

To: Safer Stockton Partnership

Supt Ian Coates, Cleveland Police

Re: Criminal Damage

Introduction

- a. Reducing criminal damage was the fifth key issue in the 2011-2014 Safer Stockton Partnership Community Safety Plan.
- b. The aim and objectives of this priority was to reduce criminal damage, reduce offences in identified hotspot areas and reduce repeat victimisation in the borough.
- c. This paper is submitted in order to provide a brief summary of the issues over the past three years which are relevant to reducing criminal damage along with the main focus of an update on the most recent 12month period (July13 to June14) in order to stimulate discussion at the Safer Stockton Partnership meeting on 19th August 2014..
- d. Reducing Criminal Damage has been retained within the Community Safety Plan 2014-2017 which was implemented in April 2014.
- e. Two key measures from 2011-14 Plan have been retained for the forthcoming three years.

Background

Against the Partnership priority of Reducing drug related offending, the measures outlined by the partnership were to:

Reduce Criminal Damage

Reduce the number of repeat victims of Criminal Damage

We said we would do this by:

- Implementation and monitoring of an action plan.
- Identification of repeat victims and ensure that they are visited to identify and redress any triggers
- Investigate all repeat cases of criminal damage to THL properties
- Maintain our prevention programme in schools to raise awareness of the harm caused by criminal damage and deliberate fire settings.
- Develop and implement a plan for peak times and localities for criminal damage to be monitored by the Criminal Damage Think Tank

The focus of this paper is upon the issues surrounding the effectiveness of the above measures long with an examination into what extent these approaches have had an impact upon reducing damage in the borough.

Alongside this, the most recent 12 months crime trends will be discussed along with forthcoming challenges for the next six months.

Performance against set targets from criminal damage action plan

All of the four targets from the criminal damage action plan were achieved during the life of the Community Safety Plan.

(a) Review the terms of reference of the multi-agency strategic criminal damage and ASB group to ensure it is meeting current objectives:

- i) Strategic Group (SG) to monitor specific action plan, which will also be reviewed weekly by the Police.

- ii) SG to be intelligence led using analysis to highlight trends and emerging issues based around the victim, offender, and location framework - scanning document presented at quarterly meetings

Achieved and ongoing - The ASB and Criminal Damage Action Plan is now in place and provides strategy and focus and drives core business in order to take positive action in relation to Criminal Damage.

(b) Identify repeat victims / properties and ensure that they are visited to identify and correct any risk factors

- i) Repeat victims to be referred to support and a problem plan created if necessary following risk assessment

- ii) The number of repeat properties that are THL owned identified

Achieved - Repeat victims identified and offences reviewed on daily basis and through POP coordinator, ASB team whilst also highlighted at local JAG's/Criminal Damage and ASB meeting. Follow up support offered through problem solving when appropriate with view to resolving issues reported.

(c) The most prolific locations to be registered as a POP to be owned and managed by NPT Insps via the JAGs.

- i) The SG to monitor activities and resources tasked at the JAGs which should be clearly reflected within the JAG meeting minutes.

Achieved - This was achieved for the life of 2011-2014 Community Safety Plan, and will remain in place. There are a number of JAGs within the whole district and feedback from Inspectors and partners shows some good working practices in place. From the 2nd April 2014 POPS are now included on the agenda items for the SG meetings where they will be reviewed and scrutinised.

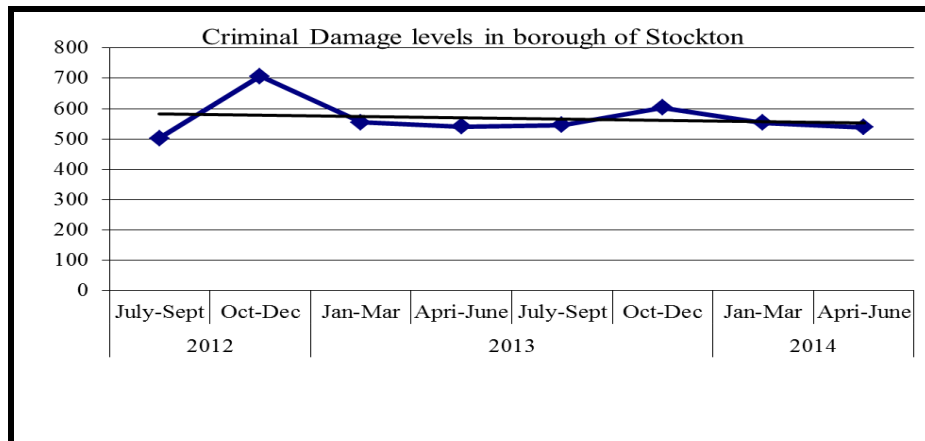
(d) Maintain our prevention programme in schools to raise awareness of the harm caused by criminal damage and deliberate fire setting. Schools in hotspot areas as identified by the SG to be targeted

Achieved - Will continue beyond the life of the Community Safety Plan 2011-2014. The Community Safety Analyst will continue to identify areas where ASB is being committed along with the Community Safety Officer working closely with all ward area PCSO's, ASB officers and local police officers to deliver impact education within all schools across the borough.

Crime Levels

- 1 Over the past five years (FY 09/10 to FY 13/14) offences of Criminal Damage have reduced by 21.6% from 2855 crimes to 2238 for the end of March 2014.
- 2 Despite this significant reduction, offences have continued to decrease with the most recent financial year (2013/14) also seeing levels reduce by 0.3%, this is despite levels being at an all-time low.
- 3 The borough of Stockton also maintained its position as the best performing policing area and Tees Valley area in terms of crimes per 1000 population for criminal damage and also for overall crime.
- 4 Cleveland Police continues to be fully committed to supporting the Crime Commissioners objectives which incorporate reducing criminal damage.
- 5 The Force has developed an operational plan which includes 'Protecting Property by reducing the level of crime suffered by the community, with the main focus on three areas, Criminal Damage, House Burglary and Theft'.

- 6 The Stockton Local Policing area is also committed to the reduction of criminal damage and repeat victimisation.
- 7 The current picture also portrays this commitment with the most recent 12 months (July13 to June 14) showing a reduction of 2.7% which is 63 fewer victims of damage.



- 8 Comparisons with neighbouring areas also shows reductions in Redcar & Cleveland (-1.7%) and Hartlepool (-8.8%) however increase in criminal damage in Middlesbrough (2.2%).
- 9 The Stockton borough still continues to have the lowest rate per 1000 population.
- 10 Criminal Damage offences account for the majority of public reported crime (22.6%) and is comparative to 22.3% previous 12 month period.

Crime analysis

- 11 There have been no significant changes to the type of damage that is being committed, with damage to vehicles accounting for 43% followed by dwelling (31%).
- 12 Arson offences continue to remain low and account for 3% and have reduced from 88 offences to 68 during the comparative 12 month period. This equates to a 23% reduction in offending and following similar trends to reductions experienced by the Fire brigade (8.4%)
- 13 The type of damage to vehicles has also not altered with wing mirrors being broken or bodywork scratched and continues to have common theme where several cars will be targeted in a spate of offending, resulting in this being the highest damage category. Juvenile offenders also feature highly within this type of damage accounting for 50% of all suspects, comparative to only 30% for dwelling.
- 14 Damage to dwellings varied from windows and doors being broke with 10% of all offences committed at dwelling being domestic related. This compares only 3% of vehicle damage recorded as domestic related.
- 15 For all damage, 7% were recorded as domestic related, which is similar to previous 12 months (7.5%).
- 16 In terms of localities, the main offending areas have not changed with Stockton Town Centre being the main area, accounting for 13%, followed by Mandale and Victoria (9.5%) and

Parkfield and Oxbridge (7.5%). These three wards are also the top three locations for anti-social behaviour and crime.

- 17** Both STC and M&V have also been subject to a rise in offences during the 12 month period with operational activity focusing on these areas along with Dispersal Orders being implemented.
- 18** The Dispersal Order in Ingleby Barwick has only recently ended (27th July) and statistics shows that whilst it was in place, incidents of ASB reduced by 23%. This area will continue to be monitored. Alongside this, ASB in M&V also reduced by 10% (in place 09.05 to 08.06) and significant reduction in damage from nine to three offences.
- 19** Also of note is Billingham Town Centre which has suffered a 35% increase (88 to 119 crimes). This correlates with an increase in ASB in this area during October and November resulting in a Dispersal Order being implemented in December 2013 which ran for 30 days (20.12.13 to 19.01.14).
- 20** Following the Dispersal order ending, offences reduced and have stayed at fairly steady rate since January 2014. ASB also reduced whilst the order was in place and 30 days after (20% reduction). This area continues to be monitored through the monthly Joint Action Group meetings.
- 21** There are no significant changes in offending behaviour, with juveniles accounting for 40% of all offenders. This includes numerous individuals linked to several offences or spates of offences.
- 22** Identification and monitoring of those linked to ASB, damage and other crimes by SBC Community Safety Dept has resulted in eight juveniles being placed on Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) and five are also now on ASBOs for ASB and crime related offending. This includes those which have been linked to several offences of damage.
- 23** Youth Restorative Disposals are also now used as way of allowing Officers the discretion to hold to account young people who have committed certain minor offences such as Criminal Damage. 38% of all detections to those 17 and under are through the use of YRDs.
- 24** By identifying young people on the cusp of further offending it allows youth offending teams (YOTs) to get support to them to help address their behaviour.
- 25** The use of YRDs is to aide with reducing the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice System for low-level crimes. The YRD also has the potential to reduce the risk of reoffending.
- 26** When looking at other age groups it is obvious that this type of offending reduces with age, with only 30% of all offenders aged 26 and over unlike many other crime types where this age group dominate, particular theft offences.
- 27** When looking at the motivating factors for committing damage, there does not appear to be any financial motivating factor for this type of offending with motives often linked to play (youths playing football nearby/or in groups), malicious (directed towards person or property) or on odd occasion, financial (breaking into phone box, attempt to remove vehicle parts).

- 28 There is also nothing to indicate offences against vehicles are on the increase for financial gain, such as insurance scams.
- 29 It is however clear that seasonal patterns exist with increases evident during October and November which is the lead up to Halloween and Bonfire Night.
- 30 This was reflected in statistics last year with offences in November increasing by 31% compared to September however reduced back to average levels the following month.
- 31 In order to combat this type of behaviour and offending, the Force and partner agencies are committed to tackling this issue in order to maintain or reduce crime levels along with deterring repeat offending and victimisation.

Operational Activity

- 32 All criminal damages reviewed on a daily basis by the LPA Commander and the INT Inspectors at the Stockton LPA morning meeting and revisited by NPT when appropriate.
- 33 Any patterns /locations identified are done so at these meeting and reviewed by officers by using police mapping database. Patrols are then put in place to target location/victim/offenders with ASB team/enforcement/youth services.
- 34 Monthly meetings are held with youth services to discuss any relevant issues , extra prevention work and the locations where they are required to deploy their services. Such an example is the good work around John Whitehead Park where they hold events three nights per week and have outreach workers in Billingham on a Sunday evening.
- 35 Borough wide statistics in respect of reported incidents of criminal damage and associated categories continue to be scrutinised at the ASB and Criminal Damage Strategy meeting and Joint Action Group meetings. Hotspots and the nature of the problems are identified, drilled down to small geographical areas, so that appropriate responses from the range of options available can be targeted to best effect. This forum also allows for the wide range of agencies present to share good practice and so drive up performance.
- 36 We continue to identify repeat victims of criminal damage to ensure that they are visited and provided with advice and guidance to correct and reduce any risk factors. This has resulted in a reduction in repeat victims of criminal damage (28 repeats for end financial year compared to 34 previous year).
- 37 Locations identified are given extra attention and made ward priority and POP when required. Such an example is Billingham town centre where Operation ARCH took place with dispersal order whilst maximising partners and this has resulted in reduction of calls in area for damage/ASB.
- 38 Operation Carbon – focussed Operation providing high visibility patrols by INT and IRT PC's and PCSO's in Stockton Town centre with an objective to prevent and reduce acquisitive crime offences. Officers now also patrol with the added incentive of reducing ASB and any associated criminal damage offences. This resulted in a 16% reduction in overall crime in the last 4 week period in STC, with damage also reducing by 53% (36 offences to 17).

Forthcoming challenges

- 39** The first quarter has seen reduction of six offences (-1.1%) giving a projection of 2145 offences which would be a decrease of 193 crimes (-8.2%).

- 40** Whilst this is good news, the forthcoming six month will see challenges with Q2 historically seeing an increase in overall crime, along with criminal damage particular of note during October and November due to Halloween and Bonfire night.

- 41** Operations are already in the planning process to tackle these issues along with continued reviewing of the criminal damage action plan through the Criminal Damage meetings.