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| West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner’s Annual Town and Parish Council Survey  2024 |

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# **About the Town and Parish Council Survey**

## **Introduction**

Since 2018, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has published an annual Town and Parish Council Survey. Presented to the Town and Parish Councils of West Mercia’s five local policing areas (LPAs): Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, North Worcestershire, and South Worcestershire, the survey is designed to allow councils to share their views on key areas of local policing, contact and engagement, crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). The responses will be used to align the priorities of the PCC and wider West Mercia Police forces with those of the communities that they serve. Highlighting best practices and areas for improvement will allow the PCC to consistently deliver an efficient police service.

## **Methodology**

Composed of 27 questions, the survey was divided into three parts: Local Policing, Contact and Engagement, and Crime and ASB, with most questions using a Likert scale for responses.

Councils were given the option of completing the survey online or completing an electronic version and returning it either 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), who were all contacted and given details of the survey for onward distribution. Whilst it is acknowledged that not all 470 town and parish councils are members of their local association, this method was deemed the most efficient and effective way of engaging with local communities. 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 one two-tier council of Worcestershire. Within these counties there is a total of 470 town and parish councils.

# **Executive Summary**

## **Response Data**

Of the 172 responses submitted, only 124 were completed entirely. In continuity with the pervious years, the partially completed survey responses will be excluded from this report for consistency and to enable comparison with previous years.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Policing Area | Number of respondents | Number of respondents as a percentage |
| Herefordshire | 25 | 20% |
| North Worcestershire | 10 | 8% |
| South Worcestershire | 33 | 27% |
| Shropshire | 48 | 39% |
| Telford & Wrekin | 8 | 7% |

## **Local Policing**

* The largest proportion of respondents (44%) believe that the police are doing a fair job. 34% believe them to be doing an excellent/good job.
* Over half of councils (55%) believe that police visibility is poor/very poor.
* 46% of councils tend to agree or strongly agree that the police work well with them to address local crime issues, 25% disagree.
* When asked if the council has confidence in the police to address crime issues, raised, 41% strongly agree or tend to agree.
* The largest proportion of respondents (44%) contact the police to raise concerns or incidents every 2-6 months.
* Nearly a third (31%) of councils rated the police response to crime and disorder incidents raised by the council as excellent or good. 17% rated them poor/very poor.

## **Contact and Engagement**

* 83% of councils are aware of the Local Policing Charter.
* 84% of councils responded they had been contacted by their police to identify their priorities, the highest it has ever been.
* Over half of councils (54%) believe that the police have acted upon these priorities.
* 80% of responses reported that they saw no reduction in crime or an increased feeling of safety following the launch of West Mercia Police’s Local Policing Charter in 2021.
* Nearly three quarters (73%) of town and parish councils believed it was very/fairly easy to access local policing teams.
* The majority of councils (54%) believe that it is very/fairly easy to access relevant information from the police for the local community.
* 71% of councils rated the level of contact they had with the police as excellent, good or fair.
* 90% of town and parish councils contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information, and invite to meetings via email.
* Most councils (46%) contact the police every 2-6 months.
* 40% of respondents believe that the police’s response to requests for information or meetings was excellent or good. However, 28% rated them as poor/very poor, the highest since the survey’s inception.
* Over a third (35%) of councils expressed that the police attend meetings and community events every 2-6 months. 24% however reported they never attend.
* A third (33%) of councils reported that the police proactively contact the council to raise awareness of local issues and share information every 2-6 months.
* Most councils (64%) are somewhat or very familiar with their local Safer Neighbourhood Team.

## **Crime and ASB**

* 63% of councils believe that anti-social behaviour is not a very big problem at all in their local area.
* One third (33%) however believe ASB to be a fairly/very big problem.
* The biggest perceived problem to councils is road safety (76%). Then rural crime (57%).

# **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:**

44% of respondents believe that the police are doing a fair job, which has remained relatively steady since 2019 (46%).

Respondents who answered good/excellent has increased to 34% from an all time low in 2023 (29%). Its peak was in 2020 (40%).

17% of respondents answered poor/very poor which has been consistent since 2022. This was lowest in 2020 (11%) and highest in 2021 (20%).

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

**Key points:**

16% of respondents think police visibility is excellent/good which is the highest it has been since the survey’s inception.

Most respondents (55%) believe that police visibility is poor/very poor. However, this has decreased from its peak in 2023 (60%).

28% of respondents believe police visibility to be fair, a slight increase since 2023 (27%). However, it was steadily increasing from 31% - 34% between 2019 and 2022.

1. The police work well with the council to identify and address local crime and disorder issues.

**Key points:**

46% of respondents tend to agree/strongly agree that the police work well with the council - the lowest it has been since 2018 (38%).

Respondents who neither agree nor disagree has steadily risen since 2019 (21%) to 28% in 2024.

25% tend to/strongly disagree which has steadily increased since 2019 (22%) but hit its peak in 2021 (28%).

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

**Key points:**

41% of respondents have confidence in the police to resolve crime and disorder issues in the community. This has increased since 2023 (39%) but peaked in 2020 (51%).

29% tend to/strongly disagree which has slightly increased since 2023 (27%). This has been steady since 2019 (29%), 2020 being an exception (23%).

28% neither agree nor disagree, a decrease since 2023 (32%), which had been rising since 2020 (24%).

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

**Key points:**

Respondents who contact the police weekly doubled since 2023 (5%) but monthly contact decreased from 17% to 13%.

Councils contacting police every 2-6 months has increased steadily to 44% since 2022 (38%) and is the highest it has been since the survey’s inception.

The greatest percentage decrease has been for those who make contact once a year, decreasing from 25% in 2023 to 15%, now the lowest it has ever been.

Councils who never make contact has increased to 10% since 2023 (6%). Its peak was in 2019 (12%).

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

**Key points:**

31% of respondents rated the police response to crime and disorder incidents raised by the council as excellent/good, an increase compared to 2023 (29%).

Those who rated the response as poor/very poor has slightly increased from 2023 (16%) to 17%, the highest it has been since 2021 (25%).

Over a third of respondents rated the police response as fair (37%) which has been steadily increasing since 2021 (30%).

## **Contact and Engagement**

1. Are you aware of the Local Policing Charter?

**Key point:**

Awareness of the Local Policing Charter steadily increased between 2021 and 2023 (67% to 87%) but has dipped back to 2022 levels of 83% awareness in 2024.

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

**Key point:**

There has been a considerable and consistent increase in the police getting in touch with town/parish councils to identify local priorities, increasing from 55% in 2021 to an all-time high of 84% in 2024.

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

**Key point:**

The number of councils who believe that the police are acting upon the priorities that they set out has increased since 2023 (50%) to 54%. However, this is a slight decrease compared to 2022 (55%).

1. In the Council’s 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 that the launch of the Local Policing Charter has led to a reduction in crime and increased feelings of safety has increased to 20% after being consistent for the last two years (14% and 15%).

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:**

Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) believe it is very/fairly easy to access their local policing team which is a large increase compared to 2023 (67%).

21% of councils believe it is fairly/very difficult to access their local policing teams which has significantly decreased since 2023 (28%). This is still higher than its lowest, recorded in 2022 (17%).

1. 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 (54%) believe that it is very/fairly easy to access relevant information for the local community from the police. This is a slight decrease from 2023 (56%). This peaked in 2022 (61%).

32% of respondents find it fairly/very difficult which is a slight increase on 2023 (31%), and a significant increase compared to 2022 (24%).

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

**Key points:**

36% of councils rated the level of contact they have with the police as excellent/good. This is an improvement compared to 2023 (33%) but still much lower than the other recorded years with it peaking in 2021 (42%).

Over a third of respondents believed the level of contact was fair (35%), dipping slightly from 2023 (37%).

26% felt that the response was poor/very poor which is a slight decrease from last year (28%).

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 majority of respondents (90%) contact the police via email, but this has gone down since last year (94%).

The next popular means are mobile (39%) and landline (25%) which have both increased significantly since last year (32% and 17% respectively) despite both decreasing since 2019.

Contact through the website (8%) has steadily increased since 2019 (5%), however has had a slight decrease since last year (9%).

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:**

30% of councils contact the police to discuss local issues weekly or monthly, the highest it has been since 2021 (also 30%).

Like 2023, 46% contact the police every 2-6 months which is still higher than previous years.

Those who contact the police once a year has dropped to an all time low (15%), the greatest percentage decrease since 2023 (20%).

5% of councils never contact the police, a slight increase on last year (4%) but an overall decrease from 2020 (9%).

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

**Key points:**

40% of councils believe that the police response to information/meeting requests is excellent/good. This has increased from 36% last year.

However, those who rated the response as fair (25%) has significantly decreased since 2023 (38%).

Moreover, 28% thought their responses were poor/very poor which is the highest since the survey’s inception.

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

**Key points:**

Over one third (35%) of councils expressed that the police attended meetings/community events every 2-6 months, an increase compared to last year (31%).

Nearly a quarter (24%) of councils stated that the police never attend meetings/events, the highest it has been since the survey’s inception.

10% reported that police attend weekly/monthly which is a slight increase on last year (9%) and the highest it has been since 2019 (also 10%).

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

**Key points:**

A third of respondents (33%) expressed that the police proactively contact their council every 2-6 months. This has increased from last year (28%) and is the highest it has been since 2020 (34%).

21% answered monthly, which has been constant since 2022 following an increase since 2019 (16%).

Those who answered weekly (7%) has slightly decreased since 2022 (9%) but is much higher than its low in 2020 (1%).

22% state that the police never contact their council for these reasons, a slight decrease since 2023 (25%).

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:**

Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) are very familiar with their local SNT, a large increase on 2023 (18%) and the highest it has been since 2021 (28%).

11% responded that their local SNT are totally unknown to them, an increase on last year (6%), but a general improvement since 2021 (16%).

41% are somewhat familiar with their SNT, a decrease since 2023 (49%).

## **Crime and ASB**

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 council?

**Key points:**

63% of respondents believe that crime and ASB is not a very big problem/not a problem at all. This has been reducing and is now the lowest it has ever been.

33% of councils believe that crime and ASB are fairly big/very big problems in their area. This is slightly higher than last year (32%) and is the highest it has ever been.

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

**Key points:**

* 81% if respondents believe that **violent crime** is not a problem/not a very big problem. This is a decrease from last year (88%).
* 56% believe that **ASB** is not a problem/not a very big problem which is lower than 2023 (65%). Last year 28% believed it was a fairly/very big problem which has now jumped to 37%.
* The biggest perceived fairly/very big problem to respondents was **road safety** (76%) which is a slight decrease since last year (79%).
* Similarly, **rural crime** is perceived to be a fairly/very big problem by 57% of councils. This is an increase on last year (53%) and the highest it has ever been.

# **LPA Findings**

## **Herefordshire**

**Local Policing**

* 40% of councils in Herefordshire believe that the police are doing an excellent/good job compared to 34% throughout West Mercia. This is also a significant increase in Herefordshire compared to last year (14%).
* 48% of respondents reported police visibility to be fair, much higher than West Mercia (28%). 48% of councils reported police visibility in their area to be poor/very poor, slightly lower than throughout West Mercia (55%). There were no reports of excellent or good police visibility in Herefordshire, whereas in West Mercia this is 16%.
* 32% of respondents in Herefordshire agree that the police work well with the council to identify and address local issues, which is lower than that seen throughout wider West Mercia (46%).
* 20% of councils in Herefordshire do not have confidence in the police to resolve crime in their communities, which is lower than the West Mercia average (29%).
* Councils in Herefordshire contact the police to raise concerns about crime or incidents less regularly than those West Mercia wide. 12% reported that they make contact either weekly or monthly, compared to 23% in West Mercia. 28% reported that they never make contact, which is significantly higher than West Mercia (10%).
* 31% of councils throughout West Mercia believe that the police’s response rate to crime and disorder is excellent or good, whereas in Herefordshire 20% believe this is good with no reports of excellent responses.

**Contact and Engagement**

* 76% of respondents in Herefordshire were aware of the West Mercia Police Local Policing Charter, compared to 83% West Mercia wide. This is also a slight decrease on last year (79%).
* The majority of councils throughout West Mercia (54%) believe that the police act upon the priorities set out by the council, whereas in Herefordshire this is 48%.
* 88% of councils in Herefordshire report that they have not seen a reduction in crime and an increased feeling of safety as a result of the Local Policing Charter. This is higher than the West Mercia average (80%).
* 28% of councils in Herefordshire report that the level of contact they maintain with police is excellent/good, which is lower than the West Mercia average (36%).
* 16% of councils in Herefordshire contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information, and invite to meetings monthly, with none reporting that they make contact weekly. This is much lower than West Mercia wide where 26% contact them monthly and 4% contacting weekly.
* The biggest proportion of councils in Herefordshire (40%) reported that the police attend council meetings and community events once a year, which is 25% in West Mercia.
* 28% of councils in West Mercia reported that the police proactively contact the council to raise awareness of local issues weekly or monthly, compared to 12% in Herefordshire. However, 56% of council in Herefordshire reported that the police contact them every 2-6 months which is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (33%).

**Crime and ASB**

* 20% of respondents in Herefordshire believe that crime and ASB in their local area was a fairly/very big problem. This is significantly lower than the West Mercia average (33%).

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

**Key points:**

* 64% of respondents in Herefordshire believe that ASB is not a problem/not a very big problem, which is higher than the West Mercia average (56%).
* Rural crime is perceived to be a fairly/very big problem by 57% of councils in West Mercia, but only 48% of councils in Herefordshire think this.

## **Shropshire**

**Local Policing**

* 29% of councils in Shropshire believe that the police are doing an excellent/good job in their local area, which is lower than the West Mercia average (34%).
* 55% of councils throughout West Mercia reported that police visibility is poor/very poor. In Shropshire, this is much higher at 67%.
* 31% of councils in Shropshire believe that the police do not work well with the council to identify and address local crime issues, which is higher than the West Mercia average (25%).
* In Shropshire, only 31% of councils have confidence in the police to resolve crime and disorder in their communities. This is significantly below the West Mercia average (41%).
* Throughout West Mercia, 31% of councils rate the police’s response to crime and disorder issues raised by the council as excellent or good. This is much lower in Shropshire (23%).

**Contact and Engagement**

* More councils in Shropshire (88%) report that they are aware of the Local Policing Charter than in West Mercia (83%).
* 85% of Shropshire councils report that they have not seen a reduction in crime or an increased feeling of safety as a result of the Local Policing Charter, more than West Mercia wide (80%).
* 79% of councils in Shropshire believe it is very/fairly easy to access their local policing teams, higher than the West Mercia average (73%).
* 39% of Shropshire councils reported that is fairly/very difficult to access relevant information for the local community from the police, higher than West Mercia (32%).
* Shropshire councils were more likely to report the level of contact they have with the police as poor/very poor (35%) than West Mercia wide (26%).
* 11% of councils in West Mercia reported that the members of their local Safer Neighbourhood Team were completely unknown to them, this is only 4% in Shropshire.

**Crime and ASB**

* There was no significant difference between views on ASB between councils in Shropshire and the wider West Mercia region.

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

**Key points:**

* 56% of councils in West Mercia believe that ASB is not a problem/not a very big problem, whereas in Shropshire this is only 45%.
* Rural crime is perceived to be a fairly/very big problem by 65% of Shropshire councils, higher than the West Mercia average (57%).

## **Telford and Wrekin**

**Local Policing**

* 50% of councils in Telford and Wrekin reported that the police are doing a good job in their area, significantly higher than the West Mercia average (30%).
* 38% of councils rate the visibility of police in their local community to be excellent or good, double the West Mercia average (16%). However, 38% rated the visibility to be very poor which is much higher than the average (21%).
* 88% of councils in Telford and Wrekin believe that the police work well with the council to address local crime issues, much higher than wider West Mercia (46%).
* 88% of Telford and Wrekin councils have confidence in the police to resolve these issues that are raised, also significantly higher than the average (41%).
* 50% of Telford and Wrekin councils contact the police about crime and incidents weekly or monthly. This is more than double the West Mercia average (23%). There were no reports of councils in Telford and Wrekin never contacting the police for these reasons, whereas in the wider region 10% never make contact.
* 13% reported the police response to crime in Telford and Wrekin as very poor, which is much lower in wider West Mercia (5%).

**Contact and Engagement**

* 86% of councils in Telford and Wrekin reported that the police have acted upon the priorities that the councils set out, significantly higher than the average (54%).
* In contrast to the wider region (20%), 63% of Telford and Wrekin councils reported a reduction in crime and an increased feeling of safety as a result of the launch of the Local Policing Charter.
* 5% of councils in West Mercia reported it was very difficult to access relevant information for the local community from the police, but this was much higher in Telford and Wrekin (13%).
* 63% of Telford and Wrekin councils contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information, and invite to meetings monthly, much higher than West Mercia (26%).
* There were no reports of poor/very poor police responses to these requests in Telford and Wrekin, contrasting the West Mercia average (28%). Similarly, there were no reports that the police never attended these council meetings, whereas 24% in West Mercia stated this.
* 26% reported that the members of their local Safter Neighbourhood Team are not well known/totally unknown, which is lower than the average (34%). 63% reported they are very familiar, contrasting the wider region (23%).

**Crime and ASB**

* There was no significant difference between views on ASB between councils in Telford and Wrekin and the wider West Mercia region.

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

**Key points:**

* 38% of Telford and Wrekin councils believe that ASB is a fairly big problem, much higher than the average (25%).
* 88% of councils believe that road safety is a fairly/very big problem in Telford and Wrekin, higher than the average (76%).

## **North Worcestershire**

**Local Policing**

* 80% of respondents believe the police are doing an excellent/good job in North Worcestershire, significantly higher than the West Mercia average (34%).
* 70% of councils in North Worcestershire rated the visibility of police in their areas to be good or fair, much higher than the average (40%).
* 80% of councils believe that the police work well with them to identify and address local crime and disorder issues, higher than the West Mercia average (46%).
* 70% have confidence in the police to resolve these issues, 41% in wider West Mercia.
* In North Worcestershire, 60% of councils contact the police to raise concerns monthly. 80% of respondents rated the police’s response as excellent or good.

**Contact and Engagement**

* All engaged councils in North Worcestershire are aware of the Local Policing Charter, only 83% in the wider region. All these councils had been contacted by the police to identify their priorities, only 84% had in wider West Mercia.
* 80% of the councils in North Worcestershire believed that the police had acted upon the priorities they set out, higher than the average (54%).
* 100% of respondents in North Worcestershire think it is very/fairly easy to access their local policing teams.
* 100% of respondents rated the level of contact they have with the police as excellent, good, or fair.
* 80% of councils contact the police to discuss local issues, seek information, or invite to meetings monthly, significantly higher than the average (26%).
* No councils in North Worcestershire reported that the police never proactively contact them, whilst 22% of councils do in West Mercia.
* All respondents were very or somewhat familiar with their local Safer Neighbourhood Team whilst only 64% are in the wider region.

**Crime and ASB**

* 50% of respondents believe that crime and ASB are fairly/very big problems. This is significantly higher than the average (33%).

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

**Key points:**

* 30% of councils in North Worcestershire do not think road safety is a very big problem, double the West Mercia average (15%).
* 60% of respondents are not sure how big of a problem sexual offences are in North Worcestershire, the West Mercia average is 50%.

## **South Worcestershire**

**Local Policing**

* 33% of councils in South Worcestershire think that the police are doing a poor/very poor job. This is almost double the West Mercia average (17%).
* 36% of councils think that the police do not work well with the council to identify and address local crime issues, which is higher than the wider area (25%).
* 41% of respondents do not have confidence in the police to resolve crime within South Worcestershire. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (29%).
* The majority of councils in South Worcestershire (64%) contact the police every 2-6 months to raise concerns about crimes and incidents, whilst only 44% do in the wider area.
* 27% of councils rated the police response to crime and disorder issues as poor/very poor. This is significantly higher than the West Mercia average (17%).

**Contact and Engagement**

* The majority of councils in West Mercia (54%) think that the police act upon their priorities. However, only 44% in South Worcestershire agree.
* 33% of councils think it is fairly/very difficult to access their local policing teams, which is higher than the West Mercia average (21%).
* 67% of councils in South Worcestershire contact the police every 2-6 months to discuss local issues, seek information, or invite to meetings. This is higher than the wider area average (46%).
* Nearly a quarter (24%) of councils in West Mercia report that the police never attend events in their area. This is significantly higher in South Worcestershire (39%).
* Nearly half (48%) of councils in South Worcestershire are unfamiliar with the members of their local Safer Neighbourhood Team. This is higher than the West Mercia average (34%).

**Crime and ASB**

* There was no significant difference between views on ASB between councils in South Worcestershire and the wider West Mercia region.

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

**Key points:**

* 70% of councils believe that ASB is not a problem/not a very big problem in South Worcestershire. This is higher than the West Mercia average (56%).
* The biggest perceived fairly/very big problem to councils in South Worcestershire is road safety (84%), slightly higher than the West Mercia average (76%).