

## 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.

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