

**Stockton Renaissance Annual Event  
13 January 2009  
Safer & Stronger Communities Workshop**

**Attendance:** Mike Batty, Marilyn Davies, Nicola Hall, Sarah Woodhouse, Trevor Lewis, Cllr Jim Beall, Philippa Corner, Philip Day, Fred Gook, Ian Harrington, Dave Brunskill, Geoff Lee, Cllr Terry Laing, Derek Rosamond.

Workshop discussion item: Relevant Thematic Partnership

MB explained that the key priorities and challenges for the Safer Stockton Partnership in 2009/10 had been outlined in DB's presentation.

MB explained that the priority areas for the Safer Stockton Partnership were included within the Community Safety Plan, which was a three-year document that was based on extensive consultation, the priorities were still relevant.

The success of the reduction in crime was noted. Comment was made that the Partnership needed to consider how they can build on and impact on this further.

Comment was made that there needs to be more consideration of community cohesion/ community wellbeing type issues that affect local communities, such as low level anti-social behaviour, parking disputes and dog fouling as these impact on people's quality of life.

Comment was made that this links in with people's perception of fear of crime. It was suggested that a strong message needs to be put across to help to reduce this and get the message across that there has been a reduction in crime.

SW explained that the Community Cohesion Strategy would look at fear of crime as part of the communication strategy and this would link with the Safer Stockton Partnership.

MD explained that the Anti Social Behaviour Team (ASB) would be using Mosaic (an experian database) which would provide smarter information on how they consult with residents. MD stated that the database will also provide different ideas on how certain communities like to be consulted with. MD stated that the database would be up and running in April 2009.

MD explained that a lot of operational work took place to provide information to residents. MD stated that the ASB Team are provided with fire statistics every week, and as a result they target streets that have had a number of rubbish and wheelie bin fires to inform residents that this will increase the crime statistics. MD also explained that a Youth Action Plan has been developed to divert young people from crime and as part of this; the Youth Bus visits different areas on a Friday and Saturday night to offer alternative and diversionary activities.

DB explained that the government was moving away from a focus on the collection of raw data (eg the number of dwelling burglaries) towards quality of life for communities.

A discussion took place around the different ways to engage with local communities and stimulate public interest as people only tend to come forward when they want to make a complaint. It was suggested that Ward Councillors as well as Champions from local communities have a role to play to get positive messages across.

MD explained that when anybody contacts the ASB Team, they get sent a postcard letting them know who the key contact is. MD explained that postcards were a good idea to get messages across as people are more likely to read them than a leaflet.

A discussion took place around the importance to engage with the wider community and not just 'the usual suspects'. DB explained that he encourages his beat officers to attend meetings/ visit different venues that they wouldn't normally attend in order to engage with a wider audience. DB stated that his officers only had the time to do this if crime was continuing to be reduced.

MD explained that the ASB Team were keen to interact with people and let them know that they were thinking of them. MD explained that a recent initiative was to leave purse bells in local venues which had on them 'a present from the Safer Stockton Partnership'. MD also explained that Warm Packs were given out to priority residents.

MB explained that the sixth strand of the Community Safety Plan was around 'emerging issues', which enabled the Safer Stockton Partnership to be flexible. DB explained that the issue of metal theft had been included within this strand, however with the current economic climate this issue might not be such a priority and as such, the flexible nature of the document would allow them to focus on other priorities that emerge.

Comment was made that the police are effective at engaging with communities, however the fire service should do more to engage with resident groups. IH explained that the fire service are engaging with local communities and do a lot of work in schools and doing free home safety visits. IH explained that the fire service would be happy to attend any resident association meeting. The responsiveness of the fire service was commended.

A discussion took place around litter. MD explained that it was included as an option as a priority area within the Community Safety Plan.

MB explained that the discussions that had taken place focussed around the themes of civility, consideration and tolerance. MB stated then when the Safer Stockton Partnership was established 11 years ago, it focussed on addressing the then high levels of dwelling burglary and vehicle crime. Progress made over the years on these issues now make it easier to address some of the broader issues.

A discussion took place around managing the public's expectation and a campaign should be considered around tolerance and respect.

#### Workshop discussion item: Stockton Renaissance (LSP)

A discussion took place around the top three cross cutting issues that Stockton Renaissance should consider. Following discussions the following were agreed as the top three cross cutting issues –

#### **1. Alcohol**

The link between alcohol abuse, violence and health were agreed as a key priority area. It was noted that alcohol also has links to sexuality activity, crime and litter. It was noted that work needs to be undertaken with parents to discourage them from buying alcohol for their children. It was noted that it was also an issue for licensing to

consider, due to the rise of the number of services that you can use to ring to get alcohol delivered.

## **2. Promotion of community cohesion/ good neighbourliness**

This was suggested to help to reduce the perception of fear of crime. A publicity campaign would be required to promote tolerance, reassurance and respect and have an intergenerational aspect to it. An Action Plan should be developed. It should reach a wider audience. The Fire Service's Life Programme was cited as best practice to engage with a wider audience.

## **3. Domestic Violence**

It was noted the incidents of domestic violence have risen 24%, it was suggested that this was partly as a result in the confidence of people to report issues as positive action will be taken. It was suggested that the current economic climate could further increase the number of incidents. It was noted that this issue is cross-cutting and impacts on young people, health and education. DB explained that the Police Force were having discussions around the possibility of setting up a Domestic Violence Unit within the Police Force.