

Town Centre Action Plan Update

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Patrols:

- Starting Monday 27th April, Town Centre Operations Officers will be providing dedicated high visibility presence in Stockton Town Centre. Officers will aim to work 0800 – 1600 and 1200 – 2000 shifts initially. This will be providing 12 hour coverage focusing solely on the Town Centre Monday – Friday. On Saturdays, 0800 – 1600 shifts will be worked each week for the duration of the 2 years.

This shift pattern is now in place and Town Centre Operations Officers are providing 12 hour 8-8 coverage Monday to Friday, and 8 hour coverage 8-4 on a Saturday.

- The Town Centre Operations Officers will be a focal point for enquiries in relation to ASB in the Town Centre and will co-ordinate the ASB Team's approach to tackling ASB related issues and increasing public confidence. The use of Stockton Council's ASB Hotline will be encouraged, and Town Centre Operations Officers will be first point of contact in responding to calls.

Calls have increased especially since business visits have commenced. Issues that have previously gone unreported are being responded to and fed back on to encourage repeat reporting to the service. Static duty is regularly carried out at busy times around the fountain to encourage the public to ask questions and pass on any concerns.

- ASB Officers will initially continue to support work in the Town Centre by providing high visibility foot patrols between 1000 – 1600 on Wednesday's and Fridays, and 0900 – 1500 on Saturday's.

This continues to be the case – ASB Officers continue to support the work on Stockton Town Centre alongside Town Centre Operations Officers. ASB Officers are continually updated on ongoing targets and matters arising.

- The High Street and immediate surrounds will be the main focus – however the area of Trinity Gardens and Hartington Road will receive attention on a daily basis.

The High Street will always remain main focus on a daily basis however a lot of calls are being received for Hartington Road, especially on an evening when officers have capacity to attend due to High Street businesses being closed. As a result of the increase in ASB/Alcohol misuse the Dispersal Powers have been extended to cover Hartington Road and Trinity Gardens.

- Cycle Patrols will be implemented in identified core periods to respond quickly and effectively to emerging issues across the area.

Cycle patrols have been used during times of high activity. Especially when calls are coming in from Hartington Road and Trinity Gardens, this has ensured we can return to the High Street as quickly as possible whilst remaining visible. Cycle patrols are also used to tackle problems at the Watersports Centre which is an emerging issue on days of good weather.

Multi Agency Approach

- Town Centre Operations Officers will attend the 0830 Daily Police Briefing at Stockton Police Station and play an active part in it. Requests for service can be made by Police at this meeting and taskings will be carried out by both officers, updates on requests for service will be fed back into the briefings daily. Information from the briefings will be shared daily with ASB Officers, Neighbourhood Enforcement and any relevant internal or external agency.
This is ongoing – the officer who is on 8-4 shift attends the daily briefing on behalf of the team, and as well as taking actions for the Town Centre – takes back to the team any requests for service or follow up work. Police often ask officers to keep an eye out for wanted or missing persons. Officers have contributed to arrests for wanted persons for offences of Theft, Assault and Domestic Violence within the first 6 weeks. Police partners appear increasingly keen to share information and make use of the extra resource on the Town Centre.
- Patrols will be carried out jointly when required with Police Community Support Officers, ASB Officers and Neighbourhood Enforcement. This will encourage information sharing as well as showcasing a multi-agency approach to the public.
Joint patrols take place on an Ad Hoc basis. For example TC officers may bump into a PCSO and spend a couple of hours walking about on the patch sharing information and tackling issues that they come across jointly.
- Town Centre Operations Officers will attend the Joint Action Group monthly, play an active role in the meeting and update on progress made as well as request any extra resources from partners if required.
2 JAGS have been attended – repeat offenders that have been identified are monitored through this meeting document.

Engagement with Businesses/Licensed Premises

- All businesses within the Town Centre area will be visited by June 30th and advice around reporting ASB is to be highlighted (use of Hotline).
This process is ongoing and is anticipated to take officers well into July to complete, due to the sheer volume of businesses to visit, and the time each visit takes to carry out in amongst other commitments within the Town Centre. The majority of visits are straight forward and report no issues, however to date 13 businesses within the Town Centre have been identified for repeat visits for reassurance. All businesses visited have been handed details of correct reporting procedures as well as reporting any issues via email direct to the ASB Team inbox.
- Vulnerable properties and people working within the Town Centre are to be identified and referred into support services. Risk assessments will be used to determine this.
This work is on-going and links in with the next action on the Crime Prevention Surveys.
- Crime Prevention Surveys/Audits will be carried out to those properties that are identified as vulnerable or have been victim of ASB/Crime. Advice around preventing further incidents will be given and where appropriate work carried out to provide extra security and reassurance.
Out of the 13 properties identified for repeat visits, only one has needed a Crime Prevention Survey. Concerns were raised about a recent break in attempt and ongoing ASB outside of the property. A Crime Prevention Survey showed a need for new locks to be fitted at the rear and advice around installing CCTV was given.
- Town Centre Operations Officers will work closely with SBC Regeneration and meet regularly to discuss issues given to them by businesses and adopt a joined up approach. The first of these meetings has already been held on 23rd April 2015.
These meetings are now ongoing fortnightly with Victoria Welsh from Regeneration and are held upstairs in the Rediscover Shop on the High Street.

Tackling Specific Issues/Problems

- DPPO signage is to be checked and where appropriate replaced/updated/put back in place. Maps of the DPPO area are to be produced along with advice and guidelines – these are to be handed out to those dealt with for alcohol misuse in the Town Centre to provide education on the DPPO area as well as reduce repeat offending.
Areas have been identified where signs have been removed or damaged. Officers have developed a hand out sheet to educate those dealt with and will come into use weekend of 13th June 2016.

- Public Space Protection Orders are to be used to tackle specific problem issues such as begging, drinking, skateboarding and problems around the fountain area. An update on this is to be provided by 31st May 2015.

SBC Legal has been approached in relation to Public Space Protection Orders. Town Centre Operations are to continue gathering evidence in relation to the issues that would be addressed by a PSPO. Issues we have identified are mainly alcohol misuse and active beggars sitting in doorways. Evidence can be gathered by using reports from the public or by own officer findings. Once enough evidence is gathered to approach legal with an application – a consultation process with residents/businesses has to take place.

- 3 Strike Policy - Town Centre Operations Officers will identify repeat perpetrators and adopt a 3 strike policy when dealing with them. 3 incidents for one person within a 6 week period will result in a joint interview with Police to address issues, as well as offering any support required and referring into support service. Those that ignore warnings and advice will be looked into for further action through the courts in the form of ASB injunctions and Criminal Behaviour Orders.

One male was identified for persistent ASB/Begging within the first week of the new posts starting. He was interviewed and placed on an Acceptable Behaviour Contract for 3 months. During interview the male expressed a desire to get back into drug treatment, officers assisted with this by contacting Birchtree Practise to inform of the situation. The male is encouraged to keep appointments when seen in community to promote we are working together rather than against those with additional needs that contribute to ASB. Officers have issued 22 AS13 forms and 11 alcohol confiscation forms in the first 6 weeks in post. This number could have been a lot higher however officers are using discretion and words of advice regularly in tacking incidents of ASB and alcohol misuse in this initial period to build relationships. It has been made clear to those dealt with that this will only continue for a short time before action will be taken. Those that ignore advice and continue have been dealt with and 4 further individuals have been identified through the 3 strikes policy and will be interviewed week commencing 15th June 2016.

Any youth identified as responsible for ASB in the Town Centre receives a visit the next day to inform parents of behaviour. This has occurred on 5 occasions and there has been no repeat of behaviour as of yet.

- Town Centre Operations Officers will assist the Police with Operation Carbon which is already in place.

Officers now have use of a Shop Watch RAT radio and are a further tool for detecting ASB and Crime within the town. Officers do assist in deterring known crime causes in the town. Officers have assisted businesses in deterring theft as well as assisting in the detaining of individuals until Police are available to attend. Officers have provided statements for offences of Shop Theft, Theft from Market Stall, Fraud and Criminal Damage.

Officers receive CCTV of every ASB incident in the Town Centre as a matter of course and review for any offences that can be passed to Police as well as using to build evidence against individual.

Community Feedback / Reassurance

- Town Centre Operations Officers will work with Community Safety Officers to consult with members of the public and businesses to gauge community confidence in the Town Centre and address the issues they feel are important to them. An event will be held towards the back end of July 2015 to allow work to be carried out and take effect over a 3 month period. **Dates have been set for a consultation with the public. Town Centre Operations Officers will be assisted by Dale Metcalfe and Steph Sanderson from Community Safety. On each Wednesday in July officers will actively approach members of the public and ask questions about their experience of the Town Centre and what issues they feel need addressing as a priority.**