

## **Key themes from the feedback gathered at the Children and Young People's Shadow Board held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2010.**

Young people were given tokens to distribute across each service area that makes up the policing budget, based on how they currently think the money is being spent.

Young people were then presented with the actual breakdown of how money is spent by service area.

A discussion then followed about the areas that the young people had chosen that are higher or lower than what was currently spent on these budget areas:

**Local Policing** – (Includes the work of Safer Community Teams policing your local area, officers responding and dealing with 999 and non-emergency calls, local investigation of crimes, and working with partner agencies).

- Young people said that their choices for the amount spent on local policing is based on a perception that there aren't many police officers or PCSOs on the street, they don't see them very much, so therefore there can't be much money being spent on them.

- Others felt 'there's not enough for them to do'

- One young person said some officers are "a bit sour"; and that police officers see engagement with youths as a waste of time and don't want to be involved with young people because they're too busy.

- Another young person stated 'In Daventry there are so many troublemakers but it's rare to see local officers.'

- There's a difference between rural and urban police visibility; one participant stated that officers 'are always wandering around in the village but never in the town centre'.

- One individual stated; in Wellingborough 'everyone's afraid to see the police instead of seeing them as helpful' because they don't know what the police are there for or what has happened. There is a need for better communication; they should explain why they're around.

- It was suggested that increased communication with young people could take place through 'Events Days' at schools, where updates could be given about issues that are taking place/being addressed in the local area. It was felt by some that "PCSOs are around to give advice but they don't explain what's going on in your area or why the police are doing things".

- Final decision was to decrease this part of the budget by 5%, however this was only a small majority.

**Organisational Support** – (Includes human resources, finance, legal, police complaints, training, administration, IT, transport, building maintenance, service improvement, media and public relations).

- One person stated that press conferences, administration and travel costs are expensive, but there is a need for these.

- Several young people were happy to know that training was included in this area of the budget and one participant said 'it helps to keep officers safe so 24% is right'.

There was almost a unanimous decision to decrease this part of the budget by 10%.

**Specialist Investigations** – (Use of forensic sciences, such as DNA or finger printing to detect and reduce crime).

There was a general perception that more money is spent in this area than is the case; up to 14% compared to 8%.

Young people's comments included:

- 'It's important to gather evidence and take DNA, especially when people have been murdered and other life-threatening crimes like rape'
- 'In Law and Order they catch criminals with it and stop them so that's what we should do.'
- 'I think it's a reasonable amount to spend, but it's not necessary for every burglary so it could be reduced.'
- Contradiction - 'Just think about how many burglaries there actually are everywhere, there's loads so you can't just stop taking evidence'.

The vast majority voted to keep this proportion of the budget the same.

**Responding to the Public** – (Includes the Communication Centre which receives 999 and non-emergency calls from the public, and the control room which sends officers and PCSOs to crimes and incidents).

Comments made about this area were:

- 'We should spend more on this because it's the main aim of the police, their job is for the public.'
- 'You hear about people who have waited for hours for officers to turn up so we should invest in this area'.
- The police don't always take things seriously enough.
- Perceptions of what the police do and how they respond is often based on the experience of others. 'If you haven't experienced it yourself you have to go on what you hear.'
- 'My personal experience was negative. I had to wait hours and the police were redirected because of an emergency.'
- There isn't an expectation that the police can arrive immediately all the time, 'I would understand if they had to go to something more serious, but they need to explain that to me'.
- It depends of the victim, if they're really upset and distraught then the police need to go to them. It depends on the circumstances.
- Response times have got better since officers' have had Blackberrys and sometimes within minutes of the call they're there.
- 'Once they promised to be there within 60 minutes and they never turned up and they didn't call me to let me know what was happening.'

- If it's a 999 problem then the response time should be better, but if it's less serious then the longer response time is understandable. If the victim is distressed or the situation is dangerous or something, then it needs to be quick.
- They must prioritise because my cat kept setting off the house alarm which is linked to the police and they never respond anymore because they don't think it's important.
- They should prioritise based on their understanding not ours, they know what's going on everywhere and how serious things are.
- It's difficult knowing who to contact, 'I called several different numbers and it makes it more difficult and makes it into more of a problem'.
- My next door neighbour was making lots of noise and banging and the council did nothing about it and then police sorted it only last week.

The vast majority of young people felt that the budget for responding to the public should go up by 5%.

The feedback gathered from young people will be combined with the feedback gathered from members of the public across the County and will help inform the budget setting decision for the Police Authority in February 2010.

The Police Authority and Force would again like to thank the young people who took part in this exercise for their valuable contributions.