

Crime and Disorder Select Committee Overview Meeting 2016

24 November 2016

Report from Director of Community Services

Community Safety and Security Service

Context

Members are well aware that as a Council we have had to adapt to funding reductions of £52 million over the last five years and that we are still confronted with having to find further savings. In relation to Community safety this has meant a funding reduction in the region of £600,000 to date and the impact of this is has meant that our approach to delivering front line services has been reviewed.

Whilst we acknowledge that we have a strong track record of sound financial management and we have been dealing with these problems successfully for many years, it will not be easy to find the additional savings of over £20 million by 2019/20. Moving forward, expectations will need to be realistic as many more difficult decisions will need to be made.

It is both acknowledged and accepted that we can't continue to do all the things we currently do and that we won't be able to work in the same way. For Community services this may mean that we have to adapt the range and availability of some services.

The challenge for all Members is to ensure that decisions about the basis on which services will be delivered are within the resources available, taking account of a number of factors such as reduced budget allocation, changing demographics, increasing demand, new national legislation and policy direction. Members are reminded of the four policy principles that support our decision-making:

- **Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention**, particularly those people in our communities who are subject to, or at risk of harm, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and those who are financially excluded or whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- **Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention**, specifically in relation to tackling health inequalities, meeting the skills gap and improving access to job opportunities, tackling fuel poverty, improving education and training opportunities, access to affordable housing and financial and digital inclusion.
- **Developing strong and healthy communities** through the provision of mainstream and preventive services that are available to all those who choose to access them.
- **Creating economic prosperity** across the Borough

It is within this context that the select committee is invited to undertake their overview duties.

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What has been achieved?

1. Despite a rise in crime Stockton still has the lowest crime rate per thousand population in the Tees Valley and remains the safest place to live within the Tees Valley. Over the last 10 years crime has reduced by 23.3%.
2. ASB in the borough reduced by 3.5% in 2015-16 and Stockton continues to have the lowest rate of ASB per 1000 population
3. Work conducted by the Security and Surveillance Unit (use of CCTV cameras) aided in the arrest of 539 individuals during 2015-16 which is a 15.2% increase on the last financial year.
4. Accessible CCTV images can now be relayed to both Gold and Silver command units within Cleveland Police. This has led to improvement working arrangements for Emergency Planning which strengthens our operational resilience.
5. As part of the Stockton Town Centre operations there have been improved links and engagement with local businesses and licensed premises. This includes the development of the 'Safer Business Scheme' which aims to provide crime prevention advice and support to small businesses within the Town Centre.
6. The Stockton Crime Prevention Panel has been refreshed in 2015/16 and this includes the securing of £14,200 external funding and the development of a new website to promote the work of the panel as well as raise funding through the sale of crime prevention goods.
7. Ongoing early help to support and empower those identified as vulnerable or families in need to build their confidence and self-esteem to make positive change in their lives and modify their behaviour. This has included a successful restorative practice approach and the continuation of Community Safety Counselling. In 2015/16 we have worked with 125 individuals via counselling and 69 families within family support and in addition to this carried out 45 restorative practice activities.
8. In 2015/16 the Community Safety team secured £80,000 funding from the PCC to support ASB/youth engagement, Domestic Abuse and Restorative Practice
9. When protecting the vulnerable the Trading Standards Service dealt with approximately 1500 complaints, of which almost two thirds were handled by the Trading Standards Advice Centre. The remainder were investigated by Trading Standards Officers.
10. Whilst enforcing consumer protection legislation almost 1,000 visits were carried out by Trading Standards Officers. Other activities involved the identification of a false wall within a shop that was found to be selling counterfeit and illicit tobacco.
11. Work continues to support local businesses and to contribute to public health and wellbeing, the Trading Standards Team were responsible for two successful prosecutions of supplying counterfeit vodka. These cases resulted in fines of £2,889 and costs of £3,586.

Challenges

1. Addressing significant increases in demand for all services
2. Reduced resources to deliver services (and lack of external funding opportunities)

3. The impact of reduced resources and organisational changes on other services/partners i.e. Police, Probation, Fire Service
4. Increase in Crime and the changes to Police recording
5. The loss of contracts and SLA's with Thirteen Housing Group
6. The roll out of awareness raising and local authority requirement under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act in relation to statutory PREVENT and CHANNEL duties
7. Reducing the number of repeat victims of domestic abuse

Emerging Issues

1. Maintaining partnership/operational relationships with Police & Probation services following significant organisational change
2. Implementation and ongoing application of powers and responsibilities of the ASB, Crime and Policing Act
3. Impact of a Cleveland-wide Integrated Offender Management service on reoffending rates
4. Reduction in resources across the key agencies of Safer Stockton Partnership and the impact this may have on crime and ASB rates within the Borough.
5. The potential reduction in resources aimed at preventative measures which lead to a rise in actual and fear of crime and ASB.
6. Changes to the delivery and development of Counselling Services provided by Community Safety with an increased focus on early help and counselling to tackle depression.
7. Community engagement and cohesion particularly in our most diverse communities.