

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO  
CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**25 JANUARY 2016**

**REPORT OF  
DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**

**Safer Stockton Partnership Emerging Issues 2016**

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide CMT with an overview of the emerging issues of the Safer Stockton partnership for 2016.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that CMT note the contents of the report

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Safer Stockton Partnership is the statutory Crime and Disorder Partnership for the Stockton Borough and has been in operation since 1998. The Partnership is made up of a number of key stakeholders including:

Stockton Borough Council  
Cleveland Police  
Cleveland Fire and Rescue  
Safe in Tees Valley  
Catalyst  
Victim Support  
National Probation Service  
Durham Tees Valley CRC  
Thirteen Group

2. An independent Chair oversees with work of the Partnership and the secretariat function is provided by Stockton Borough Council. The Partnership is responsible for the delivery of the Community Safety Plan which is refreshed every three years following a public consultation.
3. As part of its statutory requirements the Safer Stockton Partnership is required to complete an annual Partnership Strategic Assessment (PSA) which provides a statistical analysis of the overall Community Safety picture in Stockton and the emerging issues.
4. Over the last 10 years Stockton has been the safest place to live in the Tees Valley with the lowest rate of crime per 1000 population. In addition to this Stockton has outperformed the other Tees boroughs in relation to ASB which has continued to reduce over the last 5 years.

## **CHANGES TO CRIME RECORDING**

5. In 2013 an inspection of police crime recording practices was conducted in order to ensure that all police forces in England and Wales had the best possible crime recording system which is consistently applied and delivered accurate statistics that are trusted by the public.
6. As a result of this inspection and the subsequent reviews of all Police forces, many forces have now put in place a direction and systems to ensure that reports of crimes are recorded at the earliest opportunity without initial investigation. This has left little room for further assessment or the use of professional discretion which may have historically taken place prior to an event or incident being recorded as a crime.
7. Consequently a number of forces, including Cleveland, have seen a sharp rise in some offences such as assault without injury, criminal damage and public order. In Cleveland, crime began increasing around October 2014 at the same time that the force crime registrar was visiting all police officers to ensure better crime recording was taking place.
8. Levels of crime increased significantly at the exact point that this work was conducted and it is believed that while nationally there has been a true increase in crime, the level of reported increase is high and does not reflect the true picture on the streets
9. Due to the changes in the way the force has to record certain crimes, numerous incidents are now falling into the violent crime category. An example of this could be a minor assault such as being hit with a food item or children riding bikes into each other, which previously would have been seen as an 'accident' or children playing. Increases in crime, in particular violence, have been evident across the Cleveland area and across the country. Many forces are linking this to the changes in recording practices and standards.
10. The introduction of the 24 hour crime recording standard has also had an impact of the level of crime recorded. Under this new standard almost all crimes will be recorded without police attendance meaning all reports will be recorded without any challenge or initial investigation.

## **2015 PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT**

11. The annual Partnership Strategic Assessment is produced in December. For the 2015 assessment it was agreed that the assessment period would reduce to six months as opposed to the usual twelve months. This provides a more streamlined document and also enables the partnership to identify and address what impact is being made on the current crime and ASB levels.

12. During the six month assessment period publicly reported crime has increased by 26.9%. This is a significant rise equating to 1269 more victims of crime or 211 extra crimes a month. Alongside this, total crime, which includes other offences such as drugs, possession of weapons and public disorder has also rose by 70 offences, giving a total increase of 25.7% (+1339 crimes).
13. The long term picture also shows that crime has also increased by 23.7% over the twelve month rolling period (Oct 14 to Sept 15). If levels continue at this rate, a 16% rise is anticipated which will be the second largest increase in the Tees Valley area.
14. Despite this rise in crime, Stockton still remains the safest place to live in the Tees Valley area and below the national average based on crime rates per 1000 population<sup>1</sup>. We are also ranked the 6<sup>th</sup> best performing Community Safety Partnership (CSP) when compared to other CSPs of a similar nature (out of 15 CSPs)<sup>2</sup> Stockton also has the best rate per 1000 population for the majority of crime categories when compared to our peers.
15. The assessment reviewed performance linked to the Community Safety Plan highlighting violence and robbery as the key priority where levels have rose significantly. The rise in levels is believed to be linked to changes in recording practices from October 2014 onwards and this has been seen across the Tees Valley area and nationally. Comparative analysis is not expected until October 2015 onwards.
16. Headline figures show that offences that directly affect the residents of Stockton, such as domestic burglary, have also increased by 25.5% and non-domestic burglary by 34.6%.
17. Vehicle crime, which in the last few years had been following a downward trend, has seen an increase of 30.6% (91 crimes). This is mainly linked to theft of motor-vehicles.
18. In term of crimes affecting the economy, shoplifting has rose by 44.3%, a further 313 crimes.
19. It is evident from the current crime data and analysis that the partnership will not meet its target for violence and robbery although performing well in most other areas against the baselines set in the Community Safety Plan 2014-17.
20. In terms of anti-social behaviour, levels have reduced by 7.8%. Stockton still retains the lowest levels in Cleveland and just behind Darlington in the Tees Valley area. Whilst excellent progress has been made against the set targets, ASB continues to place demands on resources. Furthermore if not addressed this can result in more serious levels of offending or repeat victimisation. Identification of repeat and vulnerable victim's remains a focus of the partnership with sharing of information through a wide variety of multi-agency meetings in order to tackles these issues.
21. Cross cutting issues are apparent with the misuse of alcohol and/or drugs continuing to play a major role in crime and ASB in Stockton. This is evident in offences of violence, including those that are domestic related although

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<sup>1</sup> ONS stats in England and Wales

<sup>2</sup> Iquanta data Sept 15

drug offences have reduced comparable to an increase in violence. Offender profiling also shows links with the use of alcohol and drugs, particularly those who are linked to acquisitive crime.

22. Both adult and juvenile offenders continue to live within areas which are within lower deprivation wards with high crime levels. This has remained a similar picture for many years. Over the past few years, the number of first time entrants accessing treatment for opiate and crack cocaine has also reduced. It is now extremely rare for anyone presenting themselves for treatment to not already be known to the services. Alongside this, the national picture also shows that we have the second lowest number of people entering prison with substance misuse.
23. Stockton Safer Partnership also remains committed to addressing domestic abuse which places significant demands on many services. This was added as a priority in response to results collated by residents during the community safety audit in summer 2013. The changing economic climate and stresses on family life may have further impact on demand and as budgets and resources are reduced this could be a challenging time. National evidence also shows that domestic abuse is hugely under reported and the CSP must ensure a continued commitment to this priority.
24. Geographical analysis has seen no major changes in offending locations with the top five wards accounting for just under half of all crime and 46% of all ASB in the borough. The main five wards have altered slightly which is linked to spates of offending in certain ward areas. It also continues to be evident from crime and other partner data that the most deprived and vulnerable area for a wide variety of issues, not just crime and ASB, continues to be within the Stockton Town Centre ward. This is followed by Mandale & Victoria and Parkfield & Oxbridge.
25. Despite a current rise in crime levels, data obtained from Cleveland Police 'Local Confidence Survey' for the Stockton Borough shows that 67.6% of residents in Stockton feel that the police and local authority are dealing with crime and ASB issues that matter. The results from this survey have not changed over the past year despite increases in crime. Alongside this, we also have the lowest rate for residents who feel that their quality of life is affected by the fear of crime or anti-social behaviour (15.8%)<sup>3</sup>.

## **THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

26. The forthcoming period will see many challenges for the partnership if targets are to be met. Government funding continues to be cut for the majority of public services resulting in reductions in staff within many of the essential organisations that form part of the partnership. The landscape of the borough is also changing with 1.6%<sup>4</sup> rise in population over the past three years which is the largest increase in the Tees Valley area. This equates to around a further 2300 residents. The population is also ageing whilst the birth rate has reduced. The demand for more housing has also been seen with the development of several new housing estates around the borough attracting families and people from outside the area. This results in increase demand on

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<sup>3</sup> Cleveland Police Local Confidence survey end Sept 15

<sup>4</sup> TV mid population estimates 2014 compared to 2011

schools, roads and local authority services. There is also opportunity for crime and ASB to displace to these areas.

27. The partnership has maintained a successful working relationship which has been well-established over the life of SSP. This includes an intelligence led approach to service planning and delivery, along with collaborative working, community engagement and development. This will continue through the regular review of action plans that form part of the Community Safety plan which is in place until March 2017. Targets set for reduction of violence may need reviewing in light of the increase in crime believed to be linked to changes in recorded practices.

28. In order to aide with moving forward towards the forthcoming strategic period and to maintain the success of SSP the partnership considered the findings from the PSA report and identified the following points for consideration:

- As identified last year, a clear theme throughout should be towards delivering sustainable improvements in community safety. This will require the strategic priorities to be based around identifying those partners and resources that are best placed to respond and deliver improvements to community safety.
- Priorities and responses should consider short, medium and long term means for addressing the identified problems.
- The strategic priorities should include variety of responses focusing on enforcement, prevention, risk reduction and reassurance methods.
- Continue with effective partnership working, developing approaches to problem solving and enable local communities to be involved through the use of restorative practices.
- Scope the needs of hate crime victims and plan future services appropriately.
- Allocation of resources to the most problematic areas through regular analysis of crime and disorder.
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## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

The Safer Stockton Partnership is a key contributor to the Community Strategy underpinning the commitment to safe and sustainable communities.

## **CONSULTATION**

All members of the Safer Stockton Partnership

**Name of Contact Officer:** Steven Hume  
**Telephone No:** 01642 527610  
**Email Address:** [steven.hume@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:steven.hume@stockton.gov.uk)

Background Papers:

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Property Implications: