

5.4 Stronger communities

Safe and strong communities have a positive influence on residents' health and wellbeing. The more deprived the neighbourhood, the more likely it is to have social and environmental characteristics that present risks to health, including poor housing, higher rates of crime and poorer air quality. Some of the adverse effects caused can be mitigated when communities are empowered to identify their own priorities for action and influence the work of partner agencies in their localities.

The 'Your place, your wellbeing: Walsall Household and Lifestyle Survey¹' 2012 has provided an up to date perspective about residents' views and priorities. Overall this survey tells us that residents feel that low level of crime is the most important issue that makes somewhere a good place to live. Whilst the issue remains a priority for improvement it is less in need of attention now than previously, reflecting a rise in concern around job prospects, wages and cost of living and also a healthy sense that the issue is being managed relatively well (based upon Feeling the Difference Survey, see Figure).

Indicator	Wave 33	Wave 32	% difference
Feelings of safety during the day (% feeling safe)	97%	95%	+2%
Feelings of safety after dark (% feeling safe)	83%	75%	+8%
The Police in this area make fair decisions when dealing with local problems (% satisfied)	68%	59%	+9%
How good a job do you think the police in this neighbourhood are doing? (% good)	74%	70%	+4%
Can be relied on to be there when you need them (% agree)	81%	74%	+7%
Treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are (% agree)	86%	81%	+5%
Can be relied on to deal with minor crimes (% agree)	69%	67%	+2%
Work with people in the community to improve neighbourhoods (% agree)	64%	61%	+3%
Taking everything into account, I have confidence in the police in this area (% agree)	83%	78%	+5%
How good or poor are the relations between people in your neighbourhood and the police? (% good)	68%	61%	+7%
West Midlands Police Force provide good value for money (% agree)	72%	71%	+1%
Works hard to engage with local residents (% agree)	63%	59%	+4%

Figure 1 West Midland Police Feeling the Difference Survey. Source: West Midlands Police Force 'Feeling the Difference' survey wave 33 (December 2012 – February 2013) and 32 (May to July 2012)

¹ <http://www.yourplace-yourwellbeing.walsall.org.uk/>

Within the survey, West Midlands Police Force asked residents whether they have ever felt fearful of becoming a victim of crime at any stage over the last 12 months. Where 18% of residents across the Force as a whole are fearful of crime, this rises slightly to 19% across the Walsall Local Policing Unit (LPU). The proportion saying they feel fearful, however, has dropped from 21% in Wave 32. The figures by Constituency show that those in Walsall South are most likely to fear becoming a victim of crime (25%)².

Walsall's Area Partnerships bring together local people, Council services and the community and voluntary sector to make Walsall a place where residents can live, work and play. There are six Area Partnerships in the borough; each has a dedicated Area Manager to facilitate local partnership working and an Area Community Plan to tackle the key issues and priorities in the locality.

West Midlands Police have identified two priority areas within Walsall LPU; Walsall Town Centre and Birchills. Bloxwich has also been identified as a local priority area (See Figure below). These areas were identified utilising a range of data that when taken together, highlighted specific locations that had a greater number of community safety concerns and would benefit from a more targeted partner response.

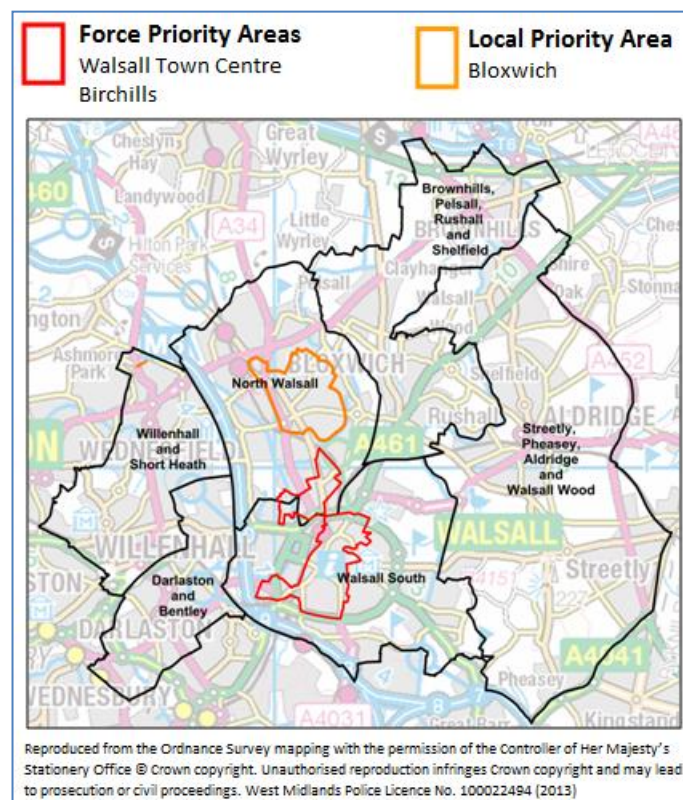


Figure 2 West Midlands Police Priority Areas

² Feeling the Difference – Walsall LPU Wave 33 results (December 2012 – February 2013)