



**Tackling Off-Road Motorbike Nuisance**

**Task and Finish Scrutiny Review**

**Final Report**

**November 2018**

## **Members**

Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE	(Stockton Borough Council) <b>Chair</b>
Councillor David Coupe	(Middlesbrough Council)
Councillor Ian Jeffrey	(Redcar and Cleveland Council)
Paul McGrath	Non-political Independent Member

## **The Group would like to thank the following for contributing to its work:**

Barry Coppinger	Police and Crime Commissioner
Joanne Hodgkinson	Assistant Chief Executive, OPCC
Superintendent Bev Gill	Cleveland Police
Superintendent Emily Harrison	Cleveland Police
Inspector Phil Morris	Cleveland Police
Andy Corcoran	Chair, Road Safety Partnership

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## **Introduction**

1.1 The Task and Finish Group was established in response to Member concerns and a desire to feed into the development of a Cleveland-wide strategy to tackle off road vehicle anti-social nuisance and seek to secure partnership buy-in.

1.2 The Group explored the following key lines of enquiry:

- What is the extent and scale of the problem?
- Are there current intelligence gaps?
- What are police and enforcement services able to achieve under their existing powers?
- What resources are currently available and what success had been achieved?
- What initiatives and future work is planned?
- What has been the impact and effectiveness of recent initiatives and interventions?
- How well are agencies working together to tackle the problem?
- What partnership opportunities are there to strengthen our collective response?
- What best practice exists?

1.3 The Task and Finish Group met on 15 November 2017 to receive an initial overview of the problem and an update on the new approaches to tackling the problem including Operation Endurance. This was followed by a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner on 22 January 2018 and a final meeting on 27 September to receive an update on the Cleveland roll out of Operation Endurance following the peak season.

1.4 This report provides detail of the evidence received and Member comments.

1.5 The Task and Finish Group works on behalf of the full Police and Crime Panel to allow for in-depth scrutiny and analysis of issues warranting more detailed investigation before consideration by the Panel.

## **Overall Conclusions**

2.1 The Group supported the new approach in particular:

- the partnership approach which was felt to be key in addressing this issue
- the importance of working with registered social landlords
- the power of a strong media campaign highlighting seizures and publicising prosecutions
- the effectiveness of S59 Notices to enable immediate seizure of vehicles following unauthorised use
- the valuable role of School Liaison Officers in targeted areas
- Neighbourhood Police presence in estates where there was a known problem
- having a Facebook page for the public to share information without having to call 101
- better intelligence

## **Recommendation**

The Task and Finish Group recognize the valuable work carried out by Cleveland Police including work carried out as part of Operation Endurance and recommend that this issue is monitored on an annual basis by the Police and Crime Panel.

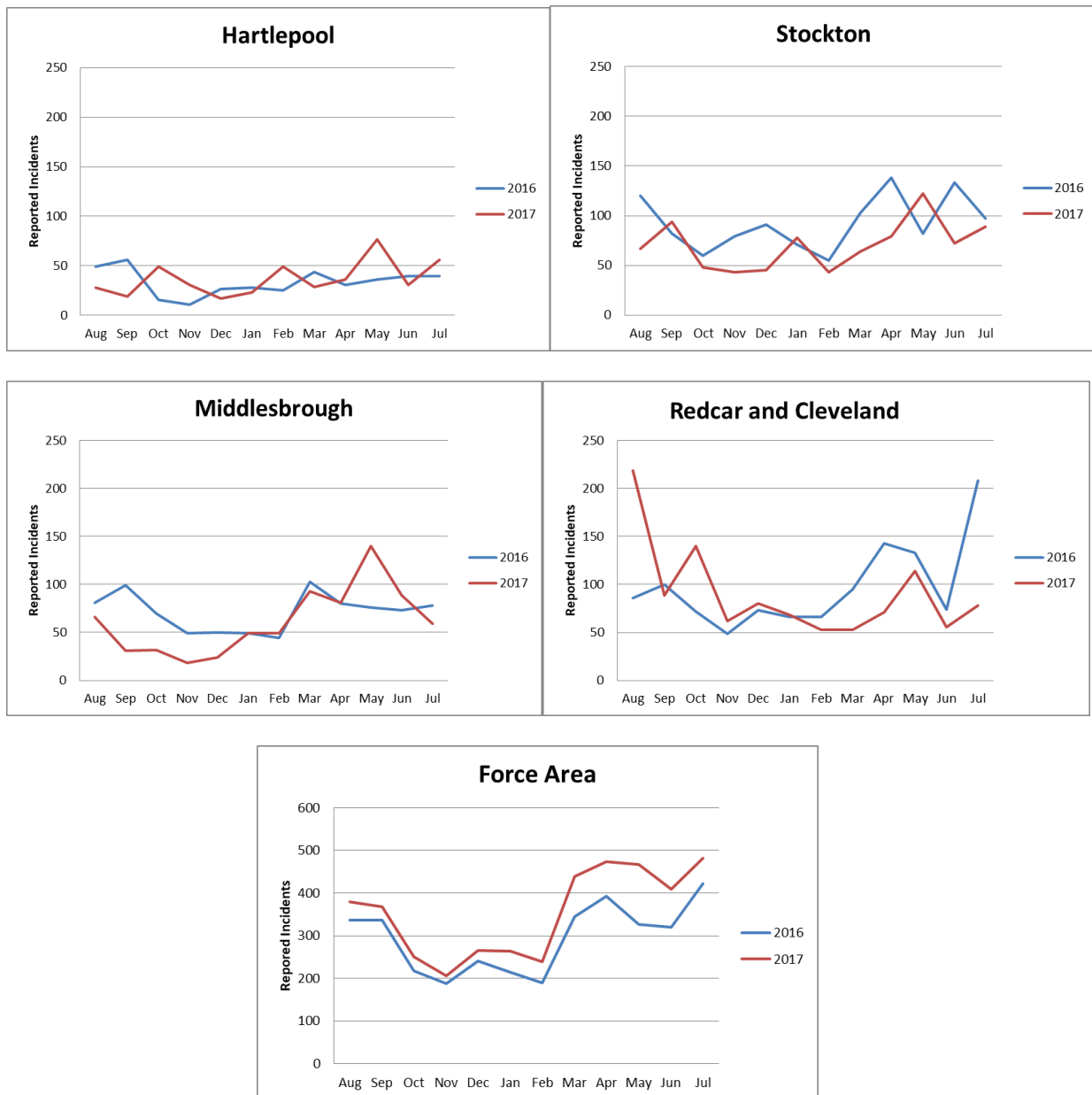
## DETAIL

### Background

3.1 Cleveland incident data revealed that between 1 August 2016 and 30 August 2017, there were 3911 incidents of ASB where motorbikes were mentioned:

- Hartlepool 431
- Middlesbrough 918
- Stockton 1178
- Redcar and Cleveland 1384

Incident trends 2016 and 2107 are set out below.



3.2 The peak day for offences was a Sunday and the peak time for offences was between 1500 and 2000hrs.

3.3 Although there were differences between beat areas, the average age of offenders was 22½ with ages ranging from 11 – 47 years; 152 males had committed offences and three females. There was often parental presence/ knowledge with regard to the offences.

3.4 During 2016/17 there had been a reduction in calls and incidents in Middlesbrough. However, there had been a significant increase in Redcar and Cleveland with incidents focused around the Eston Hills area.

3.5 There are currently eight PCs in the bike section across both Durham and Cleveland Force areas and officers are deployed in pairs. There were vacancies at the time of the task and finish review and a recognised need for more PCs to be trained.

### **The Need for a New Approach**

3.6 Traditionally the problem had been tackled by deploying police bikes into problem areas but this was only effective for short periods of time with the problems re-emerging when the police bikes left. In addition, target hardening had limited effectiveness and an adverse impact on access for people with disabilities. Deep ploughing field edges was often more effective in acting as a deterrent.

3.7 It was clear that there was a great deal of work ongoing to reduce off road nuisance and that an effective response had to be bespoke to the locality.

3.8 There were also intelligence gaps. A lot was known about the victims and locations but more intelligence was needed about:

- offenders
- the sale and supply of the bikes (through social media)
- the routes that offenders were taking
- who owned the land

3.9 It was recognised that there were significant partnership opportunities to strengthen a collective response.

### **Operation Endurance**

3.10 The Police had therefore instigated a fresh multi-agency approach, focusing on community engagement and intelligence gathering. This involved smarter ways of gathering evidence (e.g. via mobiles).

3.11 Operation Endurance had been rolled out across Durham and was being rolled out across Cleveland as a Force-wide strategy with officers from neighbourhood teams and the motorcycle section giving additional focus to off-road biking alongside partners from Cleveland Fire Brigade, Local Authorities and housing providers across Cleveland.

3.12 The weeks of action took place in Redcar and Cleveland, Hartlepool, Stockton and Middlesbrough throughout July and August. Police seized vehicles as well as issuing warnings and prosecuting where appropriate.

3.13 A press launch had taken place in February building on the pre-Christmas campaign urging residents to reconsider buying off road motorbikes as presents.

3.14 Key features of Operation Endurance included:

- Working together with Local Authorities and local housing providers to warn offenders that they could risk losing their tenancies
- Raising awareness in local schools regarding the dangers of off-road biking
- Staff refresher training on S59 Notices including inspection and identification of stolen vehicles. In Cleveland, the Section 59 Notices are classed as the first warning meaning that PCs could immediately seize a vehicle where they encountered unauthorised use. The cost of the sign and installation was approximately £60
- Best practice and national guidance was made available via a police intranet page and a twitter account and Facebook page was established for the public to share information
- Operation Endurance recognised the importance of partnership working. Partners included:
  - Councils (housing and anti-social behaviour teams)
  - Cleveland Fire Brigade
  - Registered Social Landlords
  - Sustrans
  - National Trust
- Developing Intelligence:
  - SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Evaluation)
  - Historical Incidents – What has been missed?
  - Previous offenders – who/ why/ how?
  - Better use of CCTV/PND facial recognition
  - Better use of open source intelligence (e.g. The Rusty Sprocket sale site).
  - Greater community Intelligence
- In an area where there was a known problem, the approach has been to cocoon the area and leaflet drop bespoke crime stoppers leaflets.
- Service Stations were also involved (in Durham and Darlington, 86 service stations had signed up and had given an undertaking not to sell fuel to under 16s).
- Designated days of action

3.15 Members of the Task and Finish Group also highlighted the role of planning in estate design. Multiple access points and open plan designs were felt to be adding to the problem. Early discussions with developers was important and this was an area that Members felt Local

Authorities needed to be more aware of and ensure that Local Plans provided the necessary framework for planning Authorities to ensure that new developments were designed with security in mind.

3.16 Members also felt that the Police should provide a more considered response when consulted on planning applications and asked this comment be fed back to the new Chief Constable.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner Input**

3.17 The Task and Finish Group acknowledged that the PCC was taking this problem very seriously and noted that the issue had been subject to ongoing discussions in Your Force Your Voice meetings for some time and had been scrutinised in Working Together meetings.

3.18 The PCC was keen that the good practice was rolled out and, in terms of the wider provision, he had funded ASB diversionary projects in each of the four Local Authority areas and had put in place funding for a key worker to support partnership working alongside the introduction of a new system for information sharing.

3.19 The Task and Finish Group reviewed the minutes of the Eston Hills Operational Group (which had been set up to look at issues with off road vehicles in Eston Hills) and the Tees Rural Crime Forum.

3.20 Two new co-ordinators had been appointed to work across the four LPA areas. The focus was working with the community to build up intelligence to tackle the issue. The co-ordinators would be working with persistent callers building up intelligence and problem solving.

3.21 The PCC considered that adopting a partnership approach and empowering the community was essential as the problem could not be addressed by the Police working in isolation.

### **Evaluation of Operation Endurance**

3.22 The Task and Finish Group met again in the autumn of 2018 to receive feedback on the effectiveness of Operation Endurance following the peak season.

3.23 Members noted that there was no data to compare with the previous year as the operation only started in earnest this year. However, this would provide a benchmark moving forward.

3.24 Superintendent Emily Harrison advised that she had been the lead for the Force and felt that Operation Endurance had been a success; the plan was to build on and embed the valuable work carried out recognising that changing public perceptions could only be achieved over a period of time.

3.25 Section 59 notices had been deployed on the entrance to the Eston Hills where there had been particular problems and posters had been displayed in petrol stations to raise awareness. There had also been extensive media coverage across Cleveland, including Look North, BBC Tees and radio across Teesside. There had also been a lot of communications around anonymous reporting.

3.26 The Police had worked closely with Registered Social Landlords (conducting joint visits) and Joint Action Groups, highlighting the potential implications for tenancies.

3.27 One of the most effective initiatives had been the work which had taken place in Primary Schools.

3.28 Emily felt that the success of Operation Endurance laid strong foundations for future work, utilising a range of approaches and community intelligence.

3.29 Feedback from each of the LPA areas is set out below.

#### *Redcar and Cleveland*

3.30 Leaflets were delivered to local petrol stations and staff were informed of the on-going issue of nuisance vehicles. Staff were advised that if they sighted underage individuals attempting to purchase petrol, if they witnessed any suspicious activity, or if they believed a vehicle was stolen etc. to contact the Police immediately and use CCTV as evidence if available.

3.31 Extra patrols were carried out in problem areas and residents were spoken to and advised to contact the Police if they witnessed ASB bikes. A problem encountered was the difficulty in getting ID due to perpetrators covering their faces.

3.32 Officers attended Dormanstown Primary School fun day and spoke to parents and children to encourage them to report any nuisance vehicles.

3.33 Bike Watch leaflets were handed out at all Northern Area Partnership meetings and pop-up shops were attended by officers. Attendees were made aware of how to report nuisance vehicles through the scheme which was advertised on Facebook.

3.34 Seven vehicles were seized during the period.

#### *Stockton*

3.35 Seven bikes and one van had been seized. One S59 notice was issued.

3.36 Leaflets were circulated to all community hubs in the key areas (the Willows, Portrack, Portrack Post Office, Hardwick Shops, Hardwick Drop in Centre) and all garages that sold petrol.

3.37 Publicity and awareness raising took place via social media and BBC Tees and Look North.

#### *Hartlepool*

3.38 Every Petrol Station was visited and provided with posters about the sale of fuel. Off road bike nuisance flyers and Motorbike warning posters were also distributed to the many community centres and youth clubs around the town.

3.39 Work took place with Hartlepool Borough Council's Civil Enforcement Coordinator who



arranged for numerous Section 59 warning signs to be produced for display across the town. The town's hotspots were identified from the number of calls received and 30 warning signs were erected within the Burbank, Throston, Bell Vue, Bishop Cuthbert and Clavering areas of town. Further signs were displayed in the Owton Manor and Fens area of town where the numbers of calls were beginning to increase once again.

3.40 No less than 13 vehicles were seized as part of Operation Endurance. Ten people were reported for Summons and 20 Section 59 notices were issued.

### *Middlesbrough*

3.41 During the period of Operation Endurance, 106 intelligence logs were submitted, 46 incidents were reported to Police relating to motorbikes and quads, and eight motorbikes/ quads were seized.

3.42 Coulby Newham neighbourhood policing teams carried out numerous visits to areas of high activity involving off road motorbikes/quads; leaflets were delivered in the area and fridge magnets handed out.

3.43 Petrol stations in the Hemlington area were briefed to inform police of an activity linked to off road motorbikes/ quads (repeat visits). Information was shared with partner agencies and the issue highlighted at the Joint Action Group.

3.44 Information about motorbike / quad seizures within Middlesbrough was shared via facebook.

### **Glossary**

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
PCs	Police Constables
SARA	Scanning, Analysis, Response and Evaluation
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
PND	Police National Database
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
LPA	Local Police Area