

**Report on the Community Services Review
Safer Stockton Partnership
April 2017**

INTRODUCTION

Members of the SSP will be aware that in light of the ongoing financial pressures facing local authorities a programme of service reviews was agreed by Stockton Borough Council. As part of this programme it was agreed that the Council's Community Safety function would be reviewed along with a wider review of Community Services.

A review of Community Services commenced in November 2016 and concluded following a formal 30 day Consultation period on 16th December 2016. The reason for the review was:

- to deliver the required savings within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) The overall review aimed to deliver savings of £622k
- to respond to some of the budget pressures across the Community Safety and Security areas as a result of a range of other revenue pressures
- to separate Strategic and Operational responsibilities.

A full review of the functions delivered through all services was undertaken, which includes:

- Neighbourhood Enforcement
- ASB
- Security Services (CCTV Monitoring)
- Care Call and Telecare
- Business Support
- Strategic Community Safety
- Civil Enforcement (car parking)

The following report will set out the outcomes of the review, in particular, how it will impact upon the Council's ability to provide core community safety related activities from a direct operational perspective.

DETAIL

The review identified a number of emerging community safety issues at a national level which needed to be considered within Stockton, both directly and aligned with key partners. It was identified at an early stage that it would be appropriate to split operational from strategic responsibilities with these being shared predominantly between two Service Managers.

All direct operational areas transferred to the Community Services Manager, with the exception of Care Call/Telecare which would transfer to the Technical and Commercial Services Manager. Therefore the following functions were transferred to Care for Your Area Services:

- Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Business Support
- Security Services (CCTV Monitoring)
- Civil Enforcement

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All strategic community safety functions would be picked up by the Strategic Community Safety Manager who would retain the key lead role in partnership engagement activities with Cleveland Police, other members of SSP and other key stakeholders as well as providing much-needed capacity to deal with emerging national issues which Stockton would need to consider.

As part of the review, a full analysis of priorities across Neighbourhood Enforcement, ASB, Civil Enforcement and Security Services was undertaken. There were some significant overlaps within the functions delivered by what were four distinct teams, all of which operated independently to one another for the most part; there were also differences in operating times e.g. NES are a 24/7 operational working 4 days on and 4 days off with a 12 hour working day, whereas the ASB team is predominantly a daytime services with some evening working. The CCTV service also operates on a 24 hour / 365 day service provision.

Further review was undertaken in to the times that services were requested from the public and it became clear that the 24 hour operation for Neighbourhood Enforcement response was an inappropriate use of resources as only 5% of all calls generated for that service occurred between midnight and 7am in the morning; Therefore, it soon became clear that resourcing staff during the night was not the most effective use of the Council's staffing resource.

The Civil Enforcement Officers function was also reviewed which was solely restricted to car parking functions as opposed to supporting any wider Community Safety activity. Although this provided a very comprehensive service for parking contraventions, it was identified that at a time when we were also looking to make some significant revenue budget savings we would need a more flexible approach.

The ASB service was also reviewed, in particular, the similarities that existed with the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service.

NEW CIVIC ENFORCEMENT SERVICE

What was identified following a review of functions was to operationally deliver a new combined service which will encompass Neighbourhood Enforcement, ASB and Civil Enforcement functions.

Therefore, moving forward we will have a new team of 18 Civic Enforcement Officers, 2 Civic Enforcement Supervisors and 2 Case Management Officers. The service will have three key areas of priority being:

- Environmental issues – littering, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, noise reports and other neighbourhood related enforcement issues
- ASB – we will target resources on an evening towards groups causing problems in local neighbourhoods and actively seek to work in partnership with Police, Youth Services and other key colleagues to provide an appropriate and targeted response to these issues.

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- Civil Enforcement – we will still resource what is a priority for many residents and Elected Members in relation to the range of parking contraventions, including dangerous and obstructive parking, parking problems at school drop off/pick up times and of course the issuing of car parking penalties as required.

The two Case Management Officers will play a crucial role in dealing with the more serious cases picked up by the team and will take the lead on file preparation for cases which lead to prosecutions, they will liaise with the Police, Legal, Thirteen and other key partners as well as undertaking direct proactive interventions through joint working with Youth Services and attending a range of local neighbourhood meetings. The Case Management Officers will deal with the intensive problem solving and case management of serious and persistent ASB occurring in a public place to allow the frontline officers the opportunity to spend more time on the key priorities across our neighbourhoods.

The new service will still operate on a 7 day service although working hours will be compressed to respond appropriately to key priorities at different times of the day, we will also be removing the 4 on / 4 off working arrangements which only adversely impacted upon our core resilience. We will generally operate from 7am through to 10pm with an extended service on a weekend until midnight as well as additional resources being targeted in the High Street, to work alongside the core staffing resource which already exists in the form of the 2 (soon to be 4) Town Centre Officers.

A copy of the routine tasking priorities is included at **Appendix 1** which provides an illustration as to where resources will generally be deployed over a working day, picking up emerging priorities as the day emerges e.g. cash in transit / car parking outside schools on a morning, moving into environmental issues such as fly-tipping and then moving onto ASB issues / noise later in the day. This tasking priority sheet will flex as responsive priorities are included although we will also include other corporate priorities such as covering key events and seasonal priorities such as increased presence in key locations e.g. Preston Park at times over the summer.

In summary, it is anticipated that despite delivering out on a significant revenue saving, the emergence of what will be a new and priority-focused combined service will result in more Officers available when we need them most, will increase the opportunities to plan proactive exercises with key partners such as Police, PCSO's, Youth Service and others and, more importantly, residents are likely to see more Officers on the ground at core times, providing reassurance communities.

It should be noted that some staff within the ASB, NES and Civil Enforcement areas have left the Council as part of the review. We are therefore recruiting for 8 new staff which will mean that there will be a transitional period where we will not be able to roll out the full remit of the new service until such time as staff have been recruited and trained. It is anticipated that staff will all be in place by summer and fully trained within a period of 3 months thereafter. In the meantime, as a number of staff are leaving, a transitional period has now been established which will mean that current NES staff will end shifts at midnight with the service commencing at 6am; again this is in line with the direction of travel for the new shift arrangements and does help with resilience until we can recruit back to full staffing levels.

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STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE

This area continues to be a high priority for the Police, Council and others as a result of this ward still being the one where highest incidences of crime and ASB are reported. The Council also needs to protect its interests as a result of the significant infrastructure investment in the High Street.

It is widely accepted that the work of the two Town Centre Officers has been well received by all, including residents, businesses and the Police. It is not proposed to change this function and the staff will still undertake their current functions which includes the additional services that the current NES team do not deliver which is a significant engagement with the business community to provide safety advice as well as facilitate their involvement in Shop Watch etc.

As part of a separate exercise the Council, in partnership with Stockton BID, will fund an additional 2 Civic Enforcement Officers to work alongside the two Town Centre Officers, in effect, carrying out the new Civic Enforcement role but specifically in and around the High Street area, complementing the work of the two existing staff.

As part of their commitment, we will also work with the Police who have provided additional PCSO presence in the High Street area at core times of the week when issues are more prevalent, as well as at key event times of the year; the costs have been kindly met by Cleveland Police as part of an overall Town Centre commitment between SBC, Cleveland Police and Stockton BID.

SECURITY SERVICES (CCTV MONITORING)

This is a service that has, and will continue, to operate on a 24 hour / 365 day service. It provides crucial early intervention of our network of 147 cameras which provide coverage across Stockton High Street, areas of Yarm, Norton, Billingham TC as well as locations within Thornaby.

The staff within the control room provide an early response to ASB and other criminal activities which can be used to target either SBC or Police resources to emerging and ongoing issues. As part of the review, the team will be required to respond to some alarm activations which occur when the new Civic Enforcement Service are not operational.

We have re-directed the focus of monitoring to one where we are still effectively resourcing the range of clients that we service on a chargeable basis, but also increasing ongoing monitoring of key locations in the Town Centre where ABS and other issues tend to occur. The team have been instrumental in playing a major role achieving a range of positive outcomes, including arrests by the Police as well as allowing SBC staff and the Police to dampen down potential issues at an early stage

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COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

As part of the review, responsibility for all strategic elements of community safety as well as engagement and analytical functions has transferred across to the Children's Services directorate. This includes providing local authority responsibility for the following areas:

- Community Safety Partnership
- Prevent and Channel
- Asylum and Migration
- Community Cohesion
- Crime and ASB analysis/intelligence
- Serious and organised crime
- Domestic Abuse
- Hate Crime
- Modern slavery and trafficking

The community safety strategy function will also maintain an awareness of national issues, development and policies ensuring that this work is implemented across the borough this will likely influence the ongoing operational aspects described above.

The move to Children's Services took place in January 2017 and it is likely that there will be further opportunities to add value to the wider Children's Services remit, particularly in relation to Early Help, VEMT and Youth Offending/Outreach.

Craig Willows

Community Services Manager

April 2017