

SSP 12th December 2017

AGENDA ITEM: NO

REPORT OF: CFYA Operations Manager

Mischief and Bonfire Night Strategy

SUMMARY

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide an overview surrounding the demand on services during this years Mischief and Bonfire Strategy. This time frame encompassed both "Mischief Night" and Bonfire Night, which have previously brought about seasonal crime and disorder mainly amongst youths within our communities and town centre areas. This paper is presented on behalf of the wider Safer Stockton Partnership, who come together during this period in order to work toward and achieve a collective set of objectives, aimed at ensuring our communities remain safe from crime and disorder.

INTRODUCTION

Mischief Night in its modern day format is an Americanism, a day which is considered an informal holiday during which youths have historically engaged in tricks and low level anti-social behaviour. Here in Stockton on Tees, Mischief Night falls on the day prior to Halloween and this year fell on Monday 30th October 2017. For the past 5 years, Mischief Night has brought about a sharp increase in anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and disorder which is perpetrated by youths from the third week in October, until Bonfire Night on the 5th November.

As in previous years, the Safer Stockton Partnership have jointly worked together in a combined approach under the banner of the Bonfire Strategy, also known as Operation Trojan. This joint strategy is centred on a program of targeted interventions on the lead up to this period, with a focus on education and diversionary activities aimed at problem areas across Stockton on Tees. This cumulated in a dedicated response by all partners to crime and disorder, which historically has spiked on Mischief Night, Halloween and Bonfire Night.

This period sees a larger than usual deployment of staff from Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Stockton on Tees Borough Council, all tasked to work together in order to ensure that the level of anti-social behaviour and crime experienced by members of the public and businesses is kept to a minimum.

STATISTICS

A summary report of Police and Council activity can be found at appendix 1 of the document.

In considering the performance this year, it's widely reported that we consider this year's strategy a success overall. That said, the partnership did face some difficult and challenging situations and incidents, which also suggests that this approach whilst resource intensive continues to be the right decision.

- Criminal Damage and Arson

In considering both criminal damage and arson overall, the level of demand this year was on par to the level of reported offending which we witnessed in 2016. As expected, we witnessed a large increase in demand during 24th October to 30th October 2017 which is comparable with last year. In considering arson reported to both the Police and Stockton Council, the highest level of demand was between 31st October to 6th December 2017, which incorporated bonfire night.

In considering the areas of offending, the Stockton Town Centre ward continued to see the highest level of reported incidents and also the biggest increase. On a more positive note, we witnessed reductions in our main action areas of Newtown, Ingleby Barwick and Mandale.

There was an average of 8 criminal damage/arson offences per day during both strategy periods in 2016 and 2017, with comparable spikes in offences at the end of October which coincides with Mischief Night and Halloween. The level of offending after this period, in 2017, remained lower than in previous years with much more control exerted to prevent re-offending which proved effective.

- Anti-social Behaviour

With regards to ASB reported to Cleveland Police, 2017 seen a positive decrease of reported offending equating to approximately 10%. During the 2016 period, 2121 incidents were reported by contrast to 1917 reports in 2017, a reduction of 206 incidents. In considering the problem wards, Stockton Town Centre again proved to be the highest offending ward of 81, a reduction of 5 reports. A significant increase in incidents was also witnessed in Billingham as a whole. That said, we did achieve reductions in both Newtown and Mandale as well as Roseworth, all control areas. This picture was also mirrored with calls to Stockton Borough Council.

- Cleveland Fire Brigade

A summary report of Brigade activity can be found at appendix 2 of this document.

The 2017 Bonfire Strategy seen increases in demand and fires across all areas of the Brigade command. Firstly considering deliberate F3 fires (small fires, items of no monetary value), the Brigade seen an 11% increase across all areas. That said, Stockton maintained the level of reported incidents by comparison to 2016; with 24 incidents in each years. By contrast, Redcar seen a reduction of 15% to 50 fires, Hartlepool increased by 11% to 21 incidents and Middlesbrough by 24% to 84.

Secondly, this year also seen an overall increase in deliberate F1 fires (items of monetary value) of 29% across the Brigade Command. Here in Stockton, an increase of 40% is reported however this equates to only 2 extra incidents, an increase from 5 to 7 fires. By contrast, Middlesbrough seen an increase of 167%, Hartlepool had no change and Redcar a reduction of 29%.

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