



## Feedback on Stockton CDRP's Strategic Assessment

### 1. Introduction

The Government Office for the North East has commissioned the production of a North East Regional Strategic Assessment from the UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science (JDI). The primary source for this assessment was the Strategic Assessment's (SAs) that had been produced by each Community Safety Partnership in the region. As part of the preparation of this regional strategic assessment, the JDI was commissioned by GONE to provide concise feedback on each of these local SAs.

This report offers feedback on the Strategic Assessment for Stockton. The feedback is structured around the qualities that are considered as requirements in a partnership strategic assessment and whether, in our opinion, the strategic assessment helps the partnership achieve a proficient level of status in supporting effective partnership intelligence-led business processes.

These qualities are as follows:

- It should have a clear purpose.
- It should be complementary to other intelligence products.
- It should add value to what is already known.
- It should identify intelligence gaps.
- Its length, structure and content should be fit for purpose.

We also offer recommendations that we believe would support the development of the partnership's 2008/09 Strategic Assessment.

### 2. The SA should have a clear purpose

- The Safer Stockton Partnership have taken the stance that if a crime, disorder or ASB issue is considered a priority by the public, then it should justifiably be considered for inclusion as a strategic priority in the SA. The issue is then juxtaposed against crime levels and other known information to determine its suitability as a strategic priority. For instance robbery and mugging were found to be very low in volume and therefore did not constitute a strategic priority whereas 'other theft' – or specifically theft of metal - is a serious problem, both nationally and volumetrically. A degree of flexibility has therefore been employed alongside the publicly identified issues, which demonstrates acumen on behalf of the partnership. For this reason there is clear, evidenced reasoning for the strategic priorities that have been determined.
- Although the public's views are undoubtedly important in setting priorities, it is suspected that few of them will be conversant with the problem-solving approach that is advocated to partnerships. As a result of this, they are more likely to identify addressing outcomes (i.e. crime that results from some form of behaviour or opportunity, for example by recommending 'criminal damage' as a priority), rather than focusing on how the problem can be addressed

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(e.g. through better offender management, reducing victim/target vulnerability, and place-based safety measures).

- Views from the public are also more likely to centre around crime and ASB issues, rather than considering the wider spectrum of community safety issues. This is why we do not see any strategic priorities aimed at addressing the misuse of drugs or alcohol (even though drug-related crime is perceived to be an issue), or even activities to reassure the public, who may believe that feelings of safety are bound up in a clear relationship with crime/ASB levels. Issues associated with community reassurance are discussed in the SA, but surprisingly (particularly in light of quality of life PSA targets) a strategic priority on reassurance was not recommended. This is where the partnership can supplement the public's concerns with a more precise knowledge about how to best tackle perceptions and worries. An example of this would be that domestic violence was found to be a heightened concern for respondents from the BME communities. Specific activity such as posters and helpline information (translated if appropriate) would be a visible reassurance message if placed in areas where BME communities are located.

### **3. The SA should be complementary to other intelligence products**

- It is not articulated in the SA how this document fits into the analytical commissioning process, even if this is well known within the partnership. There is subsequently little reference in the SA to other intelligence products that the partnership should have previously prepared, or has plans to prepare in the future (i.e. Tactical Assessments or Problem Profiles). Instead it appears that the material in the assessment is written in isolation, when these other products can help add depth. Directions for future analysis are suggested (e.g. cross checking drug dealers with users), but these are not set in a formal analytical commissioning process.
- There is though a better awareness of how this SA should complement the Police's efforts to produce a strategic document. This is aided by an appropriately brief summary taken from the Police SA, and the fact that the CDRP have taken an entirely different approach to how they examine their crime and ASB issues. The structured sections on victims, offenders and locations assist in supplying a different perspective from the Police generated document, even though there is duplication in topics. For this reason the Safer Stockton Partnership have created an SA that complements the Police's assessment.

### **4. The SA should add value**

- The largest contribution the SA performs to the partnership is that it draws directly from what the public have articulated are their primary concerns. In this way, Safer Stockton Partnership are fully embracing a framework that is set to instil public trust and foster a relationship with communities that will in turn assist in delivering reductions in crime, disorder and ASB. In order to fully optimise this relationship, it is important that the public are regularly informed about what the partnership is doing about their concerns.
- Added value is also demonstrated by the approach taken to analyse each issue. By drawing upon the components of the problem analysis triangle, the partnership is starting to get to the level of detail needed to understand why problems are manifesting.
- The first production of the CDRP SA has laid out a good foundation for future documents. To further enhance the value it adds to the partnership, and to facilitate clear understanding of which agencies can align their service delivery with partnership activities, the next SA should include more detail derived from analysing the problems. Presently it feels like the appreciation of the roles that many partner agencies can offer is underdeveloped. Perhaps though this is just under expressed, as 'POP's are referred to throughout the document. However with no explanation of what these entail, it is hard for us to assess their contribution or to what extent they embrace a multi-agency approach.

### 5. The SA identifies intelligence gaps

- Data gaps are generally well documented within the SA and these are escalated in importance within particular sections (e.g. the final 'summary' section). However, if these limitations are considered to restrict partnership intelligence-led processes then some strategic attention should be directed at improving the current situation. This is not only in terms of sourcing datasets from other agencies but also ensuring that received data provides relevant information that supports the partnership's intelligence-led business processes (for example details captured on shoplifting offences are far from informative or useful for analysis). Therefore an intelligence improvement plan needs devising (especially with the DAT), with actions distributed to the relevant agency.
- Good use is made of partnership data to help fill information gaps, for example Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (discarded needles), DV team statistics, FRS data on secondary fires, and should be expanded in years to come.

### 6. Length, structure and content

- Safer Stockton Partnership take a novel approach to setting strategic priorities, in that community concerns are drawn on to dictate areas for analysis and consideration. In light of the forthcoming Home Office targets in respect of listening to communities and reassuring them, this is considered to have great scope in building trust between the public and the agencies responsible for delivering community safety objectives.
- The approach taken means that the structure and content of the SA provides the reader with a clear understanding of the perceived issues regarding community safety in Stockton by the public. By analysing the victim, offender and location profile of each issue, the partnership are considering the problems in more depth than is traditionally seen. Inclusion of information on repeat victims helps to better identify sub-groups of people who are especially vulnerable and consequently need better protection. The location profile could be enhanced by employing maps as a visualisation medium for the data (e.g. the ward rates that have been calculated in the numerous tables). Maps are also appropriate for comparing different information – for example the neighbourhoods where young offenders reside alongside crime rates in each area would enable a number of hypotheses to be examined.
- The brevity of the SA is commendable and will appeal to decision makers as a document that is not too onerous to read. Having said that, there are areas where more information can be included so it is deemed a little too brief for the intended purpose. For example, a section describing the performance history of the partnership in line with PSA targets is completely missing (although reference is made to crime levels in the past as a comparator). This makes it difficult to contextualise the climate in which this document refers to and measure the successes achieved to date. These targets should not just focus on PSA1 targets, but also illustrate how the partnership is doing in relation to PSA2 and PSA4 targets.
- Whilst the level of detail achieved in the analysis is good, it has been reliant on data quality and availability from various sources. If the partnership wish to ensure that the level of detail achieved in future improves then a greater diversity of information requires examining, and a number of hypotheses tested.
- The SA is lacking in detail of past activities that the partnership has done in relation to prior strategic priorities, and how these have impacted on crime, disorder and ASB levels. As the partnership matures it is necessary to build a portfolio of knowledge about what works in reducing crime and other unwanted behaviour. An important element of this is capturing and measuring past activity against set priorities and public opinion.

### Recommendations

Feedback provided above, we hope, points to how improvements in future SAs can be made. We also offer these additional recommendations:

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- The partnership should look to examine the public's priorities within a problem-solving framework. Thus the knowledge and experience within the partnership can be called upon to complement what the public tell them is an issue. For instance, anti-social behaviour was found to be largely associated with the activities of young people and therefore could be considered under the wider agenda of diverting young people from offending. Consequently the two strategic priorities of 'ASB' and 'diverting young people from offending' can be synthesised in a programme of activity that will address the key issue of ASB.
- The partnership needs to form an alliance with the business community. Not only is this recommended by recent Home Office guidance, but intelligence gained from these organisations will assist understanding cross-cutting issues, such as theft of metal, shoplifting, criminal damage and ASB.

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