

Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Welcoming and Safe Town Centres

As we progress with our ambitious redevelopment of our town centres, fostering feelings of safety and creating a welcoming town centre are crucial for several reasons. Firstly, a safe environment encourages residents and visitors to engage in activities, boosting economic vitality through increased foot fall and business opportunities. Secondly, a welcoming town centre promotes community cohesion and pride, attracting investment but also fostering a sense of belonging amongst residents. Cultivating and developing a positive perception of our town centres which can be a welcoming a safe place to visit is an essential component of our regeneration strategy.

Over recent years, a significant amount of work has gone into our town centre both from a regeneration investment perspective, but with also from 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 within our town centre. Furthermore, last year seen the introduction of our first Public Space Protection Order to tackle both aggressive begging and street drinking in both Stockton Town Centre and Norton Village.

These measures alongside additional support from our strategic partners has resulted in sustained reductions in key areas of crime and disorder. Despite this however, the public perception of safety in the town centre continues to be poor amongst both perspective visitors to the town but also commercial investors despite rates of crime falling and additional investment being made.

It is therefore vital that we scrutinise what is currently in place in terms of promoting safety in the town centre, how effective the measures are in addressing crime and disorder whilst also further exploring what more can be done to positively promote Stockton on Tees Town Centre to address negative perceptions and improve feelings of safety.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Having a safe and welcoming town centre in which visitors feel confident to visit serves several public interest considerations.

1. Community well-being: It provides a secure environment for the community to come together both generally and for planned events. This can serve to improve community cohesion and improve feelings of belonging and pride.
2. Public Health: Low rates of crime and disorder alongside feelings of improved safety can contribute to reduced stress levels and improve mental health outcomes for our communities.
3. Economic Prosperity: A safe and welcoming town centre can attract improved footfall and as a result attract businesses and further investment which can stimulate economic activity through the creation of jobs and other training opportunities.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Having a safe and welcoming town centre has a significant impact on the social, economic, and environmental well-being for our communities. From a social wellbeing perspective, a safe and welcoming town centre encourages community cohesion and inclusivity by providing a welcoming environment which is open and accessible to all parts of our community regardless of background. It can become a place where different community groups can come together in a shared area.

In summary, a safe and welcoming town centre positively influences social interactions, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and prosperity of the communities we serve.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

A significant amount of investment has been made in respect of community safety measures in our town centre over recent years. This has resulted in a number of positive outcomes for our communities. A scrutiny review of this topic could look to assess how effective these services have been and what more can be done within existing resources to develop and improve feelings of safety for visitors and businesses.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

There are no specific reviews taking place currently that directly relate to developing a welcoming town centre and also feelings of safety.

Several other scrutiny reviews have taken place previously which may be considered in order to inform the review and provide additional research and evidence. In particular the scrutiny review of Public Space Protection Orders.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This scrutiny topic looks to support delivery of the Council Plan and falls within a number of key focus areas such as:

- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm;
- A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive,
- A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to success.

Having a welcoming and safe town centre for our community directly relates to all three visions for our borough, in line with our current Council Plan.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

A review of how the current community safety measures within Stockton on Tees Town Centre are performing and recommendations on what more can be done.

A review of how our strategic partners such as Cleveland Police, Stockton BID and the wider VCSE sector help support our aim of a safe and welcoming town centre.

Recommendations as a result of the review, on how we can improve negative public perceptions of the town centre and its safety through new and innovative means of engagement.