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Surrey vehicle theft charge rate among lower-performing forces, figures show

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Surrey Police recorded 1,551 thefts or unauthorised takings of motor vehicles in 2025, with charges or summonses recorded in 34 cases, according to Home Office figures analysed by the Liberal Democrats.

That represents a charge or summons rate of 2.19 per cent. In 1,150 cases — 74.15 per cent of the total — the recorded outcome was that the investigation had been completed with no suspect identified.

The figures put Surrey in the lower half of police forces in England and Wales for the proportion of vehicle-theft cases resulting in a charge or summons, but not at the very bottom.

Excluding the British Transport Police, Surrey's 2.19 per cent rate was the 12th lowest among 43 territorial police forces. The overall England and Wales rate in the data was 2.45 per cent.

Surrey was also among the worse-performing forces for cases ending without a suspect being identified. Its 74.15 per cent figure was the eighth highest of the 43 territorial forces, although it was slightly below the England and Wales overall figure of 75.90 per cent.

In terms of the number of vehicle thefts, Surrey sat around the middle of the national table: its 1,551 recorded offences made it the 20th highest force area out of 43. The highest totals were recorded by the Metropolitan Police, with 31,534 offences, followed by West Midlands Police with 12,979.

Among Surrey's neighbouring and nearby force areas, Sussex had a lower charge rate of 1.47 per cent, Hampshire 1.80 per cent and Hertfordshire 1.91 per cent. Thames Valley recorded 2.45 per cent and Kent 2.46 per cent. Surrey's proportion of cases with no suspect identified was higher than in Thames Valley, where the figure was 64.22 per cent, and Kent, at 70.48 per cent, but lower than Sussex's 80.02 per cent and Hertfordshire's 77.42 per cent.

Helen Maguire, Liberal Democrat MP for Epsom and Ewell, said the statistics showed that too few vehicle thieves were being brought to justice.

She said: "Across Surrey, people rely on their cars to get to work, take their kids to school, and get themselves to the doctors and other essential services. It is completely unacceptable that 1,551 individuals and families in our county have had their vehicles stolen, with so few of those responsible ever brought to justice.

"How can we expect to deter would-be thieves from stealing people's cars when so few criminals are actually being charged by Surrey Police? The Government is asleep at the wheel and people in Surrey are paying the price.

"We urgently need to restore proper community policing to tackle car theft. For too long forces have been left overstretched and underfunded, without the resources they need to respond."

The Liberal Democrats are calling for more neighbourhood policing and for a specialist National Crime Agency team to bring together automatic number plate recognition data, insurance records, border intelligence and information from police forces to target organised vehicle-crime networks.

The figures relate to the offence category "theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle". A charge or summons is one recorded outcome; cases may also have other outcomes not shown in the comparison.

Sam Jones – Reporter

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