

Safer Stockton Partnership

A meeting of Safer Stockton Partnership was held on Wednesday 1st October 2025.

Present: Alan O'Donoghue (Vice Chair), Sharon Cooney, Elliott Beevers, Leanne Maloney-Kelly, Marc Stephenson, Joy Switherbank, Chris Dunwell, Gordon Bentley, Cllr Pauline Beall, Kay Nicolson, Adam Bateman, Sarah Wilson and Kellie Wiggley.

Officers: John Devine

Also in attendance: NA

Apologies: Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE, Cllr Clare Besford, Mandy Mackinnon, Jen Moore, Majella McCarthy, Karen Hawkins, Kevin Tyerman, Jamie Bell, Anna Waddington.

SSP/26/25 Appointment of Vice Chair

AGREED That Superintendent Alan O'Donoghue be appointed at Vice Chair.

SSP/27/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted

SSP/28/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

SSP/29/25 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held Wednesday 23rd July 2025 were agreed as a true record.

SSP/30/25 Recorded Crime & Disorder Report

Members were presented with the Recorded Crime & Disorder report, the report focused on the recorded crime in the Stockton on Tees Borough over a 12 month period starting in August 2024 to August 2025.

The key points noted from the report were as follows:

- Police generated crime had increased.
- Both Publicly reported Anti-Social Behaviour & Officer reported had increased.
- Sexual Offences had increased by 30.7%
- Stalking and Harassment had reduced by 11.4%.
- Criminal Damage & Arson showed an overall reduction of 5.3%
- Drug offences continued to show an increase with an increase of 18.2%.

Officers expanded on some of the above highlights. Officers explained that the increase in Police generated crime was linked to the active policing being undertaken by the Polce, with a number of arrests related to drug offences being evidenced of

that. The increase in Anti-Social Behaviour was being monitored closely by Police and partners through daily partnership meetings.

Increased numbers of sexual offences were evidence of victims being more confident in reporting offences to Police. Partners were reassured that the Police's approach would continue to be victim led in such cases but questioned how many cases lead to prosecution. Partners agreed that more work had to be done together to tackle the offences.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/31/25 Bonfire Strategy

As there was no Officers present from Cleveland Fire brigade members agreed to defer the report to another meeting.

SSP/32/25 Reducing the Strength

Licensing Officers presented a report to the Partnership on the Reducing the Strength Scheme (RTS). It was founded by the Local Government Association, and it's aimed to uphold the licensing objectives, reduce alcohol accessibility, promote public health and reduce alcohol related Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The Scheme asks off-licences to voluntarily agree to stop selling beer, lager and Cider with an alcohol content above 6.5% ABV.

RTS had been implemented initially within the Stockton Town Centre area (Specifically the Operation Shield Area). This area was chosen over concerns raised by the Community Safety Team regarding premises that served 'high strength, low cost' alcohol.

Often those buying the high strength low-cost alcohol are people who are intoxicated / beggars / known street drinkers. These people then often go on to cause issues within the Town Centre such as ASB, aggressive begging, littering and other crime which deters the general public from entering the Town Centre. Licensing Officers had observed alcohol related ASB first hand and identified the perpetrators as mainly consuming cans of cider which could be found at a very low cost of £1.29 per can in most shops within the Town Centre.

The consultation on the scheme began in July 2024 and ranged from face to face visits to letter drops which advised premises of the implementation of the scheme. Officers received positive verbal feedback on the scheme from a number of premises. As the response for written feedback was low Officers again undertook additional face to face engagement in February 2025, requesting electronic feedback. Five out of six of the premises who responded advised they would be willing to partake in the scheme. Positive feedback received stated 'We are supporting and obey the rules of council for the wellbeing of society especially for the elders and children' and another stating 'No one needs a strong drink to enjoy a drink'.

On 21st May 2025 Officers visited all fifteen premises within the scheme area, nine verbally agreed to reduce the strength of their alcohol sold and to participate with the scheme. During the consultation the Community Safety Team and Cleveland Police gave feedback in support of the Scheme.

The Scheme was launched on 25th September 2025, participating retailers were provided with posters and involved in the promotion and comms around the scheme. The nine participating premises gathered for a photo which was shared through the Councils social media channels.

Those participating premises were as follows:

- Addison Newsagents – 102-104 Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TW.
- Pickwicks (formerly D&S News) – 8 High Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1UB.
- Iceland – Wellington Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1NH.
- B&M Stores – 139-139A High Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1LW.
- Heron Foods – 8A Castle Way, Castlegate Centre, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1AL.
- Savers – 7 Wellington Square, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1RG.
- Yarm Lane Convenience Store – 53 Yarm Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 3DL.
- Quick News - 101 High Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1BD.
- Fani Vapes - 49-51 Yarm Lane, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3DL.

Going forward the scheme would be monitored through statistics of alcohol related incidents which would be checked to identify hotspots. This would allow officers to identify any premises which may be causing an issue or if it is due to out of areas retailers. Promotion of the scheme would continue through the Councils social media and the Licensing website. A QR code was included on the posters for the scheme which provides a link to a webpage with further information on the Reduce the Strength Scheme.

Partners from Public Health, Cleveland Police and the Community Safety Team praised Officers for their hard work on the Scheme. All partners noted the success of the scheme would have a positive impact in their own spheres. Members also praised the joined up working of partners in the Safer Stockton Partnership which was making Stockton Town Centre a place residents want to come and spend time in.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/33/25 ASB Charter

Members of the Partnership were presented with the Cleveland Antisocial Behaviour Charter by Officers of the Police & Crime Commissioner.

The Charter outlined the commitment by Partners across Cleveland to help make victims feel safe in their homes and communities. Victims would be involved in how partners respond to their case and make sure their voice was at the heart of what partners do.

It stated that all members were committed to working together to resolve any issues of ASB. The charter set out what partners would do and what a victim could expect when reporting ASB against a person. There were eight bullet points in the report and they were as follows;

1. You will be able to understand and be understood.
2. The details of the incident will be recorded without justifiable delay.
3. A referral to support services will be offered with any support tailored to meet your needs.

4. You will be given information about any investigation or prosecution.
5. You will be given the opportunity to make a Victim Impact Statement.
6. You will be given information about the outcome of the cases and appeals.
7. You can make a complaint about your needs not being met.
8. You can ask for Antisocial Behaviour Case Review.

A copy of the Charter had been shared with Partners and changes had already been incorporated from their feedback. Officers stated that they aimed for the Charter to be published by December 2025, with a launch to be held in a public venue.

Members AGREED to note the update.

SSP/34/25 Project Harmony/ Shield Update

Officers gave an update on Project Harmony & Shield to members. They began with Operation Shield which Members would know was a community safety initiative of the Councils alongside Cleveland Police and other partners.

Officers praised the hard work of frontline staff as Operation Shield marked six months of operation. A number of instances where Officers had been involved in prevention of a crime or being involved in a successful arrest. For example, Officers were instrumental in helping Police making five arrests on one day in Stockton Town Centre via the use of CCTV Operators proactively monitoring the area.

Being proactive and a visible presence in the Town Centre had been an important tenet of the agreement between Partners and Local businesses. There would always be the same response function but that proactivity on the High Streets would be key to building relationships going forward.

Officers went on to praise the deployments from Enforcement & Cleveland Police during the Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) in August. The deployments saw Officers working extra hours over three days and showcased their dedication and commitment to ensuring SIRF was a success. For their commitment to ensuring the success of SIRF frontline Officers met with the High Sheriff of County Durham in a show of appreciation.

Officers moved onto give Members an update on Project Harmony, which members were familiar with as the project had been in operation for a number of years. Members were also made aware that Project Harmony had begun to draw to a close in its current format. Some elements of the project will continue in different avenue, such as Operation Nightfall and a drop-in service. Following discussions with strategic partners the drop-in service would undergo some changes, it was to be moved in line with Ropner Warm Welcome Social which took place monthly. The Ropner Warm Welcome was an expansion of the SBC Community Engagement's work in other wards and was developed out of Project Harmony and feedback from the community survey.

The expansion of the community engagement events was linked to the operation Nightfall Action Plan, which had been developed in June 2025 with collaboration from Cleveland Police and A Way Out, while also being supported by local ward Councillors. Members would recall the core objective of the latest phase of Nightfall is "to encourage on street sex work to occur away from residential dwellings, whilst

ensuring we have the right partner services in place to safeguard women experiencing multiple disadvantages and address contributing factors to on street sex work.”

Officers explained that to best communicate this and the action plan to local residents Officers have invited residents to a meeting later in the month, where Partners and residents could inspect the plan in more detail. Following that meeting Officers would return to the Partnership with an update report.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/35/25 Home Office Visit

In August 2025 Stockton on Tees Brough Council received a visit from Anne-Marie Pickup, Head of Safer Town Centres at the Home Office. Officers presented information on operation Shield, while highlighting the lessons learned from it and that it would continue to be in operation. Officers from Community Safety were praised for their efforts.

The positive feedback was welcomed by Officers and they would continue with the operation and not become complacent.

Members AGREED to note the update.

SSP/36/25 Prevent (CT) Update

Members were updated on four individuals who were currently in Stockton on Tees Councils programme. Officers also informed members that as an authority Stockton had met all of its benchmarks in a recent review.

SSP/37/25 Any Other Business

There was no other business to bring to members attention.

SSP/38/25 Reducing the Strength Report

Members were presented with a restricted report that provided further information on crime statistics related to the introduction of the Reduce the Strength Scheme.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/39/25 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.

SSP/40/25 CSP Plan

Due to the connection to an ongoing Police investigation this Agenda Item was restricted.

Agreed that the update be noted.

SSP/41/25 Town Centre Action Plan

Due to the connection to an ongoing Police investigation this Agenda Item was restricted.

Agreed that the update be noted.

Chair: