: 'We will come out to every burglary, this is what the public can expect'. The new Chief Constable needs to send a strong message."

"The cops need to know what is expected of them and the public need to know what they can expect of them [the police]. He [the new Chief Constable] needs to set out a contract with his staff and the public to say 'this is what you can expect of us in 12 months' time and if I don't deliver on it you can hold me to account'."

"In two years I've never seen a police officer on their feet in Camborne. I would really like to see them on the streets. I want to see them out policing, that will earn them some respect."

"Engagement is really important, we keep on asking for a presence at our town council, it does not happen and I think we should insist more as councillors to keep on getting the police to engage because once the police are engaged with us and seen to be at those town council meetings it just might help the community have more confidence."

“People do not feel that they are part of the community and therefore they do not have the intelligence needed.”

“If we’ve got an accident on the A30 we know that police are going to do a fantastic job, and they do. But if you have antisocial behaviour in town, and we do, then there’s no help at all. We have an elderly population and they are afraid to leave their homes at night.”

“If they come out to deal with something they should deal with it. If the fire brigade go to a fire, they put it out. The police don’t and sometimes they blow on the embers. If we can get to a situation where they deal with an issue then that would be better.”

“Give some statements out that you can achieve.”

“If you go on the police website for your area and look at what crimes are being reported it’s two months old. Some of the photos on my neighbourhood team’s webpage are out of date and one has been on its side for three years – it looks bad. How hard is it to fix it? I keep raising it and it never gets fixed.”