

CCTV and Out of Hours Proposed Service Changes

Consultation Report

September 2024



1 Background and Methods

Background

Shropshire Council currently provides 24 hour, 7 days a week CCTV monitoring for Shrewsbury. Operating costs are fully met by Shropshire Council. Shropshire Council also works closely with key partners including Shrewsbury Town Council, Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID) and West Mercia Police.

Despite the strong local partnership working in place, Shropshire Council's financial situation means it is difficult to continue to offer this service, particularly when other towns in the county are not supported in this same way. Shropshire Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies a savings target of £334,000 for the CCTV and Out of Hours service. This is a significant reduction in service budget, and it will mean a new model of operation for CCTV and out of hours call triage will need to be designed. For CCTV to continue operating effectively in Shrewsbury there is a requirement for ongoing investment in maintenance of the camera network and system. These costs for the last three years have been met by Shropshire Council, but the financial position now means that the council has no budget to continue this non-statutory function.

A consultation was launched in July of 2024, and ran for just over six weeks. It aimed to explore options for the new model of service and to gather feedback from members of the public and stakeholders to inform future decision making.

The current service offer includes:

- A CCTV network of cameras within Shrewsbury Town centre and a CCTV monitoring service 365 days a year, 24 hour, 7 days a week.
- CCTV searches.
- Radio support for the Safer Shrewsbury Scheme (including Pub and Shop Watch, Town Rangers and town centre policing).

During 2023, there were 3,144 occasions where the CCTV team took control of a camera to actively monitor a situation or were asked to retrieve footage. This includes both real time and reactive incidents, where evidence has been requested after an incident.

The CCTV service links to the out of hours calls service. There are no plans to reduce this element of service provision, it is a separate, statutory function, as a result it will remain protected.

Proposed service reduction includes changes to CCTV provision in Shrewsbury. This includes the options set out below. As part of this Shropshire Council is keen to understand if partner organisations or other providers have suggestions for working differently in future, either taking over the service or working in partnership with Shropshire Council. The options being consulted on are as follows:

Option 1

Cameras record 24 hours a day, 365 days a year but with no active monitoring. The Police will still be able to request footage to be reviewed and downloaded. A "best endeavours" approach, where there are substantial grounds to believe that

an individual or the public is in danger, the team could do its best to provide live monitoring, dependent on available resource. Partner agencies will be asked to contribute towards the cost of maintenance, replacement of cameras and hardware, and room hire.

Option 2

As Option 1 but enhanced with some volunteer led active monitoring.

The Police will still be able to request footage to be reviewed and downloaded.

A “best endeavours” approach, where there are substantial grounds to believe that an individual or the public is in danger, the team could do its best to provide live monitoring, dependent on available resource. Partner agencies will be asked to contribute towards the cost of maintenance, replacement of cameras and hardware, and room hire.

Option 3

Cease CCTV monitoring and recording altogether.

Option 4

As Option 1 with additional resource of 2 FTE staff, to provide some active monitoring (approximately 75% of the time as rotas allow.) This additional resource would require partner funding for the extra active monitoring resource. Partner agencies will be asked to contribute towards the cost of maintenance, replacement of cameras and hardware, and room hire, and towards the cost of staffing to allow the additional monitoring.

The consultation made clear that Shropshire Council's current preferred option is **Option 1**. However, the views expressed in the consultation and captured in this report will be fully considered before any final decisions can be taken.

Methods

The consultation collected responses via online survey. Additionally, four detailed letters were sent to the TellUs inbox, and some feedback was collected and summarised following an engagement event with BID. Responses resulting in quantitative data are displayed in Figures, below. Qualitative data, including responses to open-ended survey questions and letters, were analysed for common themes. Officer summary of event feedback is integrated where it corresponds with survey themes. Where possible, themes are presented in Tables, with anonymised examples provided illustrating the themes.

This report proceeds in the following sections:

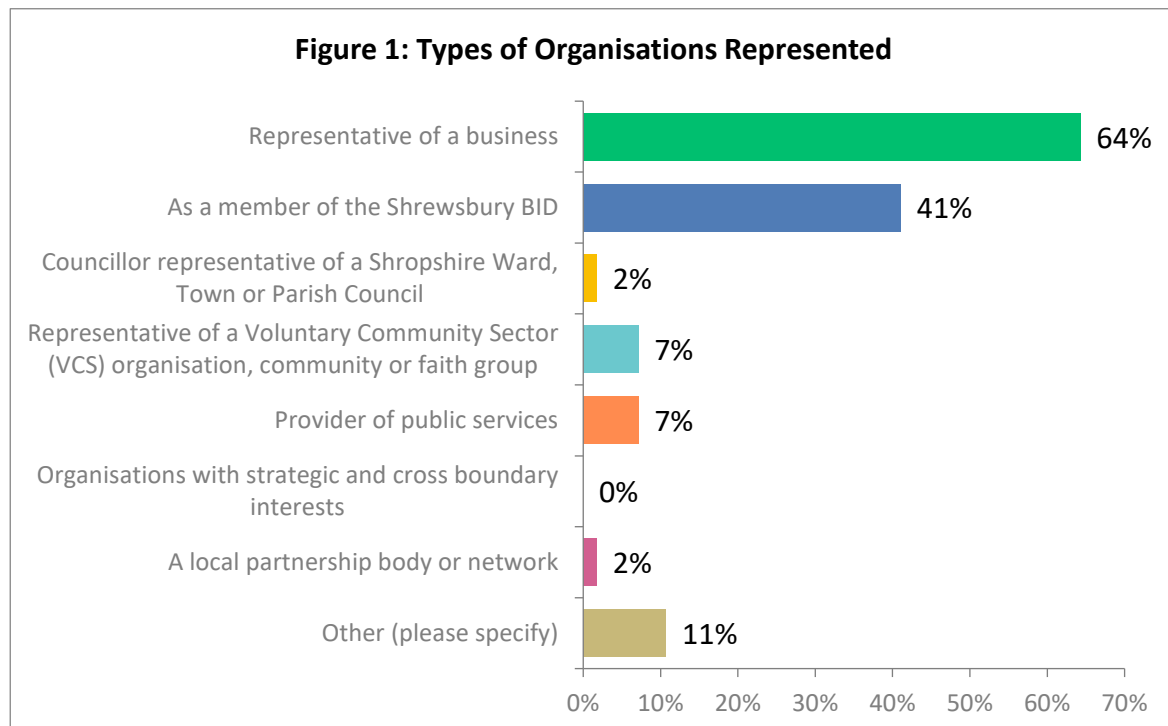
- **Section 1: Background and Methods** (this section) provides an overview of Shropshire Council's current involvement in CCTV provision, the need to achieve savings in this area, engagement with key stakeholders prior to the public consultation, and a brief description of the methods employed in analysing the results of the consultation.
- **Section 2: Respondents** presents the number and types of responses to the consultation received from the online survey, as well as identifying demographic characteristics of respondents.

- **Section 3: Current Feelings of Safety and Benefits of CCTV** presents the results of questions about how respondents currently feel about their safety and the benefits of the CCTV service.
- **Section 4: Preferred Options** analyses the results of questions aimed at assessing how respondents feel about the proposed options.
- **Section 5: Impacts of Options** looks at how respondents predict they and others will be impacted by the various proposed options.
- **Section 6: Summary and Conclusion** provides a summary of the key findings from the overall analysis of the three surveys and offers some conclusions based on the evidence.

2 Respondents

Introduction

In total, 315 respondents answered the survey, and four respondents sent emails with longer comments to the TellUs inbox. Of the survey respondents, 80% said they



were answering the questions as an individual member of the public, while 20% (62 respondents) said that they were answering on behalf of an organisation or group.

Representation of Organisations

Most of those respondents answering on behalf of an organisation were from the business community (64%), and many of those indicated that they were also members of BID (**see Figure 1**).

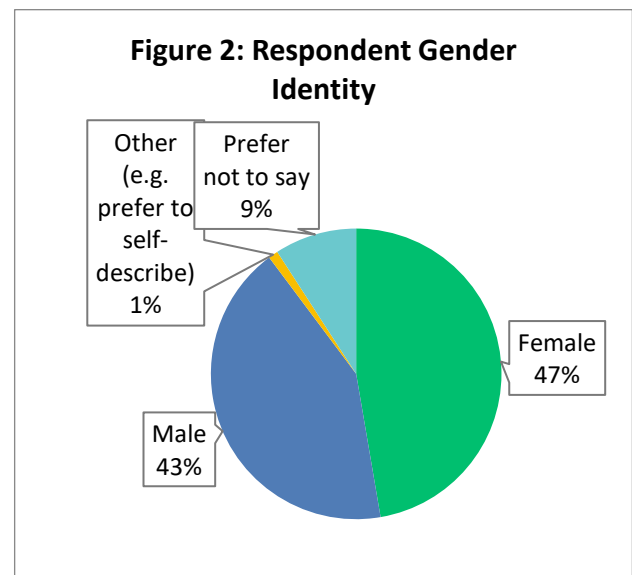
The following organisations and businesses identified themselves as taking part in the survey, though more did not identify themselves:

- JA Woodroffe

- Millard & Lancaster
- Shrewsbury Library
- Opo (Shrewsbury) Ltd
- The Alb
- Shrewsbury Street Pastors
- Palmer's of Shrewsbury
- JD Wetherspoons
- Vinegarhill
- Greggs
- Sia
- The Salopian Bar
- Halon Menswear
- Painted Life, Highly Flammable Studios
- VH
- Exchange
- Tanners Wines Ltd
- Inocencia
- BID
- Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Ludlow Residents Group (LRG)
- Clearview Security Ltd
- Wellmeadow Limited

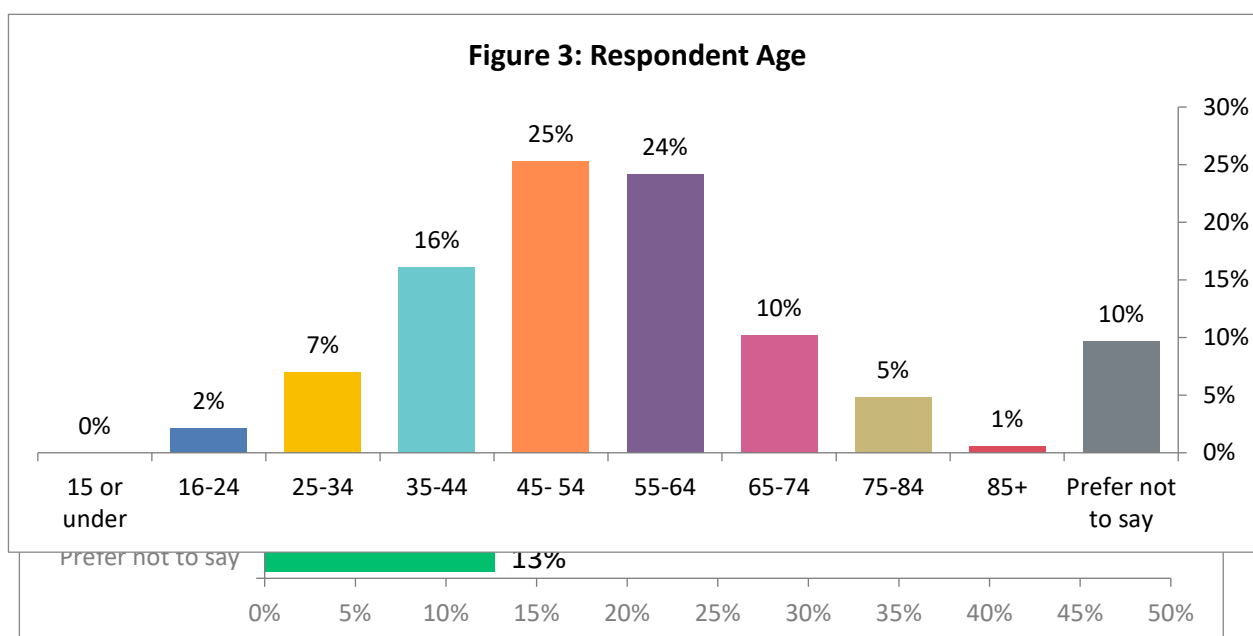
Demographics

It should be noted that respondents are not required to answer demographic questions if they don't want to, so only 177 respondents or fewer answered each of the demographic questions. These questions are asked to gauge whether the survey has reached a representative sample of the population being impacted by the proposals.



A fairly even spread of men and women answered the survey. However, children and **young adults were very underrepresented** among respondents, with only 9% of respondents identifying as under age 35 (see **Figures 2 & 3**).

Most respondents (65%) were employed, either full-time, part-time, or self-employed (see **Figure 4, below**).



14% of respondents (26) identified themselves as having a disability that limits their daily activity. Mobility (8) and mental health (5) were the most common disabilities identified in this group.

White (British; Irish; Welsh) respondents were in the majority, as were those who identified as having no religion or preferring not to say (see **Tables 1 & 2**).

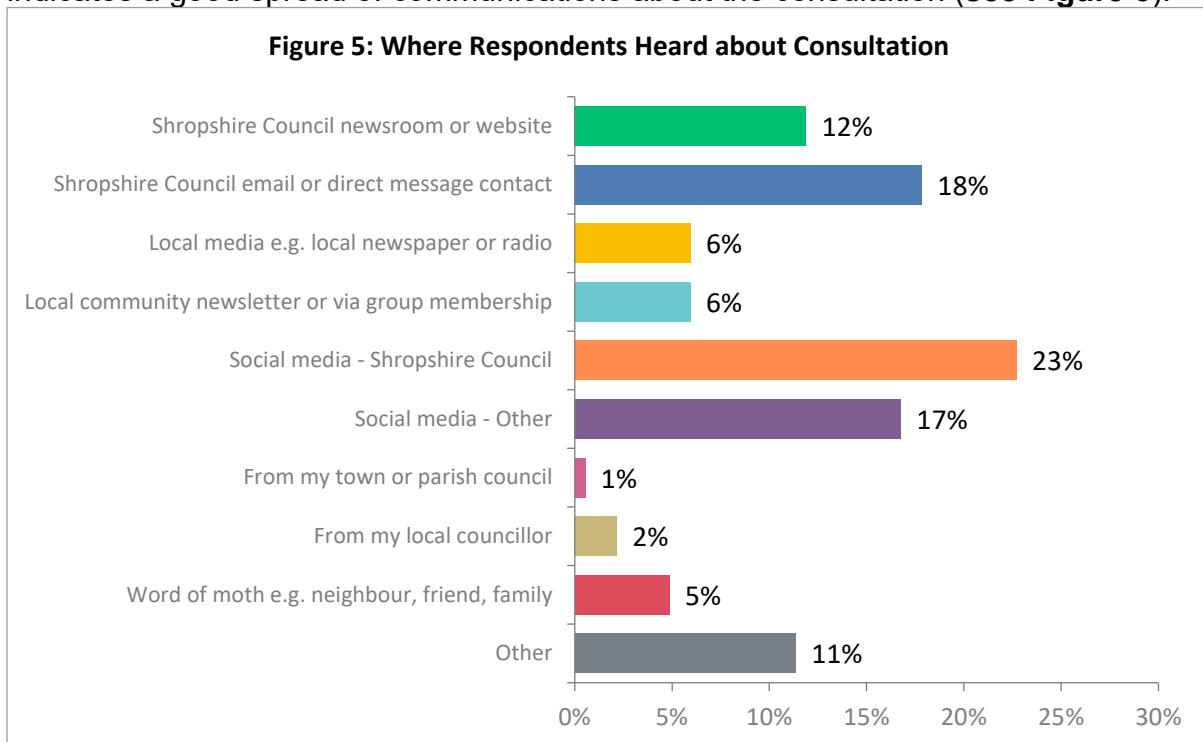
Table 1. Respondent Ethnic Background	Count	%
Arab	1	1%
Asian (Asian British; Bangladeshi Chinese; Indian; Japanese; Pakistani; any other Asian background).	1	1%
Black (Black African; Black British; Black Caribbean; any other Black background).	2	1%
Mixed (White and Asian; White and Black African; White and Black Caribbean; any other mixed background)	2	1%
White (British; Irish; Welsh)	144	81%
White (Gypsy, Roma or Irish traveller)	0	0%
Other white background e.g. Bulgarian, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, White South African, etc.	4	2%
Other Ethnic Group	1	1%
Prefer not to say or don't know	22	12%

Table 2. Respondent Religion	Count	%
Buddhist	0	0%
Christian	59	34%

Hindu	1	1%
Judaism	1	1%
Muslim	0	0%
Sikh	0	0%
Veganism (as a belief)	1	1%
No Religion	75	43%
Prefer not to say	36	21%

Heard about Survey

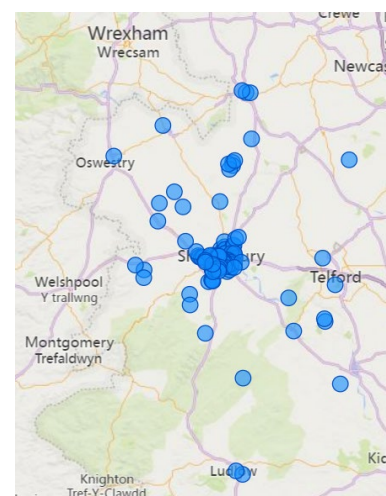
Respondents reported hearing about the survey from a wide variety of places, which indicates a good spread of communications about the consultation (**see Figure 5**).



Location

Unsurprisingly, most respondents providing their postcode were located in Shrewsbury or the nearby area (**see Image 1**). However, some respondents hailed from further out, including Ludlow, Oswestry, and the areas around Telford.

Image 1: Respondent Location



3 Current Feelings of Safety and Benefits of CCTV

Respondents were asked about their current feelings of safety under the CCTV provision now in place, as well as whether they are aware of and/or have benefitted from the service. When asked about how safe they feel in Shrewsbury Town Centre after 10:30pm, more

Figure 6: Feelings of Safety in Shrewsbury Town Centre after 10:30pm

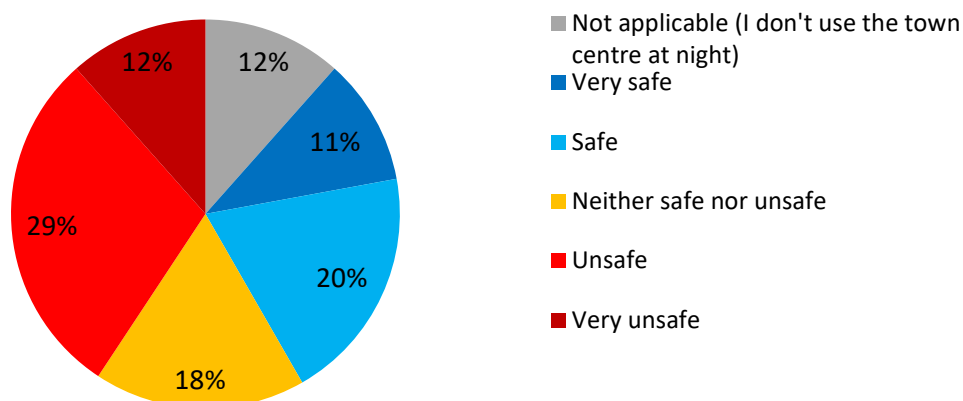
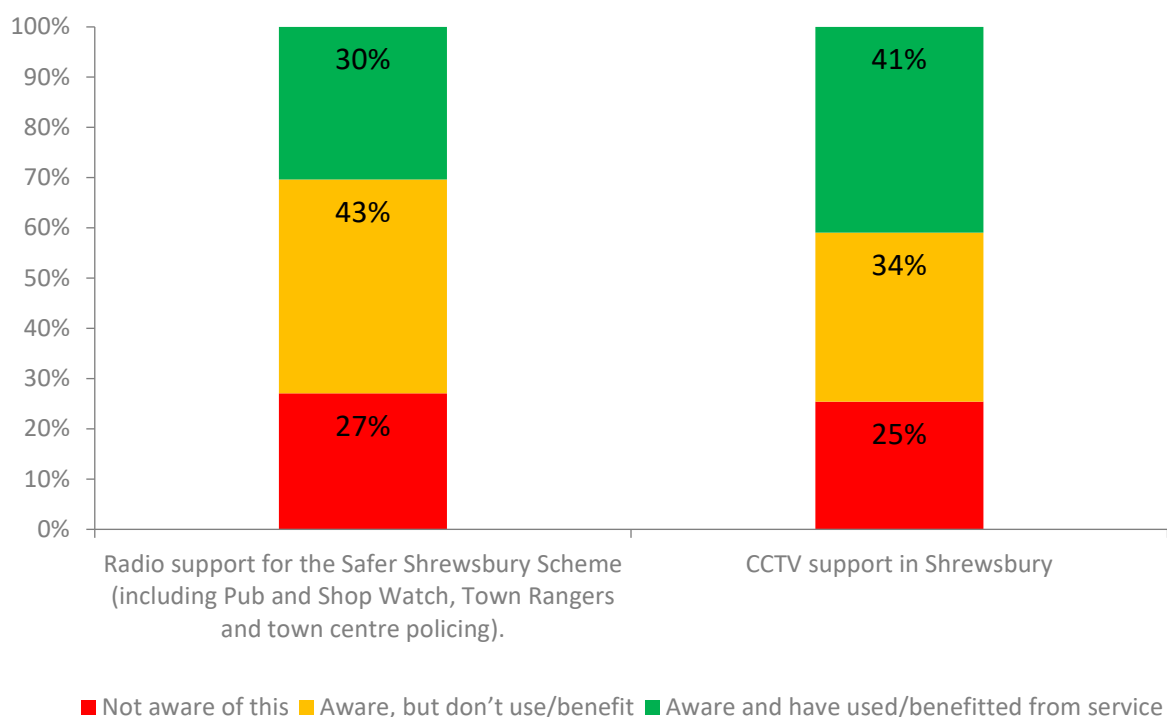


Figure 7: Benefit from Current CCTV Service



respondents said they felt unsafe (41%) than said they felt safe (31%) (see **Figure 6, below**).

Respondents were also asked about their awareness and use of two specific services currently in place around CCTV: radio support for the Safer Shrewsbury Scheme, and CCTV support in Shrewsbury. As shown in **Figure 7**, while a majority of respondents were aware of both services, a minority of respondents are aware of and have used or benefitted from these services. 30% of respondents said that they are aware of and have used or benefitted from the radio support, and 41% said they are aware of and have used or benefitted from CCTV support.

Finally, respondents were asked whether there was anything they wanted to say about the current CCTV provision (e.g. anything working particularly well, or not very well), and were provided with a space for open-ended responses. 103 respondents

took the opportunity to provide feedback on this question, and these comments were analysed for common themes, which are presented in **Table 3**. Anonymised examples illustrating the most pertinent themes are provided below.

Table 3. Themes - Current Service Provision	Count	%
Currently working well	41	24%
CCTV enhances public safety	33	19%
Don't reduce/withdraw the service	30	17%
CCTV acts as deterrent for criminals/shoplifters	14	8%
Currently not working very well/could be used better	13	8%
Specific example(s) given of when CCTV support has been important	13	8%
Suggestions for alternative ways to run the service	10	6%
Other safety elements needed (e.g. better lighting, more police/Ranger presence)	7	4%
Crime/ASB on the rise	7	4%
Other	4	2%

There was a wide variety of themes mentioned in responses to this question. The largest theme, mentioned by 41 respondents (24%) was that the **current CCTV service is working well**. Examples of comments include:

- “The current service has been seen to support the night-time economy significantly by providing monitoring to respond proactively to incidents that occur in the evenings. The PubWatch and ShopWatch schemes are an invaluable source of support for our town centre businesses and have a direct impact on economic wellbeing and economic growth.”
- “As a member of the fire service I have been to incidents where CCTV have provided valuable information which have helped resolve incidents and save lives.”
- “The rangers are a most welcome addition to the town centre and work well with the CCTV.”

13% of respondents, however, left comments suggesting that they believed the **current CCTV service is not working well**. These respondents thought that the service wasn't working well in general or said that there were ways that the service could be working better. For example:

- “Many CCTV cameras not working. General lack of training of radio procedures, making communication easily misunderstood sometimes.”
- “The shop's window has been broken twice and the cameras were not focused on the premises and could not provide assistance to police.”
- “Not working, the town is becoming a no go area.”
- “Rangers need to be present more and at different times during the week.”

A theme related to how well CCTV works, mentioned by 19% of respondents, was that **CCTV enhances public safety**. Examples of comments illustrating this theme include:

- “CCTV monitoring makes for a safer feeling environment and lessens anti-social behaviour.”

- “Don’t feel safe in town but knowing it’s monitored by CCTV makes me feel better.”
- “I believe it helps save lives and would have a detrimental impact if CCTV was reduced in the towns. Especially in regards to river safety and people falling in or vulnerable people not being noticed.”

Relatedly, 13 respondents (8%) gave **specific examples of CCTV active monitoring working**, either in their own personal experience or in the experiences of people they know or work with. Most of these examples risk compromising the anonymity of respondents, so are not provided here.

14% of respondents also said that they think **CCTV is an important deterrent** for crime and antisocial behaviour. For example:

- “The CCTV is beneficial! As an employee of a business that utilises the services offered by Shrewsbury BID, I’ve found the CCTV to be necessary to hinder anti-social behaviour.”
- “We have benefitted from reporting ASB within town during unsociable hours and this has led to immediate action to stop individuals. It also gives us peace of mind to know criminal behaviour is deterred and stopped as early on as possible.”
- “24/7 monitoring of the town centre CCTV system. IS A DETERRENT.”

Often in connection with the above theme or other themes, 4% of respondents also mentioned that they believe **crime and/or anti-social behaviour in Shrewsbury is on the rise**. For example:

- “Even with 100% live monitoring, shoplifting is still on the rise. So to maintain 100% CCTV but not live will be the best option, so footage can be requested at a later date, when required.”
- “Town is getting worse with anti-social behaviour even in the day, so a cut to CCTV is going to make matters worse.”

The second largest theme, mentioned by 30 respondents (17%) can be summarised as requests **not to reduce or withdraw CCTV service**. This theme was always mentioned alongside other themes, such as those referenced above. For example:

- “Please do not reduce CCTV. Our town centre like others has issues with homeless people (and associated behaviours), drugs alcohol abuse, theft (particularly cycles and shoplifting). I would not feel safe in the town centre without responsive CCTV and active monitoring
- “Feel we as a town need at least the current provision, certainly no reduction.”

10 respondents (6%) provided some **specific suggestions for alternative ways to run the service** in response to this question. Some of these suggestions included more facetious suggestions such as cutting employee salaries rather than CCTV or suggesting that Shropshire Council should fund CCTV elsewhere. However, three suggestions offer more nuanced ideas about how the proposals might be tweaked:

- “I have seen volunteer street pastors/welfare people who provide an excellent service of help & reassurance for local people enjoying the nighttime economy. Telford I know benefits a lot from street pastors, so if Shrewsbury’s

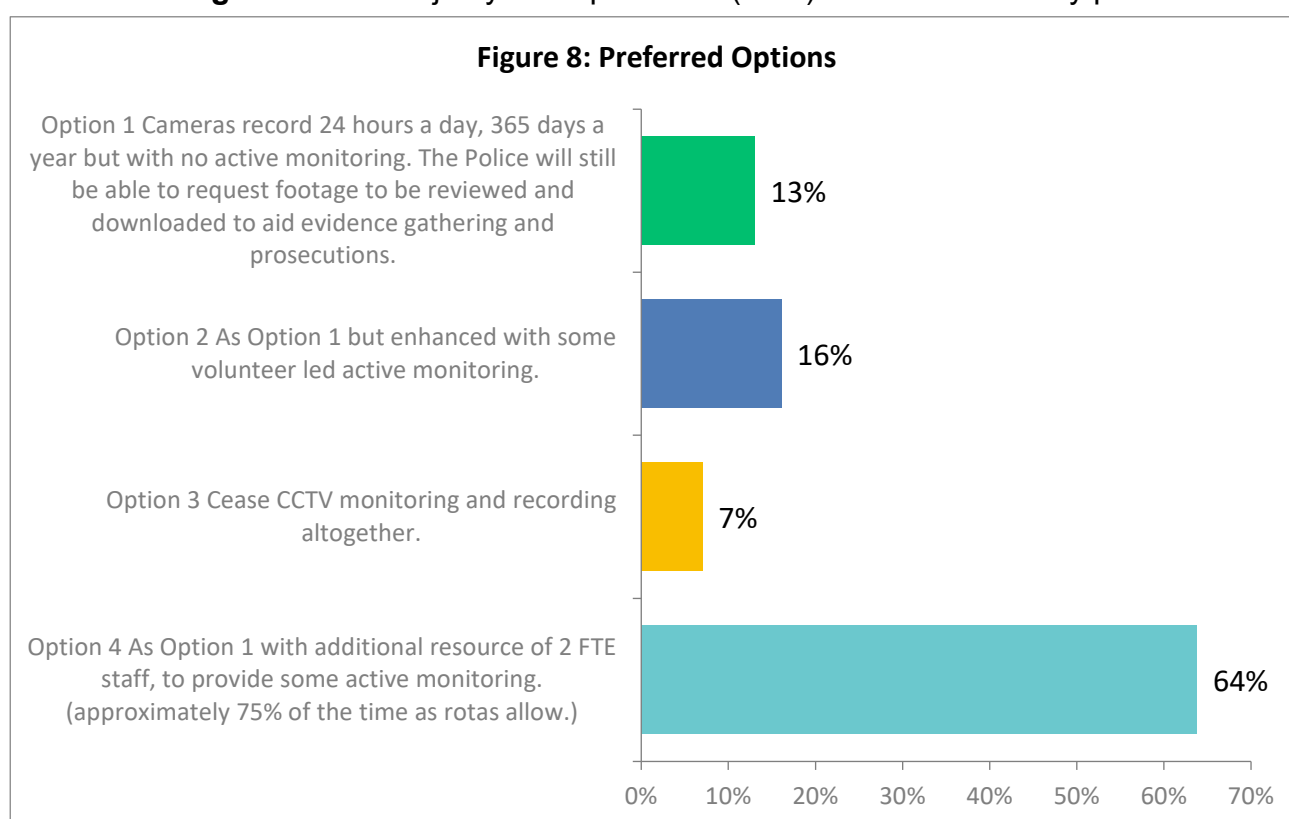
team are not a similar set-up, perhaps you could talk to Telford's community safety partnership."

- "I think CCTV should be actively monitored over the weekends especially throughout the night when most busy with nightlife. Probably not necessary to man it during the day, but still have cameras in action."
- "More PCSOs in the Town Centre is another option. CCTV records crime and acts as deterrent and intervention as crime is happening/happened. PCSOs prevent crime."

These responses indicate that the current provision overall is valuable to many of the respondents in Shrewsbury, and that there are concerns over a total elimination of active monitoring of CCTV. These concerns are illustrated further in the next section, which analyses respondents' preferences regarding the proposed options laid out in the consultation.

4 Preferred Options

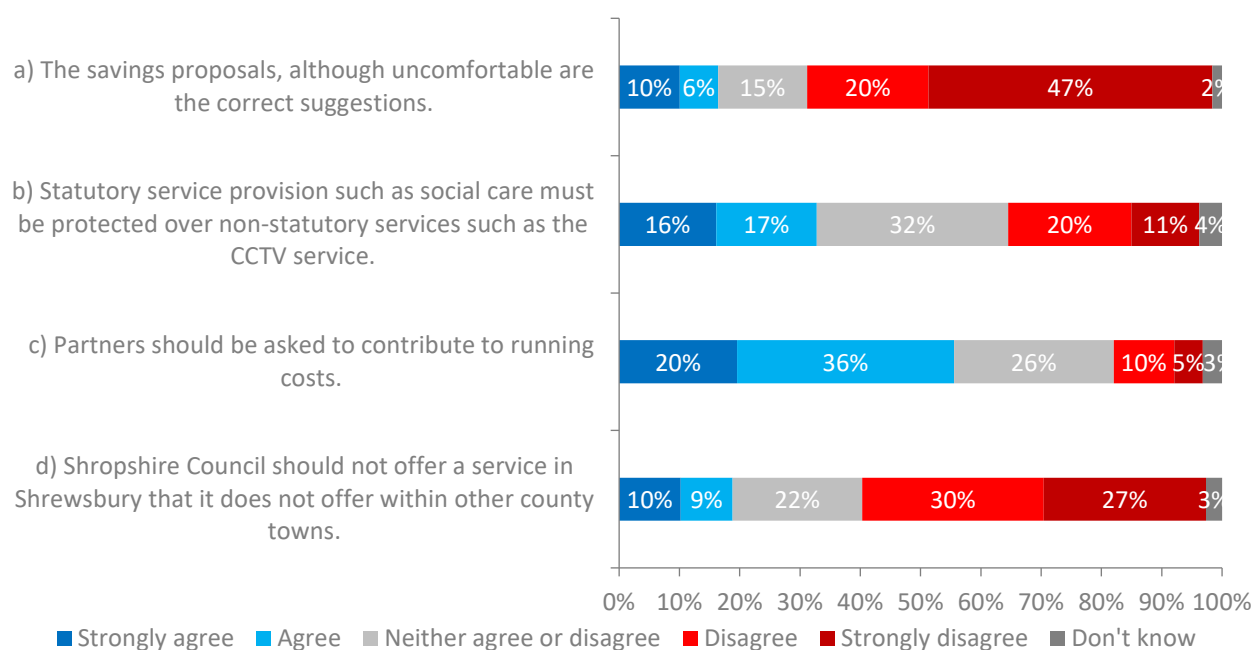
Respondents were asked to choose their preferred options from the list of four shown in **Figure 8**. The majority of respondents (64%) indicated that they prefer



Option 4, which asks partners to contribute to staffing for active CCTV monitoring for approximately 75% of the time.

Respondents were next asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of questions about CCTV provision, in order to help gauge opinion on some of the factors that will go into making the final decision about proposals (**see Figure 9, below**). For instance, it is possible to see that a majority of respondents (67%) either

Figure 9: Opinions on CCTV Provision



disagree or strongly disagree that the savings proposals are the correct suggestions. At the same time, it is clear that a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree (56%) that partners should be asked to contribute to CCTV running costs.

It is also noteworthy that, despite some comments to the contrary in open-ended responses, a majority of survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that Shropshire Council should not offer a service in Shrewsbury that it does not offer in other towns. There is some evidence from open-ended comments that these opinions might be driven by a sense of Shrewsbury being an important centre of commerce and other activity that impacts the whole of the county. However, the more important context to keep in mind with this result is that the majority of respondents are located in Shrewsbury (**see Image 1**), so the sample is biased toward the views of Shrewsbury-based residents and businesses.

Less clear are opinions over the protection of statutory services such as social care over the provision of other services such as CCTV. Opinion was divided on this question, with 33% of respondents agreeing that social care should be protected over non-statutory services, while 31% disagreed with this, and 32% were ambivalent. As will be mentioned later in this report, some respondents singled out this question as particularly problematic.

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide more detailed comments on what they liked about the proposals (or any particular options) as a way of reducing costs. 170 respondents replied to this open-ended question. Their responses have been grouped thematically and the themes are presented in **Table 4**. Anonymised comments are provided below to illustrate the most relevant themes.

Table 4. Themes – Feedback on Proposals/Options	Count	%
Specific suggestions for reducing costs in other ways	58	30%

Don't like anything/"no"	37	19%
Like the idea of volunteers staffing cameras	25	13%
Don't reduce the CCTV	19	10%
Like the idea of partners contributing to cost	19	10%
SC shouldn't be paying for CCTV in Shrewsbury	12	6%
Find the savings elsewhere (general)	10	5%
Like that it encourages reporting to the police	4	2%
Like more strategic use of resources (e.g. camera placement, use)	3	2%
Other	6	3%

Most of the themes identified in response to this question can be grouped into comments that are favourable about one aspect or more of the proposed options, and comments that are generally unfavourable toward the proposals or certain aspects of the proposals. Nearly a third of the respondents (30%), however, provided **specific suggestions for reducing costs in alternative ways**. Some of these suggestions are more realistic than others. For instance, some respondents suggested cuts to capital projects in order to better fund the CCTV service (a financial exchange that is not possible for the council to make), and some suggested cuts to CEO salaries or councillors' allowances. Some suggestions for reducing costs or finding alternative ways to fund CCTV service in Shrewsbury, though, were more realistic. For example:

- "We are all facing the same issues, things are costing more and more. Perhaps having a data sharing agreement with the authorities and key stakeholders, means that access to any requests are dealt with in a timely fashion, and maybe the police have direct access and don't have to put in individual requests."
- "As a night worker, having street lights off at night concerned me at first, but now I am used to knowing where I walk in the dark. Could save even more money by having lights off on the highways, main roads. Cars already have lights."
- "Do a recruitment drive with West Mercia Police for more Special Constables to help with local policing."
- "Encourage all businesses to have their own CCTV."

Many of the respondents had positive things to say about certain aspects of the proposals. For example, 13% of respondents said they **like the idea of using volunteers to staff cameras**, and 10% said they **like the idea of partners contributing to the cost of CCTV**. 4% of respondents (7 in total) said that they thought that there would be other benefits to the proposals. For example, 4 respondents said that the proposals would **encourage more reporting directly to the police**, and 3 said that it would encourage more **strategic use of the CCTV resource**.

6% of respondents said that they agreed in principle that **Shropshire Council should not fund CCTV in Shrewsbury**. Some respondents said that this should be the job of the Shrewsbury Town Council, or that the funding should come from other sources (such as businesses).

One individual who sent their feedback via email, said:

- “While I am a huge fan on the town, there is probably as big a need (if not greater need) for investment in CCTV in other parts of the county. I’d be particularly keen to contribute to a consultation regarding Bridgnorth and any other crime prevention initiatives that make up for the town’s woeful lack of policing. Like other towns, Bridgnorth generates a good deal of income from visitors, but one has to question how much of that helps contribute to investments of this nature that deal with the minority that are involved in disorder etc. Having said that, it’s remarkable how much the local authority is left with the burden of these costs and one has to question why the Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner’s doesn’t recognise the value CCTV plays in supporting the inadequate policing provided in our area.”

The second largest theme identified in these responses, however, was that respondents **didn’t like anything about the proposals** (19%, or 37 respondents, said this). 10% of respondents used this space to make the plea **not to reduce CCTV service**. Finally, 5% of respondents made comments reflecting a related theme around **finding the savings needed by Shropshire Council elsewhere**, rather than reducing the CCTV service in Shrewsbury.

According to summarised notes on the feedback provided from engagement events with stakeholders, there is willingness among key partners to work on alternatives to Option 1. The following summaries of feedback have been provided by officers at the events:

- “Shrewsbury Town Council confirmed its commitment to contribute towards maintenance costs of the system.”
- “West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner have reiterated that financial support for CCTV would be for capital costs only and day to day running costs to cover staff monitoring costs.”
- “Shrewsbury BID have indicated that as this would fall outside of their remit and funding agreement which was balloted on in 2023, Any additional funding requirement would need to re-ballot members and cover the costs associated with this.”
- “Shrewsbury Town Council (STC) and Shrewsbury BID have both said they would actively support any initiatives to provide any volunteer-led support to monitor CCTV.”
- “Shrewsbury Town Centre Residents Association have also indicated that members would support such an initiative and during the consultation further steps have been undertaken to develop a council wide volunteering offer that could encompass CCTV, mirroring the example as run in Oswestry.”

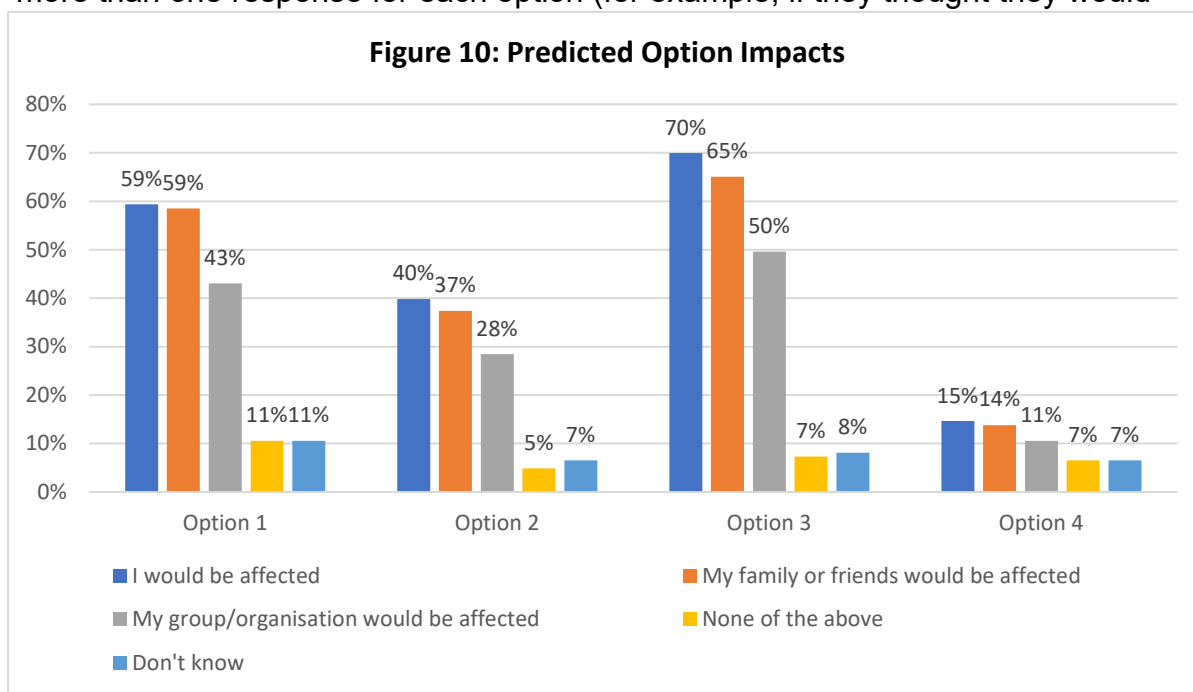
In summary, respondents were most keen on Option 4, which would see some retention of monitored CCTV coverage in Shrewsbury. Open-ended comments reinforced this view, reflecting that many aspects of the proposals that respondents singled out for praise (suggested use of volunteers, or having partners contribute to costs) were elements of the description of Option 4. Feedback from key stakeholders at engagement events indicate that partners are willing to explore options that would

allow the council to come closer to delivering Option 4 should it be determined that this is the best course of action.

5 Impacts of Options

While it is clear that respondents prefer Option 4 overall, it is also important to gauge how the public thinks that each of the proposed options will impact them and their communities. The survey asked a series of questions aimed at providing insight into this.

The first question asked to what extent respondents (whether answering for themselves as individuals or on behalf of a group or organisation) would be affected by each proposed option (**see Figure 10**)¹. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one response for each option (for example, if they thought they would



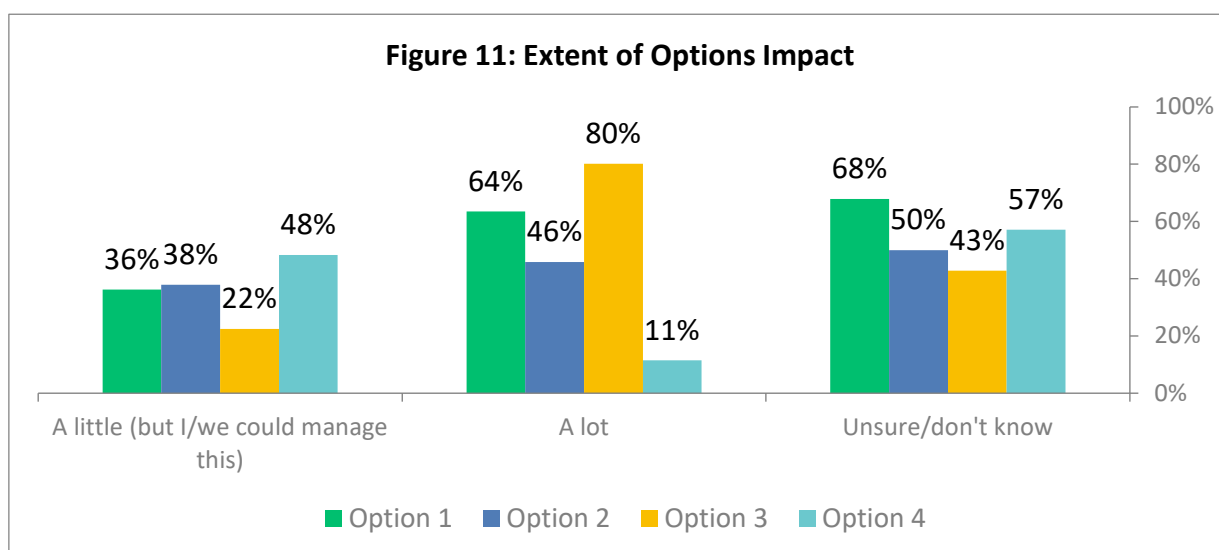
personally be affected, and that their friends and family would be affected, they could tick both boxes).

Respondents predict that Option 3 would have the greatest impact on themselves, their family or friends, and any group/organisation they are responding on behalf of. Respondents show similar levels of concern that Option 1 will affect them and others as well.

Respondents were then asked to gauge to what extent they thought they would be impacted by the proposed options (**see Figure 11, below**).

Respondents think that Option 3 will have the greatest impact on them. Respondents

¹ It should be noted for transparency that this question unfortunately had a technical issue, so that when the survey opened the question only allowed respondents to choose one option, rather than multiple options. The first 114 responses were collected with this problem in place. This issue was fixed once it was flagged, so an additional 201 respondents were able to answer the revised question. Figure 10 reflects the responses received after the technical issue was fixed.



reflected high levels of uncertainty about the impacts of all options, but Option 1 and Option 4 had the highest levels of uncertainty about the extent of their impacts.

Following this, respondents were asked two open-ended questions that invited them to provide more detailed information about how the proposed options might impact them or their communities. The first of these questions asked: “If you will be impacted as an individual or group/organisation/service please explain any concerns you have about the options outlined.” There were 116 responses to this question and these responses were analysed for common themes, and the most common themes detected are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Themes – Any Concerns about Options	Count	%
Will result in increase in crime/ASB/decrease safety in town centre generally	80	55%
Feelings of personal safety impacted	22	15%
Potential for delays/lack of evidence in missing persons or criminal investigations	14	10%
Economic impacts (e.g. shoplifting, loss of sales, fewer people coming to town, etc.)	12	8%
Concerns for staff/volunteer/customer safety of businesses and VCS orgs	10	7%
Other	7	5%

As the question did not really ask respondents to indicate *which* options they were concerned about, many of the respondents do not refer to one option specifically when voicing their concerns. However, given that all of the options indicate some reduction in service, most of the comments relate to concerns about how any reduction in service might impact them or others within the community.

A majority of respondents (55%) voiced concern that a reduction in service **will result in increase in crime and anti-social behaviour**, or generally decrease safety in the town centre. For example:

- “Massive impact with safety if no one was monitoring them. With knife crime massively on the rise, I think it’s obscene that the council would jeopardise people’s safety over money.”

- “I own an independent retail business in town. Theft is already at a serious high. People are coming by train from other town and cities specifically because of the number of independent shops in town. We don't need less CCTV and monitoring. We need boots on the ground communicating with the people monitoring from a static location to help put an end to this vicious cycle of theft we are plagued with at the moment.”
- “I look after several commercial properties in the town centre and I feel strongly that CCTV is an important part of security in the town especially with very low police presence.”

Relatedly, 15% of respondents voiced **concerns over their own personal safety** as a result of service reductions, and 7% of respondents voiced **concerns over the safety of volunteers or employees for their organisations** in the town centre should the service be reduced.

- “Don't take CCTV away - I would feel unsafe when in Town especially in the evening.”
- “We already are in a blind spot on Roushill Bank so dread to think how much worse this would get during the night if there is no monitoring surrounding this area as well. In the past we have had a large amount of drug use, defecation and vandalism on our street. Thankfully this has been less in the most recent months with the addition of more rangers and police presence. I would hate to see this return.”
- “Have been victims of ASB many many times some protection has been offered but fear for the future. Especially when a family member only just survived attempted murder who was working in the same job as I do.”
- “Monitored CCTV is vital to the safety of our volunteers out on the streets. We are keen that we keep Purple Flag status for our town.”

10% of respondents specifically worried that a reduction in CCTV service will result in **delays or lack of evidence in criminal or missing persons investigations**. For example:

- A lack of active CCTV monitoring would drastically restrict the ability to get back stolen goods and identify persons of interest who may be threat to businesses and the general public.”
- “We have had a few incidents of shop lifting in the past and the monitoring has allowed us to gain evidence and even catch the thief in real time.”
- “Situations where time is critical e.g. personal safety, crime, individuals with impairment such as dementia.”
- “CCTV is now critical to any prosecution of criminal activity of which there is increasing amounts of in Shrewsbury.”
- “The presence of CCTV cameras significantly supports emergency services by providing real-time surveillance, aiding in the swift identification and response to incidents, including crimes, accidents, and other emergencies. This rapid response capability is vital in potentially life-threatening situations where every second counts.”

8% of respondents worried specifically that a reduction in CCTV service would have **economic impacts** on their own business or the town/area generally. For example:

- “Safety of my customers, protection of the business, loss of sales.”
- “Cutting CCTV coverage at a time of increased anti-social and violent behaviour is irresponsible and will cost lives, make the town a no go zone and affect all business.”

The second question that looked at the potential impacts of the proposed options asked respondents to comment on the potential impacts on different protected characteristic groups, in order to inform the council's Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) for the eventual outcome of the proposals following the consultation. 54 individuals offered responses to this question, and their comments were analysed for themes, which are presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Themes - ESHIA	Count	%
Most vulnerable will be impacted (general)	17	24%
People with disabilities or mental health issues (including alcohol/drug problems) will be impacted	8	11%
Women will be impacted	7	10%
Ethnic minorities will be impacted	6	8%
Older people will be impacted	6	8%
Homeless people will be impacted	4	6%
Staff/volunteers will be less safe	3	4%
Children will be impacted	2	3%
LGBT+ people will be impacted	1	1%
Other	18	25%

In the comments on this question, respondents often named specific groups that they believed would be especially impacted by the proposals, though 17 respondents simply said that more vulnerable people generally would be impacted by them.

Specific categories of people that respondents singled out as being particularly vulnerable to the proposals included people with disabilities or mental health issues, women, ethnic minorities, older people, homeless people, children, and LGBT+ people. 3 respondents also said that employees or volunteers working in the centre of town would specifically be less safe. Examples of comments include:

- “People with disabilities are often targets for abuse. This would make them less likely to visit the town in the evening. We have seen unrest and violence towards migrants recently. I wouldn't like to think that the lack of CVTV might encourage this. We have a fair-sized Ukrainian community within the town who may be starting to feel unsafe.”
- “The elderly will be likely to be more impacted as they may fear attending evening events due to lack active CCTV monitoring.”
- “Do some targeted consultation in formats that can reach a more diverse representation and ask them directly.”

- “More vulnerable people who perhaps are afraid of reporting crime or dangerous situations may be affected by these changes.”
- “Particular concerns are reduced safety for individuals, especially more vulnerable e.g. dementia.”
- “I believe women would be put at more risk and also ethnic minorities.”

Finally, as is always the practice with public consultations regarding significant changes in services, the survey concluded with an open-ended question asking respondents to say anything else they wished to regarding the proposals. 51 respondents provided detailed responses here, with themes spanning the range of many of the comments already provided in the survey. However, as **Table 7** shows, a few new themes emerged in responses to this question that are also worth noting.

Table 7. Themes – Any Other Comments	Count	%
This is an important service to keep/protect	19	28%
Negative comments about Shropshire Council/councillors/the consultation	19	28%
Proposals are a bad idea/will make the town unsafe/lose money	13	19%
Specific suggestions/examples of what works elsewhere	5	7%
Greater transparency on SC funds needed	5	7%
Agree with need to cut this cost/town council should fund	4	6%
Support for Option 4 specifically	1	1%
Offer to speak with councillors	1	1%

The largest theme in response to this question, with 28% of respondents touching on it, was to reiterate the point made in other parts of the survey that many respondents feel that **CCTV is an important service to keep in place**. Relatedly, 19% of respondents made the point here that the **proposals are a bad idea** and will make the town unsafe and/or result in economic consequences for businesses or the town in general.

In a similar vein, Shrewsbury Town Centre Residents' Association (SCTRA) wrote an email to the TellUs inbox, which stated that they reject Option 3 asked to work with the council to find a solution that incorporates elements of Options 1, 2 and 4. In their letter they stated:

- “SCTRA regards it as essential that:
 - The needs of the Police are fully met for both real-time and post-hoc retrieval, for having system access terminals provided and maintained in their own premises, and in respect of the quality of images and video provided; and
 - The needs of Shropshire Council for both real-time and post-hoc retrieval are fully met in respect of fulfilling the Council's statutory duties - e.g. on ASB, and to enable officers to monitor and secure compliance with the Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order.”

Several respondents used this last survey to make comments about Shropshire Council more broadly. For instance, 28% of respondents made **negative comments here about the council, councillors, or the consultation** and how it was conducted. Five respondents specifically made the point that **Shropshire Council's financial decision-making needs to be more transparent** if the public is going to be asked to advise on service cuts in some areas in order to maintain other services. One respondent **offered to speak to councillors directly** about the proposals.

Other respondents agreed with the proposals in principle. Four respondents said that they liked the proposals because they **agree that Shropshire Council should not be funding CCTV** service to just one town – Shrewsbury. One respondent also voiced **specific support for Option 4**.

Five respondents used this space to provide specific **suggestions or examples of what might work** either in addition to the proposals or as alternatives. These were:

- “The next lot of trade events on CCTV at the NEC Birmingham will have AI as a major option, this is to be utilised to reduce costs.”
- “It would be important for the areas covered by cameras to be unknown, as it is understood currently that they are able to move to cover different areas as required. Ne'er-do-wells would take advantage of any areas that become known as 'blind spots'.”
- “SHOPWATCH should be updated more where possible...few regular faces that we don't see on there.”
- “The nighttime economy should be paying for this directly. Either through membership if pub watch or subscription. Also the police benefit most and they should operate it.”
- “Why can't you take a look at how Telford has mobilised volunteers into looking and helping their communities. I'm sure if something like their model was brought in you could save cash in other areas instead. Coming from Telford originally I've seen what can be achieved and Shropshire is way behind on a lot of things and services. No community feeling. You get people invested then they will help by volunteering. Think about it, your going to have to keep making cuts year on year. So why not build your own volunteer army to take up some of the underfunding area you have now and will have in the years to come.”

One individual who emailed their feedback to the TellUs inbox had some additional detailed advice:

- “I'm sure the council have looked into Wireless options which over time can save thousands of pounds a year by sharing fibre links from one camera to another and looking at the town centre which is not taking advantage of wireless connectivity and with line of sight which I see there is this can be done! I can see the council are using Hik or Duhua CCTV cameras dotted around the town forgive me if I'm wrong they are low brand spec which still produce high end images but for a saving options could be:

- Wireless links with line of sight from camera to camera cutting thousands in fibre costs, look at Silvernet wireless kits making one camera fibre redundant with BT or Virgin and utilising the wireless link
- Alternatively outsource the monitoring and maintenance as reactive monitoring to another control room to keep costs down.”

Finally, one of the emails received in response to the consultation was a detailed proposal from a security company to run the current service at a lower cost.

Overall, it is evident that respondents are concerned that any reduction in monitored CCTV service will lead to an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre. Concerns for how this will impact more vulnerable groups are also salient, with many people with protected characteristics, including those with disabilities and women, being mentioned as particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the proposals.

6 Summary and Conclusion

Summary

Some of the key findings in the results presented above include:

- More respondents say they feel unsafe in Shrewsbury Town Centre after 10:30pm (41%) than said they feel safe at this time (31%).
- A majority of respondents (67%) do not agree that the proposals are the correct suggestions for saving the funds required by Shropshire Council.
- When asked what their concerns are about the proposed options, a majority (55%) of respondents said that they are concerned that the proposals will lead to an increase in crime and/or anti-social behaviour in town.
- A majority of respondents (56%) like the idea of partners being asked to contribute to running costs.
- Option 4 is by far the preferred option of survey respondents, and Option 3 was the least popular option.
- Respondents believe that Option 3 and Option 1 would have the greatest impact on themselves, their friends and family, and their organisations.

Respondents also provided thoughtful insights into the potential impacts of reduced CCTV service in Shrewsbury, including the disproportionate impact on more vulnerable groups, as well as financial implications, and the potential for decreased safety and criminal justice efficacy.

Respondents provided some pertinent suggestions as to alternative methods of finding savings or carrying out the proposed changes. Some of the more relevant suggestions included placing cameras more strategically or otherwise improving camera efficiency, working with police to increase their presence in the town, more efficient staffing schedules, encouraging businesses to have their own cameras, and more effective partnership working across public services and VCS organisations.

Conclusion

The preferred option among consultation respondents is to continue recording footage with some scaled-back staffed monitoring, with partner agencies contributing to maintenance and additional monitoring costs. This approach aims to balance the need for public safety with the council's financial limitations. Some of the respondent suggestions for making the service more efficient and effective should also be considered as proposals are reviewed.

Many thanks are extended to the individuals, businesses, and organisations that took part in the consultation – whether by responding via email, attending engagement events, or taking part in the online survey. The feedback from the consultation will be fully considered before any final decisions are made about the proposals.

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