

Crime and Disorder Select Committee
Review of Bonfires on Public Land
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2021-2024 key objectives (and associated 2021-2022 priorities):</p> <p><i>A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade, support the Arson Reduction Strategy, aimed at further reducing deliberate fire setting within our communities. <p><i>A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive</i></p>	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?	
<p>Like many Local Authority areas, Stockton-on-Tees experiences an increase in bonfires between mid-October and mid-November each year. Whilst these usually occur because of 'bonfire night' (5th November) celebrations, such cases have led to significant issues including damage to grassed areas, fly-tipping (involving refrigerators, old mattresses, kitchen units, etc.), public disorder, and associated obstructive parking.</p> <p>The Council and its key partners, Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade, have historically worked together to mitigate the risks associated with the lighting of bonfires, particularly during the 'bonfire night' period. However, concerns persist around the prevalence and impact of this annual activity, and the unabating challenges faced by local organisations in managing any identified issues in relation to bonfires. Reported attacks on public sector workers when attempting to intervene is a further alarming aspect of this practice.</p> <p>Focusing on bonfire activity upon public land, the aims of this review will therefore be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the extent of bonfire-related concerns (e.g. personal safety, damage to property, fly-tipping, etc.) within the Borough during the traditional 'bonfire night' season. Understand what the Council and its partners have historically done to identify, address and reduce bonfire-related issues. Investigate what, if any, further measures can be put in place to strengthen the management, or reduction, of bonfires during this time period. 	

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What is known about bonfire-related activity on public land across the Borough during mid-October to mid-November each year? What is the scale and geographical location of this activity?

How does the Council and its key partners engage with the local community around 'bonfire night' season? What messages are circulated around the lighting of bonfires (inc. by educational / youth services)?

How does the Council and its key partners identify and manage bonfire-related activity? What powers are available to deal with bonfires / what interventions are used – how effective have these been?

What is the impact of bonfires (e.g. resources to manage incidents, environmental and wildlife damage / costs, fly-tipping, related disorder)?

Should these be allowed to continue, what other options exist to improve planning for, and dealing with, bonfire-related activity? What are the perceived benefits / challenges associated with alternative approaches?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Council, Cabinet, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, housing providers, public.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

5 months (reporting to Cabinet in September 2022)

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

- SBC: Bonfires and Industrial Pollution
<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/our-people/environmental-health/environmental-protection/bonfires-and-industrial-pollution/>
- South Tyneside Council: Partnership Approach to Tackle Darker Nights Disorder
<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/64402/Partnership-Approach-to-Tackle-Darker-Nights-Disorder>
- Police Scotland: Launch of Operation Moonbeam 2020
<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2020/october/launch-of-operation-moonbeam-2020/>
- Ealing Council: Bonfires – guidance
https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201199/air_quality/2056/bonfires_-_guidelines/1
- Newcastle City Council: Bonfires and smoke
<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/environment-and-waste/environmental-health-and-pollution/air-pollution/bonfires-and-smoke#The%20law%20and%20bonfires>

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Services - Environmental Health - Education / Youth Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data on locations / prevalence of cases ➤ Resources used to identify / manage cases ➤ Impact of incidents (damage / costs) ➤ Advice / guidance published re. bonfires
Cleveland Fire Brigade		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data on locations / prevalence of cases ➤ Resources used to identify / manage cases ➤ Issues / risks around intervention ➤ Advice / guidance published re. bonfires
Cleveland Police		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bonfire-related crime and disorder / 'Mischief Night' ➤ Operation Trojan ➤ Advice / guidance published re. bonfires
Housing Providers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement in addressing this issue ➤ Collaboration with tenants / partners
RSPCA / Wildlife Trust		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Impact of bonfires on animals / wildlife

How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)

Committee meetings, reports, background research, site visits (TBC).

How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?

Committee meetings, information submissions, site visits (TBC).

How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.

How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023: *All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities* (We know that a range of factors including... anti-social behaviour and crime are all linked to physical, mental health and wellbeing outcomes).

Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): *Crime* (Crime and the fear of crime are key factors that affect people's quality of life and sense of well-being).

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

- Reinforcing safety messages around the creation of bonfires
- Reducing ground maintenance / removal of fly-tipping / Civic Enforcement costs
- Protecting green spaces
- Prevent lawlessness (reducing associated disorder, enhancing public safety, promoting

community cohesion)

- Creating a consistent plan so everyone knows what is permitted / a potential future policy with regards to the management of community bonfires

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	February 2022	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	21.02.22	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	03.03.22	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Local Authority Cleveland Fire Brigade Cleveland Police Housing Providers RSPCA / Wildlife Trust TBC	31.03.22 28.04.22 26.05.22 TBC	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	30.06.22	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	July 2022	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	21.07.22	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	26.07.22	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet / Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	15.09.22	Cabinet / Approving Body