

Date: Thursday 9 January 2025 at 4.30 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TU

Cllr Paul Rowling (Chair)
Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy (Vice-Chair)

Cllr John Coulson
Cllr Jason French
Cllr Barbara Inman
Cllr Alan Watson

Cllr Richard Eglington
Cllr Shakeel Hussain
Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 8)
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 28 November 2024. (Pages 9 - 16)
- 5 Scrutiny Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres**
To consider information from the following organisations in relation to this scrutiny topic: (Pages 17 - 30)
 - Business Forums / Groups
 - SBC Adults, Health and Wellbeing (to follow)
- 6 Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP) - Previous Minutes (October 2024)** (Pages 31 - 34)
- 7 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2024-2025** (Pages 35 - 40)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: , Senior Scrutiny Officer, Gary Woods on email gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance

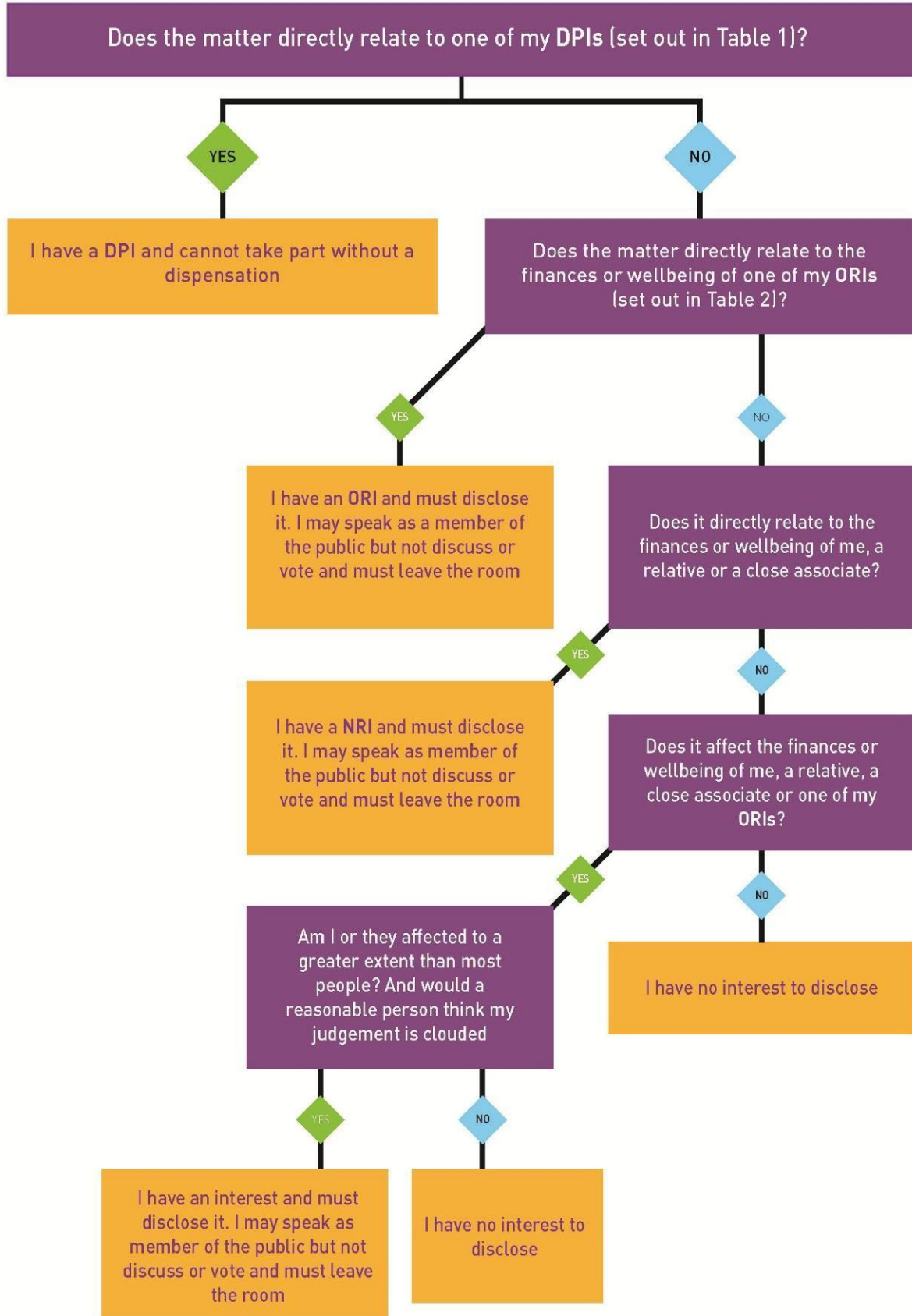


Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

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COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday 28 November 2024.

Present: Cllr Paul Rowling (Chair), Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Eileen Johnson (sub for Cllr Richard Eglinton), Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson (sub for Cllr Jason French)

Officers: Dawn Tyerman (A,H&W); Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: Andy Turner (Cleveland Fire Brigade); Cllr Helen Atkinson, Dee Smith (Billingham Town Council); Cllr Mark Fairbairn, Cllr Phil Genery (Thornaby Town Council)

Apologies: Cllr Richard Eglinton, Cllr Jason French

CSS/29/24 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CSS/30/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CSS/31/24 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Community Safety Select Committee meeting which was held on 24 October 2024 for approval and signature. Updates were provided on the following items that were on the agenda:

- Scrutiny Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres: The Committee was yet to receive a response from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Cleveland regarding the request for additional information on the anticipated public scrutiny panel – this would be shared with Members once received.
- Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP) – Previous Minutes (March, May and July 2024): As agreed, a letter had been sent to the Chair of the SSP regarding Committee concerns around stated truancy levels within the Borough, as well as the issue of home schooling and how this was being checked / quality controlled – any response would be shared with Members once received.

AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CSS/32/24 Scrutiny Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres

Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy wished it to be recorded for transparency purposes only that she was currently a member of Billingham Town Council as well as a Ward Councillor.

The fourth evidence-gathering session for the Committee's ongoing review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres considered submissions in relation to this scrutiny topic from Cleveland Fire Brigade and Town Councils across Stockton-on-Tees.

CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE

Presented by the Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) Group Manager / Head of Prevention & Engagement, several documents were summarised which covered the following:

- Fire Incidents (Stockton District): Town Centres / High Streets
- Fire Incidents (Stockton District): Economic Cost of Deliberate Fires
- Stockton District Station Work (2024)
- Stockton Community Hub Work (2024)
- Stockton Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Work (Aug 23 – Oct 24)
- Commissioned Services Work (2024)

Data on recorded incidences of deliberate primary and secondary fires within the Borough's town centres / high streets was provided for the current 2024-2025 year (up to 30 September 2024) as well as the previous five-year period (covering 2019-2020 to 2023-2024). Subsequent analysis of this information was noted as follows:

- Billingham Town Centre: Between 7.00pm and 9.00pm was the time where most fires occurred, with Thursdays being the most prevalent day for incidents.
- Ingleby Barwick Town Centre: Early evening (6.00pm to 8.00pm) saw the highest number of incidents, with Sundays experiencing the most fires since 2019-2020.
- Norton High Street: Wednesday was the most common day for recorded fires, though total numbers were low since 2019-2020. Again, 6.00pm to 8.00pm was the time when most incidents took place.
- Stockton Town Centre: Historically, the highest number of fire incidents were recorded in this area, with Thursdays being the most frequent day and 6.00pm to 7.00pm being the most common time.
- Thornaby Town Centre: Like in Norton, Wednesdays saw the most incidents, with 5.00pm to 6.00pm and 8.00pm to 9.00pm providing the highest number of fires.
- Yarm High Street: Recorded incidents were very low for each of the years since 2019-2020, with Sundays and Mondays seeing most fires.

Having access to this data enabled CFB to direct its crews to certain parts of the Borough at specific times in order to reduce incidents.

Separate analysis on the economic cost of recorded deliberate fires within the Borough across the previously completed five years (2019-2020 to 2023-2024) and the current 2024-2025 year (up to 30 September 2024) had been compiled. For the six Stockton-on-Tees town centre spaces, it was estimated that the number of incidents since April 2019 had cost the local economy around £1.8m (with Stockton high street accounting for nearly half of this amount).

A summary of the work undertaken during 2024 by community fire stations across the Borough showcased several safety initiatives implemented by CFB – these included

'Safer Homes' visits, operational intelligence / station risk footprint visits, school visits, a property risk register, arson audit inspections, community engagement by fire stations crews, and Operation Autumnus (bonfire period work with partner agencies). Future plans to aid in making town centre spaces more welcoming and safer included the development of partnership agreements with other key agencies and strengthened arrangements around supporting vulnerable groups.

Stockton Community Hub activity for the 2024 calendar year was then highlighted, with data supplied in relation to at risk adult cases, school engagement (including the number of pupils involved in these sessions), and individuals identified for fire setter intervention (mostly children, though CFB was starting to deal with adults). In terms of the latter, CFB acknowledged that it might not be aware of all individuals who may benefit from being involved with the fire setter programme, and urged Members to let the Brigade know of anyone it could be engaging with to help minimise future incidents. Other Community Hub work was outlined, including involvement in events, meetings with local partners, the use of risk reduction equipment, homelessness referrals, and sessions delivered as part of the Borough's Holidays Are Fun (HAF) programme. Staff walk-arounds in hotspot areas were planned, and it was suggested that negative perceptions of town centre spaces could be addressed by the promotion of ongoing work (continuing public events, consultations and surveys) and case studies of successful prosecutions for key areas of concern that residents had.

An overview of the achievements of the local Community Liaison Officer (CLO) since August 2023 demonstrated a range of engagement (including attendance at Stockton Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG) and Stockton Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings) which aided in preventing access to 'fuel' (materials that could be burned). Again, Members were encouraged to contact CFB if they were aware of any properties (e.g. empty / derelict) which may provide a greater risk in terms of fire setting.

Finally, safety initiatives involving CFB Commissioned Services during 2024 (up to the end of July 2024) were documented, with road safety education in primary schools, carbon monoxide awareness sessions, and the issuing of grants to reduce arson all highlighted. Investment in high quality professional youth work was seen as important in addressing negative safety perceptions of town centres, along with community consultation around what would help make people feel safer (and then acting on this).

Thanking CFB for all the support it provided (with specific reference to the recent work in Tilery where officers had put their own safety on the line), the Committee began its response to the information presented by asking how many fire incidents had been reported at nearby John Whitehead Park, Billingham, and whether the Brigade liaised with Cleveland Police when any fire-setting within the park occurred. CFB confirmed that the majority of fire incidents in and around the Billingham town centre space happened inside John Whitehead Park (further data could be provided to back this up), with CFB requesting that the police attend if the person responsible for setting the fire was known / suspected.

Members highlighted the issue of derelict / empty buildings which had the potential to attract those intent on setting fires, and queried what powers CFB had to secure such premises. The Committee heard that there was little the Brigade could do in this regard, though it was aware of a number of buildings which were considered a concern (Members highlighted problems with young people getting into Kensington Gardens, Billingham, and setting fire alarms off). The CFB Community Liaison Officer

(CLO) role was to draw owners' attention to any property risks, and it was noted that Middlesbrough Council proactively boarded up identified problem buildings and then recharged owners.

The Committee questioned if fire incidents in Ingleby Barwick had reduced since the removal of the recycling site at Tesco supermarket around five months ago – CFB confirmed that there had been a subsequent fall in incidents, though Ingleby Barwick was not a significant pressure area for the Brigade. It was noted that Ingleby Barwick Town Council had previously paid for a dedicated enforcement service which was operational all week apart from Sundays (the day which had the highest number of recorded fire incidents) – this had since changed to an 'on call basis' arrangement only. CFB encouraged partners to inform them of any relevant officers who may need to be contacted in the event of a fire.

CFBs relationship with local partners (including SBC) was probed, with Members being assured that this was strong and that the Brigade attended the same meetings as the police.

For those incidents where there was a reasonable idea of who had caused them, the Committee asked what was being done to track down the culprits once the fire had been put out (as the public perception was often that nothing happened). In response, Members were told that CFB considered every deliberate fire a crime, however, the police did not see it this way. Every CFB officer wore body-worn cameras (prompted to a large degree by physical / verbal abuse they received) which had the potential to aid identification of those responsible for fire-setting, and the Brigade actively pushed for an arrest if it had evidence. CFB requested that its CLO be made aware of suspects so individuals can be reported to the police.

Referencing ongoing efforts to regenerate the Borough's town centre spaces, attention turned to concerns around the prevalence of rubbish bags around takeaways which had the potential to present fire-setting opportunities, with the Committee querying what work was being done with businesses to reduce risks. Members were informed that the Brigade's Fire Engineering Department was responsible for this and had a business premises inspection programme in place (on a five-year cycle) which involved discussions with the 'responsible person' for a property. A particular area of concern had been identified in relation to flats above Chinese restaurants, though these were not generally located within town centre areas. Again, CFB encouraged the sharing of any information on specific premises which may present risks.

The final question focused on youths involved in fire-setting and the extent to which CFB educated young people to minimise future incidents. CFB gave assurance that once individuals engaged in fire-setting were identified, education officers visited schools (mainly primary) to conduct 1:1 intervention (though it was noted that those starting fires in town centres often did not live in these locations). Multi-agency 'Silver Recovery Groups' also existed in both Hartlepool and Middlesbrough which enabled information-sharing around known / suspected fire-setters.

TOWN COUNCILS

The Committee was keen to receive input from the Borough's Town Councils (Billingham, Ingleby Barwick, Thornaby, and Yarm) on this scrutiny review topic and had therefore made an approach to seek information / views. All four Town Councils were either represented at the meeting and / or provided a written submission for

consideration – key elements, as well as any subsequent discussion, was recorded as follows:

- Billingham Town Council: The Chair of the Town Council, accompanied by the Town Clerk, was in attendance to summarise its response. The main issue for Billingham town centre was anti-social behaviour (ASB) and vandalism from younger people (another issue was shoplifting, however, because this happened in the shops, this did not directly affect the people walking through the centre). The Town Council did not address these issues – if anything was reported, it passed the information over to the town centre management.

Residents had expressed concerns that the town centre felt unwelcoming and lacked safety, with a general perception of it being dull and grey. There was a strong desire for a greater variety of shops, including independent retailers who could offer a unique shopping experience (distinct from typical high street offerings) to attract out-of-town visitors. Residents would also like an improvement to the quality of the buildings, making the town centre more visually appealing, and advocated for re-instating the flats above the shops to increase activity in the area. More of a leisure offer to boost night-time / weekend activity would be welcomed (especially with having the Forum next to the site), as would no charges for car parking (encouraging visitors and boosting business). Local people were, however, against the re-development of the existing town centre site for housing (reflected in the recent responses to an SBC consultation).

Future priorities to make Billingham town centre as welcoming and safe as possible should include extra security presence (especially during evenings), good lighting (which needs to be extended to John Whitehead Park), an enhanced leisure offer (e.g. places for people to eat in the evening to increase the night-time economy and complement existing offers like the Forum theatre), and making the town centre more visually appealing. Creating a busier town centre could possibly mean less ASB as more people were around to deter potential offenders.

Reflecting on the identified need for better and more varied shop provision, the Committee highlighted the pop-up shop initiative in Yarm which could be an idea for Billingham. The successful enterprise arcade concept (providing short-term flexible low-cost retail space) in Stockton was also noted, with Members recognising the clear call for a diversified business offer within the Billingham town centre area.

The Committee asked if the Town Council thought it was being consulted enough on future thoughts / plans around Billingham town centre developments and whether it felt that SBC was listening. In response, it was stated that whilst existing Town Council membership included five SBC Ward Councillors (who were invited to give updates on what was happening in their individual wards), much information was sourced via social media. The town centre manager was sometimes not aware of developments – this made the Town Council look inefficient.

Reluctance around plans for town centre housing proposals was followed-up, with Members suggesting that authorities needed to make it clear to local people how this would positively contribute to the end 'goal' for Billingham as a place to live and visit. In answer to a query on why there was such objection, concerns around who would be living in these properties were relayed.

Exploring the increasing prevalence of shoplifting (also highlighted at the previous Committee meeting in October 2024), Members emphasised the benefits of a visible policing deterrent and felt inaction around this issue would be off-putting for potential new businesses (USA-style 'mall police', where premises provided funding for shared security arrangements, was noted). The Town Council agreed that any future plans were dependent on the town centre space being secure.

Discussions concluded with broad acknowledgement of the change in how people looked at town centres and how shopping habits had altered (increase in out-of-town provision and online options). However, the desire for a greater variety of shops was re-iterated, with the existing Forum possibly offering the creation of a leisure focus. The importance of building décor in promoting a stronger sense of a welcoming town centre space was also stressed.

The Committee thanked the Billingham Town Council representatives for their input and praised the passion used to put across their points. Mindful of the issues raised as part of this debate, the Chair suggested that he was considering writing to the relevant SBC Cabinet Member to inform them of this discussion.

- Ingleby Barwick Town Council: A written submission was considered which began by stating that Ingleby Barwick town centre was very different from the town centres in Billingham, Thornaby and Yarm in that it was spread out and not localised. In addition to the Tesco Supermarket and Myton Shops, it also consisted of shopping parades at Lowfields, Beckfields and Sandgate. Town Centre crime had been identified as being minimal by the SBC Community Safety Team whom the Town Council had an excellent working relationship with (and had done for several years).

Almost a third of the Town Council precept was spent on SBC Community Safety for the use of enforcement, CCTV and monitoring. There had in the past been small pockets of ASB and, more recently, the use of electric bikes and scooters – the Town Council strongly advised the public to report any aspect of these behaviours to the Civic Enforcement Team. Communication from local residents was low with regards to town centre safety – the main gripe was the lack of Christmas decorations in comparison to other town centres.

Noting that social media adversely distorted the reality of what was going on across the Borough, Members representing one of the Ingleby Barwick wards expressed their understanding that other areas of Stockton-on-Tees experiencing more challenging issues received priority in terms of resource allocation. Regarding Christmas decorations, the Town Council had a precept to use for these, but an issue with SBC meant there were difficulties in purchasing items.

The Committee also urged a look into prohibitive rent / rates which affected businesses across the Borough. Encouraging more service businesses in addition to the retail offer was advocated.

- Thornaby Town Council: Two Town Councillors were in attendance and spoke about the importance of perceptions when it came to the sense of a location being / feeling welcoming and safe. Referencing previous missed opportunities to have a more robust police presence within the town centre space, as well as the impact of social media in spreading misinformation, the change in shopping habits meant that the focus should now be on providing opportunities for products and services

that people could not obtain online. Towns needed to consider what their unique selling point was in order to attract footfall – leisure and other niche activities offered potential, but prohibitive business rates meant premises could soon close and / or relocate.

Acknowledging the historic planning issues which had impacted Thornaby, the Committee asked what the Town Councillors' perception of their town centre was – representatives responded positively, though expressed uncertainty (and a sense of powerlessness) around what would be replacing the former Golden Eagle hotel. Members stated that the town centre owners would decide the future of this site following a period of consultation, though it was envisaged that the space would likely have a family orientation.

- Yarm Town Council: A written submission had been received and was shared with the Committee. Main issues regarding town centre safety in Yarm that were regularly reported by residents and visitors were bouts of shoplifters targeting certain shops, extensive cycling on pavements, dog fouling, insufficient resources for high street cleansing, motorcycle parking provision, cluttered pavements, and problems with large trade waste bins.

Relationships between the Town Council and SBC were generally positive, though there had been rare but notable instances where some requests or the parish position were made to feel inferior. In terms of future priorities in making Yarm town centre as welcoming and safe as possible, tackling ASB problems at a nearby playing field, providing more town centre parking, improving parking and public toilet signage, ensuring good floral displays and refurbishing street benches, and the addition of historic reference points and markers were highlighted.

SBC WARD COUNCILLOR SURVEY

As part of the scoping phase for this review, the Committee identified the need to provide an opportunity for SBC Elected Members to give their views on this scrutiny topic. A list of proposed questions was therefore shared and subsequently agreed by Members – these would be circulated to all Ward Councillors via the Council's 'My Views' survey platform in early-December 2024, with a summary of responses received fed back to the Committee in the new year.

AGREED that the information provided by Cleveland Fire Brigade and the Borough's Town Councils be noted.

CSS/33/24 Stockton Home Safety Association - Previous Minutes (March and June 2024)

Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy wished it to be recorded for transparency purposes only that she was currently the Chair of the Stockton Home Safety Association.

Consideration was given to the minutes of previous Stockton Home Safety Association meetings which took place in March 2024 and June 2024.

AGREED that the minutes of Stockton Home Safety Association meetings which took place in March 2024 and June 2024 be noted.

CSS/34/24 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2024-2025

CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair confirmed the re-scheduling of the cancelled Committee meeting that was originally planned for 19 December 2024 – this would now take place on 9 January 2025.

WORK PROGRAMME 2024-2025

Consideration was given to the Committee's current work programme (2024-2025). As already noted, the next meeting was due to take place on 9 January 2025 where evidence-gathering for the ongoing review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres would continue, with a focus on business forums / groups (initial feedback from the SBC Ward Councillor survey may also be relayed if available).

In other matters, Members were reminded that an update on progress of outstanding actions in relation to the Committee's previously completed review of Tree Asset Management was due in early-2025 – relevant officers would be contacted shortly to identify an appropriate meeting date where this would be presented.

AGREED that the Chair's Update and Community Safety Select Committee Work Programme 2024-2025 be noted.

Community Safety Select Committee

9 January 2025

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF WELCOMING AND SAFE TOWN CENTRES**Summary**

The fifth evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres will consider views on this scrutiny topic from local business forums / groups, as well as further information from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adults, Health and Wellbeing directorate.

Detail

1. The Committee identified the Borough's business forums / groups as important contributors to its ongoing review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres, and therefore approached the lead representatives of established entities in Norton, Stockton and Yarm to seek responses to the following:
 - *From your group's perspective, what are the main issues regarding your local town centre's safety, and what feedback is being received from businesses in terms of the town centre environment (from a 'welcoming' and 'safe' point of view)?*
 - *What is your group's relationship with SBC like – is this enabling / inhibiting progress on making your local town centre more welcoming / safe?*
 - *Are you aware of any funding which you can access to support town centre safety? Have you tried to access funding – if successful, what has this been used for?*
 - *What should be the future priorities in making your local town centre as welcoming and safe as possible? Could your group / local businesses assist with any of these?*

Received submissions are included within these meeting papers.

2. Examples of business group / business improvement district (BID) involvement in considerations around town centre promotion / safety across the UK can be found via the following links:
 - Blackburn: <https://blackburnbid.co.uk/>
 - Bournemouth: <https://towncentrebid.co.uk/our-projects/welcoming/>
 - Harrogate: <https://harrogatebid.co.uk/harrogate-hosts-here-to-welcome-town-centre-visitors/>
 - Tunbridge Wells: <https://www.twstp.co.uk/about-us>
 - Wolverhampton: <https://enjoywolverhampton.com/bid/a-clean-safe-and-welcoming-city>
 - Worthing: <https://worthingtowncentre.co.uk/business-improvement-district/a-safe-and-welcoming-town-centre/>
3. Details of efforts to counter retail crime which involve businesses can also be found at <https://brc.org.uk/nrcsg-against-shop-worker-abuse-and-violence/partnership-working/section-1-business-crime-reduction-partnerships/>. The 'Safer Spaces' initiative (also known as Operation Portum) is an overarching scheme that businesses can sign up to and support with the objective to collectively increase safe spaces in retail premises (for further details, see <https://nbcc.police.uk/partnerships/safe-spaces/>).

4. The Committee has previously been made aware of work undertaken to make the Borough's town centres more welcoming for those with dementia and their families / carers. Representatives from the SBC Adults, Health and Wellbeing directorate are scheduled to be in attendance to provide further information – a submission is being prepared and will be shared once finalised.
5. In advance of the session, Members are again reminded of the link to the latest Town Centre-related developments which can be accessed via <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/regeneration>.
6. A copy of the agreed scope and plan for this review is included for information.

Name of Contact Officer: Gary Woods

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**Stockton Business Improvement District (BID) Report
Presented to the Community Safety Select Committee
Date: January 9, 2025
Subject: Welcoming and Safe Stockton Town Centre**

A Safe and Welcoming Stockton Town Centre

At Stockton BID, part of our mission is to make the town centre a space where everyone feels safe, welcomed, and inspired to visit. Over the past year, we've worked tirelessly with businesses, community members, and the local council to achieve this goal. In this report, we reflect on the current challenges and share the progress we've made in creating a vibrant, thriving Stockton town centre.

The Challenges We Face

Anti-Social Behaviour and Safety Concerns

Reports of anti-social behaviour, theft, and public nuisance remain persistent issues in Stockton town centre. Businesses frequently share concerns about individuals living with addiction using public spaces inappropriately, leaving needles, and engaging in disruptive behaviour. These incidents negatively impact public perception, creating a sense of unease for visitors and affecting footfall.

In 2024 alone, we recorded 651 incidents, including shoplifting and theft, with hotspots such as Wellington Square seeing repeated high-value losses. Violence, though less frequent, remains a concern, with 2.92% of incidents involving physical assaults on staff. These issues directly affect the morale of business owners and employees, further compounding the challenge of creating a welcoming environment.

Our Initiatives to Address Safety

Enforcement Officers

Our enforcement officers play a critical role in maintaining order and cleanliness within the town centre. Despite facing significant adversity, they work tirelessly to address anti-social behaviour, littering, fly-tipping, and the ongoing challenge of illegal parking, particularly around Dovecote Street. Their efforts are vital in creating a safer, more organised environment for visitors and businesses alike.

Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)

We've made significant strides through the introduction of the Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP). By implementing the Sentrysis reporting system, we've enabled businesses to efficiently log incidents, creating a centralized approach to tackling crime. Additionally, over 20 radios have been distributed to businesses, improving communication and real-time response to issues. To support night-time economy businesses, we've funded their membership to the Shop Watch scheme, ensuring they have the tools they need to operate safely.

Collaborative Efforts to Tackle ASB

Initially, the rollout of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) brought a noticeable improvement, but long-term solutions are essential. We emphasise compassionate approaches to addressing addiction-related behaviours, advocating for strategies that go beyond enforcement and work towards integration and support.

Street Angels Initiative

In partnership with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Stockton BID launched the Street Angels initiative. This program provides on-the-ground support to individuals in the town centre, enhancing safety while fostering a sense of community care. The Street Angels not only assist in immediate safety concerns but also act as a welcoming presence for visitors.

Insights from the Sentrysis Report

- Total Incidents (2024): 651, covering a range of issues including theft (121 shoplifting incidents), anti-social behaviour, and aggressive behaviour.
- Police Involvement: Only 3.1% of incidents involved police intervention, highlighting the burden placed on businesses and local systems.
- Offender Profiles
- 332 offenders were added to the database in 2024, with 223 identified as male and 93 as female.
- A significant proportion of offenders remain of unknown age, indicating gaps in profiling and potential challenges in targeted interventions.
- Seasonal Trends: Peaks in incidents occurred between March and May, with the highest monthly total of 140 in May.
- Economic Impact: Businesses experienced over £10,000 in losses due to unrecovered thefts.
- Hotspots: Wellington Square remains a focal point for safety concerns, accounting for the majority of high-value theft and aggressive behaviour reports.
- The system can be further enhanced by Police allowing integration into their own systems meaning reports can immediately be turned in crime reports meaning only needing to report an incident once as in other areas such as Durham where this had been rolled out successfully.

Positive Developments in Stockton Town Centre

While challenges persist, Stockton Town Centre continues to thrive in many areas:

- Business Growth: Independent businesses remain a cornerstone of the town's economy, with many showing consistent growth and success. Their unique offerings enhance the town's appeal and create a sense of community pride.
- Events and Festivals: The town regularly hosts vibrant events and festivals that bring colour, art, and culture to Stockton. These events not only boost footfall but also foster a sense of community and celebration.
- Regeneration Projects: The ongoing regeneration work is transforming the town centre, making it an even more attractive and functional space for visitors, businesses, and

residents alike. These projects demonstrate a commitment to Stockton's future and its role as a thriving hub of activity.

Working with Stockton Borough Council

We are proud of our collaborative relationship with Stockton Borough Council. Together, we've implemented critical safety measures such as enhanced CCTV coverage and enforcement actions. However, challenges remain, particularly around resource limitations and securing funding to tackle systemic issues like addiction and negative public perception.

Looking Ahead: Our Recommendations

To create a truly welcoming and safe Stockton town centre, we propose the following actions:

1. Expand Crime Prevention Efforts:
 - Increase engagement resources and provide additional training for businesses to address safety concerns.
2. Promote Compassionate Solutions:
 - Advocate for respectful language and policies surrounding individuals living with addiction.
 - Partner with MPs and social organizations to develop inclusive support systems.
 - Challenge local MPs to lead efforts in changing public language about addiction, like the positive changes in how society now addresses racism, sexism, and the LGBTQ+ community. This shift can foster public compassion, dispel false narratives, and encourage constructive conversations about addiction.
3. Boost Public Perception:
 - Launch a public awareness campaign showcasing Stockton's progress and successes.
 - Highlight the town's thriving independent businesses, cultural events, and regeneration efforts to create a balanced narrative.
4. Secure Strategic Funding:
 - Collaborate with SBC and external partners to identify funding opportunities for safety initiatives and community engagement.

Conclusion

Stockton BID is unwavering in its dedication to creating a safe and welcoming town center. Through collaboration with Stockton Borough Council, local businesses, and community stakeholders, we aim to overcome challenges and transform Stockton into a thriving hub for commerce and culture. With ongoing focus and investment, we can achieve a town center that attracts visitors, inspires residents, and supports a thriving local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report. We look forward to continuing our partnership to make Stockton Town Centre the best it can be.

Prepared by: Jason Maxwell, Stockton BID Manager

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Scrutiny Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres

Yarm Business Forum

- From Yarm Business Forum's perspective, what are the main issues regarding Yarm town centre safety, and what feedback is being received from businesses in terms of the Yarm town centre environment (from a 'welcoming' and 'safe' point of view)

To make the town more welcoming and easier to visit:

- a) Shoplifting - Although worse elsewhere, it is still an issue in Yarm. Would like more visibility of enforcement and / or PCSOs during daytime to deter shoplifting and begging (even if the officers are just coming to get a coffee!).
- b) Need signs on A19: Poor signage to Yarm from main roads - A19. No signs to Yarm at Southbound A19 exit. Would like 'brown tourist signs.
- c) Better and clearer signage for long stay car parks and parking on entry to High Street.
- d) Better information for local amenities - do we need a central visitors website with page for each borough town funded by SBC, or option for funding by SBC for 'Visit Yarm' information.
- e) More and clearer information for businesses and residents regarding begging and homeless issues and action plans. Could be on website. Contact numbers for enforcement, etc.
- f) More and clearer information for businesses (and residents) on mess and littering - Care for your area contact. Who to contact, etc. Ideally, 'Care for your area' should be monitoring litter and mess on side streets like central street.
- g) Car park payment machines need sorting. Out of use too often creating worry and stress for visitors.
- h) Better floral displays - hanging baskets - YTC reduced funding this year and halved number of baskets.

- What is Yarm Business Forum's relationship with SBC like – is this enabling / inhibiting progress on making Yarm town centre more welcoming / safe (please provide any examples)?

I would say the relationship with SBC is good particularly through High Street representative - Sara. However, I would say that communication with SBC as a whole has reduced in the last 18 months (with the exception of Sara) and could be improved. There has been no update on High Street improvement project, no consultation on parking charges. I think an annual meeting with the whole High Street team at Stockton should be a minimum.

- Are you aware of any funding which you can access to support town centre safety? Have you tried to access funding – if successful, what has this been used for?

Not aware of any funding.

- What should be the future priorities in making Yarm town centre as welcoming and safe as possible? Could your Forum / local businesses assist with any of these?
 - a) Bins. Removal of unsightly and unsafe bins on side streets - Central Street in particular. End up daily with loose and unsightly waste, broken glass on major thoroughfare for cars and pedestrians. Attracts vermin and is used as toilet on weekend nights.
 - b) More regular PCSO and enforcement visibility and visits during daytime.
 - c) Car parking machines.
 - d) Car parking signage.

Community Safety Select Committee
Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Cllr Paul Rowling	Contact details: paul.rowling@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Gary Woods	Contact details: gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk 01642 526187
Departmental Link Officer: Sharon Cooney (SBC Head of Community Safety)	Contact details: sharon.cooney@stockton.gov.uk

<p>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</p> <p>The review will contribute to all three of the Council Plan 2023-2026 key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm</i> • <i>A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed</i> • <i>A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive</i>

<p>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</p> <p>For several years now, debate has ensued over the future purpose and provision of town centres across the UK, with Local Authorities and their numerous partners considering the ways in which they can make these locations as appealing as possible within the context of a tough financial landscape. In related matters, the issue of town centre safety has drawn recent national attention, with significant concerns raised around reported increases in shoplifting, rising incidences of violence and abuse of shop staff, and police / community support officer numbers (UK Parliament - Town Centre Safety (Dec 23)).</p> <p>As Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) progresses with the redevelopment of its six town centres, fostering feelings of safety and creating welcoming spaces are crucial for several reasons. A safe environment encourages residents and visitors to engage in activities, boosting economic vitality through increased footfall and business opportunities. A welcoming town centre also promotes community cohesion and pride, attracting investment but also encouraging a sense of belonging amongst residents. Cultivating and developing a positive perception of the Borough's town centres is an essential component of the Council's regeneration strategy.</p> <p>Over recent years, a significant amount of work has gone into supporting Stockton-on-Tees town centres, both from a regeneration investment perspective and a community safety standpoint. A substantial amount of investment has been made in community safety measures such as new CCTV cameras and the provision of additional Civic Enforcement Officers to patrol and work with key stakeholders to problem-solve issues. Furthermore, last year saw the introduction of the Council's first Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to tackle aggressive begging and street drinking in both Stockton Town Centre and Norton Village.</p>
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<p>These measures, alongside additional support from SBCs strategic partners, have resulted in sustained reductions in key areas of crime and disorder. Despite this, however, the public perception of town centre safety continues to be poor amongst prospective visitors and also commercial investors.</p> <p>This review provides an opportunity to scrutinise what is currently in place in terms of promoting safety in town centres and how effective the measures are in addressing crime and disorder, whilst also further exploring what more can be done to positively promote the Borough's town centre spaces to address negative perceptions and improve feelings of safety.</p> <p>The main aims for this review will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish the key issues within each of the Borough's six town centres with regards safety.• Understand the measures already in place to address these issues and ascertain any gaps in future plans.• Identify any potential learning from other parts of the UK.
<p>The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:</p> <p>What is meant by the term 'welcoming' in relation to the Borough's town centres?</p> <p>What has the Council and its partners done to make its town centres more welcoming and safer (inc. impact of recent PSPO implementation)? How effective have these been?</p> <p>What safety issues (real or perceived) are specific to the six town centres across the Borough; what is stopping residents / visitors wanting to access these locations? What data is available to support / contradict these concerns?</p> <p>Do town centre businesses consider their location as welcoming and safe? What issues, if any, do they feel need addressing; could they assist with any of these themselves?</p> <p>How is the grant funding allocated to the Cleveland PCC area as part of the latest Safer Streets Fund (round five) being used to improve safety within the Borough?</p> <p>What is the role of the Stockton Safety Partnership (SSP) in relation to this scrutiny topic?</p> <p>How can this review contribute to / complement the ongoing SBC <i>Powering Our Future</i> Community Safety and Regulated Services project?</p> <p>How does / can the Council utilise the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to support welcoming and safe town centres?</p> <p>What can the Council learn from the approach of other Local Authorities?</p>
<p>Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?</p> <p>Council, Cabinet, SBC partners, businesses, public.</p>
<p>Expected duration of review and key milestones:</p> <p>8 months (report to Cabinet in April 2025)</p>

What information do we need?	
Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Association (LGA): Revitalising town centres (May 18) Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP): Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Strategy 2022-2025 GOV.UK: Safer Streets Fund (Oct 23) 	
<i>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</i>	<i>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</i>
<p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety and Regulated Services Public Health Town Centres Development Inclusive Growth and Development Ward Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues being highlighted for each town centre Safety initiatives implemented and the impact Role of SSP in this scrutiny topic Influencing community safety / violence prevention Plans for / progress on town centre investment and making these spaces welcoming / safe Feedback from public
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town centre priorities / plans Safer Streets Fund – impact within Borough
Cleveland Police Cleveland Fire Authority / Brigade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town centre crime / disorder data Safety initiatives implemented and the impact Past / future partnership-working with SBC
Town Councils Business Forums / Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues regarding town centre safety and measures taken to address these Past / future partnership-working with SBC
Catalyst / VCSE Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing VCSE involvement How the VCSE could further support efforts
Residents / Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on / barriers to accessing town centres
Other Local Authority Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives to improve views of town centres and / or tackle negative perceptions
How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)	
Committee meetings, reports, research, existing public feedback, site visits (TBC).	

<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p> <p>Committee meetings, information submissions.</p>
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p> <p>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.</p>
<p>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</p> <p><u>Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): Crime:</u> Crime and the fear of crime are key factors that affect people's quality of life and sense of wellbeing.</p> <p><u>Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023: All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities:</u> Health and wellbeing are influenced by the environment in which people grow up, live, work and spend their leisure time and by how safe people feel in their communities.</p>
<p>Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:</p> <p>An assessment of the effectiveness of local community safety measures and recommendations on what more could potentially be done to address public concerns (whether real or perceived).</p>

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	May 2024	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	29.05.24	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	13.06.24	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	SBC Community Safety and Regulated Services	11.07.24	Select Committee
	SBC Town Centres Dev. SBC Public Health / CGL	26.09.24	
	Office of the PCC Cleveland Police	24.10.24	
	Cleveland Fire Brigade Town Councils	28.11.24	
	Business Forums / Groups Ward Councillor Survey	09.01.25	
	Catalyst / VCSE Sector Other Local Authorities	23.01.25	
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	27.02.25	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	March 2025	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	27.03.25	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	[20.05.25]	Executive Scrutiny Committee

Report to Cabinet / Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	17.04.25	Cabinet / Approving Body
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SAFER STOCKTON PARTNERSHIP

A meeting of Safer Stockton Partnership was held on Wednesday 2 October 2024.

Present: John Wrintmore (Chair), Sharon Cooney, Libby Griffiths, Cllr Steve Nelson, Dawn Tyeman, Key Nicolson, Mandy Mackinnon, Leanne Melony-Kelly, Vanessa Housley, Mandie Rowlands, Anna Waddington, Marc Stephenson, Gary Knight, Sarah Wilson, Cllr Pauline Beall, Matt Storey, Stu Hodgson, Lucy Owens, Dan Heron, Richard Brown, Majella McCarthy .

Officers: John Devine.

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Norma Stephenson, Ann Powell, David Willingham .

SSP/2524 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted

SSP/2624 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

SSP/2724 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 17th July 2024 were agreed as a true record.

SSP/2824 Knife Crime Prevention

Representatives of Cleveland Police presented a report on Knife Crime Prevention to members. Officers highlighted several sections of the report to Members.

Since Sept 2023 there had been 810 crimes involving a knife or a bladed article in the Cleveland area, this amounted to a 10% decrease from the year previous. Members were also informed that more than half of all identified suspects linked to knife crime were males under the age of 24. During the same 12-month period 186 people aged 24 and under were victims of knife crime. Officers added that knife crime makes up 57% of all serious violence in Cleveland.

The report also gave a more focused look at the Stockton Borough in relation to knife crime, which showed that there had been 213 knife crime offences in the last 12 months in Stockton. This was a 23% reduction from the previous 12-month period.

Police set out their plans on how to reduce knife crime further, with early interventions schemes, One Team working collaboration initiatives and joint working with Licensing and those in the nighttime economy.

Following the report Police and other members of the partnership discussed the following:

As Stockton had seen reductions in knife crime had there been any displacement into other areas? Which Officers were happy to report was not the case.

Had any work been done to target primary school children with early prevention work? There had been work undertaken to adapt presentations for students for a younger audience, this would be linked in with partners in Children's services.

Members agreed to note the report.

SSP/2924 Deliberate Fires

Cleveland Fire Brigade Officers gave an update on Deliberate Fires and their economic impact to the partnership. An increase of 4% in the number of deliberate fires set was highlighted to members, Officers explained that in response a heightened targeting of hotspot areas had been undertaken with patrols and instigating seals community skips. The recent increase was part of a 58% increase over a five-year period, which was being investigated jointly with Police.

Offices emphasised that they are wanting to work with partners to tackle the increased activity. Members of the partnership promised to link in with the Fire Brigade following the meeting to discuss how they could work more closely going forward.

Members agreed to note the report.

SSP/3024 Post Disorder Report

Members agreed to defer this report to a following meeting due to Officers being unable to attend.

SSP/3124 Recorded Crime & Disorder Report

Officers presented the Recorded Crime and Disorder Report for July 2023 to June 2024 with Members, they noted several sections of the report for members. These were as follows:

- Public reports crime had seen a decrease of 21%
- A slight increase in the numbers of vehicle crime but work had been undertaken and a group believed to be responsible for a large part of the increase had been arrested.
- The number of drug offences had increased in the six months; Officers would continue to work with the UK Boarder Force agency as it is believed to be coming from abroad.
- A 56% decrease in the number of off-road bike reports, Officers were confident that the decrease was due to the work being carried out by Officers with cooperation with the Public.

Overall levels of crime had been reducing but the public perception of crime was higher than ever. Offices noted that it was important to push the good news stories of reductions out to the public but would not dismiss the public's perception as it was equally important.

Members agreed to note the report.

SSP/3224 Operation Harmony Update

Members were given an update on Operation Harmony which outlined that there had been a significant reduction in crime, Officers contributed this to the partnership work being done by all those involved.

The feedback from the public which shows that the perception of crime hasn't reduced with the actual level of crimes. Offices stated that more work would need to be done to reassure those members of the public, which will be an ongoing goal.

Police were trying to promote the work being done across the area and to make sure the Policing being done was more visible in an attempt to combat the communities perception.

Members of the community had made a recommendation to Police that Operation Nightfall be continued in the area. This was seen as a possible solution by members for the communities perception.

Community engagement would continue into the future with a residents meeting being planned in the week following this Safer Stockton Partnership meeting.

Members Agreed to note the report.

SSP/3324 Prevent (CT) Update

There were no further updates to bring to members attention for this item.

SSP/3424 Any Other Business

Members shared information about an update on the Bleed Cabinets which were discussed at the previous meeting.

Partners agreed to jointly petition for the Bleed Cabinets to be dealt with under the same system that the Defibrillator cabinets.

Members noted the discussion.

SSP/3524 iQuanta Report

Members were presented with a restricted report that provided an overview on crime comparisons against other similar CSPs utilising iQuanta.

This report was a restricted document due to the statistical information only made available as an intelligence tool for partnerships until released by the Home Office.

AGREED that the report be noted.

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COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE
Work Programme 2024-2025

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
25 April	Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Draft) Final Report 	Cllr Clare Gamble / Cllr Steve Nelson / Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Neil Mitchell
23 May	CANCELLED	
13 June	Monitoring: Action Plan - Outdoor Play Provision Monitoring: Progress Update – Tree Asset Management Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Draft) Scope and Project Plan 	Graham Clingan Dale Rowbotham Marc Stephenson
11 July	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC Community Safety and Regulated Services 	Sharon Cooney / Stephen Donaghy / Leanne Maloney-Kelly
26 September	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC Town Centres Development • SBC Public Health / CGL 	Iain Robinson / Marc Bould Sarah Bowman-Abouna / Mandy MacKinnon / Oliver Metcalf
24 October	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland • Cleveland Police Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (March, May & July 2024)	Matt Storey John Wrintmore / Andy Evans
28 November	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleveland Fire Brigade • Town Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Billingham ○ Ingleby Barwick ○ Thornaby ○ Yarm Minutes of the Stockton Home Safety Association (March & June 2024)	Alan Turner Cllr Helen Atkinson / Dee Smith (written submission) Cllr Phil Genery / Cllr Mark Fairbairn (written submission)
19 December	CANCELLED	
9 January	Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Forums / Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Norton (TBC) ○ Stockton 	Jason Maxwell

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2024-2025

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yarm (TBC) ● SBC Adults, Health and Wellbeing <p>Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (October 2024)</p>	Lesley Tart
23 January	<p>Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catalyst / VCSE Sector ● Other Local Authority Initiatives ● Ward Councillor Survey Feedback <p>Domestic Abuse: Duties to Victims</p>	<p>Lucy Owens Sharon Cooney</p> <p>Sarah Bowman-Abouna / Mandy MacKinnon</p>
27 February	Monitoring: Progress Update – Tree Asset Management	Dale Rowbotham / Mark Nozedar
27 February (informal – after formal meeting)	<p>Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations 	Sharon Cooney
27 March	<p>Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Draft) Final Report 	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Carolyn Nice / Sharon Cooney

2024-2025 Scrutiny Reviews

- Welcoming and Safe Town Centres

Monitoring Items (scheduled / to be scheduled)

- Fly-Grazed Horses (Progress Update) – TBC
- Tree Asset Management (Progress Update) – Feb 25
- Outdoor Play Provision (Progress Update) – TBC (mid-2025)

Other Information Sources / Updates

- **Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP):** The SSP is the local community safety partnership and works together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) – meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be accessed via <https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=1144&Year=0>. Every three years, the SSP undertake a Crime and Disorder Audit and, following public consultation, produce a Community Safety Plan which sets out how agencies within the Partnership intend to achieve targets in crime reduction – the latest version is the [Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Strategy 2022-2025](#). Government is consulting on part two of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Review, with Councils giving input into the Local Government Association’s (LGA) response – there is appetite amongst Councils for a more fundamental look at the partnership duty landscape and how CSPs work with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2024-2025

- **Serious Violence Duty:** The Duty (Aug 22) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet> and associated guidance (Dec 22): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/efforts-to-tackle-serious-violence-and-homicide-stepped-up?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=66d44b4c-9d22-4f1d-aed7-517818847183&utm_content=immediately. The Home Office plan to update the guidance to the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) – the LGA will be giving views (Councils have contributed to this).
- **Martyn’s Law:** ([The Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Draft Bill](#)) has recently (May 23) been published, which will introduce new requirements for those responsible for certain public premises or events to take protective security measures to mitigate against terrorist attacks. Also known as Martyn’s Law, this will likely have a number of implications for Councils. Further details can also be found on [the Home Office’s Martyn’s Law factsheet](#). The LGA has recently (Apr 23) published [a case study highlighting how Manchester Council](#) has embedded the principles of Martyn’s Law into their licensing process.
- **Modern Slavery:** [New modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence guidance for local authority commissioners of adult social care](#), produced by the University of Nottingham Rights Lab in tandem with the LGA, was published in October 2023 - it provides advice on to how to set up effective local systems to identify and manage the risks of modern slavery in adult social care. The LGA has established a modern slavery network for council officers leading on work to tackle modern slavery – the network meets quarterly via Teams and aims to share good practice and discuss current issues. In March 2024, the Home Office [published data on the number of potential victims of modern slavery](#) referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or via the Duty to Notify (DtN) process in 2023. 17,004 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office in 2023. The number of referrals for females were at their highest on record, as were the number of referrals for child potential victims. The most common nationality referred in 2023 was UK.
- **Youth Offending:** *Turnaround* is a voluntary youth early intervention programme led by the Ministry of Justice. The programme provides multi-year grant funding to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) across England and Wales until March 2025, enabling them to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. The eligibility criteria for *Turnaround* includes; children involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) – ranging from coming to notice for repeated involvement in ASB up to and including receiving a Civil Order for ASB. The Ministry of Justice is encouraging all community safety teams to engage with their local YOT Manager or Management Board to discuss a referral pathway for eligible children so they can be offered support via *Turnaround*.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):** The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issued a press release in August 2023 expressing concern that [Councils were not doing enough to help victims of ASB](#). The Ombudsman has also produced a [learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour](#) document which includes scrutiny questions for Councillors. The [ASB Action Plan](#) has since been updated (March 2024).
- **CONTEST:** In July 2023, the Government published its [updated counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST](#), which judges that risks from terrorism are rising. In related matters, SBC rolled-out mandatory staff training around the Prevent and Protect duty at the end of April 2023. In March 2024, the Government [published a new definition of extremism](#), updating the one in the 2011 Prevent Strategy and to reflect the evolution of extremist ideologies and the social harms they create. The Government also recently published a [progress report one year on from the publication of the Independent Review of Prevent](#). This sets out that 30 of the

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2024-2025

34 recommendations are now complete, including updated statutory guidance, training and the assessment framework, the launch of a new [Standards and Compliance Unit \(STaCU\)](#) to handle complaints and provide oversight.

- **Fire & Rescue:** [State of Fire & Rescue 2022](#) - His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England. Arson and deliberate fire setting remain a significant issue for Cleveland Fire Brigade with Cleveland being the arson capital of the UK – in October 2022, Cleveland Fire Brigade [appealed for everyone to become a FireStopper in a new bid to reduce arson and violent attacks on Firefighters](#).
- **Shoplifting:** Police to treat shoplifting like organised crime (BBC online article published in October 2023): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-67191793>. In November 2024, it was reported that incidents of shoplifting had reached a 20-year high, according to figures recorded by the police. A survey of shopkeepers by the Association of Convenience Stores found that 94 per cent felt that the problem had worsened in the last 12 months: [Sky: 'We need help': Workers say shoplifting is 'out of control' after surge in brazen thefts](#).
- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991:** The Government has added the XL Bully breed type to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 in England and Wales. From 31 December 2023, breeding, selling, exchanging, advertising, rehoming, gifting, abandoning, and allowing an XL Bully dog to stray will be illegal, and these dogs must be muzzled and on a lead in public. From 1 February 2024 it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully in England and Wales unless the owner has a Certificate of Exemption. [Defra has published further information about how to prepare for the ban which will be updated regularly](#), and they will continue engagement with stakeholders. In March 2024, the LGA wrote to Council chief finance officers on behalf of DEFRA about new burdens funding relating to the XL Bully Ban for 2023-24.
- **Licensing:** [Legislation has been introduced into Parliament to amend the Licensing Act 2003](#) so that it is easier to get changes to licensing hours for special events or occasions, such as significant sporting events, through Parliament. The Bill is more concerned with parliamentary process than the contents of the Licensing Act itself. The Local Government Association (LGA) understands this legislation has Government support, so is likely to complete its parliamentary stages and become law. The British Beer & Pub Association has [produced advice for licensees showing European Championship football matches](#) – this is an update of the previous World Cup guidance.
- **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs):** The LGA and DAC conducted a survey regarding DHRs - [the results can be found on the LGA website](#). The LGA, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) have established a forum to share best practice and act as a platform for government changes in relation to domestic and related death homicide. So far there has been one meeting and 132 people have volunteered to take part.
- **Float to Live campaign:** The [RNLI's Float to Live campaign](#) took place on 21 May 2024. The ['float to live' message has saved lives](#), and the RNLI is keen for Councils to support the campaign to raise more awareness amongst local communities. It has produced [a free social media toolkit](#) which may be of interest to Council communications team.
- **Fires involving e-bikes and e-scooters:** The Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) has written to heads of trading standards, asking that, where resources and prioritisation allow, Trading Standards services identify and inspect bike repair businesses and where possible inform OPSS of their findings.

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- **Khan Review:** Dame Sara Khan has published her [independent review into social cohesion and resilience](#). Recommendations include the establishment of a new Office for Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience (OSCDR), a 5-year Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience Strategy (SCDR) and Action Plan, and that Government should better engage with Local Authorities over actions that could undermine social cohesion – for example in relation to asylum dispersal.
- **Taxi Licensing:** An [HMRC consultation](#) ended on 8 August 2024 on the VAT implications of court judgements that proposes abolishing the current licensing system, which differentiates between Taxis and PHVs, and moving to a single-tier system. The LGA will respond.
- **Safe Access Zones Around Abortion Clinics:** Councils have been contacting the LGA regarding Safe Access Zones around abortion clinics. The LGA have been engaging with government to ensure safe access zones can be established. Legislation will come into force from 31 October 2024 and will make it illegal for anyone to do anything that intentionally or recklessly influences someone’s decision to use abortion services, obstructs them, or causes harassment or distress to someone using or working at these premises. The law will apply within a 150-metre radius of the abortion service provider. The College of Policing and the Crown Prosecution Service will be publishing operational guidance to ensure there is clarity and consistency with the enforcement of the new offence. Further information is available at: [Protection zones around abortion clinics in place by October - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).
- **Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland:** Further information on the office of the PCC can be found on via <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/> - this includes engagement with the **Cleveland Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**. Access to PCP agendas and papers can be found via <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/the-work-of-cleveland-police-and-crime-panel/>.

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