

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**20 JANUARY 2022**

**REPORT OF CRIME  
AND DISORDER  
SELECT COMMITTEE**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Lead Cabinet Member – Access, Communities and Community Safety – Cllr Steve Nelson**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF POLICE COMMUNICATIONS IN STOCKTON-ON-TEES (TASK & FINISH)**

**SUMMARY**

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's task and finish review of Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) / DECISION(S)**

This topic was included on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2021-2022. The review is now complete, and the recommendations have been endorsed by the Crime and Disorder Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) Any scheduled reviews of Cleveland Police's '*Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025*' document factors in the key findings and recommendations from this review.
- 2) As part of the future communications protocol / agreement between Cleveland Police and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Ward Councillors:
  - a) Cleveland Police promotes the need for regular and Ward-specific engagement with SBC Ward Councillors amongst its internal workforce (including the provision of information to Elected Members which is relevant to their particular Ward);
  - b) Cleveland Police and SBC use their various public-facing communication platforms to raise the profile of Force-Councillor partnership-working (highlighting examples of positive engagement leading to direct action and good outcomes);
  - c) Expectations around the physical visibility of police officers (i.e. Ward Surgeries, partnership-meetings, resident meetings) be re-established between Cleveland Police and all SBC Ward Councillors;

- d) PCSO contacts for each Ward be reinforced to all SBC Ward Councillors, along with relevant escalation points if a PCSO is unavailable for any reason;
  - e) Consideration be given to using available platforms to raise the profile of PCSOs and their crucial part in the policing function (providing clarity on what they can and cannot do, including their use of social media as a communication tool);
  - f) Cleveland Police provides a response to concerns raised within the SBC Ward Councillor survey (undertaken as part of this review), with specific reference to what it is doing to promote better engagement in those Wards where Councillors have expressed dissatisfaction with existing communications arrangements.
- 3) Cleveland Police ensures robust mechanisms are in place for victims of crime / ASB which:
    - a) provides clarity on the expected communication process between Force and victim;
    - b) ensures updates are provided (as regularly as agreed with each individual victim) regarding the progression of investigations, even when there have been no developments.
  - 4) The SBC Ward Councillor survey is repeated in approximately 12 months to gauge developments around Cleveland Police-SBC Ward Councillor communications arrangements.

## DETAIL

1. Cleveland Police and Crime Panel had previously established a Task and Finish Group to examine the existing communication methods of Cleveland Police with / between the public and other local stakeholders. The main aims of that review were to:
  - Establish the communication priorities of the Force and how these are being actioned.
  - Understand the interplay between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Cleveland and the Force in relation to communication.
  - Examine the ability for the public and key partners to engage with the Force, and how the Force then acts on this (i.e. providing feedback).
  - Identify the ways and means in which the positive work of the Force can be communicated more widely and efficiently, which could aid both a future increase in the reporting of crimes and a reduced fear of crime.
2. As a way of informing the Cleveland-wide work around the Police Communications Strategy, the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's local area-based task and finish review would focus on information-sharing and communications in Stockton-on-Tees between neighbourhood policing, local Ward Councillors, local residents and other key stakeholders. The review would seek to ensure that appropriate information-sharing mechanisms were in place with a view to strengthening effective partnership-working within the Borough.
3. In undertaking the evidence-gathering for this review, the Committee's appointed Task and Finish Group met with a number of Cleveland Police staff – both frontline police officers as well as representatives from the Force's Corporate Communications Unit. To obtain views on police communications from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Elected Members, the Group issued a survey to all 56 Ward Councillors. Finally, consideration was given to several consultation examples which not only demonstrated the ways in which the public

could engage with the Force and its partners, but also highlighted further opinions on the issue of crime-related communications.

#### **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

4. Continuing to strengthen communication mechanisms and ensure robust engagement between Cleveland Police and the residents of Stockton-on-Tees has clear benefits for the whole Borough in terms of identifying and addressing crime and ASB concerns. Central to this is the need for regular engagement with Ward Councillors who can act as a conduit between the Force and residents in their locality regarding intelligence and good news stories. Many of the review's recommendations seek to enhance this Cleveland Police-SBC Ward Councillor interaction which should assist in the further development of positive relationships between the Force and the local population.

#### **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

5. There are no direct implications in the report.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6. There are no financial implications identified at this stage.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7. There are no legal implications identified at this stage.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

8. The review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

#### **WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS**

9. This review involved a Borough-wide investigation around police communications, and all 56 SBC Elected Members were given the opportunity to respond to the survey undertaken as part of the Task and Finish Group's work.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10. None.

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