SCOTTISH POLICE

AUTHORITY

Agenda Item 6

Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
_	Meeting
Date	8 th June 2021
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	SPA Public Confidence and Support
	Surveying Analysis
Presented By	Martin Smith, Strategy and Research
	Lead (SPA)
Recommendation to	For Discussion
Members	
Appendix Attached - N	0

PURPOSE

This paper provides the Committee with additional geographical analysis of data obtained via the Authority's public confidence surveys about policing during the pandemic. The surveys were carried out in four waves during 2020/21.

The paper specifically examines regional and urban/rural variations in the findings, highlighting areas of consistency between differing geographic areas, as well as any notable variations.

Findings from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey Divisional Data Tables (2018-20) and the Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey 2020 are incorporated into the analysis to provide some context, although it should be noted that variations in survey mode mean that results are not comparable between surveys.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Authority commissioned a number of public opinion surveys during 2020/21 exploring attitudes towards the police, lockdown restrictions, and the public's ease of compliance and experiences of policing. Findings have been published on the Authority's website¹ and discussed at previous Authority Meetings and at the Policing Performance Committee.

¹ https://www.spa.police.uk/strategy-performance/oversight-of-policing-covid-19/

- 1.2 Four waves of online surveying took place in 2020/21: two surveys in May 2020 to coincide with the initial national lockdown; a survey in October 2020 to coincide with the move towards regional levels and localised lockdowns; and a final survey in February 2021 to coincide with the national lockdown introduced in December 2020.
- 1.3 The Authority has surveyed the public using the *ScotPulse* panel survey, via its chosen independent supplier, the Diffley Partnership. The *ScotPulse* panel comprises over 28,000 adults from across Scotland, and samples taken are representative of the Scottish population, with data weighted accordingly. Participation is on a non-self-selecting basis. The survey is conducted online. This survey mode differs from the Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey (via telephone) and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (face-to-face). Variations in survey mode mean that results between surveys are not directly comparable.
- 1.4 This paper builds on preliminary regional analysis provided to the Committee in March 2021, presenting further findings on regional variations, as well as urban/rural analysis. The paper examines trends across survey Waves, and key areas of consistency and variation are identified. To improve consistency with the way findings from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) and the Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey (SVTS) are presented, the analysis herein includes "Don't Know" responses to questions. However in line with previous practice, and in line with SCJS and SVTS reporting, non-responses have been excluded from the analysis.
- 1.5 The findings from the analysis contained within this report have been discussed at the Police Scotland Public Confidence Governance Board and the Independent Advisory Group prior to being presented to Committee.
- 1.6 The Authority's Strategy and Performance team will also produce a follow-up analytical paper for a future Policing Performance Committee meeting examining variations between: (1) different demographic groups; (2) people with different personal circumstances and responsibilities; and (3) socio-economic circumstances.

2. SURVEY APPROACH AND METHOD

2.1 The Authority surveyed the Scottish adult population at four points during 2020/21, using the *ScotPulse* panel. These four waves of

surveying corresponded with different points during the pandemic in terms of the nature of lockdown restrictions in place.

- 2.2 The four survey waves are described as follows:
 - Wave 1 (April 28-29th 2020): Initial "Stay at Home" National Lockdown. Reducing rates of infection across the country following the early April peak. Sample size: 1,660.
 - Wave 2 (May 13-15th 2020): Continuation of the "Stay at Home" National Lockdown with restrictions expected to ease later in the month. Reducing rates of infection across the country. Sample size: 1,575. Additional focus on willingness to comply with restrictions.
 - Wave 3 (29th September to 5th October 2020): Localised lockdowns/restrictions in place, and a "circuit breaker" National lockdown on the horizon. Increasing rates of infection across the country. Sample size: 3,791 (boosted to explore experiences of compliance, personal circumstances, and demographic sub-group experiences).
 - Wave 4 (2nd-6th February 2021): "Stay at Home" National Lockdown. Decreasing rates of infection across the country following a peak in early January. Sample size: 2,617 (boosted to enable sub-national analysis; more limited question set).
- 2.3 Regional analysis of the data has been conducted by aggregating Divisional-level data and has taken the form of examining variations between regions of the country over the four waves of surveying.

West Region (Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire)

East Region (The Lothians and Scottish Borders, Fife, Forth Valley and City of Edinburgh)

North Region (Tayside, North East, and Highland and the Islands)

2.4 The analysis at this stage is confined to questions that have been asked across multiple waves of surveying. It should be noted that the approach to surveying has been dynamic during the course of the pandemic, with some questions having been asked as standing items in all four survey waves, other asked more intermittently, and

- some asked on a one-off basis linked to specific topical areas of interest.
- 2.5 The Authority developed and formulated its questions during the pandemic through engagement with the Independent Advisory Group, and has also drawn on the professional advice of Diffley Partnership. A number of questions have been asked specifically as they enable some comparability with questions asked in the SCJS and other surveys nationally.
- 2.6 The Authority has published it survey results on its website throughout the year², and has also disseminated findings and papers to the Police Scotland Public Confidence Governance Board and the Independent Advisory Group at various points. Analytical reports have been considered for scrutiny by the full Authority, and via the Policing Performance Committee.
- 3. MAIN FINDINGS FROM REGIONAL AND URBAN/RURAL ANALYSIS

Views on local policing performance have been consistently positive throughout the pandemic across all parts of Scotland

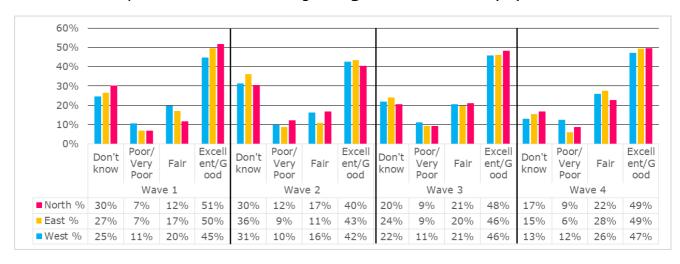
- 3.1 The largest proportion³ of survey respondents has consistently felt that the police in their local area have been doing an 'Excellent/ Good' job across all regions and rural /urban areas during the course of the pandemic, with very little differentiation across the country see **Figure 1 and Figure 2**.
- 3.2 Although the degree of confidence in local policing performance has been high throughout the pandemic across all parts of Scotland, Wave 2 did see a small reduction compared to the Wave 1, however confidence levels recovered during Waves 3 and 4. The dip in Wave 2 is largely attributable to a relatively high proportion of respondents answering "Don't Know" a possible manifestation of sustained shielding, self-isolation and limited social interaction and leaving of the home, resulting in more respondents feeling unable to make an assessment of how well they thought the police were performing locally.

² https://www.spa.police.uk/strategy-performance/oversight-of-policing-covid-19/

³ Note that a relatively high proportion of respondents provided "Don't Know" responses to this question in all four survey waves, reaching – in Wave 2 - a peak of 36% in the East Region and 37% in the case of people living in rural areas. When "Don't Know" responses are discounted from the analysis, the proportion of respondents stating Excellent/Good forms a clear majority.

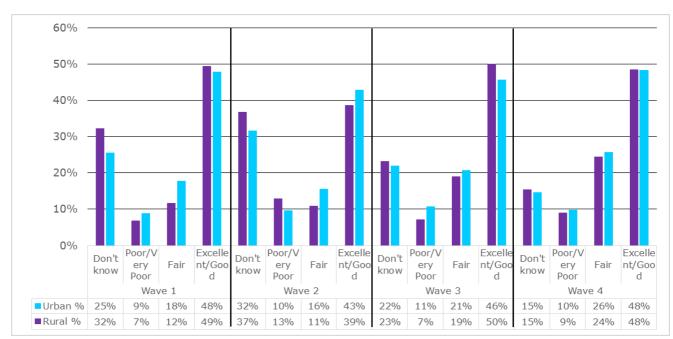
- 3.3 Wave 4 saw the highest proportion of respondents in the West feel that the police were doing an 'Excellent/Good' job at 47%. However, the East and North regions were marginally lower than Wave 1 (50% and 51%) at 49%. Wave 2 consistently saw the lowest levels across the regions (North 40%, East 43% and West 42%).
- 3.4 In Wave 1 the proportion of both rural and urban based respondents who felt that the police were doing an 'Excellent/Good' job was similar (49% and 48%). However in Wave 2 both decreased (rural to 39% and urban to 43%), before increasing in Wave 3 (rural to 50% and urban to 46%). Wave 4 saw no difference between the groups as the proportion of urban-based responses increased to 48%, while rural based decreased slightly to 48%.

Figure 1: Taking everything into account how good a job do you think the police in your local area are doing? **Regional** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018/20: Excellent/Good (North 60%, East 56%, West 53%) Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey 2020/21: Excellent/Good (Scotland 60%)

Figure 2: Taking everything into account how good a job do you think the police in your local area are doing? Urban/Rural Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 201/20: Excellent/Good Job (Urban 55%, Rural 57%) Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey 2020/21: Excellent/Good Job (Urban 60%, Rural 59%)

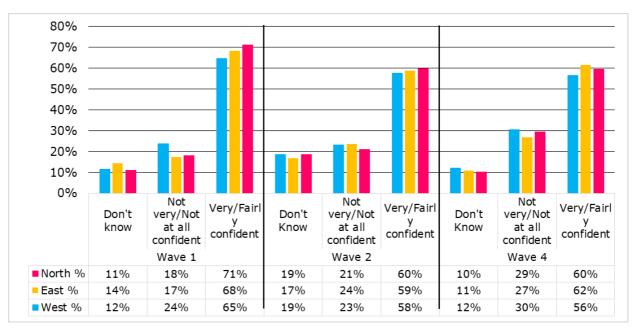
Confidence in the police's ability to respond quickly and deal with incidents was especially strong in the initial stages of the pandemic

Confidence in Responding Quickly

- 3.5 The Authority asked two additional questions about confidence in Waves 1, 2 and 4 of its surveys, with one question focused on the ability of the police to respond quickly, and the other focused on the ability to deal with incidents as they occur.
- 3.6 The majority of respondents across all regions throughout the pandemic have been 'Very/Fairly confident' in the ability of the police to respond quickly see **Figure 3**. The highest levels of confidence were seen at the beginning of the pandemic.
- 3.7 All regions saw the highest rates of 'Very/Fairly confident' responses during Wave 1. In the North region there was a dip in those who were 'Very/Fairly Confident' from 71% in Wave 1 to 60% in Waves 2 and 4. The level of confidence among respondents from the West has continually decreased between the Waves, going from 65% in Wave 1, to 58% in Wave 2 and 56% in Wave 4. The East saw a dip

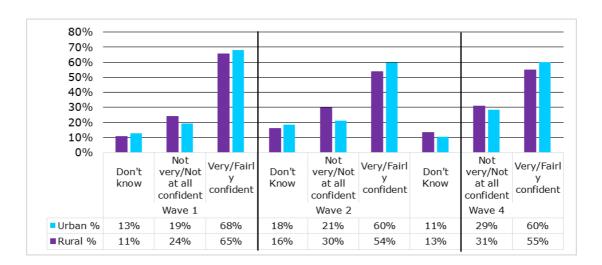
- between Waves 1 and 2 (68% to 59%), however, in Wave 4 levels had risen to 62%.
- 3.8 Regarding rural and urban respondents, while the majority of respondents felt 'Very/Fairly confident' in the ability of the police to respond quickly, the proportion of urban respondents expressing confidence has been consistently higher than has been the case for respondents living in rural areas. At Wave 1 65% of rural based respondents and 68% of urban felt 'Very/Fairly Confident'. This decreased to 54% and 60% in Wave 2, and remained relatively static at Wave 4 (55% and 60%) see **Figure 4**.
- 3.9 It is notable that over the waves there was an increase amongst respondents who were 'Not very/Not at all confident' across both the regions and rural /urban areas. In the regions, 18% of respondents in the North region noted they were 'Not very/Not at all confident' in Wave 1, 17% in the East, and 24% in the West. At Wave 2, this had risen to 21% in the North and 24% in the East, and decreased in the West to 23%. Wave 4 saw the most substantial increase in the regions, at 29% in the North, 27% in the East and 30% in the West.

Figure 3: How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to respond quickly? **Regional** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018/20: Very/Fairly Confident (North 65%, East 62%, West 62%)

Figure 4: How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to respond quickly? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 201/20: Very/Fairly Confident (Urban 65%, Rural 60%)

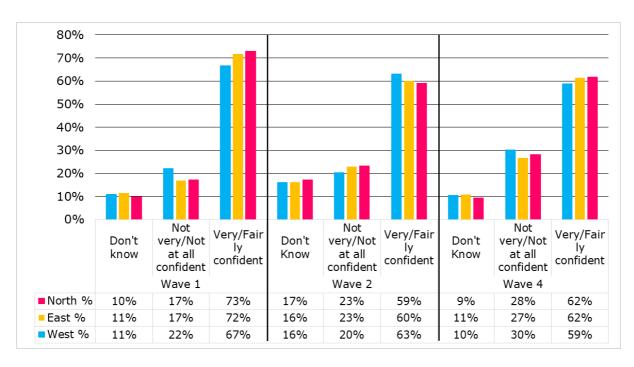
3.10 Both rural and urban respondents increasingly selected 'Not very/Not at all confident' as the survey waves progressed – although rural respondents were more likely to express this view than urban respondents. In Wave 1, 24% of rural based respondents were not very or not at all confident, compared with 19% of urban. This increased to 30% in Wave 2 for rural and 21% for urban, rising again in Wave 4 to 31% and 29%.

Confidence in Dealing with Incidents

- 3.11 Across all regions and rural /urban areas, the majority of respondents have felt very or fairly confident in the ability of the police to deal with incidents as they occurred across the waves see **Figures 5 and 6**.
- 3.12 The West region has seen consistent decline in response level as the Waves progressed, going from 67% in Wave 1, to 63% and 59% in Waves 3 and 4. In the North region, responses declined from 73% in Wave 1 to 59% in Wave 2, before rising to 62% in Wave 4. The East saw a similar pattern to the North, declining from 72% to 60% between Waves 1 and 2, and rising to 62% in Wave 4.
- 3.13 Consistently a slightly higher proportion of urban based respondents reported feeling 'Very/Fairly confident' than rural based respondents (**see Figure 6**). In Wave 1, the breakdown for 'Very/Fairly confident' was 70% urban and 69% rural. This decreased in Wave 2

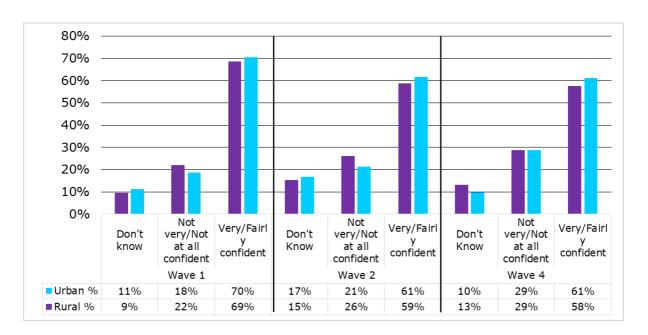
- to 61% urban and 59% rural, and remained relatively static at Wave 4 at 61% urban and 58% rural.
- 3.14 Over the regions and rural and urban areas, there has been an increase in those who feel 'Not very/Not at all confident' between Waves 1 and 4. In Wave 1, 17% of respondents in the North and East selected this, rising to 23% in Wave 2, and 28% and 27% in Wave 4. The West region has shown slightly more fluctuation, with 22% of respondents 'Not very/Not at all confident' in Wave 1, decreasing to 20% at Wave 2, and peaking at 30% in Wave 4.
- 3.15 Further, rural-based respondents were more likely to say they were 'Not very/Not at all confident' than urban-based respondents in Waves 1 and 2 this levelled off in Wave 4. In Wave 1, the breakdown for 'Not very/Not at all confident' was 22% rural and 18% urban. This increased in Wave 2 to 26% rural and 21% urban, before increasing again in Wave 4 to 29% for both.

Figure 5: How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to deal with incidents as they occur? **Regional** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018/20: Very/Fairly Confident (North 68%, East 64%, West 63%)

Figure 6: How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to deal with incidents as they occur? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2019/20: Very/Fairly Confident (Urban 65%, Rural 62%)

Support for how the lockdowns have been policed has been strong across the country, although more people have been saying that they would welcome tougher police enforcement action

- 3.16 Across all Waves, the two most common responses in the regions and urban/rural areas were that the respondents fully supported the police approach to lockdown, or that police need to take tougher action to ensure public compliance see **Figures 7 and 8**.
- 3.17 In Waves 1-3 the majority of respondents across the regions and in urban /rural areas fully supported the approach being taken by police in their handling of lockdown. The view that tougher action was required was the second most common response in these waves.
- 3.18 However, in Wave 4 these views switched, with the majority viewing that tougher action needed to be taken. In the regions, 40% in the North felt tougher action needed to be taken, 39% in the Fast and 38% in the West.
- 3.19 In rural and urban areas, the rates were 40% and 39% respectively. In comparison, 35% in the North fully supported the

actions of the police, 38% in the East and 33% in the West. These rates were similar to the rural and urban areas (33% and 36%).

Figure 7: Which one of the following statements comes closest to your view of how the police in Scotland are handling the COVID19 lockdown? **Regional** Breakdown (%)

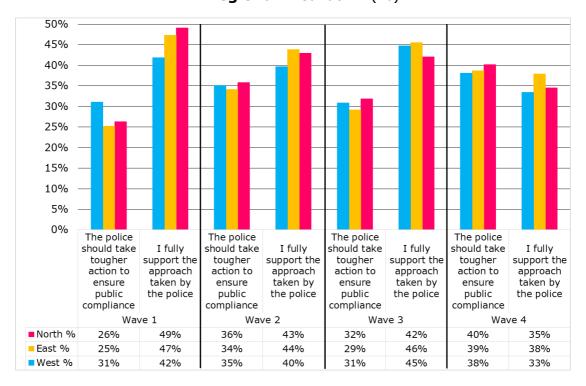
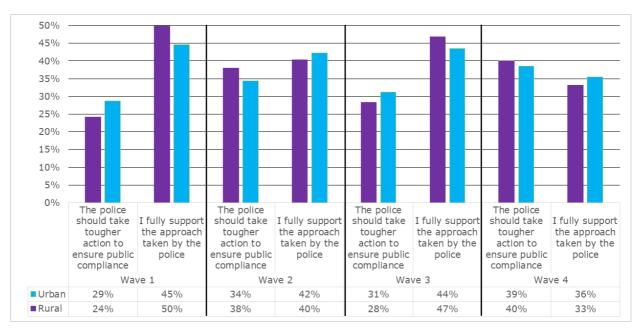


Figure 8: Which one of the following statements comes closest to your view of how the police in Scotland are handling the COVID19 lockdown? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)

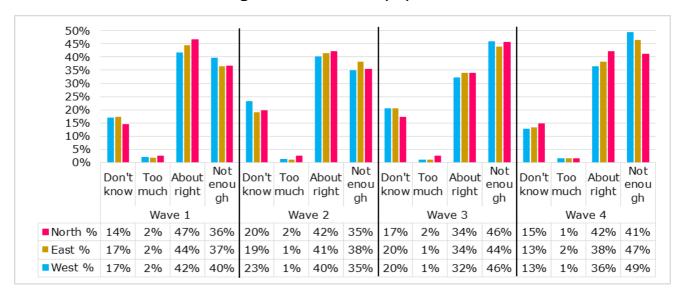


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In the East and West of the country, and in urban areas of the country more generally, a growing proportion of people have been saying that they would like to see more police officers in their local area

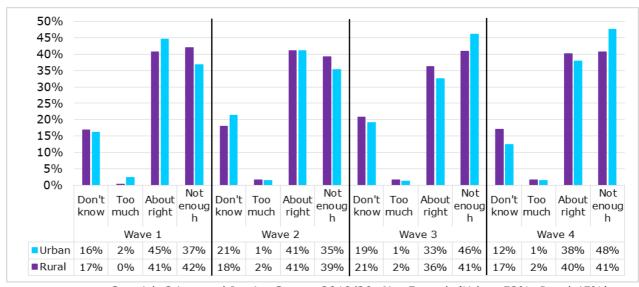
- 3.20 Across Waves 1 and 2 of the surveys, the majority of respondents across all regions felt that the police presence in their local area was about right see **Figure 9**. However, in Wave 3 those who felt the police presence was not enough became the majority across the regions, with 'About right' consistently becoming a minority view.
- 3.21 Wave 4 saw the trends in the regions diverge slightly, with the majority in the East and West feeling there was not enough police presence (47% and 49%), and the majority in the North feeling that levels were about right (42%).
- 3.22 Unlike the regional analysis, there has been much more fluctuation between respondents in rural and urban areas and their views on the police presence in their local area across the waves see **Figure 10**.
- 3.23 In Wave 1, the majority of those in rural areas felt the police presence was 'Not enough' (42%), in comparison to those in urban areas where the majority felt it was 'About right' (45%). In Wave 2, the majority across rural and urban areas felt the police presence was about right (41% for both), with 'Not enough' being the second most common response (39% rural, 35% urban).
- 3.24 Between Waves 3 to 4, 'Not enough' became the most common response, with 'About right' coming second. 46% of urban based respondents felt the police presence was not enough in Wave 3 an increase of 11 percentage points from Wave 2. In comparison, rural rates remained relatively stable, increasing by 2 percentage points from Wave 2 to 41% in Wave 3.
- 3.25 In Wave 4, the proportion of urban based respondents who felt police presence was not enough increased again to 48%, but the proportion of rural based remained the same as Wave 3.

Figure 9: Overall, do you think that the police presence in your local area is...? **Regional** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018/20: Not Enough (North 45%, East 52%, West 53%)

Figure 10: Overall, do you think that the police presence in your local area is...? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2019/20: Not Enough (Urban 52%, Rural 45%)

Support for police enforcement in the form of fines, arrest and 'stop and account' has been high, varying little in relation to Scotland's geography

Use of penalty fines

- 3.26 The Police have the powers to issue to fines to individuals and businesses for breaching regulations aimed at reducing the transmission on coronavirus.
- 3.27 In Wave 1 86% of respondents in the North, 87% in the East and 83% in the West were 'Very/Fairly comfortable' with the use of penalty fines see **Figure 11**. In Wave 2 this increased to 87% in the North, 88% in the East and 85% in the West. However, Wave 4 saw a decrease in comfort, with 83% in the North and East and 79% in the West.
- 3.28 Urban areas saw the same trend as the regions see **Figure 12**. In Wave 1, 84% of urban respondents were comfortable with the use of penalty fines, increasing to 87% in Wave 2 and decreasing to 81% in Wave 4.
- 3.29 While a vast majority were comfortable with this approach in rural areas, the proportion has decreased steadily over the waves. In Wave 1, 89% of rural-based respondents were 'Very/Fairly comfortable'. This decreased in Wave 2 to 86% and Wave 4 to 82%.
- 3.30 Rates of those who were 'Fairly/Very uncomfortable' have remained relatively low and static over the waves, with only slight increases and decreases.
- 3.31 In the regions, between Waves 1 and 2 the levels of those who were 'Fairly/Very Uncomfortable' remained the same in the North and East (11% in the North and 10% in the East). In the West, there was a decrease between Waves 1 and 2 from 14% to 11%. However, there was a slight increase across all regions between Waves 2 and 4 (13% North, 15% East, 16% West).
- 3.32 Regarding rural and urban based respondents, in Wave 1 10% of rural based respondents felt 'Fairly/Very uncomfortable', increasing to 11% in Wave 2, and increasing again to 14% in Wave 4. The rates for urban based respondents have not been so linear, with 13% of urban based respondents reporting they were

uncomfortable in Wave 1, decreasing to 10% in Wave 2, and increasing to 15% in Wave 4.

Figure 11: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the police issuing fines for breaches of lockdown regulations? **Regional** Breakdown (%)

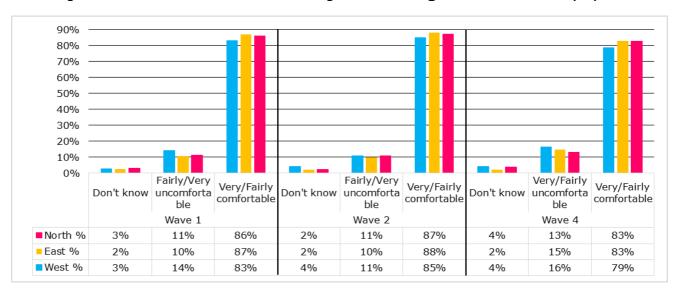
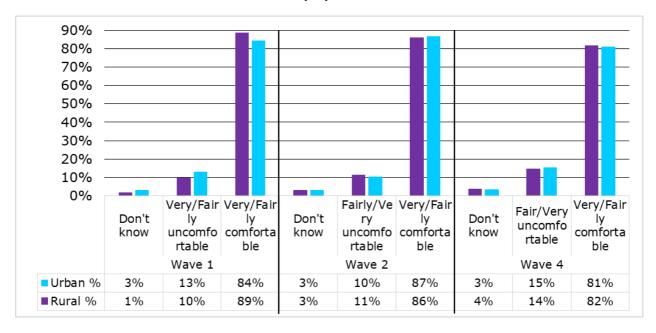


Figure 12: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the police issuing fines for breaches of lockdown regulations? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)



Use of "Stop and Account"

3.33 A key strand of the strategy for policing the regulations aimed at reducing the transmission of coronavirus relates to engaging,

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- educating and encouraging the public to comply with regulations, prior to moving to enforcement. The Authority asked a question regarding this in Waves 1 and 2 of its surveys.
- 3.34 The majority of respondents across the regions and in rural and urban areas felt comfortable with 'stop and account' measures being used as part of the police's strategic response see **Figures 13 and 14.**
- 3.35 In Wave 1, 89% of respondents in the East felt comfortable with this measure, 82% in the North and 81% in the West. In Wave 2, rates declined in the East and North to 87% and 80%, but increased in the West to 86%.
- 3.36 The urban/rural analysis (see **Figure 14**) also showed that a majority of respondents in both areas felt 'Very/Fairly comfortable' with 'stop and account' measures. However, in Wave 1, rural based respondents were more comfortable than urban based respondents (87% compared to 83%). This changed in Wave 2, where the rural response rate decreased to 82% and the urban response increased to 86%.

Figure 13: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the police asking people to provide a valid reason for being out of their home when challenged (stop and account)? **Regional** Breakdown (%)

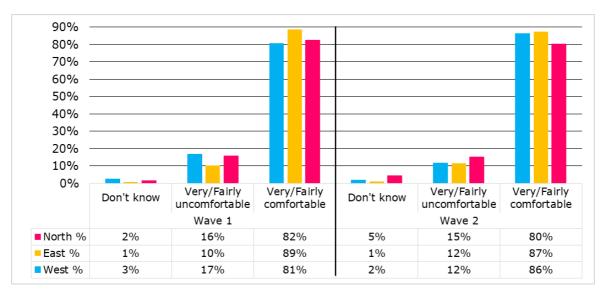
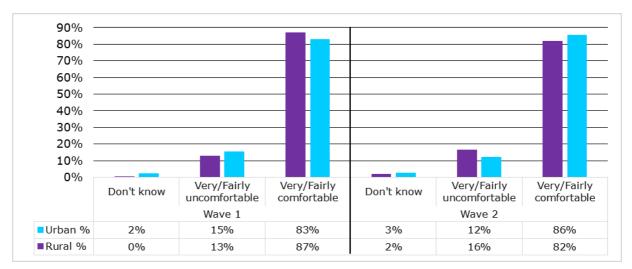


Figure 14: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the police asking people to provide a valid reason for being out of their home when challenged (stop and account)? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)



Arresting People

- 3.37 The police have powers to arrest people for breaching coronavirus regulations in a limited number of circumstances. The Authority asked a question regarding this in Waves 1 and 2 of its surveys.
- 3.38 In Waves 1 and 2 the vast majority of respondents across the regions and urban and rural areas were 'Very/Fairly comfortable' with police arresting people who failed to comply with the instructions to return home see **Figures 15 and 16**.
- 3.39 In the regions, the North consistently had the highest proportion of people who were comfortable with this measure, although this decreased from 84% in Wave 1 to 79% in Wave 2. The West and East regions were relatively static across Waves 1 and 2, with the West remaining at 77% and the East decreasing slightly from 78% to 77%.
- 3.40 In Wave 1, there was a greater proportion of rural based respondents who felt 'Very/Fairly comfortable' than urban based (82% compared to 79%). However, in Wave 2 this switched, with 77% of rural respondents and 78% of urban feeling this way see **Figure 16**.
- 3.41 Regarding those who were 'Very/Fairly uncomfortable', levels remained relatively static in the West and East regions. The West decreased from 20% in Wave 1 to 19% in Wave 2, and the East

- increased from 19% to 21%. It was the North region that saw the largest increase between Waves 1 and 2, rising from 14% to 18%.
- 3.42 In Wave 1 a greater proportion of urban based respondents felt 'Very/Fairly uncomfortable' (18%) than rural (16%). This increased in Wave 2 to 19% of both rural and urban based respondents feeling this way.

Figure 15: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the police arresting people who fail to comply with instructions to return home? **Regional**Breakdown (%)

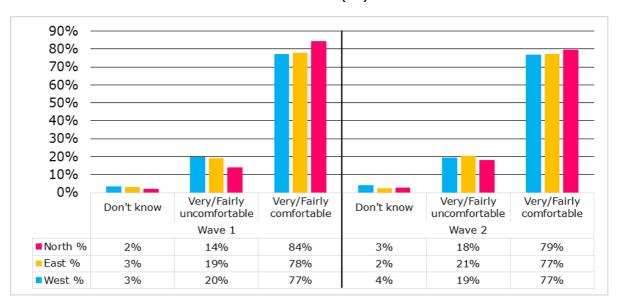
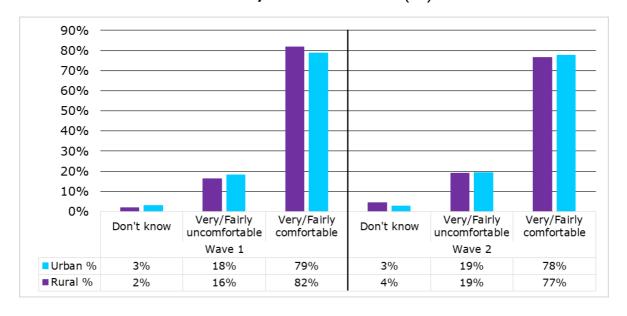


Figure 16: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with the police arresting people who fail to comply with instructions to return home? **Urban/Rural** Breakdown (%)



4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Key insights arising from this geographical analysis of survey responses include:
 - There has been a high degree of consistency in views across the country, taking into account both regional and urban/rural factors.
 - Confidence in policing was especially high at the onset of the pandemic across Scotland, with the police enjoying a very high degree of support for the policing approach being taken.
 Confidence levels have returned throughout the year to levels more typically seen pre-pandemic.
 - As the pandemic has progressed, an increasing number of people have been expressing the view that they would like to see greater police visibility and greater use of police enforcement regarding breaches of lockdown regulations.
 - Support for the police using various enforcement measures linked to the new powers that have been granted has been strong, with very little variation in responses from across the country.
 - The nature of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions has meant that the Authority's surveys have found that a relatively large proportion of people were unable to provide a definitive view of how the police have been performing (Don't Know responses). This was especially the case as the Spring 2020 lockdown embedded (Wave 2 – mid May 2020), with many people likely to be remaining at home for much of time, shielding and/or selfisolating.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the Authority's Strategy and Performance team continues to work with the Police Scotland Public Confidence Governance Board and the Independent Advisory Group to examine additional areas for analysis and insight.
- 4.3 It is also proposed that the SPA Strategy and Performance team brings a paper to a future Policing Performance Committee analysing variations in attitudes and opinions as they relate to different demographic groups, varying personal circumstances, and socio-economic factors. Relevant geographic factors would be taken into account as part of the analysis.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are **no** financial implications associated with this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are **no** personnel implications associated with this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are **no** legal implications in this paper.

8. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are **reputational** implications in this paper associated with the need for the policing system to listen to the opinions of communities and promote and enhance public confidence.

9. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are **no** social implications associated with this paper.

10. COMMUNITY IMPACT

10.1 There are **no** community implications associated with this paper.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are **no** equality implications associated with this paper.

12. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are **no** environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to:

Discuss and note the main findings arising from the geographical analysis of survey data and consider the Next Steps outlined at Section 4.