

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE SAFER STOCKTON PARTNERSHIP

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STOCKTON CRIME RATE HALVED

FIGURES released today by the Safer Stockton Partnership show the crime rate across Stockton-on-Tees has almost halved over the past seven years.

Commenting on a 49 per cent drop in crime over that time, Superintendent Darren Best, District Commander for Cleveland Police in Stockton, said: "In just seven years, recorded crimes across Stockton-on-Tees have fallen from 20,534 in the year 2003/04 to 10,832 in 2010/11, the year just closed.

"That's a reduction of 9,732, or 47 per cent, in the number of crimes and crime victims each year.

"When you take into account the fact that the population of Stockton has grown from 186,000 to more than 192,000 over the same period, the rate of crime per person is now down by 49 per cent."

Geoff Lee, Chair of the Safer Stockton Partnership, added: "People are often sceptical about the accuracy of crime figures but in Stockton we have robust checks and balances.

"From systematic public opinion surveys carried out by Stockton Council over the years, we know that Stockton residents consistently report crime at levels much higher than the national averages.

"We also know there have been stunning reductions in some of the most commonly reported types of crime, such as dwelling burglary, down by 76 per cent over the last seven years, and vehicle theft, down by 80 per cent.

"We also know we have outperformed the averages both for the North East and for the country – across England and Wales the crime rate was down by 31 per cent over the six years to 2010."

Mike Batty, Stockton Council's Head of Community Protection, said: "It's easy to forget how many services and organisations play a part in reducing crime levels. These results show just what strong partnership working can achieve, with the police,

council, probation service, fire brigade, Primary Care Trust, Youth Offending Service, Tristar Homes and others all key to this success.

“For our part, the Council contributes through activities such as CCTV, our Neighbourhood Enforcement officers and Anti Social Behaviour Team. We commission services to help tackle issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse and domestic violence, as well as improving local employment and housing opportunities.”

Bert Smailes, Chairman of the Safer Billingham Partnership, said he was not surprised at the reduction: “The hard work of officers and their interaction with various community groups is commendable. Crime prevention officers, resident group leaders and others have nothing but praise for the help and cooperation they receive. Well done!”

Suzie Viana, who manages the Noah’s Ark family centre in Thornaby, added: “I have seen a noticeable reduction in vandalism and anti social behaviour over the last year, especially around the area of the church where I work.

“Something has clearly changed as the young people seem to have a more positive attitude and are proud of the area, which in turn makes them less likely to destroy things as they have in the past.

“We have previously suffered problems with graffiti and criminal damage around the church area, but that is not a problem now due to regular police patrols and positive action.”

ENDS.

NOTES TO EDITORS: The significance of using 2003/04 as the baseline is that the National Crime Recording Standards are largely unchanged over that period.

For further information on this release, please call Vince Rutland, Media Relations Manager for Stockton Council, on (01642) 526097.

Stockton is the 2010 winner of the Association for Public Service Excellence ‘Council of the Year’ and has received the top ‘excellent’ rating for Use of Resources from the Audit Commission.

Stockton-on-Tees won the Gold Award in the Entente Florale 2010, Europe’s top environmental award, and will represent the North East in Britain in Bloom 2011.