

Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2025-2028 Consultation

Public Insights

Strategy, Insight and Engagement
Professionalism and Enabling Services, Police Scotland

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Contact: InsightEngagement@scotland.police.uk

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Executive Summary

- There is a general consensus around the proposed direction, evidenced by high overall agreement across both stakeholders (92%) and the general public (74%). This mandate demonstrates broad confidence in the strategic vision and its core objectives.
- The primary driver for public investment is the need to minimise administrative burdens and streamline routine paperwork. By using digital tools to automate background tasks, police officers can spend less time on operational admin and dedicate more time to visible, high-impact community policing.
- Public trust and ongoing support are dependant on maintaining human-centric policing and ethical standards. Key factors include preserving face-to-face contact in local communities, enforcing strict data privacy protections, and maintaining transparent communication to resolve public concerns regarding AI and automation.
- To overcome public concerns and build trust, strategic messaging must explicitly position AI and digital tools as 'enablers' that assist and free up officers for human-centric community presence rather than replacing them. All public-facing materials should be communicated in clear, plain English to eliminate misinterpretation and foster long-term public confidence.

Purpose of the Insight Pack

- This insight pack summarises public and stakeholder consultation feedback for the Police Scotland Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2025-2028 and highlights implications for consideration and governance decisions.
- The consultation sought views on the proposed refreshed strategy, specifically focusing on harnessing technology to enhance operational effectiveness, ensuring ethical data use, and building public trust.
- This pack:
 - Summarises consultation responses from both the general public and partners.
 - Quantifies key themes from open-text survey responses.
 - Highlights main drivers of community support and technological concerns.
 - Identifies areas where digital governance, robust oversight, and inclusive design may benefit from clarification.
- The findings support leaders ahead of presenting the final draft to the Scottish Police Authority Board in September 2026 to determine next steps.

Consultation Approach

- From 30th of July to 27th of August, we received **1,144** responses from the public, as well as **13** stakeholders, which included organisations and community groups.
- The consultation was hosted on Police Scotland's [Engagement Hub](#) through an online survey open to both the public and stakeholders, enabling broad reach and structured analysis of responses.
- The consultation was promoted through stakeholder networks and direct outreach, with reminders issued to maximise participation.
- As with all consultations, respondents are self-selecting and not statistically representative but provide valuable insight into public and stakeholder perspectives. The high number and quality of responses shows there is a real interest on how we plan to progress in this space.

Consultation Questions

Respondents were asked to consider whether they agreed with the four elements of the strategy, highlight public priorities as well as how the use of digital, data and technology would impact their experiences with policing in Scotland:

1. New and innovative solutions to prevent and detect crime
2. Digital reimagination to maximise officer and staff efficiency
3. Reform the citizen experience and engagement
4. Enhance multi-agency collaboration and partnership

Analysis Methodology

- All open text comments were read individually, and thematically analysed to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns and themes in the qualitative data. (Braun & Clarke, 2022)*.
- Quantitative analysis was undertaken using Likert scale responses to assess levels of agreement across each consultation question. Responses were aggregated and presented as percentages (or by count for stakeholders) to illustrate overall sentiment and enable comparison between questions.

* V. Braun, V. Clarke. (2022). Thematic Analysis. A Practical Guide London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 376 s.

Why a Digital, Data and Technology Strategy?

- The strategy plays a vital role in delivering our [2030 Vision for policing in Scotland](#) which is for safer communities, less crime, supported victims and a thriving workforce.
- In an era of rapid technological advancement and evolving public expectations, the role of digital and data within policing has never been more critical.
- This refreshed strategy will set out our renewed vision for harnessing technology and information to enhance operational effectiveness, improve public trust and confidence, and support our workforce in delivering outstanding policing services.

Why Consult with Stakeholders and the Public?

- We have committed to using stakeholder and public feedback, along with other research and evidence, to develop and shape the final Digital, Data and Technology Strategy.
- This feedback on the draft strategy will also inform future public engagement on future proposals brought forward as part of our implementation of this strategy.
- Findings will be considered by Police Scotland, before being presented to the Scottish Police Authority Board in September 2026. We will update our [Engagement Hub](#) with progress made.





Stakeholder Feedback

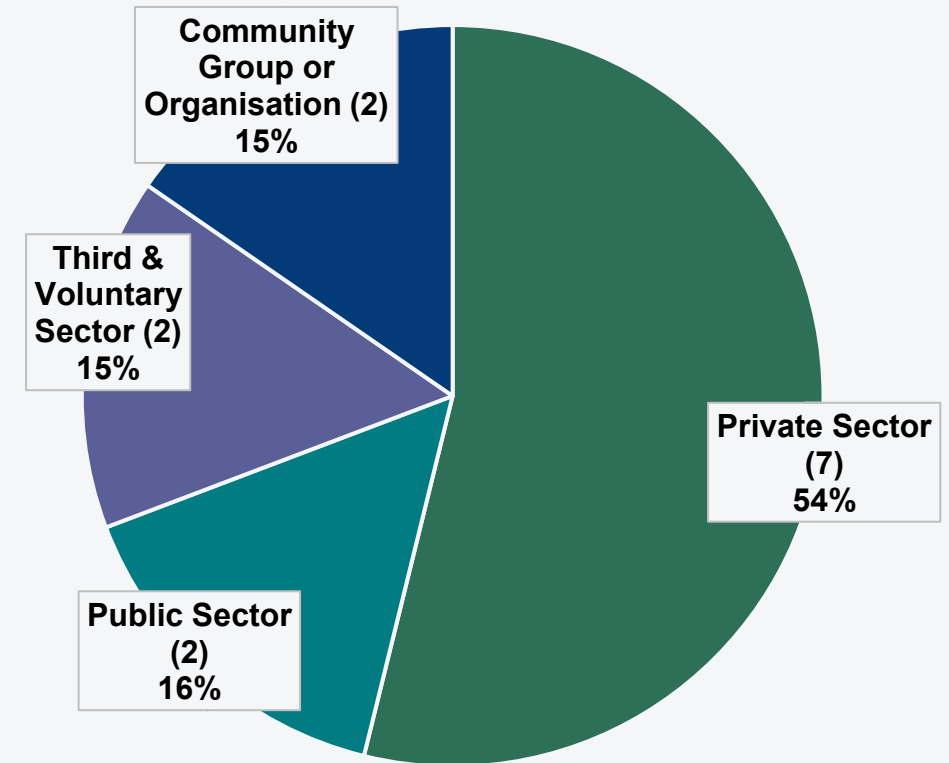
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Stakeholder Profile

13 stakeholders responded to the consultation on the draft strategy:

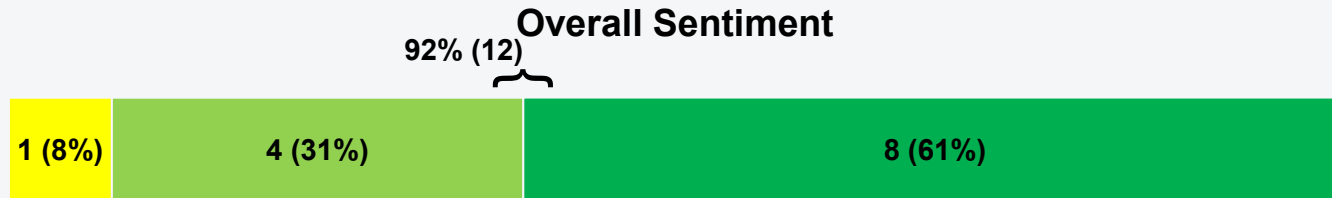
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Dejero
- Hareshaw Village Community Group
- Lambhill Stables
- Neighbourhood Watch Scotland
- NiCE Public Safety & Justice
- NHS Lothian
- Palo Alto Networks
- SCC
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Splunk (part of the Cisco Group)
- Wyvis One Estate Limited
- Zscaler

Stakeholder's Organisation Type



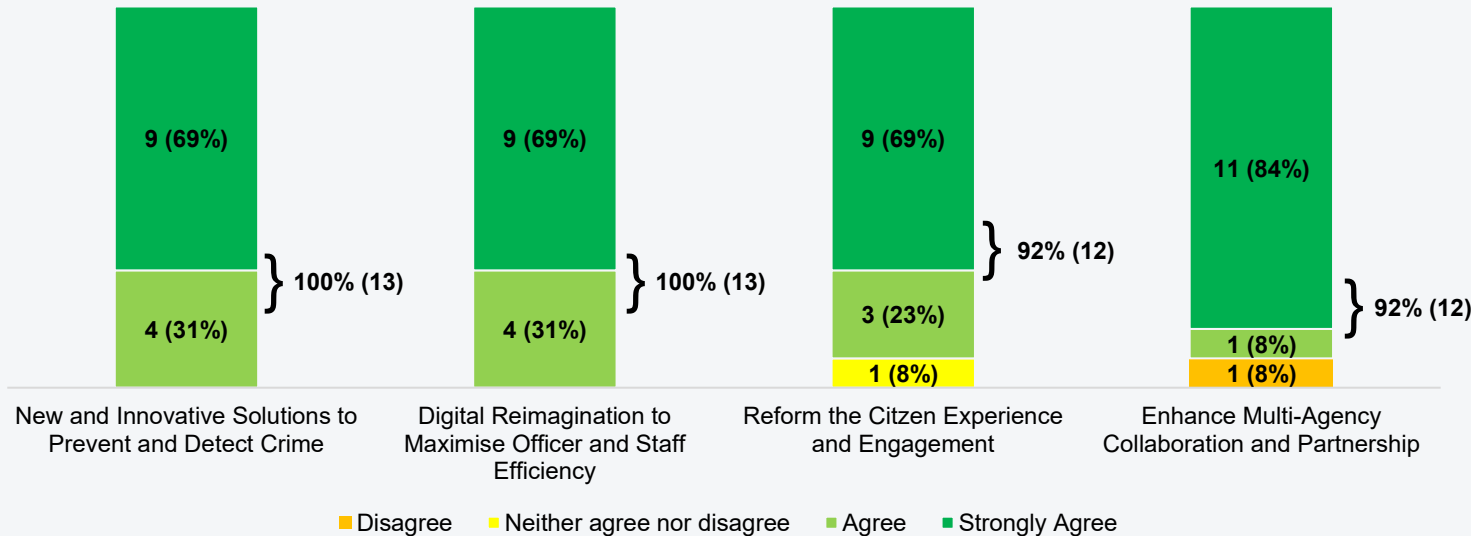
We worked extensively with partners and stakeholders to develop our last Digital Strategy which focused on moving from 'Doing Digital to Being Digital', recognising the evolving role that digital, data and technology has within an organisation. This refreshed draft was open to partners and stakeholders to take part.

Stakeholder Overall Sentiment



■ Neither support nor oppose ■ Somewhat support ■ Strongly support

Stakeholder Overall Sentiment to the Digital, Data and Technology Strategic Aims



n=13

■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

- The data shows that stakeholders generally agree (92%, n=12) with the strategy as a whole.
- Agreement is strongest on the need to focus on New and Innovative Solutions to Prevent and Detect Crime and Digital Reimagination to Maximise Officer and Staff Efficiency.
- Insights indicate that stakeholder support of the strategy is dependent upon how the data is managed, stored and governed.

Stakeholder Open Text Analysis – Summary

- Feedback highlights the need for Police Scotland to **keep up to date** on a strategic level with data and technology.
- There was an acknowledgement that whilst the implementation of technology is a good thing, it must be done in a way that **frees officers to engage with the public more**.
- Organisations overwhelmingly supported the need for multi-agency collaboration, citing the benefits of **data sharing between organisations** to create more cohesive services and **better lines of communication**.
- There was a strong emphasis on **better collaboration needed between Police Scotland, the NHS and Neighbourhood Watch** respectively.

Verbatim comments – Stakeholders

"Unifying data across the complete digital footprint within Police Scotland - all physical devices, applications and infrastructure will be critical to provide visibility, context and to allow informed decision making. Importantly, this data should be owned and managed by Police Scotland within the confines of country sovereignty. Ultimately, unified data as the foundation accessed across the whole organisation will provide a fully Digital Resilient solution irrespective of vendors and technologies"

"I think it can only help as we move forward, increased communication between police and public services such as NHS, social work and other agencies would be really helpful when trying to establish how to help people that end up in our care. I work with people with learning disabilities in a community lead nursing role, and they often end up dealing with the police which can cause further trauma. If I could help share a snapshot of how to de-escalate situations that could help both the person and police involvement this would be really helpful."

"Digital inclusion is broader than being online. Barriers can include access to suitable devices and affordable connectivity, skills and confidence, accessibility, literacy, language and the need for support from another person. In a policing or justice context these barriers can be heightened by distress, trauma or difficult personal circumstances. A service being available digitally does not necessarily mean it is accessible or usable."

"It should improve communication."

"Done well, greater use of digital technology and data has the potential to make policing more responsive and more accessible. Citizens increasingly expect to interact with services on their own terms - reporting incidents online, tracking case progress, accessing support without needing to visit a station or wait on hold. Meeting that expectation builds trust as much as it improves efficiency."

"...regular contact with local police teams is very sporadic, and it should be an everyday thing, we need better direct contact with area police teams"

"In certain cases I agree but not in all circumstances. Police need to be seen by the public to assure that they are there to support their communities."

"Digital tools give me safer, more flexible ways to report incidents, especially in sensitive cases like domestic abuse. AI helps police pull evidence together faster, speeding up investigations and progress updates. Automated queries free up service centre staff, and smarter custody monitoring supports detainee welfare. Bodies like NPCC, PDS, and College of Policing help ensure proven, fit-for-purpose tools reach forces without lengthy delays. Overall, DDaT reduces friction, for the public reporting and for staff investigating, so time goes where it matters most."

"The improved use of data enables police services to better understand community needs, identify emerging trends, and deliver more targeted and proactive services. Technology can also increase transparency through real-time updates on cases and incidents, helping to build trust and confidence in policing."

Public Feedback

Public Profile

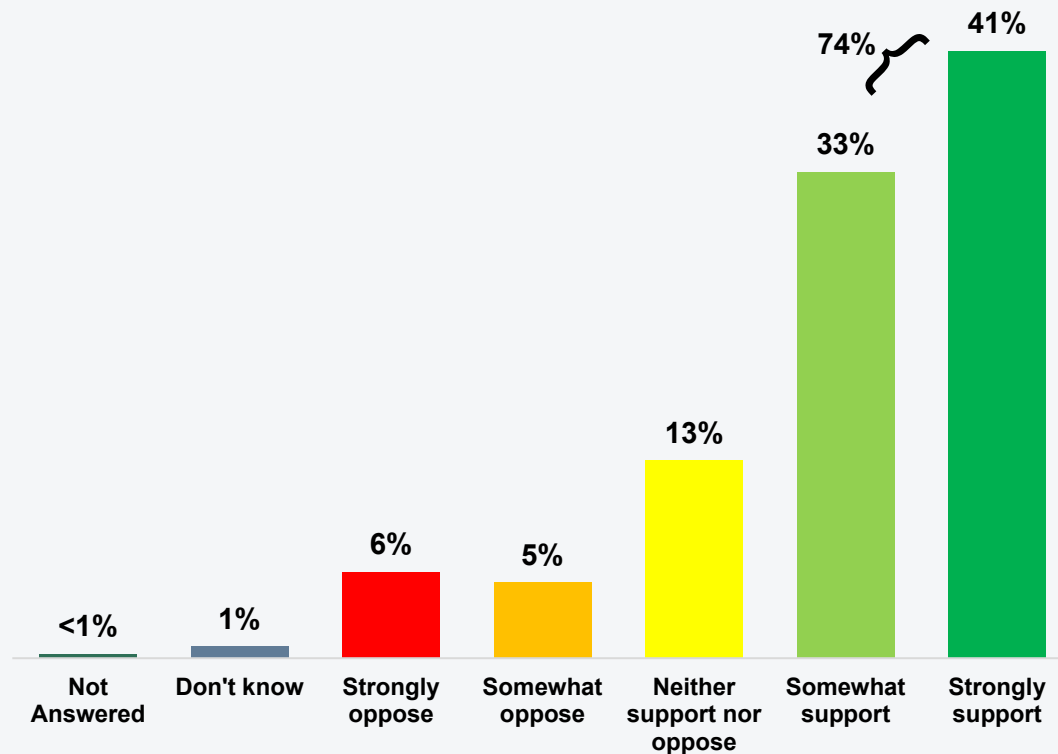
The consultation received **1,144** responses from the public.

	Sample size	Sample %
Gender		
Man	614	53%
Woman	493	43%
Prefer not to say	25	2%
Non-binary (gender neutral)	4	<1%
Other	6	1%
Age		
Under 16 years old	4	<1%
16-18 years old	1	<1%
19-24 years old	4	<1%
25-34 years old	9	1%
35-44 years old	41	4%
45-54 years old	130	11%
55-64 years old	330	29%
65-74 years old	401	35%
75-84 years old	186	16%
85 years old and over	8	1%
Prefer not to say	23	2%
Total	1137	100%

	Sample size	Sample %
Ethnicity		
White Scottish	861	76%
White other British	170	15%
Any other white ethnic group	18	2%
White Irish	13	1%
White Polish	2	<1%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	1	<1%
African, African Scottish or African British	3	<1%
Any mixed or multiple ethnic group	5	<1%
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	2	<1%
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	1	<1%
Any Other Asian	1	<1%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	1	<1%
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	1	<1%
Other	19	2%
Prefer not to say	31	3%
Total	1129	100%

Overall Sentiment

Q: To what extent do you support or oppose the strategy?

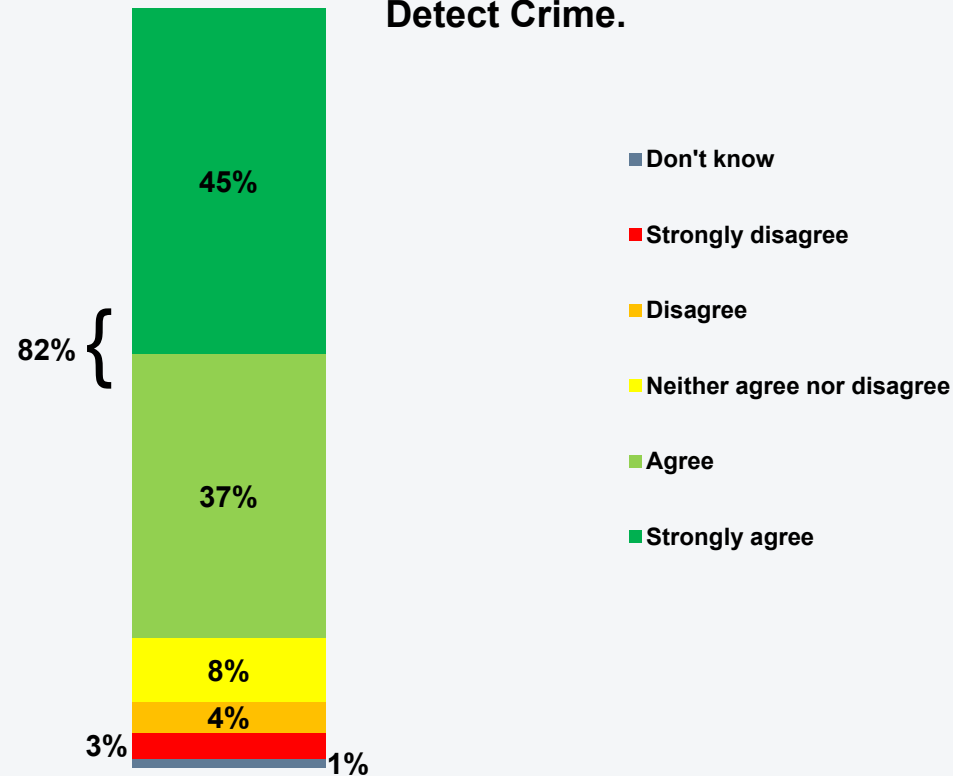


n=1144

- There is a broad support from the public (74%, n=1144) in relation to the strategy as a whole.
- It is, however, important to recognise that around one quarter of respondents have either opposed the strategy (11%) or remained neutral (13%).
- Whilst there is a broad agreement it is worth noting that their sentiment's come with caveats when reviewing the open-ended text.

New and Innovative Solutions to Prevent and Detect Crime

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is an objective we should be focussing on:
New and Innovative Solutions to Prevent and Detect Crime.



n=1144

- There was an overwhelming agreement from the public that Police Scotland should focus their new Digital, Data and Technology strategy around new and innovative solutions to prevent and detect crimes (82%, n=939).
- This strategic aim received the most support of agreement compared to the other three, but it is worth noting that all are all well supported.

New and Innovative Solutions to Prevent and Detect Crime – Open Text Analysis

- Respondents' feedback reflected an awareness of the benefits that technological advancements can offer policing. Overall, there were many positive comments relating to the implementation of new technology in policing, mainly surrounding the need to 'keep up' with digital advancements in crime in today's society.
- Respondents shared some apprehension and fear over losing the human side to policing. For example, losing face to face interactions with police and police presence among communication. Some shared that police presence within communities is still the best way to deter crime.
- Concerns were raised around the trust and relatability over new and emerging technologies, and how these would be used in a public setting and what data they would gather. Many comments shared that while they apprehensive, as long as appropriate safeguards are in place and they are communicated well, then it would still be an overall positive for the benefit it would bring to policing.
- As well as concerns over the security, concerns were raised over barriers that need to be considered when adapting to new technologies
- Respondents emphasised the need for complete transparency, where possible, to ensure public safety and how any new technology will be used. Face to face communication was raised as a way for these updates to be delivered, by utilising community partnerships with policing for in person updates.

New and Innovative Solutions to Prevent and Detect Crime – Verbatim Comments

“Any strategy to prevent crime is important and I know how much cyber crime is happening these days.”

“It’s important to have a good balance between online safety and traditional policing.”

“These innovations need to be well tested and to complement, not replace, the skills of detectives.”

“I always like to hear that police activity is met with success in the investigations they have to go, and of course you have to keep up to date with technology.”

“The overriding aim for Policing is to prevent crime, and where that hasn’t been possible, to then detect and give victims the closure they seek. Using innovation to aid this is rightly a key priority.”

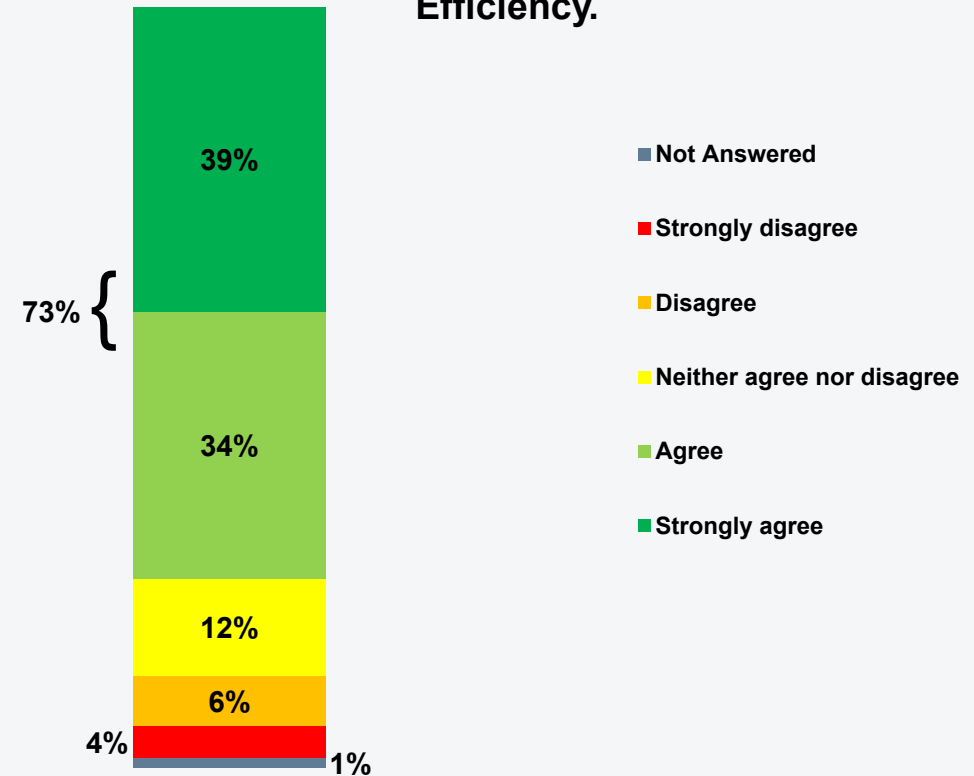
“I support the responsible use of new technology to prevent and detect crime, but innovation should not be treated as an objective in itself. New systems should be demonstrably necessary, proportionate, independently scrutinised and capable of being audited.”

“DDaT should be used as an additional tool where required. It must not be relied upon to replace or exclude conventional policing methods. Neither should it replace existing methods of communicating with the public.”

Digital Reimagination to Maximise Officer & Staff Efficiency

- Almost three quarters of the public (73%, n=843) agreed that maximising officer and staff efficiency through digital reimagination should be a focus of the refreshed strategy.

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is an objective we should be focussing on:
Digital Reimagination to Maximise Officer & Staff Efficiency.



n=1144

Digital Reimagination to Maximise Officer & Staff Efficiency – Open Text Analysis

- Many respondents shared positive views on the introduction to the usage of new technologies, and many are happy to utilise them in order for policing to modernise with society. However, while people are happy for police to utilise new and emerging technologies, there is the hope that this will in turn lead to a larger police presence back in communities.
- Some respondents shared that new technology will be beneficial for police efficiency, so long as it does not lead to duplication of work for everyone involved.
- Respondents shared positive and encouraging feedback that the implementation of new technology will be an overall benefit to improving current systems and processes.
- Responses highlighted the need to ensure a human approach and community focus. Many respondents shared concerns and worries that the introductions of new technologies will further reduce ‘boots on the ground’ and take officers away from local communities.
- Some comments shared concerns over trust and security of data. Robust testing to ensure the technology is fit for purpose, it will be a good additional to help however should **not** be used as an alternative to traditional police work.

Digital Reimagination to Maximise Officer & Staff Efficiency – Verbatim Comments

“To improve quality of staff to perform efficiently this is a good thing”

“More officers in public would give the public more confidence in the police”

“The police must be more on top of digital technology to be able to stop "online" crime”

“By allowing front line data processing and capturing of data ensures they remain visible in their communities. Also, by using this data effectively tasking the correct response from business partners.”

“With the increase in the crime rate and the decrease in members of Police Scotland every avenue must be explored to help the dwindling human resources work at optimum efficiency”

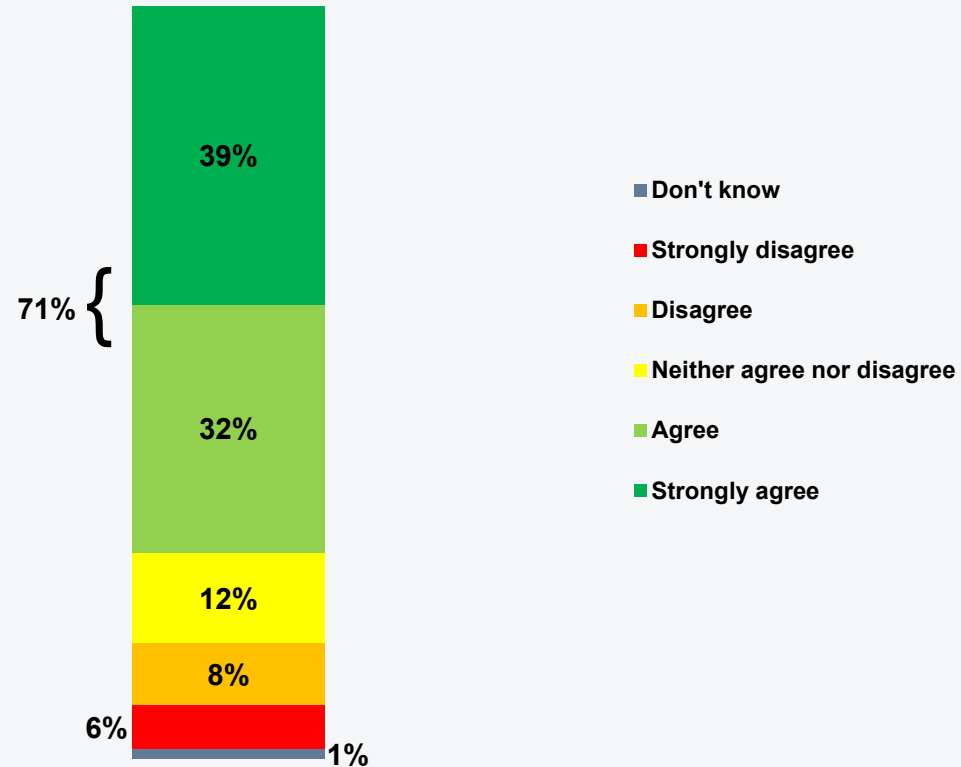
“Police organisations have to be progressive and keep ahead of the latest technologies. They have to understand the workings of people and organisations in order to fully investigate crime. IT technology can help them to do that but should never be a replacement for good traditional policing.”

“Digital technology can substantially improve efficiency, but efficiency should not come at the expense of evidential integrity, accountability or proper investigation...”

“The strategy should therefore measure success not simply through time or financial savings, but through improvements in accuracy, accountability, evidential integrity and public confidence.”

Reform the Citizen Experience & Engagement

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is an objective we should be focussing on: Reform the Citizen Experience and Engagement.



n=1144

- A majority of the public (71%, n=816) are in agreement that the refreshed strategy should have a focus on reforming the citizen experience and engagement.

Reform the Citizen Experience & Engagement – Open Text Analysis

- Respondents shared the need for improved self-service and accessibility. For example, a self-servicing app for people to report crime as the current 101 system is a point of frustration for a lot of people. Additionally, an improved digital platform for victims was suggested.
- Multi channel engagement and communication. When referring to engagement and communication, many highlighted that the feedback loop is not great and people are left waiting extended periods of time for updates.
- Maintaining community policing and human connections is a key concern. As previously mentioned, there is a fear of losing personal interactions and communities being alienated. Some wondered how this would affect older people or those who do not use or understand newer technology.
- Ethical, responsible and care implementation and Trust AI and technology concerns. Similar to what has been mentioned previously, respondents shared concerns over new technology that is being implemented. To ensure it is done in an ethical way, it can be trusted and police consider and discuss concerns with the public to help ease concerns to answer any questions they may have.
- Many comments from respondents highlighted that the wording of the strategy should be reconsidered, as currently, it sounds like technology will replace face to face policing altogether. Additionally, many raised issues of the wording, at times, being difficult to understand and would prefer it if plain English was used throughout.

Reform the Citizen Experience & Engagement – Verbatim Comments

“There is a strong risk of alienation if communication is only digital. Sometimes a human voice can be very reassuring”

“My concern would be with this initiative ending up like many corporations where you cannot speak to a real person.”

“Support for victims through DIGITAL services? People already spend too much time on the phone waiting to be connected (for non-emergencies). We just want to speak to an officer who will guide and progress matters appropriately. We would need to know more about how this 'ambition' will be rolled out.”

“Fully agree with improving digital channels to address all crime from minor to major although this may substantially increase police workload. The public would require feedback on any crime reporting which may contravene privacy laws.”

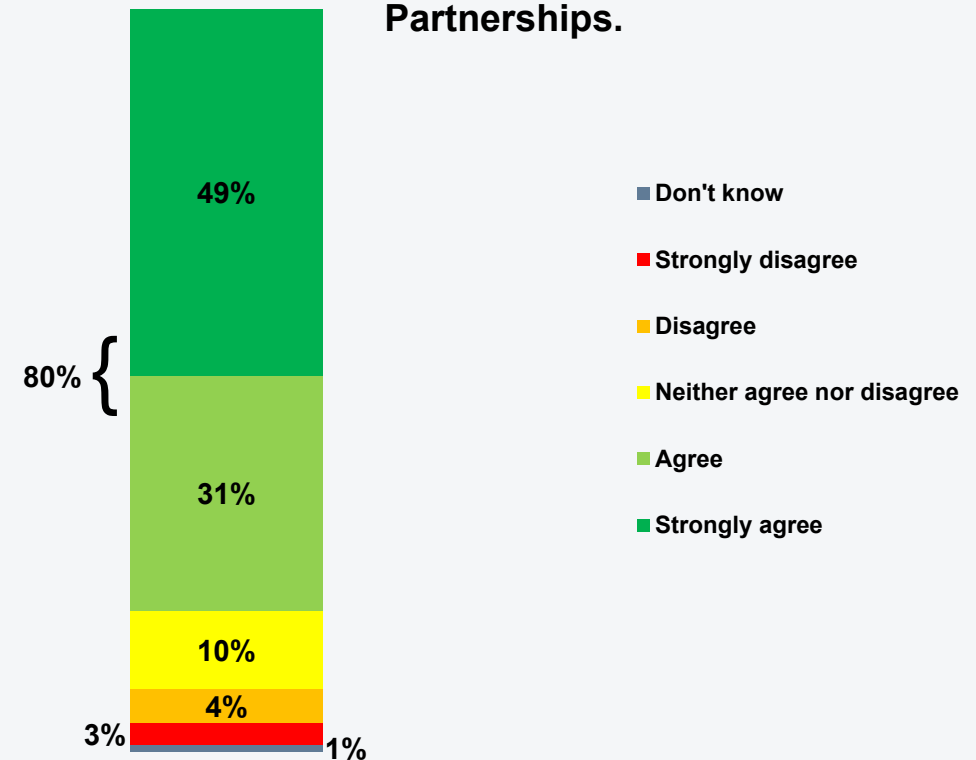
“I can see the need to provide digital services to assist the public to access police services but am concerned at the suggestion that there will be fewer channels to contact service centres. Many older members of the community find digital services difficult to navigate, for good reason.”

“Very little police/citizen interaction, police officers are unlikely to engage if spoken to. Very few kids would now go to an officer if they needed help.”

Enhance Multi-Agency Collaboration & Partnership

- Enhancing multi-agency collaboration and partnership within the refreshed strategy was again, well supported with 4 in 5 respondents (80%, n=911) in agreement that it should be a focus.

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is an objective we should be focussing on:
Enhance Multi-Agency Collaboration and Partnerships.



Enhance Multi-Agency Collaboration & Partnership – Open Text Analysis

- Many comments from respondents emphasised that joint working and collaboration across other agencies will be a positive step forward. Comments shared that collaboration, while a positive for creating a more efficient system with resource sharing, there needs to be strong communication between agencies to ensure a smooth process for everyone involved.
- Multi-agency collaboration is generally viewed in a positive light with regard to detecting and preventing crime, but respondents expressed hope that this will mean there will be a higher police presence and officers are freed up to spend more time within communities. Respondents shared that as part of collaboration and partnerships, communities need to be engaged with as well.
- While data sharing across agencies will be beneficial for efficiency and resource sharing, some comments highlighted apprehension over data sharing, stating that certain types of information should only be shared when absolutely necessary and there should be strong safeguards in place to protect privacy where possible.
- Similar to the previous point, concerns were raised over data security, privacy and legal compliance. There needs to be safeguards in place, along with consistent governance and accountability.

Enhance Multi-Agency Collaboration & Partnership – Verbatim Comments

“More multi-agency collaboration and information sharing can only reduce crime (especially organised crime) and that can only be a good thing.”

“Sharing data digitally will speed up processes and create a larger understanding of other bodies.”

“More involvement in schools in local towns can help - I work at a High School and there hasn't been any workshops or connection with the students.”

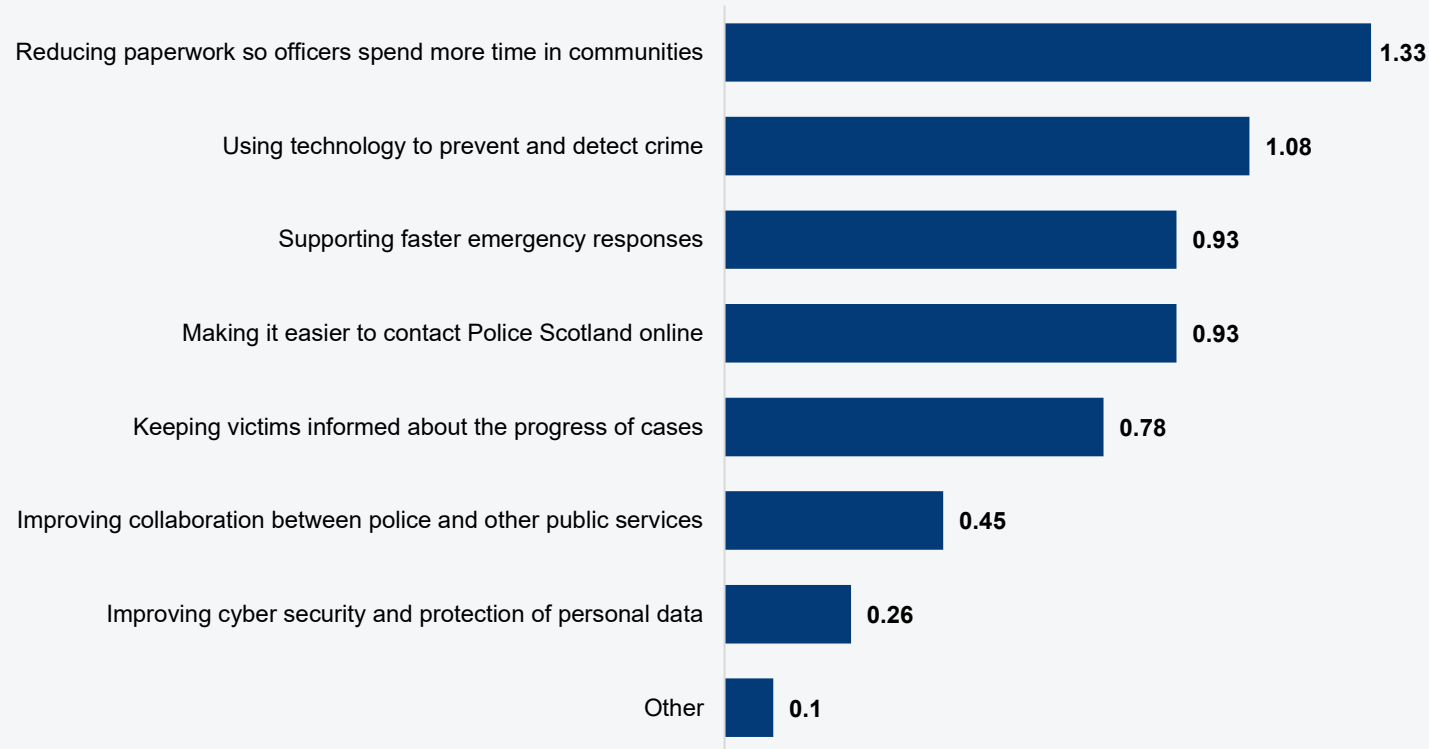
“Collaboration is the top priority to help prevent failures and a waste of resource. Not every event is a police matter, so immediate hand-off to the correct agency will provide a more seamless and professional interaction, getting the right help to each person.”

“Effective collaboration between public bodies can improve policing, but increased information sharing must be accompanied by clear accountability...Multi-agency working should not create gaps in accountability where each organisation assumes that another body holds the relevant information or is responsible for preserving it.”

“Sounds good, however I think the general feeling is that we could be turning in to a centralised state where individual rights to privacy are compromised. As long as this collaboration is targeted correctly with proper oversight it is of course a great idea”

Public Priorities

The Public's Highest Priorities for Digital Investment

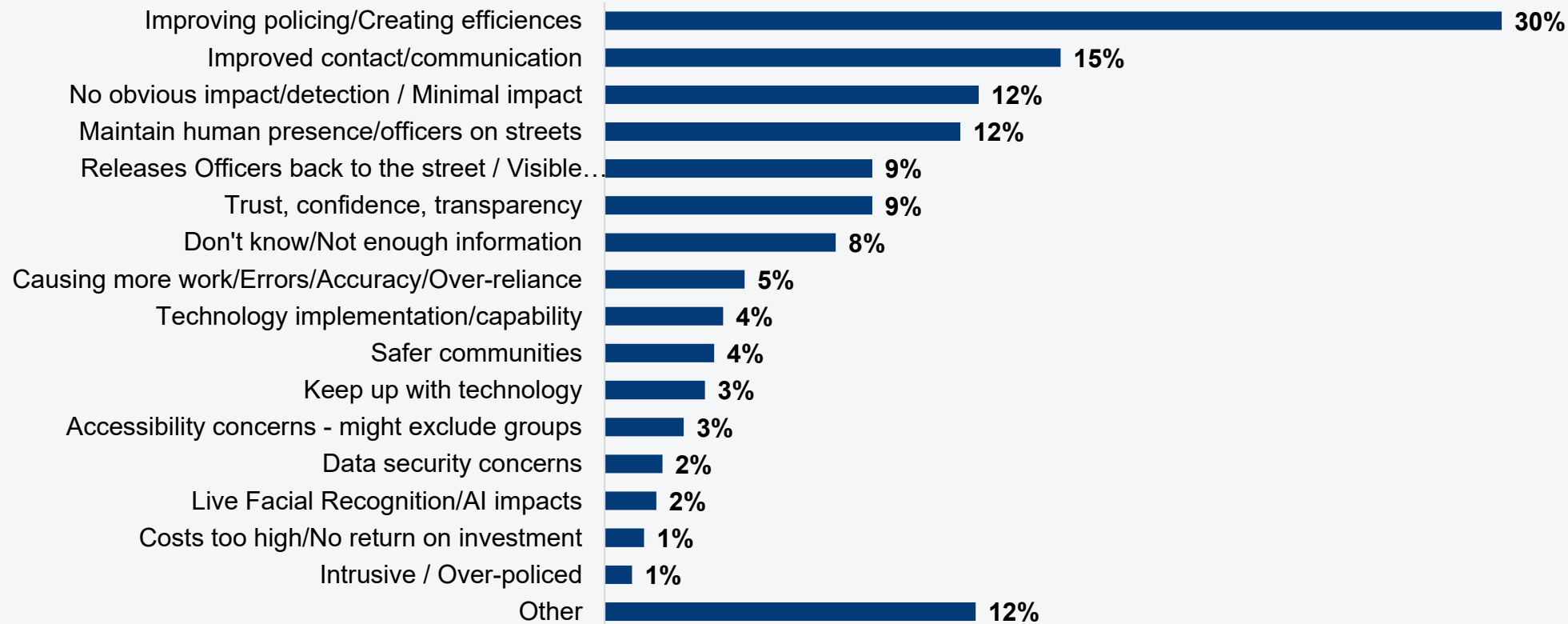


n=1,151

- Respondents were asked to rank which of the following areas should be the highest priority for digital investment. These rankings were weighted using a formula (see appendixes) to provide the final score for each area.
- 1,151 respondents felt that the highest priority for digital investment should be in reducing paperwork, enabling officers to spend more time in communities.
- The public would also like to see investment in technology to prevent and detect and crime, supporting faster response times and digital contact method with Police Scotland.
- By contrast, improving cyber security and protection of personal data was lower on the public's priorities.

Perceived Impacts of the Proposed use of Digital, Data and Technology

Question: How do you think the use of digital, data and technology will impact your experiences with policing in Scotland?



n=1,001 individual respondents who provided comments

Please note: Some respondents commented on more than one theme. Percentages, therefore, do not add up to 100%.

Perceived Impacts of the Proposed use of Digital, Data and Technology

Overall, views were more positive than negative, with digital, data and technology seen as an opportunity to improve policing while raising some concerns about its use.

Perceived positive impacts

- **Improving policing and creating efficiencies** was by far the strongest theme with 30% reflecting expectations that technology can make policing more effective and efficient by streamlining processes, minimising administrative tasks and making things more efficient, which in turn would improve service delivery. Respondents felt it would speed up reaction times and improve crime prevention. It was perceived that it could improve collaboration between partners by improved data sharing and linking opportunities.
- **Releases officers back to the street / visible policing** – Around one in ten respondents would expect to see improved visibility of police officers in the community with more officers being freed up to go back onto the beat. It was felt that by improving policing it would **make people feel safer in their own communities** with a reduction in community-based crime.
- **Trust, confidence and transparency** - Around one in 10 respondents view technology as a tool to improve trust and confidence in policing. It was felt that the use of technology to improve efficiencies and better prevent or detect crime and increase visibility would lead to greater public confidence.
- **Improved contact and communication** - 15% of respondents who commented expected to see an improvement in contact with the police, including ease and speed of contact offering up more ways to contact the police and reduce the amount of time spent waiting on 101 calls and paperwork. Suggestions included providing a chat function which could be more accessible than a phone call for those who do not speak English confidently, or an AI agent to help direct or answer frequently asked questions. Many felt that it could improve ongoing communication with the police by keeping people up to date with progress and outcomes.

Perceived Impacts of the Proposed use of Digital, Data and Technology

Main concerns

- **Maintaining a human presence** – over one in ten respondents (12%) still see visible officers and human interaction as an important part of effective policing. A main concern was that respondents did not want to see the more efficient use of technology, data and AI to replace police officer interaction with the public or reduced number of police officers on the streets.
- **Minimal or no obvious impact** – A sizable minority (12%) were unsure whether technology would make a noticeable difference to them or policing in general. This was not necessarily viewed as negative by some, with many not expecting to contact the police or have any interaction with them.
- **Don't know/No enough information** – Comments highlighted that there was a degree of uncertainty, with some (8%) feeling they lack sufficient information to assess the impact.
- **Errors, accuracy and over-reliance** – There were concerns that technology could introduce errors or lead to over-reliance on automated systems and AI. Some felt that it could have the opposite effect and cause greater scrutiny and more work for officers, in turn causing delays and longer policing times.
- **Other concerns** – Smaller groups mentioned issues such as accessibility, data security, AI/facial recognition and feeling like this approach would be intrusive with worries of over-policing.

Key point – Digital, data and technology is primarily associated with opportunities to improve policing, but public confidence depends on transparency, appropriate use and retaining the human element.

Verbatim Comments – Perceived Positive Impacts

“I think it will streamline communication with victims, speed up process ...reduce paperwork carried out by officers and allow them more time to focus on policing issues”

“...I would expect it to make it easier to contact Police Scotland, receive timely updates about cases, obtain clearer information as a victim and potentially receive faster responses when incidents are reported.”

“Hopefully it’ll make the streets safer.”

“It will make interacting with the police much faster and more transparent. ..it should lead to a more visible police presence in the community. ...I expect it to create a more proactive service that addresses local safety issues before they escalate into crises.”

“...it has the potential to improve access to services, speed up investigations, reduce administrative burdens... and enable a more proactive approach... [It] should also strengthen partnership working ..., allowing agencies to ...deliver more coordinated support...”

“If done correctly, it will make me feel safer. I’ve had nothing but good encounters with police in Scotland. I have a high respect for officers working in Scotland.”

“Increase confidence in the Police and improve the protection of communities.”

“I perhaps would like to know how it is progressing without cause to contact someone.”

“I would hope using technology would improve contact with the police. My experience using the non emergency number is not good - at times waited 20+ minutes for calls to be answered. Sometimes I just hang up.”

“When I ask the police for help, the process would be seamless and I wouldn’t have to repeat information. If I need an update on something I have reported, I will be able to check the website, or receive an email or text messages informing me that there has been progress.”

“Hopefully it will make for less admin for officers so they can be out in the community showing their presence “

“I would love to see more Officers on the beat. This would make me feel safer.”

Verbatim Comments – Concerns

“a visible, trusted human presence in communities is irreplaceable. Digital transformation can enhance policing, but it cannot substitute the legitimacy, reassurance and deterrence that come from officers physically present in neighbourhoods.”

“I would not be happy with any reduction in the face to face policing though.”

“Digital, data and technology are often presented as solutions, but in reality they risk making policing in Scotland feel less personal, less accessible, and more intrusive. Instead of improving the service, there’s a real possibility that technology will widen the gap between the public and the police. Online reporting may be convenient, but it also removes human contact at a time when people often need reassurance. Increased reliance on data systems introduces new opportunities for errors, misidentification, and unfair decision-making, especially when outdated or inaccurate information is fed into automated tools. Surveillance technologies and biometrics may be justified as “modernisation”, but to many people they feel like a step toward over-policing and reduced privacy. And while digital tools are supposed to save time, they often create more bureaucracy, meaning officers spend even more time staring at screens instead of being visible in communities. Overall, the push toward digital policing risks delivering a service that is more remote, more automated, and less connected to the people it is meant to serve.”

“technology should be seen as an enabler rather than a replacement for the human aspects of policing. Public trust, visibility and community engagement remain fundamental to policing by consent. Digital services must complement, not replace, meaningful interaction between officers and the communities they serve. It will also be important to ensure that all citizens can access policing services, including those who may be digitally excluded. Strong safeguards around data security, privacy and accountability will be essential to maintaining public confidence in how information is shared and used.”

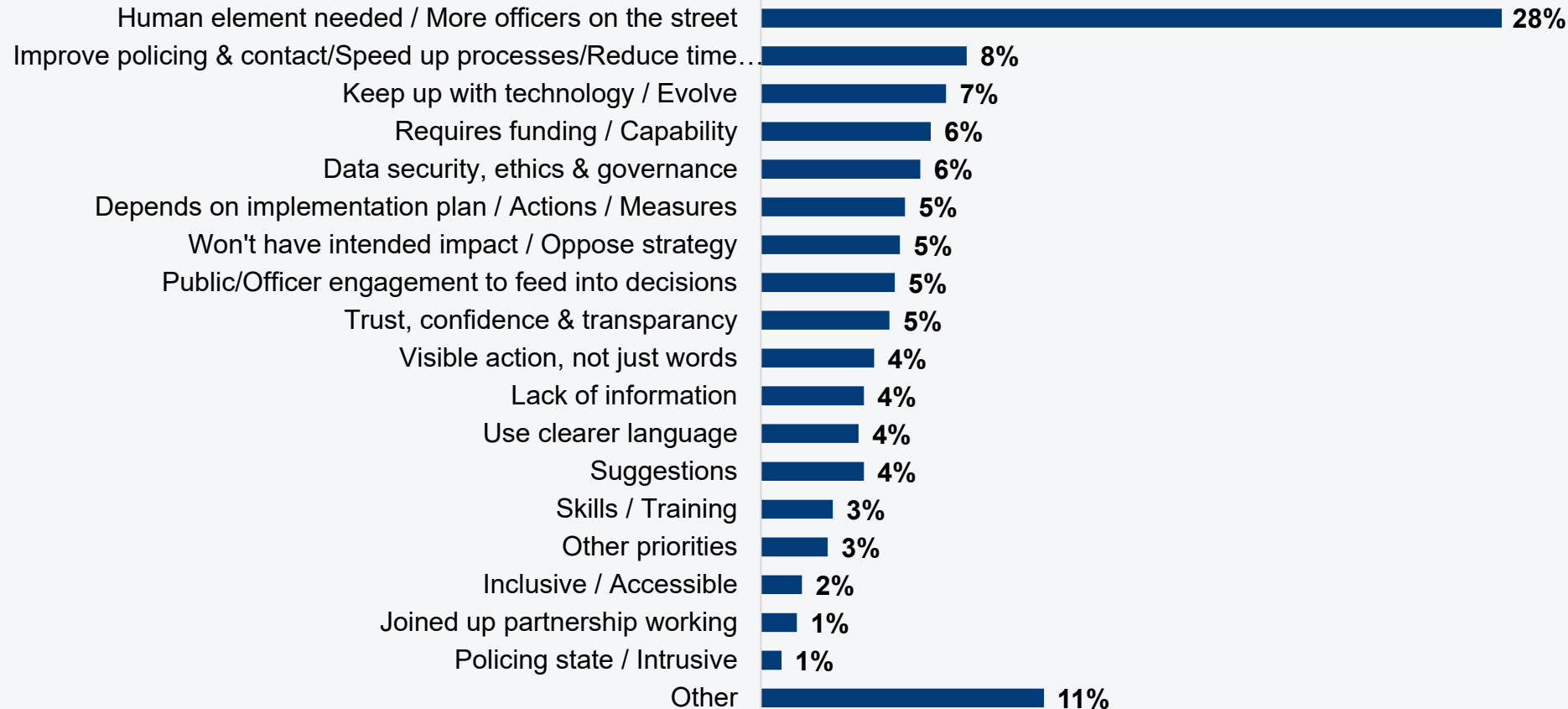
“I doubt it will make any difference to me personally given how “minor” crimes are not priority.”

“I have grave concerns about the security of information in the current and future digital world”

“I think digital, data and technology can improve my experience of policing by making services easier and quicker to access, improving communication and allowing information to be shared more effectively. However, it is important that digital services do not replace human contact completely. People should still be able to speak to someone when they need help, particularly in urgent, sensitive or complex situations. Technology should support policing while remaining secure, accessible and inclusive.”

Other Comments

Question: Please provide any other comments you may have on the draft strategy



n=504 individual respondents who provided comments

Please note: Some respondents commented on more than one theme. Percentages, therefore, do not add up to 100%.

Other Comments – Key Takeaways

Human interaction and having more police officers visible in the community and on the street is hugely important

- The theme that came through most strongly was the importance of human interaction and having more police officers on the streets. Respondents felt that use of data and technology should not replace human interaction. Trauma-informed communication was felt to be vital when interacting with victims and witnesses. It was particularly felt that technology should be used to reduce administrative work for police officers, facilitating officers to be more visible on the streets in local communities. There was genuine concern that AI and automation would be used to make efficiency savings and reduce police officer numbers.

Digital, data and technology brings many benefits, however, it essential that this is adequately funded, resourced and well planned

- Respondents acknowledged the benefits digital, data and technology could bring to policing. Some respondents felt that we should be keeping up to date with advances in technology. This was caveated with the fact that there needs to be adequate funding and resource to meet requirements, including ensuring that officers and staff are trained up appropriately. Having well thought out and transparent plans were considered important, particularly ensuring goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART), whilst keeping it simple.

Other Comments – Key Takeaways

A greater focus on data security, ethics and governance is important, providing full transparency and reassurance

- Respondents showed concerns about inappropriate use and poor management of personal data, as well as some worries around more specific tools such as live facial recognition, including bias and errors. Accessibility was also touched upon with concerns that we should not forget those who are less likely to use technology.

Ongoing public and police officer engagement is viewed as crucial to getting the right products for a successful outcome

- Some respondents highlighted that we should be speaking with the public and police officers who are involved in the areas of interest when designing solutions. It was felt that person-centred approach to design were key to success.

Clearer language and more information was sought after to improve understanding and reassure the public

- Respondents felt the strategy could be clearer with more plain English and more information provided.

Reassurance sought over unintended consequences

- There were general concerns that the strategy would not have the desired impact of reducing workload and allowing more police back to the streets, and instead some felt that it would cause additional scrutiny and work, as well as feeling more intrusive and over-policed. Some were opposed to the strategy on this basis and others felt that Police Scotland should be focussing on other priorities, such as getting the “basics” right.

Strategic Reflections

- **General support for the strategy:** Both stakeholders and individual members of the public strongly associated technology with making policing more efficient and effective, and hope technology can be used as a way to strengthen police contact, communication and engagement. However, this support was heavily dependant upon certain conditions.
- **Operational Expectations vs. Human Presence:** While 30% of respondents expect technology to improve efficiency and response times, 12% stress that visible, physical police presence and human interaction remains essential and must not be replaced by automated systems.
- **Divergent Perspectives:** Stakeholders focus primarily on operational possibilities and inter-agency data sharing, whereas individual members of the public focus on risks regarding privacy, data security, digital exclusion, and potential loss of personal contact.
- **Communication Gap:** The public demands clearer updates (resolving issues with 101 call waiting times) and expressed a preference for plain, non-jargon language so as not to misinterpret technology as a replacement for officers.
- **Governance and Data Ownership:** Stakeholder approval relies heavily on robust data management, sovereignty, and secure cross-agency interoperability (e.g., with NHS and local authorities).

Recommendations

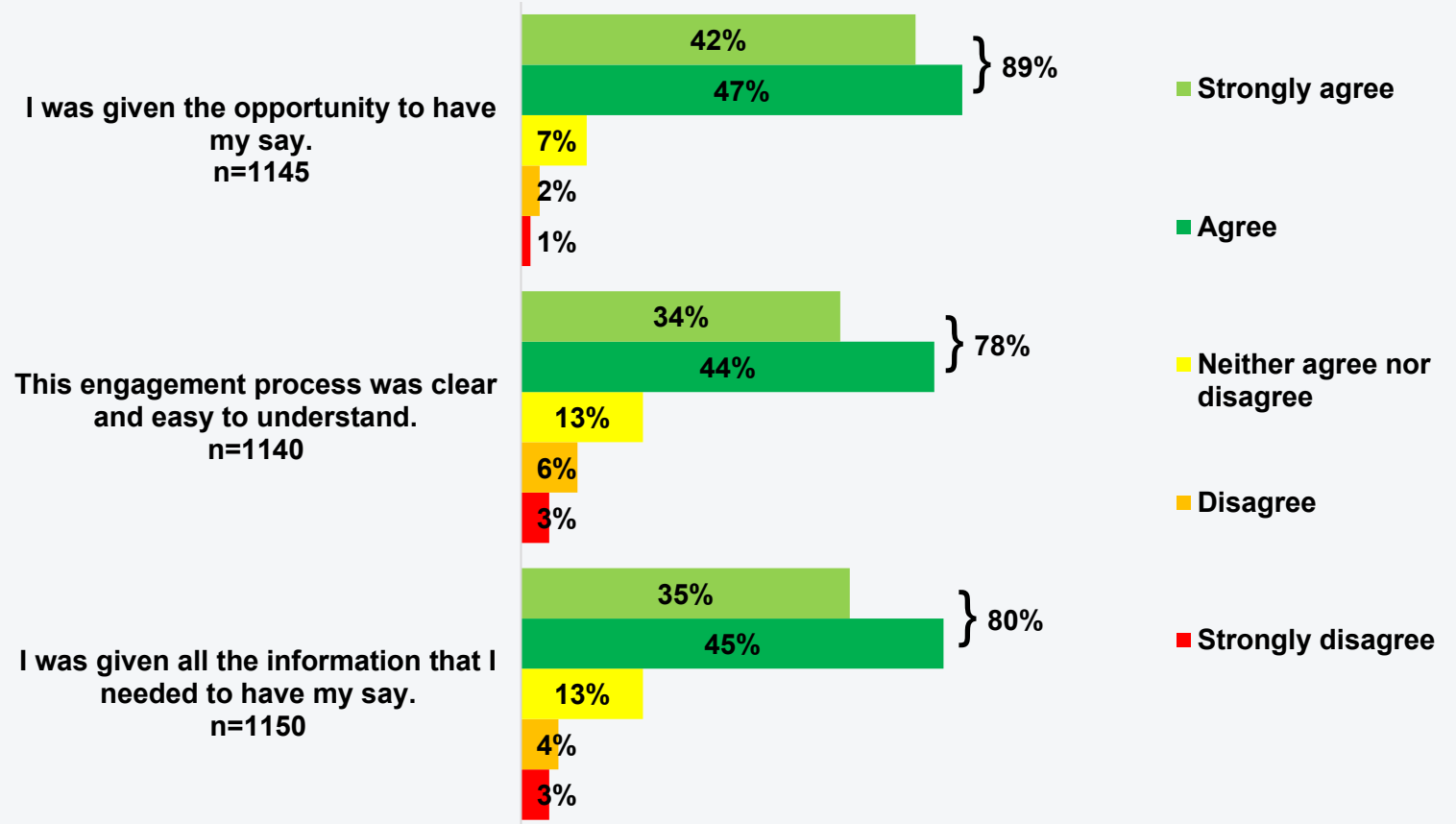
- **Reframe Messaging Around 'Enabling' Officers:** Explicitly clarify in strategic language that digital tools and AI are meant to assist and free up officers for the community, rather than replace human interactions or presence.
- **Simplify Language and Communication:** Review public-facing strategy materials using clear, plain English to alleviate misinterpretations and foster public confidence.
- **Strengthen Data Governance and Privacy Safeguards:** Establish transparent guidelines on data protection, sovereignty, and security to reassure both partner organisations and members of public.
- **Strengthen ethical commitments within the strategy through our Rights Based Approach:** provide information in the strategy on how Police Scotland will consider the potential benefits, risks and impacts of technology, ensuring that its use meets ethical standards such as fairness, necessity and proportionality, and our commitment to taking a trauma-informed approach to policing. Include our commitment to public and stakeholder engagement as part of our Rights Based Approach, building transparency, trust and confidence, and taking a person-centred approach.

Feedback about the Consultation Process

Amongst both members of the public and stakeholders, the percentage who agree or strongly agree they...

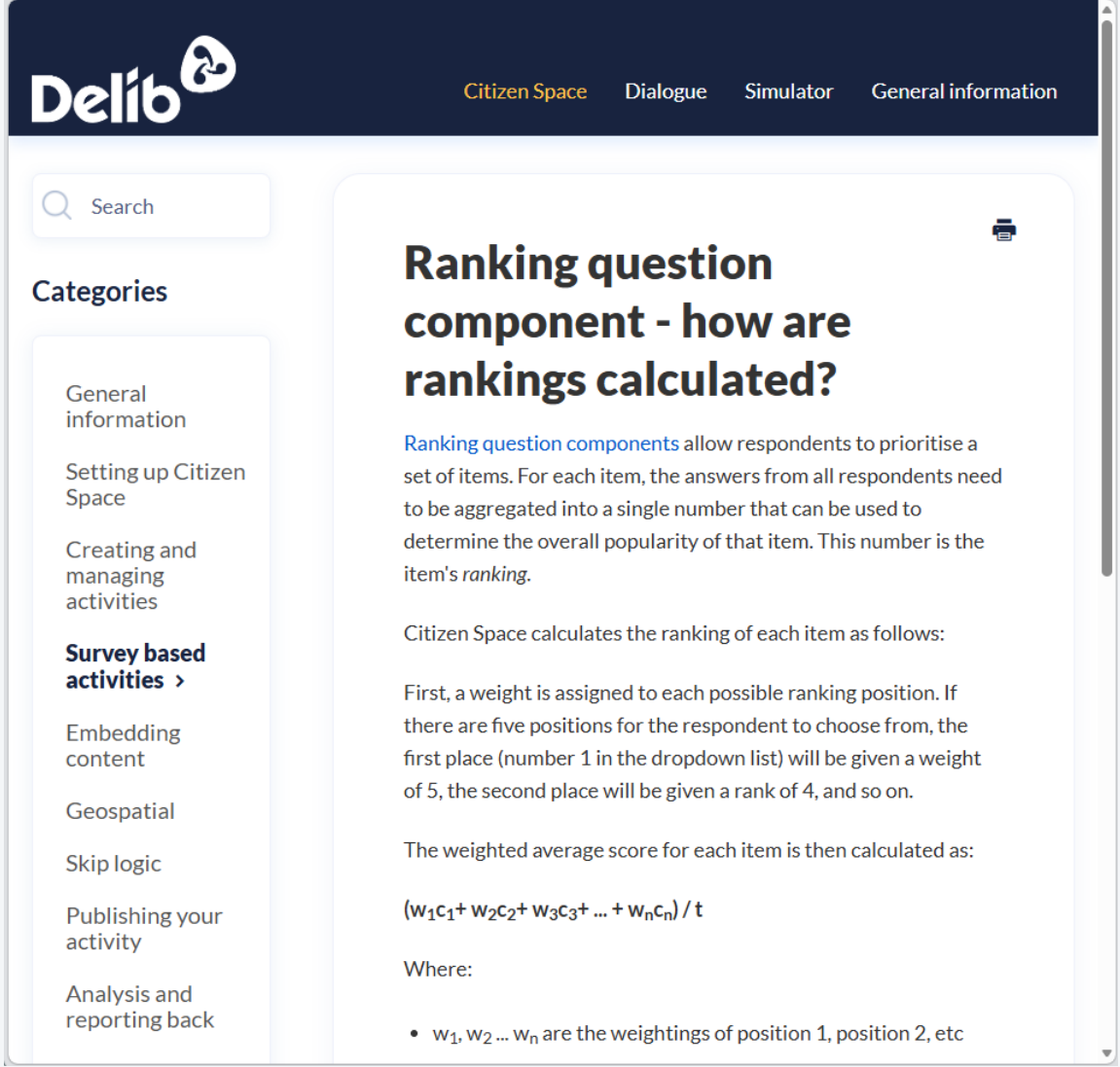
- were given the opportunity to have their say **89%**
- found the consultation process clear and easy to understand **78%**
- were given all the information needed to have their say **80%**
- **3%** felt they weren't given the chance to have their say; **9%** felt it wasn't a clear process and **7%** disagreed they were given all information.

Feedback about this consultation process



Appendix

- For full methodology on how rankings questions are calculated in the 'Public Priorities' section, refer to the [Delib Knowledge Base documentation](#).



The screenshot shows the Delib website interface. The top navigation bar includes the Delib logo and links for Citizen Space, Dialogue, Simulator, and General information. A search bar is located below the navigation bar. The left sidebar lists various categories, with 'Survey based activities' highlighted. The main content area displays the title 'Ranking question component - how are rankings calculated?' and a detailed explanation of the ranking process, including the formula for calculating the weighted average score.

Delib

Citizen Space Dialogue Simulator General information

Search

Categories

- General information
- Setting up Citizen Space
- Creating and managing activities
- Survey based activities >**
- Embedding content
- Geospatial
- Skip logic
- Publishing your activity
- Analysis and reporting back

Ranking question component - how are rankings calculated?

Ranking question components allow respondents to prioritise a set of items. For each item, the answers from all respondents need to be aggregated into a single number that can be used to determine the overall popularity of that item. This number is the item's *ranking*.

Citizen Space calculates the ranking of each item as follows:

First, a weight is assigned to each possible ranking position. If there are five positions for the respondent to choose from, the first place (number 1 in the dropdown list) will be given a weight of 5, the second place will be given a rank of 4, and so on.

The weighted average score for each item is then calculated as:

$$(w_1c_1 + w_2c_2 + w_3c_3 + \dots + w_nc_n) / t$$

Where:

- $w_1, w_2 \dots w_n$ are the weightings of position 1, position 2, etc

Contact Us

If you have any question, please email us

InsightEngagement@scotland.police.uk