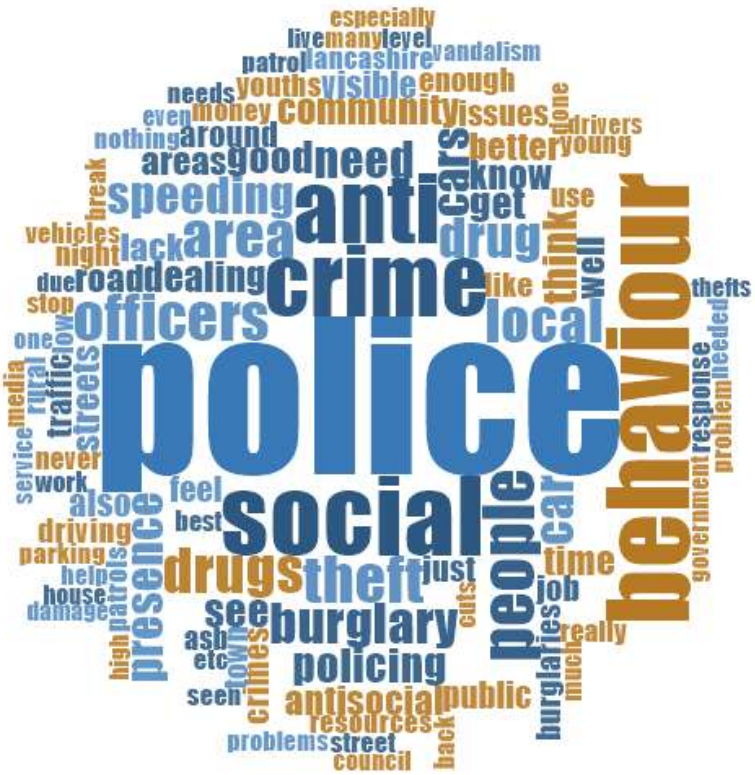
ANALYSIS OF THE 'LET'S TALK POLICING' SURVEY 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent assessments, inspections and national statistics illustrate how policing has reduced and stabilised crime rates (apart from an overall rise in fraud offences) over the last few decades (ONS, 2020). Yet, this is often not reflected in the public's views and concerns, since they are often not aware of police data or day-to-day policing activities (Bradford & Myhill, 2015). Taking this phenomena into account, dialogue with the public has become more important than ever due to the publicity surrounding police austerity and the decline of police budgets in the UK (Brains & Owens, 2015). This would subsequently signal issues in police effectiveness to the public, resulting in reduced levels of confidence and feelings of safety (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013). This void between the public's understanding of police priorities and objective crimes rates has previously been termed the 'reassurance gap' (Herrington & Millie, 2006), whereby forces need to carefully balance reassurance policing alongside serious crime related issues. It is important that this engagement takes place since the public have also previously stated that they want an open dialogue with the police to understand and contribute towards police priorities (Casey, 2008).

The 'Let's Talk Policing' survey is a prime example of the effort police agencies are taking to understand their public. It aimed to collect views of local residents regarding their police force, covering key topics such as safety, confidence, contact, policing priorities and funding. As the survey collected a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data, the Policing department of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) was approached to provide analytical support. Subsequently, this report aimed to provide analysis into three key questions using a mixed methods approach. It concerns multivariate modelling of who would be willing to pay more council tax for policing based upon other questions within the survey, as well as a thematic analysis of two open-ended questions pertaining to policing issues in the local area and what the police are doing well or could do better. This analysis was conducted on a sample of 2,815 survey responses which met the inclusion criteria of the analysis (reduced from 3,256).

With regards to the quantitative analysis, statistical modelling found that the variables which illustrated a strong statistical relationship with agreement to pay council tax were: stating that roads policing was a medium or high priority ($p < .001$); stating that the patrolling of low crime areas was a low priority ($p < .001$); the respondent not disclosing their ethnicity ($p < .001$); and the respondent not disclosing their victimisation, or reported not being a victim of crime ($p < .001$).

Across the 2,815 respondents, seven themes were developed around issues within the respondents' area. The themes covered a variety of crime types and policing issues within the respondents' local area, including: 1) anti-social behaviour; 2) theft; 3) vehicle issues (excluding theft); 4) drugs; 5) police presence; 6) petty crime; and 7) rural crime. The thematic

analysis that focused on the things Lancashire Police do well or could do better resulted in the development of five core themes. These themes covered: 1) more police visibility; 2) crime reporting and response; 3) police budget; 4) police engagement; and 5) general opinion.

The results uncovered core themes that were important to the sample of respondents, whereby several findings appeared consistent with previous surveying of a Lancashire population (BMG Research, 2019; Birdsall, et al., 2015; Robinson, et al., 2015). Such issues included requests for increased police visibility and greater communication, as well as the police tackling local key issues such as anti-social behaviour, theft and drugs. However, there were some findings that were not apparent within the previous surveys, such as the importance of roads policing, as well as the mention of rural crime.

Overall, whilst it is helpful to get such feedback from the public to aid with engagement and make them feel that they have a say in the way their force is run (Casey, 2008), the research demonstrated that their wants can sometimes be contradictory in nature, insensitive to force priorities, or involve unsupported assumptions (Kelling, et al., 2003). Therefore, Lancashire Police may be best placed to focus their priorities on objective strategies that are evidenced in reducing crime and disorder, whilst understanding how to make such policing activity more visible. Furthermore, consideration should also be placed into understanding how to practically implement findings from the 'Let's Talk Policing' survey, whereby respondents' wants could be enacted to address the reassurance gap (Herrington & Millie, 2006) through measures that are more targeted than those highlighted by the public themselves. An example of this could be to specifically target hotspots of citizen identified crime issues with physical police patrols, and ensuring that this police activity is heavily advertised to citizens within the local area.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The 'Let's Talk Policing' survey is a predominantly online survey, supported by a series of roadshow events, conducted by Lancashire's Police and Crime Commissioner. It aims to collect views of local residents regarding their police force, covering key topics such as safety, confidence, contact, policing priorities and funding. The survey was launched on 27th July 2019 and closed on 10th September 2019, with roadshows held across:

- Preston Pulse Community Celebration Day, Preston Flag market, 28th July;
- Garstang Show, 4th August;
- Haslingden, Tesco, 9th August;
- Accrington, Arndale Shopping Centre, 9th August;
- Colne, Asda, 17th August;
- Skelmersdale, Concourse Shopping Centre, 23rd August;
- Chorley, Booth's Supermarket, 23rd August;
- Burnley, Tesco Extra, 28th August;
- Bamber Bridge, Sainsbury's, 29th August;
- Blackpool, Houndshill Shopping Centre, 29th August;
- Lancaster, St Nicholas' Arcade, 5th September;
- Clitheroe, Sainsbury's, 6th September;
- Lancashire Game and Country Festival, Scorton, 8th September.

Upon completion of the survey, the data held within the survey software was examined to provide the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) with descriptive insight into the responses to the survey. However, as deeper analysis was required for insight into particular questions, researchers in the Policing department of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) were approached to provide analytical support. Subsequently, this report aims to provide analysis into three key questions using a mixed methods approach. It concerns multivariate modelling of who would be willing to pay more council tax for policing, as well as thematic analysis of two key open-ended questions pertaining to policing issues in the local area and what the police are doing well or could do better.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 Introduction

Understanding the public's views on policing is critical in ensuring that forces abide by the core Peelian principle of policing by consent. However, understanding what the public want can often result in a huge variety of ideologies and expectations with regards to the policing role (Goldstein, 1977). Furthermore, these concerns can often be expressed without an understanding of the policing context, since very few individuals actually come into contact with the police or fully understand their role as a service (Bradford & Myhill, 2015). Consequently, forces can sometimes be left with an unclear picture of priorities, since

conflicts arise between various residents' views, as well as between objective and subjective perspectives on police priorities.

Conflicts between citizens' views often occur due to some believing that the police are there to solely fight crime, with their outlook often focused on efficiency and visible policing (Jackson & Bradford, 2010). This contrasts to the alternative mindset of citizens who focus on police treatment, taking police legitimacy as an indicator of wider maintained order (Murphy, 2009). Examining the issue wider than citizens' views of the police role, there is further complexity in understanding subjective priorities as they are often borne from an individual's interpretation of disruption to their perceived social norms, a phenomena called 'signal crimes' (Jackson, et al., 2009, p. 109).

This approach, first developed by Martin Innes, illustrates how each individual interprets disorder differently, whereby smaller signs of disorder, such as graffiti and littering, can make an individual feel unsafe without actually being a victim or witness to crime (Innes, et al., 2009). Recent assessments, inspections and national statistics illustrate how policing has reduced and stabilised crime rates (apart from an overall rise in fraud offences) over the last few decades (ONS, 2020). Yet, this is often not reflected in the public's views and concerns, since they are often not aware of police data or day-to-day policing activities (Bradford & Myhill, 2015). Taking this phenomena into account, dialogue with the public has become more important than ever due to the publicity surrounding police austerity and the decline of police budgets in the UK (Brains & Owens, 2015). This would subsequently 'signal' issues in police effectiveness to the public, resulting in a reduced level of confidence and feelings of safety (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013).

This void between the public's understanding of police priorities and objective crimes rates has previously been termed the 'reassurance gap' (Herrington & Millie, 2006), whereby forces need to carefully balance 'reassurance' policing alongside serious crime related issues. It is important that this engagement takes place since the public have also previously stated that they want an open dialogue with the police to understand and contribute towards police priorities (Casey, 2008). Furthermore, such engagement is particularly important given that understanding police priorities, and being able to contribute towards them, addresses the ideologies of both those who focus on police efficiency, as well as those who focus on police legitimacy.

1.2.2 Practical implementation of reassurance policing

Due to the complexity involved in understanding what the public want, any implementation to meet these needs in practice also becomes fraught with difficulty. This is because requests are often not evidence-based, and/or are contradictory in nature. Ultimately, the public often request the police to engage in policing activity that has been evidenced not to work, or does not have sufficient evidence to show that it does work. Furthermore, contradictions often

appear in two forms regarding interpretations of survey data. The first is that individual priorities are often personal issues based upon 'signal crimes' (Jackson, et al., 2009), so residents may consider burglary to be a priority in their local area even though national statistics highlight how burglaries are decreasing (ONS, 2020). Secondly, priorities are often influenced by the format of the survey itself. If lists of policing priorities are provided, then respondents tend to consider serious crimes as high priority, and patrols as low priority. However, when open to their personal views, they often state that they want greater visibility and more patrols. Therefore, requests become difficult to fulfil as respondents can both state that patrols are a low priority overall, but that they want to see a greater number of patrols.

Further difficulty arises when considering evidence about whether increased patrols actually increase public perceptions of safety and confidence in the UK. There is some evidence to suggest that seeing regular patrols and being informed of policing increases public satisfaction (Bradford, et al., 2009). Yet, other studies have identified that higher police presence can lead some individuals to either form a negative disposition towards the police, since constant contact with police can become onerous (Carr, et al., 2007; McAra & McVie, 2005), or report a higher level of fear due to increased police presence in their area (Hinkle & Weisburd, 2008). Furthermore, police may act more prejudicially within known high crime areas, which may negatively impact upon public perceptions (Skogan, 2006).

The largest study into the impact of police patrols was the Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment (Kelling, et al., 2003). This US randomised controlled trial allocated patrols into geographical areas of the force's jurisdiction, ensuring a controlled allocation of: 'reactive' (received no preventative patrol since patrols were removed from this area); 'proactive' (police visibility was increased by two to three times its usual level); and, 'control' (normal level of patrols were maintained). The randomised control group experiment evidenced that, across all three groups, there were no statistically significant differences in the level of crime, citizens' attitudes of the police, citizens' fear of crime, and citizens' satisfaction with police response time. Ultimately, the study evidenced that citizens do not necessarily notice increased levels of patrols within an area, meaning that preventative patrols should be deployed based upon specific crime prevention aims, as opposed to routine or general patrol.

The study conflicts with the traditional prevailing view of police work that has been entrenched into the psyche of police officers and the public without scientific basis since the 1930s (Kelling, et al., 2003). Ultimately, because residents want to feel safe and secure within their homes and their local communities, consideration of the signal crimes theory could explain why police visibility is so vital to citizens (Lowe & Innes, 2012). That is, if disruption of the norm is a signal of crime, then a fully uniformed police officer, in theory, provides the signal of order and safety. In practice, however, scientific research illustrates how this may not necessarily be the case and that similar sentiments of safety can be achieved through media and word of mouth (Hohl, et al., 2010). Consequently, efforts should be placed into understanding how to best address the reassurance gap and balance objective policing

priorities against what the public want from their local police force (Herrington & Millie, 2006).

1.2.3 Methods of communication

In order to gauge the public's views, forces first need to communicate with the communities they police. In addressing engagement, the police have a range of continuous communication methods at their disposal, including Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, unplanned street meetings and the use of social media. However, these mediums often have low attendance or need constant tailoring to area demographics to ensure they have an effective response rate (Birdsall, et al., 2015). As a result, one of the main methods for interacting with the public is through surveying their views and expectations (Brown & Benedict, 2002). Whilst not a two-way dialogue, surveys are an effective means of collecting information from the community and learning about the concerns of residents. Yet methodological issues often mean that information is gathered without a clearly defined focus or analysis plan (Cao, 2004). Subsequently, confusion can arise in understanding key metrics and key questions, since they are often not standardised with, or complimentary to, similar surveying of the same target population (Birdsall, 2019). This adds further complication to the varied views of citizens, as different perspectives will be collected and represented via different surveys due to differing sampling techniques and survey instruments. This provides further strain on the objective versus subjective policing priorities, as there is much agreement around the quantifiable metrics of policing (crime rates, arrest figures and officer numbers), in comparison to greater ambiguity on how to measure public perceptions and views (Lowe & Innes, 2012).

1.2.4 Surveying the public's expectation of policing

Previous research into policing in Lancashire includes several surveys concerning public perceptions and police priorities. With regards to a survey conducted by UCLan on behalf of Lancashire Constabulary in 2015 (Birdsall, et al., 2015) and a survey conducted by BMG research on behalf of HMICFRS (BMG Research, 2019), both found that respondents from Lancashire had strong views on physical police visibility. The UCLan survey found that 75.2% of respondents reported that they wanted an increase in foot patrols (Birdsall, et al., 2015) and 83% of the respondents to the BMG survey stated that regular officers or PCSOs in the local area were important (BMG Research, 2019). When respondents to the UCLan survey were asked to highlight issues in their local area, the respondents explained how anti-social behaviour (17.2%), violent crime (14.7%), and drugs (14.2%) were something the police should prioritise (Birdsall, et al., 2015). Consistent with these findings, anti-social behaviour was also the most prominent issue within the 2015 'Living in Lancashire' Survey, with litter and thefts following in close succession (Robinson, et al., 2015).

Specific to the 2015 UCLan survey, the majority of respondents reported that they felt safe in their home during the daytime; however, this feeling of safety decreased during the nighttime

and within town centres. This may have important considerations for the OPCC survey, as respondents may be considering different aspects of their lives when considering whether they feel safe. Subsequently, if respondents as a whole report a safety score between 50-80%, then this could be an averaging of those who consider their safety within their homes (reporting higher levels) and others who consider their safety in their local areas (reporting lower levels).

Respondents in the previous survey also reported how they were dissatisfied with being able to provide '*information in'* to the force, meaning reporting and updating the force on local issues. This focused on difficulties with the 101 number and a lack of local knowledge when reporting non-emergency crimes to this number. During the 2015 survey, however, there was no capacity for the public to report issues online even though this was a mechanism of public interest. With regards to *'information out'*, Birdsall et al. (2015) suggested the improved use of social media to promote visible police work within the community. It was recommended that the communication should be tailored to a younger and/or female audience, since this demographic was significantly more likely to positively engage with this communication method. It was argued that this promotion of visible policing allowed the force to somewhat control the police narrative and counteract negative impacts to confidence and satisfaction caused by news and media reporting (Hohl, et al., 2010).

1.3 SUMMARY

This report provides an analysis of the Lancashire OPCC 'Let's Talk Policing' survey, which collected residents' views on policing at a time when police austerity was at its peak. Whilst previous surveys have examined residents' views on police priorities, the data contained within the OPCC survey may provide unique insight into the core 'wants' from the public, since they are aware that policing resources are extremely constrained.

It is therefore important to understand the respondents' views within this context, whereby descriptive comparisons could be made to the previous surveys to understand how responses may have changed over time. However, the data within the OPCC survey is particularly rich, since the survey collected information on the residents' policing issues and thoughts of the force via open-text boxes.

Subsequently, this report aims to provide a mixed method analysis of the secondary data collected by the Lancashire OPCC's annual policing survey to provide insight into their data. The analysis will identify key issues expressed by the public within the survey, in order to better understand and target practice to ensure reassurance policing meets public expectations.

SECTION 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2020, UCLan were commissioned to provide analytical support for three key questions contained within the OPCC's 'Let's Talk Policing' survey of 2019. The report provides a key focus on:

- Multivariate modelling of willingness to pay more council tax towards policing;
- Thematic analysis of policing issues in the respondents' local areas; and,
- Thematic analysis of what the respondents believe the police currently do well or could do better.

2.2 APPROACH

The report concerned a secondary source design, using sanitised secondary data provided by the OPCC. The analysis used a mixed methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Quantitative approaches use statistical methods to process and analyse numerical data, which is often associated with greater accuracy, validity and reliability, allowing for comparison and replicability (Sarantakos, 2013). However, whilst quantitative methods are adept in illustrating straightforward information and trends, they do not explain the nuances as to why a trend is taking place. Conversely, qualitative approaches often examine open text data to understand the context, meanings and nuances to participants' views (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical approval for the analysis of secondary survey data was granted by the UCLan ethics committee with data management conducted in line with General Data Protection Regulations and University procedures.

2.3 DATA PROCESSING

The survey data was received by the researcher in .XLSX format compatible with MS Excel. This file contained a sanitised dataset of the responses to the OPCC 'Let's Talk Policing' survey. The survey data was stored electronically in password protected files on the university servers. The researcher first read the data for familiarity before beginning to clean the data for analysis.

The first step in data processing was to remove the incomplete or partially completed survey responses prevalent within the dataset. The criteria for inclusion was that the survey response had to contain answers to all questions apart from the qualitative response boxes and demographic questions at the end of the survey. The removal of the incomplete responses

reduced the overall dataset from an original 3,256 respondents, to 2,815 survey responses that met the inclusion criteria. The refined dataset was used for the analysis throughout the report.

As the study employed mixed methods, the dataset was split into numerical or coded data appropriate for quantitative analysis, as well as free text data appropriate for qualitative analysis. The quantitative data consisted of the closed response questions to the survey, which related to the questions surveying: respondent safety; confidence; policing priorities; value for money; council tax; and, respondent demographics. This data was coded and imported into IBM SPSS v26 with the participant ID used as a primary key to ensure connection to the raw data. The qualitative data related to the two open-ended questions within the survey (Q5 and Q8 of the survey in Appendix A). This data was imported into NVivo 12+, with each cell being attached to the participant number to ensure connection to the raw data.

2.4 SAMPLE

The total 2,815 sample contained data on the respondents': gender; ethnicity; whether they had been a victim; safety score; and confidence in Lancashire Constabulary.

The predominant gender of the sample was female (*n* = 1,447, 51.4%) with males following closely in terms of proportion (*n* = 1,207, 42.9%). There were 108 (3.8%) respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender, and 53 (1.9%) cases of missing data. The overwhelming majority of respondents were White (*n* = 2,502, 88.9%), with 37 (1.3%) respondents who were Asian/British Asian, and 13 (0.5%) respondents who were Black/British Black. There were 158 (5.6%) respondents who preferred not to disclose their ethnicity and 51 (1.8%) respondents who defined their ethnicity as 'other'.

With regards to the feelings of safety across the sample, the mean score was 3.4 (*SD* = 1.1) (safety score ranged between 1 - very unsafe, and 5 - very safe). This meant that the sample as a whole felt largely safe where they lived, as it equated to a 68% safety score across the sample. Conversely, this did not follow through into confidence that Lancashire Constabulary would be there when the respondents needed them. Examining the confidence scoring, the majority of the sample were 'not very' or 'not at all' confident (*n* = 1,609, 57.1%), with a smaller proportion of respondents feeling 'fairly' or 'very' confident (*n* = 864, 30.7%). There were 342 (12.1%) respondents who did not know how confident they felt towards the police being there when they needed them.

The safety and confidence scores may have been impacted by previous victimisation which was captured within the survey. Across the 2,815 sample there were 617 (21.9%) respondents who reported being a victim of crime in the last year, with 1,975 (70.2%) respondents

reporting no victimisation in the previous year. In the responses, there were 40 (1.4%) instances of missing data and 183 (6.5%) respondents who preferred not to say.

2.5 ANALYSIS

2.5.1 Quantitative analysis

The numerical data, coded and imported into IBM SPSS v26, was first visualised using descriptive statistics. The variable of focus was whether the respondents were willing to pay more council tax towards policing, with the respondents either answering 'Yes', 'No', or 'Don't know'. To determine whether other elements of the survey provided insight into the agreement to pay more tax, regression analysis was chosen to model the respondents' demographics (Q10-12) and policing priorities (Q4).

For both statistical models, the dependent variable 'council tax' was coded as a binary variable, consisting of only 'Yes' (1) and 'No' (0). Respondents with missing data, or those who responded with 'Don't know' were excluded from this analysis. Due to missing data within the demographic analysis, the demographic modelling included *n* = 2,318 (82.3%) respondents and the policing priority modelling included *n* = 2,361 (83.9%) respondents. Both found statistically significant models, with several variables in each model explaining respondents' agreement for a raise in council tax. Subsequently, the significant variables from each model were put together and a combined model was developed using these significant factors.

2.5.2 Qualitative analysis

The qualitative data imported into NVivo 12+ was analysed using thematic analysis, which included both *inductive* and *deductive* approaches. The inductive coding involved three steps: 1) The use of auto-coding to develop core themes (whilst the use of auto-coding is considered an experimental feature of NVivo, it has previously been stated as particularly useful for 'large projects with short responses' (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019) similar to the current project); 2) examination of word frequency to add to the core themes; and 3) manual examination of each cell to code the respondents' information against the core themes, or develop further themes where information did not fit the existing themes.

This was followed by the deductive analysis which searched the cases for specific themes which related to the corresponding question. This meant that the themes developed in an analysis of crime issues in the respondents' local area were used to search for what the police could do better, and the themes developed from what the police could do better were used to search for specific police issues in the respondents' local area. Cells were coded when they contained information that related to these deductive themes; however, the themes were later split, combined or deleted based upon their frequency across the sample.

SECTION 3: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1 WILLING TO PAY MORE COUNCIL TAX

Across the 2,815 respondents, 1020 (36.3%) believed Lancashire Constabulary was not good value for money, 1010 (35.9%) were unsure, and 785 (27.8%) believed the Constabulary was good value for money. With regards to agreeing to pay more council tax, 1,391 (49.4%) stated they were willing to pay more, with 970 (34.5%) not wanting to pay more, and 454 (16.1%) stating they don't know whether they would pay more council tax.

To understand whether other questions in the survey explained the respondents' agreement to pay more council tax, binary logistic regression was used to model respondents' demographics and policing priorities. A binary logistic regression is an analysis technique that examines a main variable that has a binary outcome (for example on/off, yes/no, or present/not present) against a set of independent variables. It then examines how each independent variable explains the change in the main variable by attributing comparative values to illustrate this relationship. With this in mind, the analysis separated the respondents' demographics into one model and policing priorities into a second model, before then merging the significant variables from each into a combined third model.

Firstly, the modelling of respondents' demographics examined three variables: gender; ethnicity; and victimisation, against the dependent binary variable of agreement to pay more council tax. This analysis found a statistically significant model which explained between 3.9% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 5.3% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in agreement to pay more council tax, $\chi^2(8) = 93.306$, $p < .001$. This analysis found that ethnicity ($p < .001$) and victimisation ($p < .001$) had a significant relationship with the dependent variable. This meant that the respondents' ethnicity and whether they had been a victim in the previous year had a relationship with their agreement to pay more council tax, whereas gender did not.

The second model contained 12 variables (each with three categories: high; medium; low) pertaining to police priorities. The list of variables analysed in this instance included:

- Tackling child abuse and sexual exploitation;
- Investigating serious crimes;
- Combatting terrorism/extremism;
- Tackling domestic abuse/violence;
- Patrolling areas with regular reports of crime;
- Addressing local crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Taking early action to prevent crimes;
- Road traffic policing;
- Answer and respond promptly to non-emergency calls;

- Provide crime prevention advice and support;
- Provide information to respondents about policing;
- Patrolling areas with low levels of reported crime.

The analysis found a slightly stronger statistically significant model which explained between 4.9% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 6.7% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in the dependent variable, $\chi^2(24) = 119.558$, $p < .001$. The independent variables which had a significant relationship with council tax in this instance were roads traffic policing ($p <. 001$), answer and respond promptly to non-emergency calls ($p = .016$), and patrolling areas with low levels of reported crime ($p < .001$). This analysis highlighted how three of the 12 policing priorities had a relationship with the respondents' agreement to pay more council tax.

Reviewing the findings, the first model found that ethnicity and victimisation had a relationship with the dependent variable of council tax. The second model found that roads policing, responding to non-emergency calls and patrolling low crime areas had a relationship with council tax. Therefore, these five variables were combined and placed into a third binary model to understand their overall impact on the respondents' agreement to pay increased levels of council tax.

A third binary logistic regression was compiled using the statistically significant variables from the previous two models. The analysis consisted of n = 2,318 (82.3%) respondents and included the variables: ethnicity; victimisation; roads policing; non-emergency calls; and patrolling low crime areas. The analysis found a model that was statistically stronger than the two previous models, explaining between 6.3% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 8.4% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in agreement to pay more council tax, $\chi^2(12) = 148.951$, $p < .001$ (please see Table 1).

Table 1: Binary logistic regression of agreement to pay more council tax analysed across five predictor variables.

Variable	Level	β	Wald	Exp(β)	Confidence Interval (95%)	
					Lower	Upper
Road policing	*Low (comparator)*		*41.907*	***		
	Medium	.503	20..898	1.653***	1.333	2.051
	High	.815	40.992	2.260***	1.761	2.901
Non-emergency calls	*Low (comparator)*		*5.254*			
	Medium	-.157	2.050	.855	.690	1.060
	High	-.303	5.238	.738*	.569	.957
Patrol low crime area	*Low (comparator)*		*17.797*	***		
	Medium	-.310	10.190	.733**	.606	.887
	High	.594	13.579	.552***	.402	.757
Ethnicity	*White (comparator)*		*36.302*	***		
	Asian/British Asian	.012	.001	1.012	.484	2.114
	Black/British Black	-1.758	4.729	.172*	.035	.841
	Prefer not to say	-1.112	31.823	.329***	.223	.484
	Other	-.069	.047	.933	.498	1.749
Victimisation	*No (comparator)*		*21.339*	***		
	Yes	-.255	5.836	.775*	.630	.953
	Prefer not to say	-.784	18.053	.457***	.318	.655

Significance values: *p <.05; **p <.01; ***p <.001.

As demonstrated in Table 1, the variables which illustrated a strong statistical relationship with agreement to pay more council tax were roads policing (p < .001), patrolling low crime areas (p < .001), ethnicity (p < .001), and victimisation (p < .001). Non-emergency calls did not have a statistically significant relationship within the model (p > .05).

The table can be interpreted by comparing the levels of each variable against their respective comparator (labelled in Table 1) using the beta values (β) and exponential beta values (Exp(β)).

For example, in the variable roads policing, the comparator category was respondents who marked this policing activity as 'low' importance. When comparing those who marked it as 'medium' importance, there was a positive beta value (β) which indicated an increase in agreement to pay more council tax. The exponential beta (Exp(β)) acts as a ratio against the comparator level (which is fixed at a 1-point increase) to allow for an interpretation of the relationship within the model. In this instance, the result illustrated that those who marked

roads policing as 'medium' importance had an Exp(β) = 1.653, meaning that these respondents were 1.7 times (Lower CI = 1.3, and Upper CI = 2.1) more likely to agree with an increase in council tax, when compared to those who marked roads policing as 'low' importance. Following a similar procedure to interpret those who marked roads policing as 'high' importance, the result illustrates how these respondents had an Exp(β) = 2.260, meaning they were 2.3 times (Lower CI = 1.8, and Upper CI = 2.9) more likely to agree to higher council tax in comparison to those who marked roads policing as 'low' importance. Overall, the result pertaining to roads policing showed that those who were most likely to agree with an increase in council tax were those who marked it as a high priority. Following the trend of this relationship, the respondents least likely to agree to a rise in council tax were those who marked roads policing as a low priority.

However, the results in the case of patrolling low crime areas, ethnicity and victimisation provided negative beta values (β). This meant that the respondents within these levels were less likely to agree to a rise in council tax when examined against the respondents in the comparator level. When interpreting these results (using the Exp(β)), the negative values are examined against a fixed value of 1 for the comparator level by using percentages.

For example, when interpreting the variable of patrolling low crime areas, the comparator level was respondents who marked it as a 'low' priority (Exp(β) fixed at 1). In comparison to this group, those who marked this police activity as 'medium' importance had an Exp(β) = 0.773, meaning these respondents were 73.3% as likely (Lower CI = 60.6%, and Upper CI = 88.7%) to agree to a council tax increase. Using the same process to interpret those who marked patrolling low crime areas as a 'high' priority, this level illustrated how respondents were 55.2% as likely (Lower CI = 40.2%, and Upper CI = 75.7%) to agree with increasing council tax when compared to those who marked this police activity as 'low' importance. This finding shows that the respondents who considered patrols in low crime areas as a low police priority were significantly more likely to agree to an increase in council tax. Likewise, the finding also illustrated how those who considered patrols in low crime areas as a high priority were least likely to agree to paying more council tax.

When comparing ethnicity categories to 'White' respondents, those who were 'Black/Black British' were 17.2% as likely (Lower CI = 3.5%, and Upper CI = 84.1%), and those who 'preferred not to say' their ethnicity were 32.9% as likely (Lower CI = 22.3%, and Upper CI = 48.4%) to agree with an increase in council tax. All other ethnicities provided a non-significant relationship meaning the variance in these levels could be attributed to random chance ($p > .05$). Overall, this particular result highlights how those most likely to agree to a rise in council tax were 'White' respondents. Similarly, it also shows that 'Black/Black British' respondents and respondents who did not want to disclose their ethnicity were the least likely to agree to paying more council tax.

Finally, using respondents who had not been a victim of crime in the previous year as a comparator, those who had been victims were 77.5% as likely (Lower CI = 63.0%, and Upper CI = 95.3%), and those who 'preferred not to say' about their victimisation were 45.7% as likely (Lower CI = 31.8%, and Upper CI = 65.6%) to agree with an increase of council tax. This finding illustrated how those who had not been victims in the previous year were significantly more likely to agree with an increase in council tax. Similarly, it also demonstrated that the respondents least likely to agree with paying more council tax were those who had been victims in the previous year, or preferred not to disclose their victimisation at all.

Overall, when examined against their respective comparators, the modelling found that the respondents most likely to agree to a rise in council tax were 'White' non-victims who considered 'patrolling low crime areas' as a low priority and 'roads policing' as a high priority. Conversely the respondents least likely to agree to an increase in council tax were 'Black/Black British' (or preferred not to say) victims of crime (or preferred not to say) who considered 'patrolling low crime areas' as a high priority and 'roads policing' as a low priority.

SECTION 4: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 IN YOUR VIEW, WHAT CRIME TYPE OR OTHER POLICING ISSUES DOES YOUR LOCAL AREA HAVE THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH?

Both inductive and deductive coding was used to develop themes within the qualitative analysis. To provide context to the analysis, a Word Cloud was first generated to provide an overview of the most common words occurring across the respondents' answers (see Figure 1). Across the 2,815 respondents, seven themes were developed around crime types and policing issues within the respondents' local area (see Table 2). The following section outlines these themes and any further subthemes that were developed within the analysis.

Figure 1: Word Cloud displaying the frequency of the most common words (minimum word length set to three letters) in response to the question pertaining to crime types and policing issues with which the respondent has a problem in their local area.

Table 2: Overview of themes developed for the policing issues with which the respondents had the biggest issue in their local area. Please note, coding was not mutually exclusive and respondents may have been in multiple parent, child and sub-child themes.

Parent Theme	**Child Theme**	***n (% of parent)***	***Sub-Child Theme***	***Sub-Child n (% of Child)***
Anti-Social Behaviour		**676 (100.0)**		
	Youths, teenagers or children	384 (56.8)		
	Weapons and knife crime	45 (6.7)		
	Criminal damage	23 (3.4)		
Theft		**597 (100.0)**		
	Burglary	492 (82.4)		
	Vehicle based theft	110 (18.4)	*Car and vehicle theft*	*101 (91.8)*
			Bike, motorbike, or moped theft	*9 (8.2)*
	Theft of specific contents	20 (3.4)		
Vehicle Issues (excluding theft)		**455 (100.0)**		
	Speeding, racing and revving	300 (65.9)		
	Parking	89 (19.6)		
	Vehicle damage	32 (7.0)		
Drugs		**328 (100.0)**		
	Drug dealing	216 (65.9)		
	Drug taking	76 (23.2)		
Police Presence		**237 (100.0)**		
	Police stations	60 (25.3)		
	Police officers	55 (23.2)		
Petty Crime		**41 (100.0)**		
Rural Crime		**30 (100.0)**		

4.1.1 Theme one – anti-social behaviour

There were 676 respondents who explained issues with anti-social behaviour in their local area. These references ranged simply from mentioning the key words 'anti-social behaviour', 'antisocial' behaviour' and 'ASB', through to more detailed explanations of behaviour that amounted to anti-social behaviour:

> *'With a shop being on the corner there can be large gangs of youths and they can cause trouble as the park around the corner is an easy get away in the dark' (R18).*

> *'Youths, all hang in gangs, also drinking on streets, shops don't bother moving them on they want their money but then don't like the trouble, they all congregate outside shops, very intimidating for anyone wishing to use the shop and they're not scared, nothing bothers them' (R224).*

> *'Out of control teenagers causing damage and intimidating people' (R2348).*

In the more detailed explanations, three subthemes were developed around the responses to understand some of the specific dynamics that were occurring within the anti-social behaviour theme. The first and largest subtheme related to 384 (56.8% of anti-social behaviour theme) respondents highlighting young people as being the main issue. This includes phrases such as 'gangs of kids' (R360), 'rowdy youths gathering' (R376), 'teenage trouble' (R1824), 'anti-social behaviour from young people' (R2012), as well as many other references to young people often gathering in groups. The second subtheme highlighted specific issues with anti-social behaviour involving weapons and knives (*n* = 45, 6.7% of anti-social behaviour theme):

> '*Youth knife/weapon crime. They don't seem to get punished for these crimes and this therefore sends out a message to others that they can get away with this behaviour' (R2062).*

> *'Violence in teenagers, resulting in increased knife crime' (R2374).*

The third subtheme related to criminal damage, with 23 respondents (3.4% of anti-social behaviour theme) highlighting it as an issue:

> *'Antisocial youths committing low level crimes… They've caused damage at my shop twice… They have threatened to smash my shop windows' (R2219).*

4.1.2 Theme two – theft

Theft was an issue raised by 597 respondents to the survey. In the majority of cases this appeared through simple key words such as 'theft' or 'burglary'; however, there were some responses that provided more context that could be coded into subthemes. The subthemes related to: burglary; vehicle-based theft; and theft of specific contents.

The first subtheme, burglary, was highlighted by 492 respondents (82.4% of the theft theme), and often involved the key word 'burglary':

> *'Burglaries – this has a huge impact on the people it happens to but seems to be treated as a low priority' (R420).*

> *'We have a huge issue with burglaries in [the local area]' (R858).*

The following subtheme of vehicle-based theft, highlighted by 110 respondents (18.4% of the theft theme), related to those who identified theft of vehicles or from vehicles. The subtheme consisted of thefts involving both cars and other large vehicles, such as vans (*n* = 101, 91.8% of vehicle-based theft):

> *'Motor theft and general theft is crazy at the moment, broad daylight and cars are getting robbed, houses raided while people are at work, workmen can't even go to a job without worrying who's going to rob their tools from the van whilst they work' (R1543).*

As well as theft involving bikes, motorbikes and mopeds (*n* = 9, 8.2% of vehicle-based theft):

> *'…motorcycle thefts and during the day I personally had a motorcycle stolen at 12 in the afternoon…' (R989).*

The third and final subtheme of theft related to theft of specific contents (*n* = 20, 3.4% of the theft theme). This often referred to theft of 'tools from vans' (R938), but there were also examples of 'fuel theft' (R620); 'dog thefts' (R2272), and 'high value thefts from people's garages or lock ups' (R2057).

4.1.3 Theme three – vehicle issues (excluding theft)

From the total 2,815 sample, 455 respondents identified vehicle issues (excluding theft) within their local area as being a policing issue. Three subthemes emerged from the responses which encapsulated the type of issues respondents experienced: speeding, racing and revving; parking; and vehicle damage.

The first subtheme related to speeding, racing and revving (*n* = 300, 65.9% of the theme vehicle issues). This covered a range of behaviour, from more general speeding complaints:

> *'I truly expect a child to be killed due to the speeding' (R265).*

To specific complaints of speeding in certain geographical areas:

'Speeding traffic on the [geographical area] on the bypass down to the roundabout just before the [geographical area]. Constant accidents are happening here…' (R794).

'Delivery vans speeding in out [geographical area]. Also drivers on A59 "undertaking" and "overtaking", driving at speed using mobile phones...' (R2632).

In addition, some respondents also complained about the noise of engines and exhausts often due to suspected racing of vehicles:

'…noisy cars and bikes, modified exhausts and engine management systems…' (R557).

'Even side streets are like racetracks. You are just not safe. The people involved know they are safe to do what they want. [Geographical area] is so dangerous. I have seen cars actually racing each other. Two abreast. Insanity' (R1029).

The second subtheme related to respondents having issues with parking (*n* = 89, 19.6% of the vehicle issues theme), which covered both their local areas as well as in the town centre. The subtheme was often covered with comments such as 'illegal parking' (R148), 'cars parking on double yellow lines' (R1831), and 'parking on pavements' (R2620).

Respondents also mentioned issues with vehicle damage (*n* = 32, 7.0%) within the theme of vehicle issues. This mainly related to phrases such as 'car vandalism' (R789), and 'car damage' (R2107), without further detail.

4.1.4 Theme four – drugs

The fourth theme related to 328 respondents who described drugs as being an issue within their local area. Some responses simply mentioned the key word 'drugs', often alongside other policing issues, but numerous responses provided more detail which allowed for the coding of subthemes.

The first and largest subtheme (*n* = 216, 65.9% of the theme drugs) related to respondents outlining issues with drug dealing. In their responses, many respondents merely described 'drug dealing' (R94), or simply 'dealing' (R267), when referring to the issue of drugs in their local area. However, other respondents highlighted more detail on the method of drug dealing, illustrating how it occurred from vehicles:

'Cars have been seen stopping, money been exchanged and people buying drugs' (R112).

Or using particular methods to avoid detection:

'…clear drug selling and dealing using runners and more in the area still causing lots of problems' (R721).

'County line drug dealing. I live in a rural area and drug dealers use local, isolated car parks and areas to sell drugs' (R732).

The second subtheme related to drug taking (*n* = 76, 23.2% of the drugs theme), and was coded when a respondent mentioned they had issues with 'drug addicts' (R34), 'drug use' (R215), 'drug misuse' (R1388), 'drug taking' (R1527), and phrases such as 'openly smoking drugs' (R528) to illustrate how drug taking was an issue in their area. Some respondents also explained how it was younger people who were causing issues by taking drugs:

'drug taking and drinking underage' (R1831).

'Youngsters taking drugs [and] drinking alcohol' (R2663).

4.1.5 Theme five – police presence

Theme five did not relate to particular crime issues as illustrated within the previous themes, as it instead covered respondents' issues with the lack of police presence. This was an issue that appeared in 237 cases:

'…absolutely no evidence of any police patrols' (R19).

'Lack of police presence indicates to criminals they are less likely to get caught' (R455).

There were 60 respondents (25.3% of the police presence theme) who explained issues with the closure of local police stations, which was coded into a subtheme:

'Lack of police presence, should never have closed local stations' (R210).

'Since Leyland police station closed, anti-social behaviour and theft is getting worse' (R2150).

55 respondents (23.3% of the police presence theme) expressed frustration with the lack of police officers:

'We don't seem to have local bobby's anymore and feel the community police has been lost due to cuts' (R2245).

'Lack of visual police officers' (R2677).

4.1.6 Theme six – petty crime

Petty crime was a smaller theme mentioned by 41 respondents. It covered phrases such as 'low level crime' (R62), 'minor crime' (R270) and 'petty crime' (R760), whereby the respondents provided very little supporting information.

4.1.7 Theme seven – rural crime

The final theme recurred numerous times throughout the previous coded themes and related to 30 respondents who specifically explained they had issues with rural crime. Some respondents simply stated 'rural crime' (R8) in their response; however, some explained specific rural crime issues:

> *'Rural crime… theft of farmstock and machinery' (R1830).*

> *'Livestock thefts and general rural crimes issues' (R1876).*

4.2 IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK LANCASHIRE POLICE DOES REALLY WELL OR COULD DO BETTER?

Following a similar process explained in 4.1, including the generation of a Word Cloud (see Figure 2), five themes were developed around what respondents thought the police do well or could do better (see Table 3).

Figure 2: Word Cloud displaying the frequency of the most common words (minimum word length set to three letters) in response to the question pertaining to what Lancashire Police does well or could do better.

Table 3: Overview of themes developed around what the respondent thought Lancashire Police does well or could do better. Please note, coding was not mutually exclusive and respondents may have been in multiple parent, child and sub-child themes.

Parent Theme	**Child Theme**	***n* (% of parent)**	***Sub-Child Theme***	***Sub-Child n* (% of child)**
More Police Visibility		**353 (100.0)**		
	Foot Patrol	106 (30.0)		
	Rural	41 (11.6)		
Crime Reporting and Response		**253 (100.0)**		
	Better Response	215 (85.0)	*To drugs and drug dealing*	73 (34.0)
			To Anti-social behaviour	*65 (30.2)*
			To Burglary and theft	*47 (21.9)*
			Fracking response	27 (12.6)
			Respond to low level crime	*27 (12.6)*
	Crime Reporting	47 (18.6)	*101 Number*	*42 (89.4)*
			Internet reporting	*4 (8.5)*
			999 Number	*2 (4.3)*
Police Budget		**239 (100.0)**		
	Do well Despite Budget	126 (52.7)		
	Issue for Government	85 (35.6)		
	Remove or Reduce PCC	24 (10.0)		
	Used as an Excuse	8 (3.4)		
Police Engagement		**209 (100.0)**		
	Victim and Public Information	138 (66.0)	*Social media*	83 (60.2)
			Victim updates and follow up	43 (31.2)
	Increase connection to local area	73 (35.0)	*Neighbourhood policing*	22 (29.3)
General Opinion		**123 (100.0)**		
	Generally Satisfied	52 (42.3)		
	Don’t know	47 (38.2)		
	Generally Dissatisfied	25 (20.3)		

4.2.1 Theme one – more police visibility

The most prominent theme of what the police do well, or could do better, related to police visibility, whereby 353 respondents highlighted how they wanted more overall police visibility:

> *'More visible patrols (any sort of patrol would be an increase)' (R19).*
>
> *'Can we see officers on patrol please?' (R338).*
>
> *'More visible policing would help' (R841).*

These responses could also be grouped further into two subthemes based upon further information provided within the respondents' answers. The first related to 106 respondents (30.0% of the police visibility theme) who specifically wanted to see officers 'on foot patrol' (R249) or 'on the beat' (R938), as opposed to in vehicles or responding to blue light incidents.

The second subtheme related to increased visibility in rural areas (*n* = 41, 11.6% of the police visibility theme), a subtheme that related specifically to respondents expressing a desire for more police visibility in rural communities:

> *'The lack of visible policing in rural areas helps no one' (R325).*
>
> *'Be more visible in all communities… even rural' (R1700).*
>
> *'Provide more police to rural locations – I pay higher council tax and get less police' (R2037).*

4.2.2 Theme two – crime reporting and response

The second theme related to crime reporting and crime response, which was mentioned by 253 respondents. This theme was largely broken down into two key subthemes, the larger of which related to respondents stating that they thought the Lancashire Police could provide a better response (*n* = 215, 85.0% of crime reporting and response theme).

This subtheme was further broken down into grouping based upon the crime or policing issue the respondents believed the police could better respond to. This involved 73 respondents (34.0% of better response subtheme) who thought the police could provide a better response to drugs and drug dealing:

> *'Tackle drug dealers, working with housing to target known problem addresses' (R199).*
>
> *'Respond faster to reports of drug dealing' (R814).*
>
> *'Try and stop the drug dealers ruining Lancashire' (R1346).*

This was closely followed by 65 respondents (30.2% of better response subtheme) who wanted the police to better respond to anti-social behaviour:

> *'Could and should do more tackling anti-social behaviour…' (R301).*
>
> *'Need to be more presence on streets to discourage anti-social behaviour' (R311).*
>
> *'Tackle anti-social behaviour better as it is dragging [geographical location] down and will escalate into bigger crimes' (R1988).*

With 47 (21.9% of better response subtheme) respondents mentioning burglary and theft:

> *'Quicker and better response to local burglary' (R194).*
>
> *'Investigate some crimes rather than just saying "Here's a crime reference for your insurance" …' (R1307).*
>
> *'Police have no interest in theft and the criminals know it' (R1908).*

The police response to fracking also appeared across the answers of 27 respondents (12.6% of the better response subtheme). This grouping mainly focused on how the police should 'stop wasting money' (R73) or 'stop wasting police resources' (R1635) on policing fracking and subsequent anti-fracking protests. There were also some who explained how the policing of fracking sites was damaging the reputation of the police, with statements such as 'hired bouncers' (R854), 'beating up… public trying to protect the planet' (R2184), and 'police behaviour… absolutely disgusting' (R1633).

The final grouping in the first subtheme were those who wanted the police to improve their response to low-level crime (*n* = 27, 12.6% of the better response subtheme). Often the terms 'low-level crime' (R1727) or 'petty crimes' (R425) were explicitly used; however, some answers provided more detail on what constituted low-level crime in the respondents' view:

> *'…needles and sharps found in the village…' (R141).*
>
> *'Response to low level crime such as the reports of off-road bikes…' (R567).*

The second subtheme related to better reporting (*n* = 47, 18.6% of the crime reporting and response theme), which mainly related to the respondents commenting on the method of reporting crimes to the police. The majority of this subtheme was made up of respondents referring to the 101 number (*n* = 42, 89.4% of the crime reporting subtheme). Whilst 3 comments were positive, the remaining comments were how the 101 number could be better. In the request for improvement, 19 respondents explained how it was the time spent on the call that was the issue:

> *'More people needed to answer 101 calls. The waiting time really is too much' (R1192).*

'Answer the 101 call line quicker. Can take 20 minutes to be answered' (R2164).

With two respondents complaining about the cost of the call:

'101 service should be free of charge, [I'm] not having to pay to report a crime' (R1250).

In addition to the 101 number, there were four mixed comments relating to the online reporting service. In this instance, one of the comments was very positive:

'Great online reporting service with great response from local PCSOs' (R1072).

And the remaining three related to improvements to this service:

'Reporting a crime through internet could be simplified and more user-friendly' (R498).

Finally, there were two comments about the 999 number that requested advice on appropriate calls. Both focused on educating the public on what should be reported through this number in comparison to other sources of crime reporting:

'Another police force live tweeted their 999 calls then put advice next to each one saying whether it was appropriate' (R708).

'It needs to be made clearer what's a 999 call and what isn't. I recently called 999 for a traffic offence… when I did I was told it's not a 999 issue' (R1186).

4.2.3 Theme three – police budget

There were 239 respondents who mentioned the police budget when explaining what they thought the police do well or could do better. The theme presented a split in sentiment regarding the police budget, with some considering the police do well with the other half suggesting that the budget was an issue. As such, these sentiments formed underlying subthemes within the data.

The first subtheme related to the 126 respondents (52.7% of the police budget theme) who explained that the police do well despite the budgetary constraints. These responses involved terminology such as the police do well 'under difficult circumstances' (R815), 'with the resources available' (R843), as well as more explicit mention of financial restraints:

'…do a good job with the budget restrictions' (R849).

'…doing the best they can give the financial constraints imposed upon them…' (R1314).

The second subtheme, found across 85 respondent answers (35.6% of the police budget theme), focused on how the budgetary constraints were an issue for the government. This

often related to how the police were doing well as a service, but had been failed by government funding:

> *'[The police] have been greatly let down by the government due to cuts. In turn this impacts on the level of service they can offer to the public' (R263).*

> *'Lancs Police do the best they can given the financial constraints imposed by this government' (R2150).*

Smaller proportions of participants had slightly more negative views regarding funding, with 24 respondents (10.0% of the police budget theme) complaining about funding of the police and crime commissioner:

> *'…appointment of a deputy PCC which is purely a political role is a negative move and feel this is unnecessary spending. The role should be disposed of…' (R880).*

> *'Police commissioners are a complete waste of money. Unnecessary and much too costly' (R1877).*

And the final subtheme related to eight respondents (3.4% of the police budget subtheme) who stated that the dialogue around police budgets was being used to excuse poor police practice:

> *'Stop blaming government cuts…' (R878).*

> *'…easy to blame cuts in police. It's about priorities' (R1708).*

4.2.4 Theme four – police engagement

The fourth theme developed around what the police do well or could do better was interpreted as police engagement. It related to 209 respondents who covered communication with the police in their answer, whereby some answers were general:

> *'Better engagement with communities' (R151).*

And others were more detailed which allowed for the development of subthemes. The two subthemes developed in this instance focused on information to victims and public, and the other on increasing the police connection to their local areas.

The first subtheme, victim and public information (*n* = 138, 66.0% of police engagement theme), involved respondents who generally stated that engagement was something the police do well or could do better:

> *'Good at communicating' (R701).*

Several responses had more detail which allowed for the further coding of groupings within the subtheme. The first related to the police use of social media (*n* = 83, 60.2% of the victim and public information subtheme). These comments were positive and often complimented the police use of social media to inform the public of police work and provide updates:

> *'…nice to see some use of social media being applied. That's a positive step in the right direction' (R165).*

> *'Good at engaging via social media' (R386).*

> *'New social media pages updating the public are really good' (R1911).*

However, there was also a grouping around victim updates and following up with victims (n = 43, 31.2% of the victim and public information subtheme) that were considered something the police could do better. This grouping solely related to the police providing more information to victims about the progress of their case, or the public after they had reported a crime:

> *'Better feedback of result following a complaint' (R711).*

> *'[the police] don't get back to victims with updates' (R1371).*

> *'Update witnesses' (R2529).*

The next main subtheme, increase connection to local area (*n* = 73, 35.0% of the police engagement theme), was developed around respondents who identified good communication practice or explained how they wanted more connection to the police in their local areas:

> *'Have local knowledge in the control room for the area' (R82).*

> *'Good initiative such as community café' (R446).*

> *'…could have better communication with community' (R1860).*

Within the subtheme were 22 respondents (29.3% of the increase connection to local area theme) who specifically requested the improvement or rejuvenation of neighbourhood policing:

> *'Neighbourhood policing could be improved by working more closely with neighbourhood groups' (R672).*

> *'Reinvest in neighbourhood policing' (R2395).*

4.2.5 Theme five – general opinion

The final and smallest theme related to 123 respondents who provided a general opinion about the police without stating something that they do well or could improve. The theme was made from three subthemes: generally satisfied; don't know; and generally dissatisfied.

The first subtheme, generally satisfied (*n* = 52, 42.3% of the general opinion theme), consisted of respondents who provided positive comments about the police with no other information. This related to positive comments and expressions of gratitude:

> *'The police are always polite and get lots of things right' (R106).*

> *'Our local police are great, approachable and do a great job' (R593).*

> *'On the whole I feel they provide an excellent service' (R2730).*

There were 47 respondents (38.2% of the general opinion theme) who admitted to not knowing enough about policing to respond to the question. This often involved the response 'Don't know' (R48), but others also included more information:

> *'I am sorry, I don't know as I don't have any facts' (R424).*

> *'Don't know, don't come into contact with the police much' (R1795).*

The final subtheme was developed around comments that were generally dissatisfied with Lancashire Police, whereby the respondent did not provide information about an aspect of policing they do well or could do better. This included comments such as:

> *'I can't think of anything you do well' (R78).*

> *'What could it do better? Just about everything' (R422).*

> *'I don't think Lancashire Police will be better' (R1428).*

Which highlighted how the respondent was generally negative or dissatisfied with the police.

SECTION 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides further explanation of the findings contained within sections three and four, with a discussion of how these findings relate to previous research and literature. In addition, the section suggests practice and highlights potential pitfalls in addressing the respondents' views of policing.

5.1.1 Establishing policing priorities

The respondents within the current survey reported that they felt safe, with a score that equated to a 68% level of safety. This figure appeared consistent with previous surveys of Lancashire examining key metrics of policing, such as effectiveness and satisfaction (BMG Research, 2019; ONS, 2019; Robinson, et al., 2015). Whilst this could indicate a steady level of safety in relation to a reduction in police resources, the figure is more likely an averaging of safety as outlined in the literature review. Referring back to Birdsall et al. (2015) who specifically measured feelings of safety, the majority of the respondents within their survey felt safe in their home and during the daytime, but felt unsafe during the nighttime and within the town centre. This may have impacted the ratings of safety within the current survey, as respondents could have considered different aspects of their lives when reporting their safety score. Therefore, care should be taken in interpreting this figure in relation to public safety, due to the range of explanations that may account for the overall figure. In spite of the limitation, however, the score did represent an overall indication that the residents of Lancashire felt safe where they lived.

In understanding the levels of safety, the qualitative findings highlighted how anti-social behaviour, drugs, vehicle-based offences, and theft-based offences were the most prominent issues across the sample. These issues were somewhat consistent with respondents' views from the 2015 surveys which also contained respondents who identified anti-social behaviour, theft and drugs as a policing priority (Birdsall, et al., 2015; Robinson, et al., 2015). A likely explanation for the prominence of these themes within the two surveys is that this form of disorder may have the widest visible 'signals' as well as actual criminal acts (Jackson, et al., 2009). For example, the stereotype of anti-social behaviour is groups of young people (highlighted by the subtheme of 'youths, teenagers or children' within the qualitative analysis), often males, and often dressed in sports clothing (Quinton, 2011). Furthermore, taking account of a decrease in the feeling of safety during the nighttime suggests that fear could be enhanced during dark hours (Birdsall, et al., 2015). Consequently, if a respondent visibly sees a group of young males in sports clothing hanging around in dark hours within their area, then they may feel intimidated and unsafe as they associate this signal with crime and disorder, even if the group is behaving lawfully. The consideration of signal crimes becomes especially important when considering the estimates derived from the Crime Survey

of England and Wales, as this report illustrated how Lancashire fell below the national average for respondents who actually witnessed incidents of anti-social behaviour within their local communities (ONS, 2019). Therefore, in addition to witnessing actual acts of anti-social behaviour, residents within the community may also report this to be an issue in their area due to hearing about it via word-of-mouth (Hohl, et al., 2010), seeing pictures taken from private CCTV cameras, as well as seeing personal signals within their local area (Lowe & Innes, 2012).

However, a further issue that was not prominent within the previous surveys were vehicle-based offences. Vehicle-based issues appeared within both sets of analysis within the current report, appearing as an explanatory variable attributed towards respondents being more willing to pay council tax, as well as a theme of issues within the respondents' area. The qualitative analysis illustrated how respondents reported concerns such as speeding, racing and revving to be a policing issue, as well as parking and vehicle damage within their local areas and town centres. The explanation for this particular trend may be that roads policing encapsulated strong views from a subsection of the sample, who would be willing to pay more money towards this particular policing issue because it was of particular importance to this subsample. This dynamic would be in contrast to anti-social behaviour and theft, which was mentioned by a broader number of people within the sample and who may not have had as strong views on addressing these issues through an increase in tax.

5.1.2 Willingness to increase council tax

Whilst the descriptive statistics illustrated an equal split between respondents willing to increase council tax (49.4%), and those who did not want, or were unsure about, an increase in tax (50.6%), the statistical modelling uncovered elements that helped explain the divide. In addition to the earlier mentioned roads policing, the analysis also found that those who: preferred not to disclose their ethnicity; preferred not to disclose their victimisation; were Black/Black British; or were a victim of crime in the last year, were all significantly less likely to agree to an increase in council tax. A likely explanation could be that the results captured those who were disengaged or distrustful of the police (or of the survey itself). Naturally, their beliefs around police legitimacy would then also preclude them from agreeing with more money being spent on policing through council tax, as respondents may not believe that the money would be spent appropriately (Jackson, et al., 2012).

Black/Black British respondents may be less likely to agree to an increase in council tax for policing due to disproportionality, or perceived disproportionality, in policing issues more broadly (Skogan, 2006). However, it is important to note that this finding had lower statistical significance in comparison to other findings, most likely due to the low number of Black/Black British respondents. Furthermore, those who were a victim of crime in the previous year were significantly less likely to agree with an increase in council tax. This may be due to the

respondent being victim to crimes such as burglary, where the police did not provide a police response that met their expectations (i.e., provided only a crime reference number as opposed to a police response) which subsequently led to dissatisfaction. This was particularly apparent within the qualitative analysis which found that respondents thought that the police could provide a better response to particular issues, as well as provide updates to victims and witnesses of crime. Therefore, these respondents could have been less likely to agree with an increase in council tax since they did not believe the money would result in a better response to their crime type. However, much like ethnicity, the finding had lower statistical significance, meaning it was a weaker finding in comparison to others within the modelling.

5.1.3 Desire for increased police visibility

One of the main themes emerging across the analysis was the respondents' desire to see an increased police presence, consistent with previous surveys involving a Lancashire sample (BMG Research, 2019; Birdsall, et al., 2015). The finding illustrated how the Lancashire public continue to have strong views over physical police visibility within their area. This corresponds with previous literature which explains how seeing police patrols is an entrenched view of traditional policing (Kelling, et al., 2003), whereby residents consider a visible police patrol to signal order and safety (Lowe & Innes, 2012). However, the greater prominence of the theme within the current analysis could also be explained by the introduction of bias within question six of the survey, since the question stated that there were 750 fewer officers. Consequently, this may have led respondents into considering police visibility within their free-text responses, as the topic was already brought to the forefront of their mind.

Exploring the findings of the current analysis in more detail, the quantitative analysis found that there was no statistically significant relationship between patrolling high crime areas and council tax, and that respondents who marked patrolling low crime areas as 'medium' or 'high' priority were significantly less likely to agree to an increase in council tax. The findings suggest that respondents desired an increase in overall police patrols, yet had mixed views on increasing council tax to fund the patrolling of high crime areas and were significantly opposed to increasing tax for patrolling low crime areas.

The combination highlights how the respondents wanted more police visibility, but did not agree with a rise in council tax to achieve this. The finding further adds to the complexity of practically implementing reassurance policing (Herrington & Millie, 2006), as even if Lancashire Police were to fund and deploy greater patrols in both high and low crime areas, the Kansas city experiment (Kelling, et al., 2003) evidences how the residents would be unlikely to notice the increase in patrols within their local area. Consequently, efforts should continue to be placed in understanding how to address reassurance of the public without necessarily increasing the number of general and untargeted patrols.

5.1.4 Greater communication with citizens

Previous surveying of Lancashire also highlights how the public do not believe they are well informed about policing (Birdsall, et al., 2015), and that this falls below the national average when compared to residents in other police force areas (BMG Research, 2019). Subsequently, one of the main themes developed from the respondents' answers to what the police could do better was improved communication between the police and the community. Both *information in* and *information out* appeared as issues within the analysis.

With regards to information in, respondents highlighted issues in reporting through the 101 and 999 numbers, as well as the internet. Overall, they appeared dissatisfied with time and cost of reporting via the 101 number, which highlighted similar sentiments to the UCLan survey in 2015 where respondents stated the 101 number was "awful" and "useless" (Birdsall, et al., 2015, p. 44). A possible rectification to this could be to better advertise to respondents that the 101 number is now a service that is free of charge, as well as providing insight into the call centre capacity. Similarly, there was a suggestion in the 2015 report that local knowledge should be brought into the 101 hubs, a suggestion that appeared within the respondents' answers within the current analysis. The local knowledge could support callers when making reports to reduce caller frustration and encourage more effective non-emergency reporting. However, in the previous survey there was no capacity for the public to report issues online to police, whilst this appeared to be a mechanism with public interest. Within the current survey a couple of respondents had negative views about the online reporting mechanism, and a single participant mentioned it was useful. The lack of mention of the online reporting system potentially illustrated how it was still largely unknown to the public, whereby attention should be placed into heavily promoting the online mechanism of reporting non-emergency issues so that demand is reduced on the 101 number.

Social media was a key subtheme when considering information out, suggesting that efforts should continue to develop the police's virtual presence as a means of addressing the reassurance gap (Herrington & Millie, 2006). Furthermore, the virtual presence should complement the physical presence of the police by highlighting police work and police engagement opportunities, as opposed to necessarily replacing elements of physical visibility. This would become especially important as crime and policing demand increasingly moves into a virtual space, where cyber specialists will have little to no public visibility. It is therefore important for the police to take control of the narrative and provide insight into each department to illustrate the 'hidden' police visibility. This recommendation is a continuation of Birdsall et al. (2015) who promoted the use of social media to increase the visibility of police work within the community as respondents, especially younger and female respondents, reacted positively to this information. This was again found to be largely positive within the current survey, with animal-based police units (mounted police and dog units) receiving the most positive feedback. The continued promotion is critical to counteract the

negative impact on policing confidence caused by news and media reporting (Hohl, et al., 2010), and has been gathering European-wide interest in addressing reassurance policing (Leventakis, et al., 2017).

5.2 LIMITATIONS

As with any study, it is important to highlight potential limitations to the work which could have impacted upon the results. Within the current report, the analysis featured some limitations which could be addressed in future research or further iterations of the 'Let's Talk Policing' survey.

Firstly, a deeper analysis could be introduced to understand the agreement to increase council tax for policing. The analysis within this report limited itself to explanatory variables contained within the survey instrument; however, data linkage could first expand the dataset to link the respondents' postcodes to average household income or political wards. This could determine whether such variables have explanatory power towards the dependent variable. Such insight could have even broader implications for policing whereby certain geographical areas may be more or less likely to agree to council tax increases, which could be analysed for tax increase 'hotspots', which could be subsequently overlaid with crime data to understand any relationships occurring across the force area.

Secondly, question eight of the survey was worded in such a way that it contained a dual focus. The first element was what the police currently do well, and the second was what the police could do better. Subsequently, developing themes around survey responses to this particular question was difficult due to some responses being focused on one element of the question and others focusing on both elements. In future research using the 'Let's Talk Policing' survey, more direct themes could be developed from survey responses if the question was separated into two separate questions.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The report concerned a mixed methods analysis of the data collected from the 'Let's Talk Policing' survey conducted by the Lancashire OPCC. The results of the analysis found key issues highlighted by respondents, many of which were consistent with previous surveys conducted with a Lancashire population (BMG Research, 2019; Birdsall, et al., 2015; Robinson, et al., 2015). Such issues included requests for increased police visibility and greater communication, as well as the police tackling local key issues such as anti-social behaviour, theft and drugs. However, there were interesting findings that were not apparent in the previous surveys, such as the importance of roads policing to a particular portion of the sample, as well as the mention of rural crime.

Overall, whilst it is helpful to get feedback from the public to aid with engagement and demonstrate they have a say in the way their force is run (Casey, 2008), the research suggests

that their wants can sometimes be contradictory in nature, insensitive to force priorities, or involve unsupported assumptions. This includes assumptions such as generally increasing patrols within an area reduces the level of crime, whereas previous evidence illustrates that general patrols lead to no change in crime prevalence (Kelling, et al., 2003). Therefore, Lancashire Police may be better placed to focus their priorities on objective strategies that are evidenced in reducing crime and disorder, whilst understanding how to make this police activity more visible. Furthermore, consideration should also be placed into understanding how to practically implement findings from the 'Let's Talk Policing' survey, whereby respondents' wants could be enacted to address the reassurance gap (Herrington & Millie, 2006), but perhaps with measures that are more targeted than those highlighted by the public. An example of this could be to specifically target anti-social behaviour hotspots with physical police patrols, and ensuring that this police activity is heavily advertised to citizens within the local area.

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APPENDIX A: LET'S TALK POLICING SURVEY TEMPLATE

CLIVE GRUNSHAW
LANCASHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

LET'S TALK...
POLICING IN LANCASHIRE
POLICING AND CRIME IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Annual Policing Survey 2019

I'm Clive Grunshaw, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.

My role includes holding the Chief Constable to account, setting the council tax precept for policing, commissioning services for victims of crime and funding community safety projects.

I also set the policing priorities for the county by consulting with residents like yourself, so I'd be grateful if you could complete this short survey about where you live.

***Your privacy is important to us. We aim for full transparency on how we gather, use and share your personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data protection laws. You can read our privacy notice in full on our website at lancashire-pcc.gov.uk ***

Q1. How safe do you feel where you live? On a scale of 1-5
(Where 1 is 'very unsafe' and 5 is 'very safe')

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Q2. How confident are you that the police will be there when you need them?

☐ Very ☐ Fairly ☐ Don't know ☐ Not very ☐ Not at all

Q3. How would you like to be kept informed about policing in your area? (Choose up to 3)

☐ Social media ☐ In the Know ☐ Local media ☐ Police website ☐ Local events ☐ Other

If other please state how:

Q4. Thinking about the issues below, what should Lancashire Police be concentrating on as a high, medium or low priority? (Mark each as high, medium or low)

Tackling Child abuse and sexual exploitation	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Investigating serious crimes	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Combatting terrorism/extremism	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Tackling Domestic abuse /violence	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Patrolling areas with regular reports of crime	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Addressing local crime and antisocial behaviour	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Taking early action to prevent crimes	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Road Traffic Policing	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Answer and respond promptly to non-emergency calls	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Provide crime prevention advice and support	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Provide information to you about policing	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low
Patrolling areas with low levels of reported crime	☐ High	☐ Medium	☐ Low

Q5. In your view, what crime type or other policing issues does your local area have the biggest problem with?

Q6. The PCC is responsible for a policing budget for 2019/20, 29% of which comes from council tax which equates to 55p per day for a band D property.

Owing to Government cuts, over £84m has been saved since 2010 and there are now 750 fewer police officers.

On a scale of 1-5, do you think the services you get from Lancashire Police represent value for money? (Where 1 is 'poor value for money and 5 is 'excellent value for money)

☐ 1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐ **5**

Q7. Would you be willing to pay more council tax to support policing in your community?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Q8. Is there anything you think Lancashire Police does really well or could do better?

Q9. What is the first half of your postcode e.g. PR1

Q10. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer to self-identify ☐ Prefer not to say

Q11. What is your ethnic background?

☐ Asian/British Asian ☐ Black/British Black ☐ White ☐ Prefer not to say

Other:

Q12. Have you been a victim of crime in Lancashire in the last year?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say

Q13. Would you be happy to be contacted by either the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner or Lancashire Constabulary in relation to any of your answers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes please supply your full name, email or phone number:

Let me know your views by filling in this survey and returning it to me. Return the form to:

Annual Policing Survey 2019
OPCC, PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston PR1 0LD