

Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Strategy

Summary Document

Introduction

Whilst the past decade has seen a reduction in crime, ASB and the fear of crime it is still the case that anyone can be a victim of crime and ASB and that the impact on victims can be both significant and long lasting. Knowing this motivates us to continue in our collective efforts to make Stockton-on-Tees a safer borough for all those who live, work, play and visit it.

It is a truism that we achieve more by working in partnership and I believe that the borough has a good record of partnership working which this Community Safety Plan will seek to develop even further to achieve the desired outcome of a safer borough for all.

This Community Safety Plan has been driven by the priorities of residents articulated in their response to the community safety survey. Residents have spoken and we have listened.



Councillor Steve Nelson – Chair of the Safer Stockton Partnership

Background

The Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP) is statutorily responsible for the delivery of a wide variety of strategies and plans with the overall aim of improving the safety of the community in the borough. As part of this process a Community Safety Plan is published every three years which focuses on an identified set of priorities. The priorities are intelligence led based upon analysis from the partnerships strategic assessment and results from public consultations.

Six key areas have been identified which the partnership will focus on over the next three years. Since 1998 the SSP has worked to reduce crime and the fear of crime for residents across the borough. Over the last 10 years we have experienced significant reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour as well as an increase in community confidence and feelings of safety.

Our partnership approach will continue to work on all cross-cutting themes for all of the key agencies of the SSP such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and vulnerable exploited missing and trafficked (VEMT).

This will involve linking all work where shared priorities exist for other close partnership agencies and to align the direction of those such as the Children's and Young People's Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Adults Board and Stockton's Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Innovation has never been as paramount as it is now for the Partnership, changing times, reductions in funding mean there is opportunity to be creative and develop new ways of working.

We will be looking at tackling issues, using carefully planned approaches with continuous evaluation to make way to further develop new pilot projects into wider initiatives.

Working together with partners and communities we can make Stockton a safer place.

What do we know about crime in Stockton-on-Tees?

Crime has fallen 8% in Stockton-on-Tees over the past 12 months, with large reductions in burglary (26%) and criminal damage (25%), which is likely due to the impact of the pandemic. Drug offences have risen 50% in that time, and violent crime by 6%. When we look at the social and economic costs of crime in Stockton, crime costs the economy approximately £75m a year, of which 70% of the cost is made up by violent and sexual offences.

What are we going to do about it?

The Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Partnership (SSP) has statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prepare a strategy to reduce crime and disorder, reduce reoffending, and to reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol. In addition to this we have analysed crime data and undertaken a public consultation, and have agreed the following priorities for the partnership for 2022-25:

1. Managing the impact of serious and organised crime on Stockton

We recognise that Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) is a key issue that drives crime and causes many associated harms for residents and communities in Stockton. SOC groups are involved in a multitude of criminal activities from drug importation to firearms supply, modern slavery, and human trafficking (including county lines), to housing fraud.

We will take a holistic approach to organised crime, working to relentlessly disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups and prevent young and vulnerable people from being drawn into criminality. We also need to work with vulnerable communities to build resilience against the threat from serious and organised crime; empowering these communities to be part of the solution and reducing future victimisation.

2. Serious violence

Violent crime is 70% of the of the total cost of crime in Stockton-on-Tees, and has risen by 6% over the previous 12 months. Cleveland has the third highest violent crime rate in the country, and most serious violence offences are increasing at a higher rate than the national average.

We will take a "public health" approach to managing serious violence, focusing on addressing the underlying risk factors which make people vulnerable to violent crime, whilst directing

enforcement activity to the locations and individuals most responsible for driving violence in the borough.

3. Vulnerability

The exploitation of vulnerable people (including children) is a national issue, encompassing county lines, cuckooing, modern day slavery, radicalisation, and child sexual exploitation, and especially those vulnerable, exploited, missing and trafficked (VEMT). We will seek to support and protect those most vulnerable in our community. A small number of highly vulnerable individuals are at risk from a range of potential harms. We will work in partnership with other multi-agency arrangements including safeguarding boards to identify those at risk and seek to intervene early to support these individuals and increase their resilience.

We will identify those most at risk, prevent them from being drawn into harm, protect and support those who have become victims, and pursue and prosecute those who seek to exploit the vulnerable.

4. Crime and disorder linked to drugs and alcohol

51% of residents surveyed in Stockton said that people using or dealing drugs was a concern for them. This was the top-rated concern. Alcohol admissions to hospital in Stockton have been rising for five years, and drug and alcohol use are significantly above the national average.

We will work to bring more people to access treatment services whilst enforcing against those who peddle drugs and misuse drugs and alcohol. We will work to support safer licenced premises and improve feelings of safety in the night time economy. We will maximise every opportunity to address offending behaviour that is driven by abusing drugs and alcohol.

5. Reducing the offending rates of the most prolific offenders

A high volume of crime is committed by offenders described as 'prolific or priority offenders'. Providing appropriate monitoring and supervision, and working together with offenders to tackle drug and alcohol abuse, improving their basic skills, tackling their offending behaviour and improving the chances of them getting a job has proven to help break the cycle of offending.

We will target persistent offenders through the rollout of a refreshed Cleveland-wide 'Integrated Offender Management' (IOM) framework that works to reduce the likelihood of offending through addressing the specific needs of each individual offender. Doing this effectively should reduce total crime and lead to fewer victims.

6. Anti-social behaviour and feelings of safety

Reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) is pivotal in achieving a safer, cleaner Stockton. The impact of ASB can be devastating to residents, businesses and visitors. For victims and the wider community, it can become a destructive, cumulative issue leading to a poor quality of life. It often overlaps with more serious crime, and this can contribute to communities feeling unsafe where

they live and work. 37% of residents report that they have been a victim of ASB, and 63% of people feel less safe than they did a year ago.

We will identify those areas of Stockton reporting the highest amounts of ASB, whether these be nuisance behaviours or environmental crime, and work with residents to identify perpetrators and reduce repeat victimisation where this occurs. We will support young people to change behaviours and take appropriate action where necessary against all persistent offenders.

The successful delivery of the Safer Stockton Partnership priorities will help us deliver our mission statement:

“To make Stockton a safer place where people are protected from serious harm and live in communities which are safe and welcoming.”

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