Community Safety Plan: Stockton-on-Tees 2025 - 2027

Introduction: Councillor Norma Stephenson

Since 1998, Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Partnership (SSP) has worked to reduce crime and the fear of crime for residents across the borough. The SSP has statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prepare a strategy to reduce crime and disorder, reduce reoffending, and reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol.

This new Community Safety Plan seeks to build on the progress made in recent years to further improve safety for all who live and work in our Borough. Our key objective is to make Stockton a safe, welcoming place to live, work and visit.

While there have been significant reductions over the last three years, and in 2024/25 Stockton had the lowest amount of crime reported in the Tees Valley, we should not be complacent. I recognise that despite these drops, some fear of crime remains. I understand the impact being a victim or witness to a crime can have; the SSP will continue to drive successful outcomes and will not be complacent in our endeavours to address the issues.

I thank those that have helped to develop this strategy, we have consulted local stakeholders to ensure that local concerns are incorporated, and feedback has been invaluable in developing this plan.

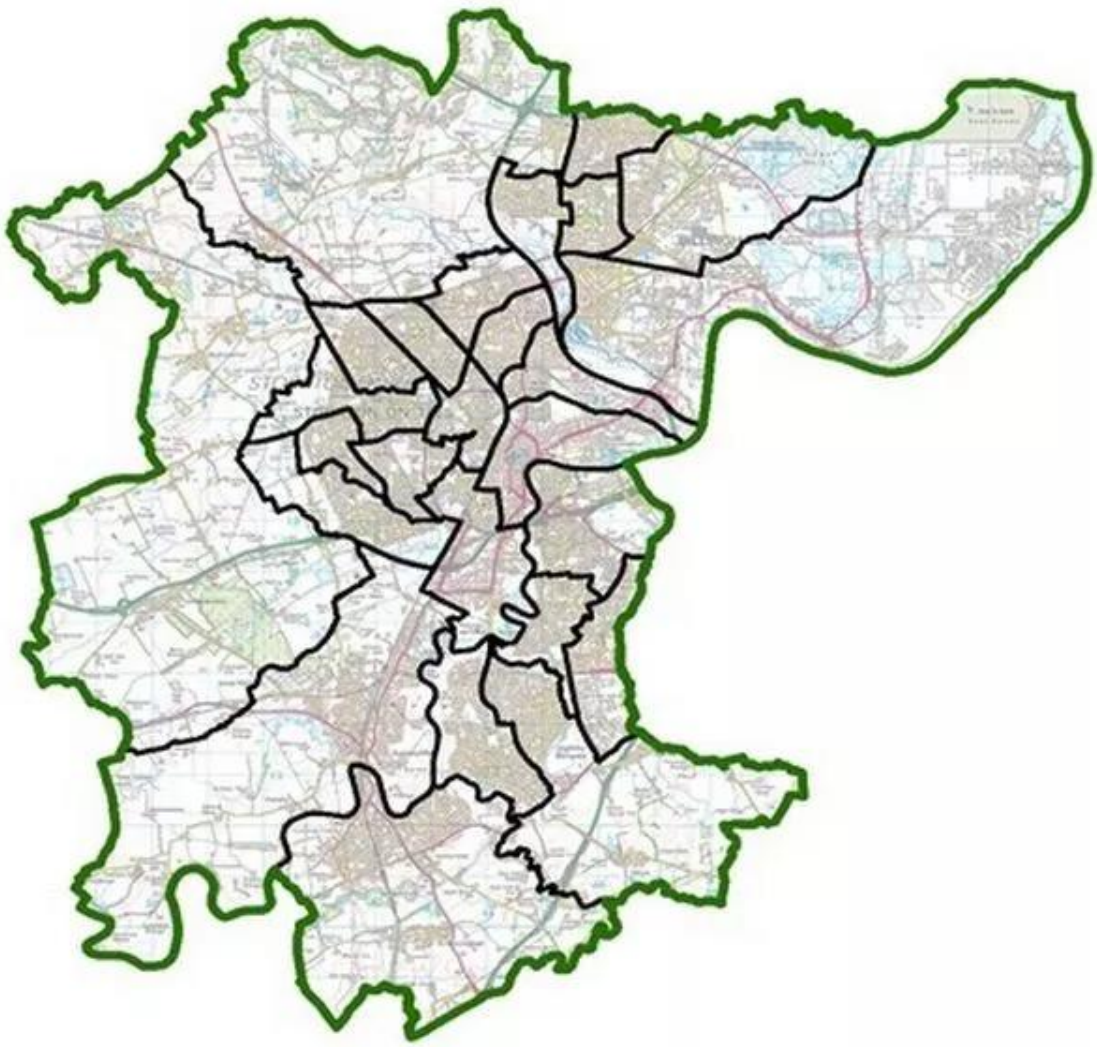
This Community Safety Plan is shaped by the priorities residents expressed in recent surveys and in consultation with local communities. Discussions also took place with young people in about what concerns them most, and with members of the Independent Advisory Group and Police and Crime Panel.

Concerns were expressed about the visibility of antisocial behaviour in Town Centres and public spaces. I am aware of the anxiety inconsiderate use of off-road bikes and e-bikes can cause. I also know that despite significant progress by the partnership, and drops in actual crime numbers, the public remain concerned about these issues.

These issues will be addressed by the partnership through evidence-based interventions addressing the root causes, active enforcement of available legislation where appropriate, and continued meaningful conversations with

stakeholders. Options such as revising the Public Space Protection Order and exploring opportunities for funded interventions will be explored.

About Stockton Borough



The Borough of Stockton covers around 79 square miles (205 square kilometres) and has a population of approximately 197 350, 92% of whom are white and the remaining 8% consist of various ethnicities. Almost 25% of our population is under 19 years old and 18% are aged over 65. There are large gaps in life expectancy between some of the most deprived wards and those areas with higher affluence.

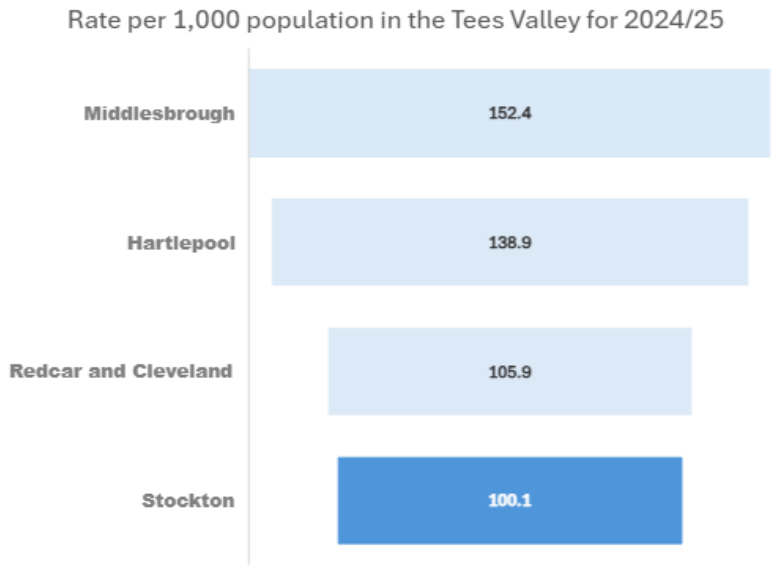
Stockton is undergoing significant change; regeneration schemes are taking place across the borough. To support this, we are working with partners on projects to

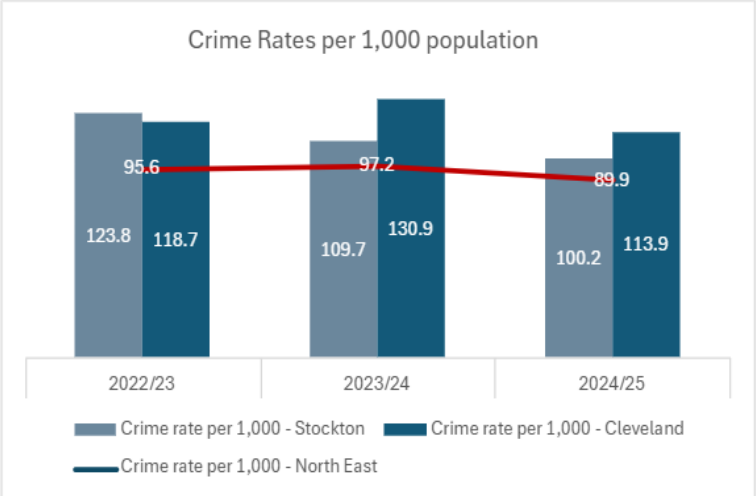
keep our communities safe. Funding from the Home Office and from the Police and Crime Commissioner has been used to support violence reduction initiatives in our town centres. There have been upgrades to CCTV cameras, crime prevention kits distributed to homes and businesses and funding granted to grass roots organisations to support community initiatives.

There is much to be proud of, and significant positive efforts are underway in the borough. The residents are a crucial asset in addressing crime and ASB, and we urge everyone to keep reporting all incidents. Public information has frequently played a pivotal role in our successes. The local community have been involved with and advised us on Project Harmony and Operation Shield in Ropner wards and the Town Centre, resulting in improvements in crime rates and incidents of antisocial behaviour.

What do we know about crime in Stockton on Tees?

Crime in Stockton-on-Tees has decreased over the last three years. Overall, in 2024/25, Stockton had the lowest amount of crime reported in the Tees Valley. Over the period from 2022/23 to 2024/25 there has been a continuing decline in crime figures for the Stockton area although reports of drug trafficking and rape have increased.





There has been a significant decrease in death or serious injury caused by illegal driving in 2024/25, along with significant reductions to burglary residential, burglary business and community and bicycle theft.

Stockton's crime rates were lower than the wider Cleveland Police force averages in both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

There are concerns about the presence and influence of organised crime groups (OCGs) within local communities and of criminal exploitation of young people, signalling a need for targeted early intervention and safeguarding strategies.

ASB incidents are prevalent, with dog fouling frequently reported while noise nuisance complaints have declined. Domestic abuse overall is showing a downward trend; however, incidents involving children present in the household are beginning to rise, suggesting a shift in the nature and complexity of domestic abuse cases. These patterns emphasise the importance of a coordinated, intelligence-led approach to community safety, with a focus on prevention, early intervention, and multi-agency collaboration.

Hate crimes related to race, disability, and religion have declined year-on-year since 2022/23, reflecting progress in some areas of inclusion. However, reports of transgender hate crime have risen sharply, highlighting a growing concern and the need for focused support and awareness around LGBTQ+ safety.

Reported fire incidents across the borough have generally declined over the past three years, despite occasional fluctuations. The nature of fire types has remained broadly consistent, with a modest reduction in false alarm reports.

Keeping Stockton Safe 2025-2027

Our partnership approach will continue to address cross-cutting themes across all key agencies of the Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP), including domestic abuse, child exploitation, serious and organised crime, and violence against women and girls (VAWG). In line with the Serious Violence Duty, we will work collaboratively with police and partners to prevent and reduce serious violence, with a strong emphasis on understanding its root causes and delivering targeted prevention and intervention.

To ensure our efforts are effective and impactful, we will embed continuous evaluation into all aspects of our work. Success will be measured through a combination of:

- **Performance indicators** aligned to strategic priorities
- **Qualitative feedback** from communities and service users
- **Partnership reviews** and shared learning
- **Monitoring of outcomes** from pilot projects and wider initiatives

Where shared priorities exist with other partnership agencies, we will align our evaluation frameworks to ensure consistency and maximise learning. This evidence-led approach will allow us to adapt and refine our interventions, scale up successful projects, and remain responsive to emerging challenges.

By working together with partners and communities, and by measuring what matters, we will ensure our strategy delivers real and lasting improvements—making Stockton a safer, stronger place for everyone.

What is the Serious Violence Duty?

This requires Local Authorities to work together and share information to reduce serious violence.

Serious Violence is defined in Cleveland Police Serious Violence and Homicide Prevention Strategy as the following:

- Homicide, attempted murder, and manslaughter.
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm.
- Malicious wounding, wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm.
- Arson with intent to endanger life.

- Aggravated burglary.
- Death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving.
- Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking.
- Kidnap.
- Knife/firearm enabled offences of:
- Robbery – business and personal.
- Threats to kill.
- Assault with injury.
- Assault with injury on a Constable.
- Racially or religiously aggravated assault with injury.

We will work alongside a wide range of partners, including Public Health, Police, Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence and with the community to address the underlying causes of serious violence. We will also focus on addressing the underlying risk factors that make people vulnerable to violent crime, while directing enforcement activity to the locations and individuals most responsible for violent offending in the borough.

The following priorities will underpin our strategic approach for the next three years:

1. **Managing the impact of serious and organised crime**

We acknowledge that Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) is a significant issue that drives criminal activity, causing harm and increasing fear of crime for residents and communities in Stockton. Organised crime groups engage in various criminal activities, ranging from fraud, drug offences, firearms supply, violence and exploitation. We will adopt a comprehensive approach to organised crime, aiming to disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups and intervene to prevent young and vulnerable individuals from being drawn into criminality. We will collaborate with communities to build resilience against the threat of serious and organised crime, empowering these communities to be part of the solution and reducing future victimisation. We will coordinate efforts across the partnership to address the drivers and consequences of organised crime.

2. **Crime and disorder linked to drugs and alcohol**

A focus on early intervention and prevention, taking a harm reduction approach to addressing the determinants of crime and community safety. Factors such as social inequality, skills, health, housing, employment and environment all have an impact.

Stockton-on-Tees rate of admissions for alcohol-specific conditions are higher than the national average. Under 18s admissions for alcohol specific conditions is also higher than the England average. The Authority is working with local partners and the Youth Endowment Fund to target support for young people at risk.

3. **Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and feelings of safety**

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a corrosive impact on communities, businesses and visitors to our borough; and often overlaps with criminal offending. We are aware of the impact of off road and e-bike ASB and will work closely with police and others to address these issues and their impacts on the community. We will continue to work closely with our partners to strengthen relationships with residents and community organisations, fostering trust and shared responsibility. Ongoing visible joint patrols involving police and enforcement officers will help deter antisocial behaviour, while ensuring public spaces are consistently clean, well-lit, and welcoming. Our aim is to create inclusive, respectful environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and part of the community.

4. **Reducing the offending rates of the most prolific offenders**

Persistent offenders are often responsible for high volumes of crime. We will work to reduce reoffending with partners in police, probation and the prison service through the OPCC led Reducing Reoffending Group. Criminality is often driven by socio-economic factors, as well as substance misuse and addiction, we will explore interventions to address this.

5. **Domestic Abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees (2022-28) sets a strong focus on reducing perpetration of domestic abuse: holding perpetrators to account and supporting them to change their behaviour. The strategy sets out the plan to work as a system to ensure that abusive and harmful behaviours are disrupted and addressed at the earliest opportunity through a range of appropriate interventions. A multi-agency approach will include support from our communities, specialist services providing perpetrator programmes and criminal justice partners. We will ensure that we learn from Domestic Homicide Reviews to inform local approaches to prevention and addressing abusive, violent behaviours.

The evidence-based Respect intervention for high risk, high harm perpetrators will be introduced to Cleveland by the OPCC in 2026. Community-based specialist domestic abuse services include the provision of a 26-week Respect accredited

perpetrator programme. Currently, completion rates mirror those experienced nationally, with 33% of participants benefiting from the full programme.

Harbour, the provider of specialist domestic abuse services within the borough, delivers a community awareness programme. This promotes understanding of healthy relationships and challenges harmful, abusive behaviours within our communities.

In addition, our prevention work includes working across agencies to develop approaches which promote healthy relationships in the early years. Working with childminders we are promoting activities for children which focus on empathy, sharing, caring and cause and consequence of behaviours.

6. **Prevent**

Prevent aims to safeguard individuals from being drawn into terrorism by identifying and addressing the underlying factors that make people susceptible to radicalisation. It focuses on early intervention through education, community engagement, and support services, helping individuals build resilience against extremist influences.

Prevent works in partnership with schools, local authorities, health services, and community organisations to promote shared values, challenge harmful ideologies, and provide tailored support to those at risk. We will continue to use this approach to create safer, more cohesive communities where people feel protected and empowered to reject extremism and hate in all its forms.

7. **Diverse Communities Feeling Safe**

We are committed to ensuring that all diverse communities in Stockton-on-Tees feel safe and supported. We will work closely with community leaders and organisations to understand the unique challenges faced by different groups and develop tailored strategies to address these issues. By fostering open communication and building trust, we aim to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels secure and valued. Our efforts will include cultural competency training for law enforcement and community safety officers, as well as initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion within our safety programs.

8. **Welcoming Town Centres**

Fostering vibrant and welcoming town centres is vital to the health and well-being of our communities. We are committed to delivering initiatives that engage young

people and diverse community groups, transforming our town centres into lively, inclusive spaces where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Our approach includes:

- **Organising community events** that bring people together.
- **Supporting local businesses** to thrive and contribute to the town centre experience.
- **Enhancing public spaces** to ensure they are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all.

Each of our six town centres has a unique character, offering a mix of entertainment, leisure, and shared community spaces. Ongoing regeneration projects will continue to improve these areas, strengthening their role as community hubs.

Operation Shield: A Unified Approach to Town Centre Safety

Operation Shield is a multi-agency initiative designed to improve safety and public confidence in Stockton Town Centre. It brings together departments within Stockton Borough Council and external partners under a shared mission: to respond to public concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour and to deliver visible, coordinated action.

Shield integrates multiple workstreams under a single, recognisable banner, addressing:

- **Community safety**
- **Addiction and recovery**
- **Public perceptions of crime**

Key partners include Cleveland Police, Recovery Connections, CGL, The Moses Project, Stockton BID, and Wellington Square, alongside internal teams such as Public Health, Licensing, and Community Safety. Together, these organisations are tackling antisocial behaviour and offending in the town centre's business district.

Operation Shield balances enforcement with support for addiction recovery, recognising both as essential components of a long-term solution to community safety challenges on the High Street.

Creating vibrant and welcoming town centres is essential for the well-being of our community. We will implement programs and activities designed to engage young people and other communities, making our town centres lively and inclusive spaces. This includes organizing events, supporting local businesses, and enhancing public spaces to ensure they are accessible and enjoyable for all. By fostering a sense of belonging and community pride, we aim to make Stockton-on-Tees a place where everyone feels welcome and connected. Our six Town Centres are very different; offering entertainment, leisure and shared community spaces. Regeneration initiatives will further improve the offer.

Operation Shield is a multi-agency and multi-component initiative, aligning Stockton Borough Council departments and external agencies with a common purpose: to enhance safety and improve public perceptions of safety in Stockton Town Centre. Shield is a direct response to listening to the public about their fears of crime and antisocial behaviour in the town centre. Shield also coalesces multiple work streams addressing wider town centre safety and addiction issues, under one unified and identifiable banner for the public.

Stockton Council and Cleveland Police are leading partners, such as Recovery Connections, CGL, the Moses Project, Stockton BID, and Wellington Square, alongside internal departments such as Public Health, Licensing and Community Safety. Together, these like-minded agencies aim to combat ASB & offending in the business district areas of the town centre ward. The operation emphasises enforcement and addiction recovery as equal methodologies to problem-solving community safety concerns on the High Street.

Achieving our Mission

An Action Plan will be developed in line with this strategy and monitored by the Stockton Safer Partnership (SSP) to deliver on these priorities and to achieve our Mission:

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