



# **SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP AGENDA**



**Friday 11 March 2016**

**at 10.00 am**

**in Committee Room B, Civic Centre  
Hartlepool**

**MEMBERS: SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP**

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher, Elected Member, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Councillor Marjorie James, Elected Member, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Gill Alexander, Chief Executive, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Clare Clark, Head of Community Safety and Engagement, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Chief Superintendent Gordon Lang, Neighbourhood Partnership and Policing Command, Cleveland Police  
Barry Coppinger, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland  
Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston, Chair of Youth Offending Board  
Julie Allan, Head of Area, Cleveland National Probation Service  
Barbara Gill, Head of Offender Services, Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Co Ltd  
Steve Johnson, District Manager, Cleveland Fire Authority  
John Bentley, Voluntary and Community Sector Representative, Chief Executive, Safe in Tees Valley  
Stewart Tagg, Head of Housing Services, Housing Hartlepool  
Karen Hawkins, Representative of Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Clinical Commissioning Group  
Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services Hartlepool Borough Council  
Hartlepool Magistrates Court, Chair of Bench (vacant)

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**



### **3. MINUTES**

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2016.

### **4. ITEMS FOR DECISION**

- 4.1 Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2016-2019 – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*  
4.2 Community Safety Plan 2014-17 (Year 3) – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*  
4.3 Respect Your Neighbourhood – Environmental Crime Campaign – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*

### **5. PRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 The Integrated Neighbourhood Police Team Review – *Representative from Cleveland Police*

### **6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*  
6.2 Home Office Consultation – Enabling Closer Working Between Emergency Services – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*  
6.3 VEMT (Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked) Update – *Director of Child and Adult Services*  
6.4 Response to the Proposal on the Provision of Court and Tribunal Services in the North East Region – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*

### **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

#### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of next meeting – to be confirmed.**



## **SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

22 January 2016

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Superintendent Gordon Lang, Cleveland Police (In the Chair)  
Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Clare Clark, Head of Community Safety and Engagement  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health  
Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston, Chair of Youth Offending Board  
Steve Johnson, Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authority

In accordance with Council procedure rule 5.2 (ii) Councillor Jim Ainslie was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher, Councillor Jim Lindridge as substitute for Councillor James, Neville Cameron as substitute for Barry Coppinger, Rosana Roy as substitute for Julie Allan and Gilly Marshall as substitute for Stewart Tagg

Officers: Rachel Parker, Community Safety and Research Officer  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Prior to opening the meeting the Chair, Superintendent Gordon Lang, expressed his disappointment in relation to the level of attendance given the importance of the business.

### **42. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Christopher Akers-Belcher and James, Hartlepool Borough Council, Gill Alexander, Chief Executive, Hartlepool Borough Council, John Bentley, Safe in Tees Valley, Barry Coppinger, Police and Crime Commissioner, Karen Hawkins, Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Clinical Commissioning Group, Julie Allan, National Probation Service and Stewart Tagg, Housing Hartlepool.

### **43. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Ainslie declared a personal interest in Minutes 46 and 47.

#### **44. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2015**

Confirmed.

#### **45. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

With regard to Minute 37, Taxi Marshalling Scheme, and the decision taken at the last meeting that all funding stream options be pursued, it was reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner had discussed this issue with the Chair. Alternative funding streams were continuing to be explored, feedback from which would be reported to the next meeting of the Partnership.

##### **Decision**

That feedback in relation to the availability of funding be reported to the next meeting of the Partnership.

#### **46. Strategic Assessment 2014** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

##### **Purpose of report**

To consider and agree the annual priorities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Strategic Assessment 2015.

##### **Issue(s) for consideration**

It was reported that the Partnership had a statutory responsibility to undertake an annual strategic assessment to identify and address the community safety issues that really mattered to the community.

The strategic assessment contained information to aid understanding of the priority community safety issues identified for the communities of Hartlepool including what had changed over the last year, what work the Partnership was doing as well as how the Partnership measured effectiveness and future challenges. An executive summary of the Strategic Assessment was attached to the report which provided a description of the current local and national delivery landscape and a reminder of the objectives and priorities that had been set the previous year. The assessment would assist the Partnership in setting strategic objectives and inform the annual Community Safety Plan for 2016-17.

The Community Safety and Research Officer, who was in attendance at the meeting, provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which focussed on the following:-

- Strategic Objectives 2014 - 2017
- Annual Priorities 2015-16
- The Delivery Landscape
- Performance figures as a comparator with neighbouring authorities
- Crime figures
- Acquisitive Crime
- Organised Crime
- Violent Crime
- Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Hate Crime and Incidents
- Anti-social behaviour incidents
- Community Perceptions & Neighbourhoods
- Victims
- Substance Misuse
- Re-offending
- Youth Offending
- Proposed SHP Delivery Groups

#### Proposed Strategic Objectives 2014-17

- Reduce crime and repeat victimisation
- Reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse
- Create confident, cohesive and safe communities
- Reduce offending and re-offending

#### Proposed Annual Priorities 2016-17

- Reduce acquisitive crime
- Safeguard individuals and families from domestic violence and abuse
- Substance Misuse
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Support vulnerable victims experiencing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce re-offending

Following conclusion of the presentation, a lengthy discussion ensued which included the following issues:-

- (i) Reference was made to the potential reasons for the increase in acquisitive crime, particularly shop lifting and the measures in place to address this. Members were advised that during analysis of re-offending figures shop lifting was the main type of re-offence. In response to a query in relation to the strategy to tackle re-offending, the Chair of the Youth Offending Board advised that prolific offenders were part of the Integrated Offender Management Scheme and there was a need for a number of arrests to be made before a custodial sentence was imposed.
- (ii) In response to concerns raised regarding the increasing levels of

drug dependency in Hartlepool, the Director of Public Health indicated that whilst drug dependency in young people was relatively low, preventative work in this regard was currently taking place which included awareness raising sessions in schools in terms of the dangers around drug and alcohol misuse.

- (iii) Clarification was sought in relation to feedback from vulnerable victims on the benefits of the restorative justice arrangements. The Head of Community Safety and Engagement advised that the Local Restorative Justice Service was in the first stages of implementation, with a Restorative Justice Co-ordinator having recently been appointed. The police were using restorative interventions to address shop lifting related crime and first time offenders. A view was expressed on the need to focus on restorative justice in terms of its significance for victims of crime and vulnerable victims in particular as well as the need to engage with schools on the restorative justice agenda.
- (iv) A Member highlighted the invaluable support provided by the Victim Services Team to vulnerable victims of burglaries and other crime related activities, examples of which were shared with the Partnership. The Chair acknowledged the hard work of the Victim Services and Community Safety Teams in supporting vulnerable victims and requested that a letter of thanks be sent to the teams on behalf of the Partnership.
- (v) Crime prevention was discussed as well as the problems associated with the night time economy. It was suggested that the issue of early morning restriction orders should be revisited given that it was four years since the matter had previously been considered by the Licensing Committee. It was noted that the intention to revisit this issue would be reflected in the Community Safety Plan.
- (vi) With regard to intelligence gathering, the importance and reliance on PCSO's in terms of information provision was emphasised. In response to a request for clarification, the police representative advised that there were no plans to further reduce PCSO resources.
- (vii) Further discussion ensued in relation to crime figures generally and the need to consider how statistical information would be provided in future given the increase in the size of wards. The Head of Community Safety and Engagement referred to a recent piece of work which examined vulnerable localities and work was currently ongoing in those areas where Anti-Social Behaviour Officers were proactively engaging with communities of this type. The need to provide additional support to victims of race related incidents was also highlighted.
- (viii) With regard to re-offending and the support available to individuals prior to release from prison, clarification was provided in relation to

the Through the Gate Service which had been introduced to manage these issues.

- (ix) The potential reasons for the increase in burglary related crime was debated during which the Chair of the Youth Offending Board commented that whilst domestic burglary figures had increased it was envisaged that the figures would reduce during the next reporting period. It was noted that a number of domestic burglaries were carried out on empty properties.
- (x) In relation to the increase in hate crime, it was reported that hate related incidents had increased nationally and the terrorist related activity that had taken place across Europe had contributed to the increase.
- (iv) The issue of hate crime was further discussed including the asylum seeker situation as well as cultural issues. The Chief Superintendent commented on the need to address the national distrust of the police following recent inaccurate media coverage in this regard, details of which were provided. Concerns were expressed that local authorities may not be informed that asylum seekers were being placed in their areas and therefore appropriate levels of support could not be provided.
- (v) Clarification was provided in response to a number of further issues/queries raised in relation to the strategic assessment.

The Partnership took the opportunity to thank the Community Safety and Research Officer as well as all members of the team involved in production of the strategic assessment.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the strategic assessment and proposed annual priorities 2016-17 be agreed.
- (ii) That discussions, as outlined above, be utilised to assist in setting the strategic priorities for the Community Safety Plan 2014-17.
- (iii) That the issue of early morning restriction orders be referred to the Licensing Committee for review.
- (iv) That a letter of thanks, on behalf of the Partnership, be conveyed to the Victim Services and Community Safety Teams for their hard work in supporting vulnerable victims.

## **47. Community Safety Plan 2014-17 (Year 3)** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

### **Purpose of report**

To consider the annual refresh (Year 3) of the 2014-17 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Community Safety Plan.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

It was reported that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership was required to produce an annual refresh of the 2014-17 Community Safety Plan following completion of the annual strategic assessment. A draft version of the revised Community Safety Plan for 2014-17 was attached at Appendix A which had been developed based on the findings of the Strategic Assessment and public consultation.

Members were referred to the four strategic objectives and six annual priorities, details of which were set out in the report. Progress against the Plan would be managed and monitored by the Partnership through quarterly performance reports and review of Task Groups/Sub Group Action Plans. The Partnership's approval to the proposed reporting timetable, as set out in the report was sought and the identification of an appropriate Partnership member to Chair Partnership Task Groups/Sub Groups. In addition to the existing delivery structure, the Partnership's views were sought as to whether a time limited task and finish group to address acquisitive crime, particularly domestic burglary would be beneficial. The Partnership was of the view that given current resource issues, each of the individual task groups should explore how they could contribute to reducing acquisitive crime when developing their action plans.

The Head of Community Safety and Engagement reported that the Plan would be amended to include some of the comments of Partnership Members, as detailed in Minute 46 above, and would be reported to the next meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee.

Reference was made to the discussions in relation to early morning restriction orders and clarification was sought regarding the recommendation of the Partnership, as set out in Minute 46 above. The Head of Community Safety and Engagement advised that the Community Safety Plan would include an action for the Licensing Committee to investigate early morning restriction orders.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the draft Community Safety Plan 2014-17 be approved subject to the inclusion of recommendations of the Partnership, as set out in



Minute 46 above, in relation to early morning restriction orders and restorative justice issues.

- (ii) That the Task Group delivery structure and reporting timetable, as set out in the report, be agreed.
- (iii) That the following Partnership Members Chair the following Groups:-
  - Anti-Social Behaviour – District Manager, Cleveland Fire Authority
  - Substance Misuse – Director of Public Health
  - Domestic Violence – Head of Community Safety and Engagement
  - Communication – Head of Community Safety and Engagement
  - Offending/Re-offending – Head of Offender Services, Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company
  - Joint Action Group - Local Area Commander, Cleveland Police
- (iv) That each of the individual Task Groups explore how they can contribute to reducing acquisitive crime when developing their action plans.

#### **48. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

#### **49. Any Other Business – Proposed Closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court**

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reported that whilst there had been no acknowledgement to the objections by the Council to the closure of the Magistrates Court, and no formal notice had been received, it was anticipated the closure would go ahead in 2016/17.

##### **Decision**

That the information given be noted.

#### **50. Any Other Business – Off-Road Motor Cycles**

A Member expressed concerns regarding the ongoing problems associated with off-road motor cycles which had been reported to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Chief Superintendent outlined the process and importance of reporting such incidents to the Off Road Motor Cycle Team to enable information to be collated with a view to tackling this problem, The

Community Safety and Research Officer added that this had been identified as a ward priority and work was currently ongoing with the Council's Enforcement Team and Neighbourhood Policing with a view to educating individuals of the restrictions. There was a reliance on the public to report such incidents to the Community Safety Team.

**Decision**

That the information given be noted.

**51. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Friday 11 March 2016 at 10.00 am.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 am.

CHAIR



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ABUSE STRATEGY  
2016-2019

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree a process for developing the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy 2016-2019.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Community Safety Partnerships have a statutory responsibility to develop and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in their local area.
- 2.2 The current Hartlepool Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy which was developed in 2012 came to an end in December 2015.
- 2.3 This report sets out a proposed process and timeline for developing a new Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy 2016 – 2019

## 3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ABUSE STRATEGY 2016 - 2019

- 3.1 Overseen by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Domestic Violence & Abuse Task Group, work will begin on developing the Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy in March 2016.
- 3.2 Using a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data sources from Cleveland Police, Hartlepool Borough Council Child & Adult Services, Safe Lives, Hartlepool Borough Council Public Health, Harbour Support Services, Halo, North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and local consultation exercises; a local needs assessment will be undertaken to ascertain the extent of domestic violence and abuse in Hartlepool and understand the impact it has on those affected by this issue.

- 3.3 Key findings from the needs assessment will be used to inform the development of the strategy, including the identification of proposed strategic objectives and priorities.
- 3.4 The draft Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy will be presented to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership in June 2016, and subject to Partnership approval, will be ready to go out for consultation immediately after.
- 3.5 The draft Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy will be subject to an eight week consultation period with the consultation exercise comprising of the following:
- An online consultation survey – with links published on the Safer Hartlepool Partnership website, Hartlepool Borough Council website, Hartlepool Borough Council Facebook page, Hartlepool Borough Council Twitter page and Harbour Support Services Facebook page.
  - The use of local media mechanisms including but not limited to Hartlepool Mail and Hartlepool FM.
  - Targeted emails will be sent to a wide range of public, private, community and voluntary sector representatives and groups containing a link to the online consultation survey.
  - Officers will link into community, residents and domestic violence support groups.
  - The draft strategy will be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board, Finance & Policy Committee, Audit & Governance Committee, Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board and Hartlepool Adult Safeguarding Local Executive Group.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that the finalised strategy will be presented to the Partnership in September 2016.

#### **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

#### **5. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no staff considerations associated with this report.

#### **6. SECTION 17 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Failure to develop and implement a Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy will undermine the Safer Hartlepool Partnerships ability to fulfil its statutory obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate strategies to reduce crime and disorder.

## **7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Community Safety Partnerships have a statutory responsibility to develop and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in their local area.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Effective implementation of the strategy will ensure that those affected by domestic violence and abuse have equal access to services, and that vulnerable victims and their families are safeguarded and protected, including those affected by Honour Based Violence.

## **9. CHILD POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no child poverty implications associated with this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 That the Partnership consider and approve the proposed schedule for developing and consulting on the Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy 2016-2019.

## **11. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 11.1 The current Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy came to an end in December 2015.
- 11.2 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership has a statutory duty to develop and implement strategies aimed at reducing crime and disorder, including domestic violence and abuse.

## **12. CONTACT OFFICER**

Denise Ogden  
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 3  
Email: Denise.Ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523300

Clare Clark  
Head of Community Safety & Engagement  
Hartlepool Borough Council

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 4  
Email: [Clare.Clark@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Clare.Clark@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01429 523100



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2014-17 (YEAR 3)

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the annual refresh (Year 3) of the 2014-17 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Community Safety Plan (see **Appendix A**).

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The current Community Safety Plan, published in 2014 outlines the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's strategic objectives for a three year period, with a requirement to refresh the plan on an annual basis following completion of the annual strategic assessment.
- 2.2 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership considered the first draft of the Community Safety Plan (Year 3) and proposed annual priorities at their meeting held on 26 January 2016, and following discussion at that meeting, the final draft is attached for the Partnerships consideration.

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Partnership agrees the Community Safety Plan 2014-17 (Year 3).

## 4. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Failure to agree the refreshed Community Safety Plan would prevent the Safer Hartlepool Partnership from fulfilling its statutory responsibilities around reducing crime and disorder, substance misuse, and re-offending, as per the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

## 5. CONTACT OFFICER

Denise Ogden  
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 3  
Email: Denise.Ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523300

Clare Clark  
Head of Community Safety & Engagement  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 4  
Email: Clare.Clark@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523100





# Safer Hartlepool Partnership Plan 2014 – 2017

## Year 3



# Contents

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>The Safer Hartlepool Partnership.....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Hartlepool in Context .....</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Partnership Activity 2015/16.....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Strategic Assessment 2014/15.....</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Key findings from the Strategic Assessment.....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>Public Consultation.....</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Partnership Priorities 2016/2017.....</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Key activities over the next 12 months.....</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Measuring Performance.....</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance 2015/16 (Appendix 1).....</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>Delivering the 2016/17 Priorities (Appendix 2).....</b>	<b>Page 17</b>

## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Annual Plan which is based on the findings of the Partnership's Annual Strategic Assessment and consultation with the public through our on-line survey and our annual "Face the Public" event. The Plan outlines the Partnership's strategic objectives and priorities for 2016-17 and will be refreshed next year to incorporate new objectives and priorities as they emerge.

Since becoming Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership in May 2013, I have been impressed by the strength of partnership working and the dedication and continued support of those organisations that are responsible for the Partnership including; the Council, Police, Fire Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, Probation and the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner.

By working together, over the last year recorded anti-social behaviour has reduced by 5.2%, equating to 392 less incidents than in the previous assessment period. .

During 2015-16 the Safer Hartlepool Partnership has also successfully supported and delivered numerous partnership initiatives that have contributed to improved safety in Hartlepool and some of these successes are outlined in this plan.

However crime has increased during this reporting period, and over the coming year there are a number of factors that will present the Safer Hartlepool Partnership with challenges including; an enduring poor economic climate; Welfare Reform; the emergence of new types of serious and organised crimes; and further significant cuts to public expenditure following the Governments Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015. Ministry of Justice plans to close Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court if they go ahead will also inevitably impact on the ability to access justice in the town.

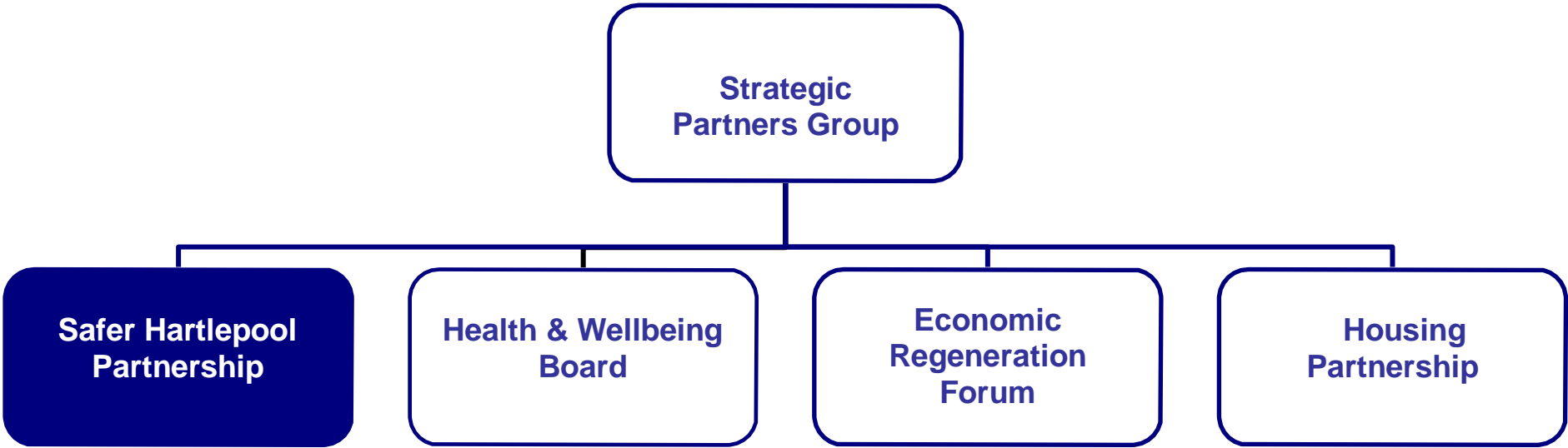
Whilst the year ahead will be full of challenges I am confident that this Partnership Plan will help us to make Hartlepool a safer place to live, work, and socialise.

**Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher**  
**Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership**



# The Safer Hartlepool Partnership

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership is Hartlepool’s statutory Community Safety Partnership and is one of the four<sup>1</sup> themed partnerships of the Hartlepool Strategic Partners Board. The aim of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership is to make Hartlepool a safer place to live, work and socialise by addressing crime and anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and to reduce re-offending.



The Partnership is responsible for delivering the following: *Community Safety Plan; annual Youth Justice Plan; Substance Misuse Plan (Drugs and Alcohol); CCTV Strategy; Domestic Violence Strategy; Social Behaviour Plan; Prevent Action Plan; Cohesion Strategy; Troubled Families Programme*. The Partnership is also responsible for the delivery of the community safety outcomes within the *Sustainable Communities Strategy* and the *Hartlepool Plan*. These local strategies and plans will have regard to the Cleveland Police and Crime Plan and appropriate national strategies and plans, to ensure that national policy is followed.

<sup>1</sup> The themed Partnerships are: The Safer Hartlepool Partnership, The Health and Well Being Board, the Housing Partnership and the Economic Regeneration Forum

## Local Context

Hartlepool is the smallest unitary authority in the North East region and the third smallest in the country comprising of some of the most disadvantaged areas in England. Issues around community safety can be understood by a number of contextual factors:

### Population

- Hartlepool has a stable population rate, maintained by low levels of migration.
- Hartlepool has become more diverse in recent years, although a very small proportion of the population are from the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community.
- 56% of the population in Hartlepool live in six of the most deprived wards in the country, where crime and anti-social behaviour rates are high.

### Health & Wellbeing

- There is a higher prevalence of long term health problems, including mental health.
- Alcohol related hospital admissions in Hartlepool are significantly worse than the regional and national.
- Hartlepool has 40% greater need in relation of mental illness compared to England.
- The number of Class A drug users in Hartlepool is more than double the national average.

### Deprivation

- Hartlepool has pockets of high deprivation where communities experience multiple issues: higher unemployment, lower incomes, child poverty, ill health, low qualification, poorer housing conditions and higher crime rates.
- Hartlepool is the 18<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area out of 326 local authorities.
- Residents living in more deprived and in densely populated areas have high perceptions of crime

### Housing

- The percentage of long term empty properties in Hartlepool is higher than the Tees Valley average.

### Geography

- Community safety problems are not evenly spread and tend to be concentrated in geographic hotspots, particularly in the most deprived wards in Hartlepool.

### Unemployment

- Unemployment rates in Hartlepool are above the regional average and double the national average.
- The unemployment rate of young people aged 18-24 years remains above the national average.



## Partnership Activity 2015– 2016

Over the last year, the Partnership has delivered a number of projects and initiatives against the strategic priorities in the Partnership Plan 2015 - 2016, and developed new services which have been designed to reduce crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending. Examples are listed below:

### Strategic Objective: Reduce Crime & Repeat Victimisation

- **Crime Prevention & Target Hardening** - We have continued to offer crime prevention advice and promote safety measures throughout the year, with seasonal campaigns addressing specific crime types and issues.
- **Serious and Organised Crime** - We have set up a local 'Organised Crime Disruption Panel to disrupt the activities of known organised crime groups in Hartlepool. Front line staff across organisations working in Hartlepool have also been trained to recognise the signs of crimes such as modern day slavery and human trafficking and how to report it.
- **Dedicated Victims Service** - Over the last year we have provided support to 593 victims including 315 victims of crime, and 105 victims of anti-social behavior with the remainder being indirect victims such as those living in high crime and disorder areas and living in the fear of crime. 354 homes have also benefited from improved security across Hartlepool, providing reassurance to victims and reducing their risk of repeat victimisation. Over 88% of victims who have received this service also report increased feelings of safety.
- **Domestic Violence and abuse** – In March this year we launched Operation Encompass to ensure timely information sharing between schools, police, and social care, to improve early intervention and support for children who have witnessed domestic abuse. We have also improved refuge provision for those made homeless by domestic abuse through a dispersed properties scheme.



## Strategic Objective: Reduce the harm caused by drug & alcohol misuse

- **Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Support** – The Partnership has commissioned a range of community based specialist services to support those who misuse substances. To improve access and increase engagement this service now includes an outreach element. Overall these services have helped more than 900 people on their journey to recovery.
- **Awareness Campaigns** – The Partnership is driving forward campaigns to promote responsible drinking and highlight the dangers of drug misuse - campaigns include Dry January, Substance Misuse Week, and Foetal Spectrum Disorder.
- **Education and awareness**- The Partnership has provided education and awareness in relation to the dangers of alcohol to young people through healthy life style work in schools.
- **Enforcement** - The Partnership has continued to monitor sales of underage drinking, undertaking test purchasing where required, and delivered mandatory training to licensees around irresponsible drink promotions.



160311 RND Community Safety Plan 2014-17 (Year 3)

## Strategic Objective: Create confident, cohesive and safe communities:

- **Respect Your Neighbourhood Campaign** - Throughout the year we have delivered eleven multi-agency Neighbourhood Action Days to tackle environmental crime.
- **Targeted Youth Outreach Activities** - Have been delivered in anti-social behaviour hotspot areas to ensure young people remain safe and are diverted into positive activities.
- **Selective Licensing of landlords** – Following consultation we have identified further streets to extend selective licensing of landlords to more areas of the town.
- **Supported a number of Voluntary Sector Groups** - such as the Asylum Seeker Group, and Crime Prevention Panel to promote crime prevention messages and cultural diversity, and raise awareness of services available for victims of hate crime and domestic abuse.
- **Anti-social Behaviour Awareness Day (ASBAD)** – More than 1,500 secondary school pupils have taken part in the annual ASBAD event with interactive sessions on topics such as alcohol awareness, making hoax calls, and bullying.
- **Hate Crime** – We undertook an investigation into the levels and impact of hate crime through the Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and a hate crime action plan will be delivered this year.
- **Operation Impact** - Introduced intensive police patrols in anti-social behaviour hotspot areas, and made extensive use of new powers under new anti-social behaviour legislation including dispersal orders.

## Strategic Objective: Reduce offending and re-offending

Reducing offending and re-offending has been one of the main focuses of the Partnership during 2015/16. In response to high rates of reoffending in Hartlepool the Partnership has introduced a new strategy which aims to break the cycle of re-offending behaviour and improve public safety. The strategy aims to strengthen the ability of the Partnership to work together to provide local solutions to reoffending set against the broader context of the national Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy. Current activities aimed at reducing offending and reoffending include:

- **Triage Programme** - This scheme diverts young offenders into positive activities and support, instead of charging them and taking them to court. The initiative continues to reduce the numbers of young Hartlepool people entering the criminal justice system in Hartlepool and the success of the scheme is now being replicated across the Cleveland area.
- **Integrated Offender Management (IOM)** – This multi-agency approach to reducing re-offending has benefited from further development work this year with a multi-agency hub comprising of a Police Sergeant, HMP Prison Officers, a Community Rehabilitation Company Officer, Restorative Justice Co-ordinator, and Performance Officer co-located at Holme House Prison. The hub aims to improve 'through the gate services' ensuring a smooth transition for offenders into the community to reduce the risk of further offending behaviour.
- **Troubled Families Programme – Think Family / Think Community** – This government funded initiative entered its second phase during 2015. The programme aims to reduce youth offending, reduce anti-social behaviour, increase education attendance and get people into work. Due to the local success of the programme the government has committed funding to enable work to be undertaken with a further 143 families over the forthcoming year.



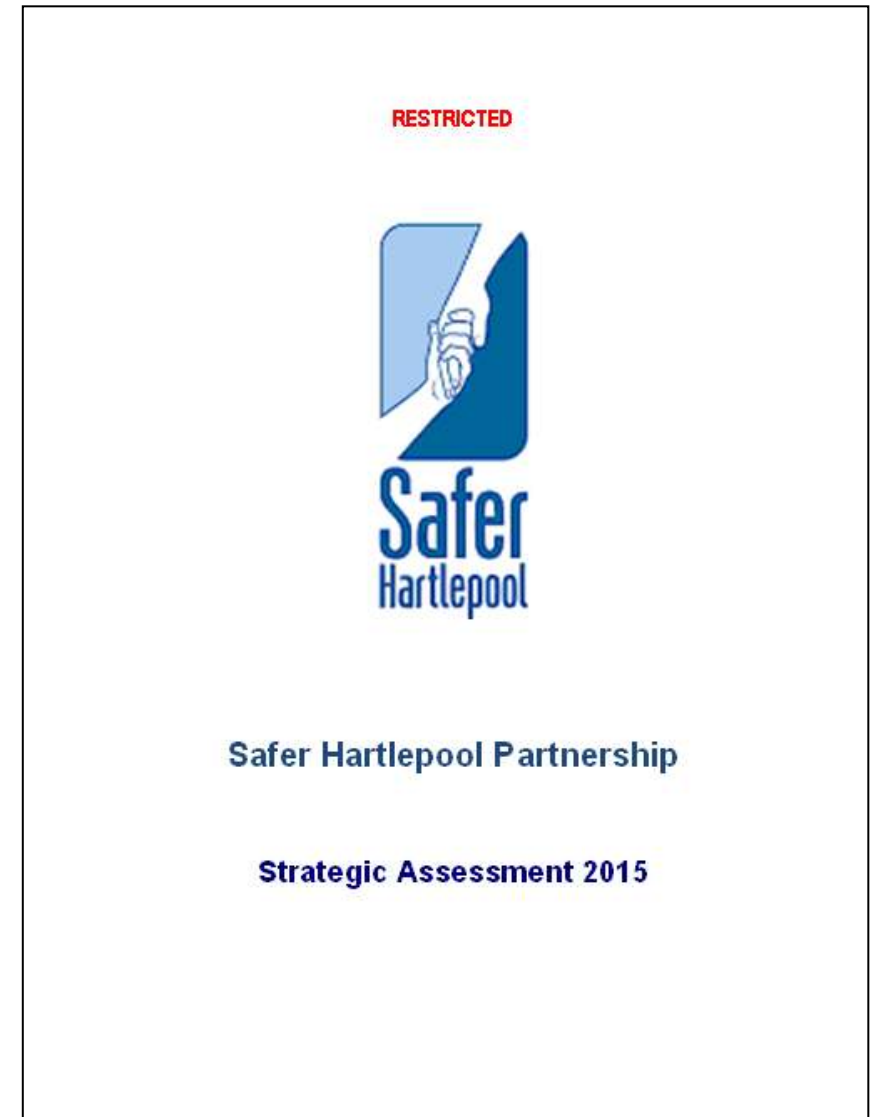


## Strategic Assessment 2015

The ninth Safer Hartlepool Strategic Assessment was completed in December 2015 and contains information to aid the Partnership's understanding of the priority community safety issues in Hartlepool. The Assessment forms part of an intelligence-led approach to community safety, which enables a more focused, resource-effective and partnership-orientated delivery of options to help:

- Better understand the patterns and trends relating to crime, disorder and substance misuse issues affecting the Borough;
- Set clear and robust strategic priorities for the Partnership;
- Develop interventions and activities that are driven by reliable intelligence-led evidence.

The Strategic Assessment covers the twelve month period October 2014 to September 2015 and contains analysis of data obtained from both statutory and non-statutory partner agencies including: the Hartlepool Borough Council, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Housing Hartlepool, and Harbour Support Services. Additional information has also been obtained from community consultations and meetings.



## Key findings from the Strategic Assessment period include:

### Strategic Objective: Reduce Crime & Repeat Victimisation

- Recorded crime in Hartlepool has increased by 36% and remains above the national average.
- Acquisitive crimes, particularly domestic burglary offences, have increased.
- Repeat victimisation is evident in most crime categories; however it is even higher in violence offences, particularly domestic related violence.
- In the current economic climate there is potential that the numbers of repeat and vulnerable victims will increase.

### Strategic Objective: Reduce the harm caused by drug & alcohol misuse

- Alcohol specific hospital admissions for adults and under 18's in Hartlepool are significantly higher than the national average.
- The number of people dependant on drugs in Hartlepool is twice the national average.
- There is a clear link between Class A drug misuse and the occurrence of acquisitive crime.
- The number of individuals accessing drug treatment has remained stable since the previous assessment period.

### Strategic Objective: Create confident, cohesive and safe communities

- The number of anti-social behaviour incidents recorded in Hartlepool have reduced by 5%.
- Our most disadvantaged communities and neighbourhoods suffer from disproportionate levels of anti-social behaviour.
- Anti-social behaviour in all its forms act as visible signs of disorder in the community and is closely linked to perceptions of safety and satisfaction with their local area.

### Strategic Objective: Reduce offending and re-offending

- Adult re-offending continues to be a significant factor, with more than 90% of repeat offenders being aged 18 years or over.
- Re-offenders have greater needs in respect of housing, education, training, employment and substance misuse.
- The number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time has reduced by 29% in comparison to the previous assessment period.

## Public Consultation

To ensure that the Partnership is focusing on the issues that residents consider to be a priority, findings from local community consultations have been taken into consideration when setting the strategic objectives and priorities.

### Face the Public

Consultation in the lead up to and at the Safer Hartlepool Partnership ‘Face the Public’ event held in October 2015 raised the following issues:

- How to sustain Neighbourhood Policing; the vital links with the community; and strong multi-agency partnership working.
- The importance of tackling anti-social behaviour and looking after the local environment to improve quality of life.
- Improving safety on the streets and safety ‘on-line’.
- Working with offenders and the importance of drug and alcohol treatment services.
- The need to ensure continued support for victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

### Safer Hartlepool Partnership On-line Survey

During September and October 2015 the Partnership undertook an on-line survey. Accessed via the Safer Hartlepool Partnership website, more than 200 people responded. As part of the survey participants were asked:

**“Which of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership priorities is the most important to you?”**

From the four choices available, the majority of respondents identified creating confident, strong and safe communities as the most important priority, as below:

- Create confident, strong and safe communities (41%)
- Reduce crime and repeat victimisation (25%)
- Reduce offending and re-offending (18%)
- Reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse (16%)

When participants were presented with a list of anti-social behaviour issues, and asked to tell us which they felt were a very or fairly big problem in their local area the following five issues were identified:

**Rubbish or litter lying around**

**Speed and volume of road traffic**

**Groups hanging around the streets**

**People being drunk or rowdy in public places**

**People using or dealing drugs**

## Partnership Strategic Objectives 2014-2017

Based on the findings in the annual Strategic Assessment and consultation with the local community, the Partnership will retain the following four strategic objectives during the lifetime of the three year plan:

Strategic Objectives 2014 - 2017	
Reduce crime and repeat victimisation	Reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse
Create confident, cohesive and safe communities	Reduce offending and re-offending

## Partnership Priorities 2016-2017

To reflect community priorities evidenced in the community consultation process, during 2016/17 our key focus will be to: **“Create confident, cohesive and safe communities”** by concentrating on the following areas of concern:

Annual Priorities 2016 - 2017	
<b>Re-offending</b> - reduce re-offending through a combination of prevention, diversion and enforcement activity.	<b>Acquisitive Crime</b> – reduce acquisitive crime through raising awareness and encouraging preventative activity with a particular focus on domestic burglary.
<b>Domestic Violence and Abuse</b> – safeguard individuals and their families from violence and abuse and implement programmes to tackle those identified as ‘high risk’.	<b>Anti-social behaviour</b> –. reduce anti-social behaviour through a combination of diversionary, educational, and enforcement action and increase restorative interventions.
<b>Substance misuse</b> – reduce the harm caused to individuals, their family and the community, by drug and alcohol misuse and alcohol related violence.	<b>Vulnerable Victims</b> - work together to identify and support vulnerable victims and communities experiencing crime and anti-social behavior.

## Key activities over the next 12 months include:

**Partnerships** - we will review and implement new ways of partnership working investigating the use of new technology to manage anti-social behaviour cases and share information. We will continue to develop multi-agency partnership working in neighbourhoods, particularly those neighbourhoods experiencing high levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues.

**Crime Prevention** – to reduce the opportunity for acquisitive crime to occur we will increase the use of technology to promote crime prevention advice and key safety messages, and continue to deliver our home and personal security service.

**Substance Misuse** - we will address the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on the broader community working in partnership with the police to target hotspot locations, investigating the use of **Early Morning Restriction Orders with the Councils Licensing Committee**. We will also ensure appropriate treatment and recovery support services are in place for individuals and their families.

**Anti-social behaviour** – we will identify persistent offenders; making effective use of enforcement tools to protect the community and environment. We will ensure the effective resolution of anti-social behaviour, and increase the use of our restorative justice and mediation service to prevent escalation of behaviours negatively impacting on quality of life. **This will include exploring the use of restorative interventions in schools.**

**Vulnerable Victims** – we will improve the identification of vulnerable victims; strengthen support pathways **(including the use of restorative conferencing)** and links with safeguarding, protecting those at risk of exploitation.

**Domestic Violence & Abuse** – we will undertake an in depth needs analysis, and develop and implement a new strategy for tackling domestic abuse, exploring ways of supporting victims and their families, and making use of programmes to promotes healthy relationships and reduce abusive behaviours.

**Offenders** – we will continue to work with offenders and those at risk of offending, investing in families through early help services to prevent offending behaviour, and working with “Through the Gate” services to ensure offenders are fully reintegrated back into the community by providing support and improving access to stable accommodation, **and employment**.

**Community Engagement** – we will maintain vital links with the community ensuring pathways are in place for local residents to raise issues of concern, **map and** work with diverse communities **to tackle hate**, and maximize the work of the voluntary sector.

## Measuring Performance

Partnership performance monitoring will be undertaken on a quarterly basis to assess progress against key priorities drawn from the strategic assessment and identify any emerging issues. Performance management reports will be provided to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

The following performance indicators will be monitored over the next 12 months:

Strategic Objective	Performance Indicator
Reduce crime & repeat victimisation	Total recorded crime rate per 1,000 population
	Domestic burglary rate per 1,000 household
	Vehicle crime rate per 1,000 population
	Robbery rate per 1,000 population
	Shoplifting rate per 1,000 population
	Violent crime (including sexual violence) rate per 1,000 population*
	% of violent crime (including sexual violence) that is domestic related
	% of repeat cases of domestic violence (MARAC)
	Violent crime (including sexual violence) hospital admissions for violence per 100,000 population*
Reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse	Drug offences per 1,000 population
	% of people who think drug use or dealing is a problem
	% of opiate drug users that have successfully completed drug treatment*
	% of non-opiate drug users that have successfully completed drug treatment*
	% of alcohol users that have successfully completed alcohol treatment
	Alcohol related hospital admissions rate per 100,000 population*
	Number of young people known to substance misuse services

\*Indicators link to the Public Health Outcome Framework

Strategic Objective	Performance Indicator
Create confident, cohesive & safe communities	Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population
	Public order offences per 1,000 population
	Criminal damage rate per 1,000 population
	Deliberate fires rate per 1,000 population
	Number of reported hate crimes & incidents
	% of the population affected by noise - number of complaints about noise
	% of people who feel safe during the day
	% of people who feel safe after dark
	% of people who think rubbish or litter lying around is a problem
	% of people who think groups hanging around the streets is a problem
	% of people who think people being drunk or rowdy in a public place is a problem
	% of people who think vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property is a problem
	% of people who think noisy neighbours or loud parties is a problem
	% of people who think abandoned or burnt out cars are a problem
	% of people who think that they belong to their local area
	% of people who feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area
	% of people who believe that people from different back grounds get on well together
	% of people who think that people in the area pull together to improve the local area
Reduce offending & re-offending	Rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System per 100,000 population*
	Re-offending levels - percentage of offenders who re-offend*
	Re-offending levels - average number of re-offences per offender*
	Re-offending rate of Prolific & Priority Offenders
	Re-offending rate of High Crime Causers
	% of Troubled Families who have reduced their offending behaviour

\*Indicators link to the Public Health Outcome Framework

## **Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance 2015/16**

## **Appendix 1**

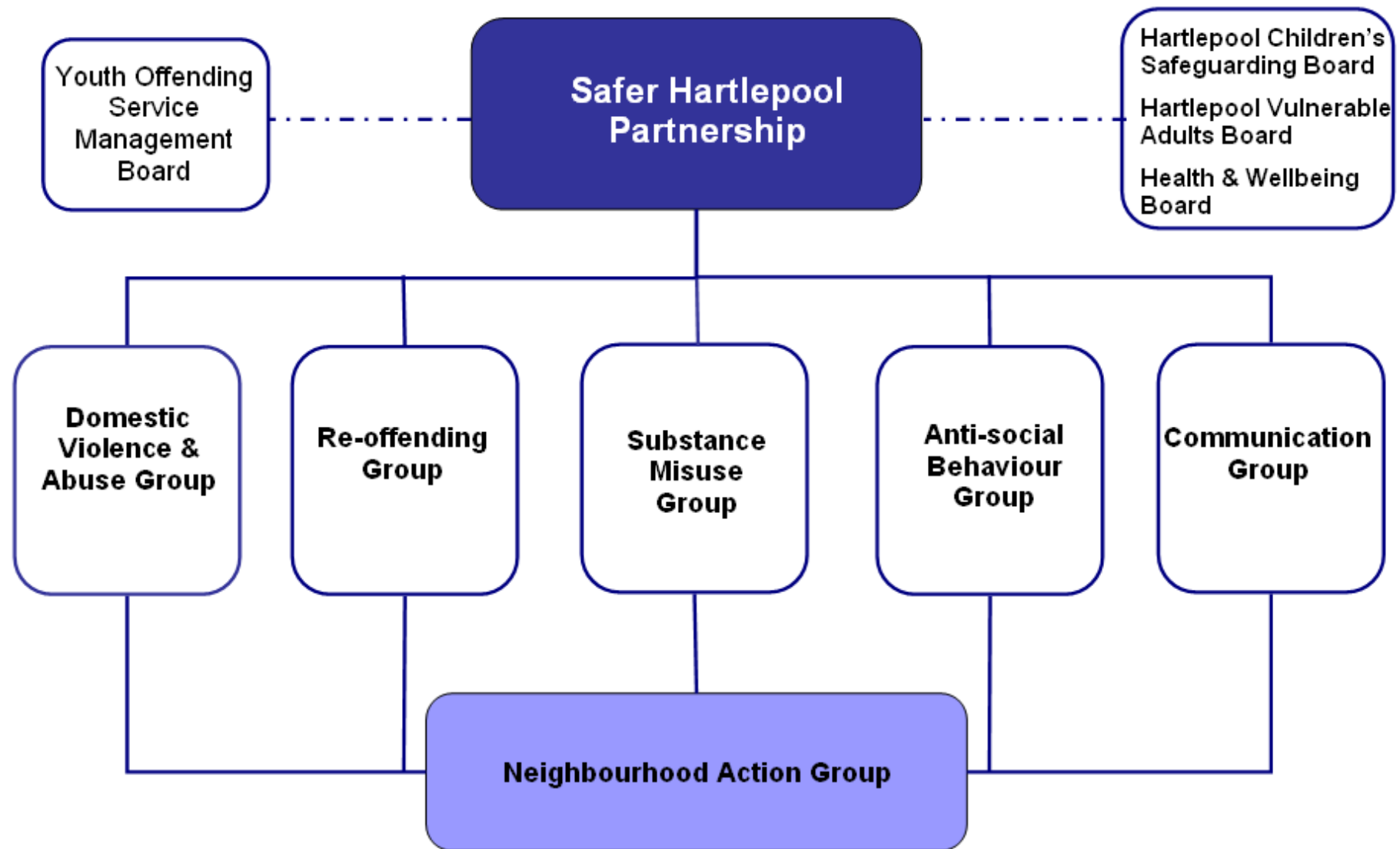
**To be published in April 2016**



## Delivering the 2016/17 Priorities – Delivery Structure

## Appendix 2

The responsibility for delivery of each of the priorities has been allocated to a dedicated theme group of the Safer Hartlepool Executive Group.







# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** RESPECT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD -  
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME CAMPAIGN

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the 'Respect Your Neighbourhood – Environmental Crime Campaign'.
- 1.2 To consider the Partnerships continuing support for Neighbourhood Action Days over the forthcoming year.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 'Respect Your Neighbourhood' campaign was introduced in February 2013 to tackle environmental crime following both Neighbourhood Services Committee approval, and the agreed support of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.
- 2.2 One of the key elements of the campaign is a multi-agency 'day of action' organised by the Council which is primarily enforcement orientated, but also includes measures to improve neighbourhood safety and resolve quality of life issues.
- 2.2 As originally agreed by the Councils Neighbourhood Services Committee, Neighbourhood Action Days are underpinned by a problem solving approach involving the analysis of community concerns, visual audits, and partnership data. It operates on one day per month, with all eleven wards within Hartlepool benefiting from the initiative on a rotational basis.
- 2.3 A report to the Councils Neighbourhood Services Committee in January, outlined progress to date on Neighbourhood Action Days, and included a proposal that an annual schedule of Neighbourhood Action Days be agreed at the beginning of each year by the Neighbourhood Services Committee. This was subsequently approved by the Committee and for information, the full report is attached as **Appendix A**.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership considers the attached Neighbourhood Services Committee Report, discusses its content, and agrees their support for Neighbourhood Action Days over the forthcoming year.

### **4. CONTACT OFFICER**

Denise Ogden  
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 3  
Email: Denise.Ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523300

Clare Clark  
Head of Community Safety & Engagement  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 4  
Email: Clare.Clark@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523100

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>th</sup> January 2016**



**Report of:** Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods)

**Subject:** 'RESPECT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD' -  
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME CAMPAIGN UPDATE

---

## **1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY**

1.1 For information.

## **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 To update the Neighbourhood Services Committee on current progress to date in relation to the 'Respect Your Neighbourhood' Environmental Crime Campaign.
- 2.2 To consider improvements to the planning of Neighbourhood Action Days; and to agree the 2016 /17 Neighbourhood Action Day schedule as attached at **Appendix A**.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The 'Respect Your Neighbourhood' campaign was introduced in February 2013 to tackle environmental crime following Neighbourhood Services Committee approval. One of the key elements of the campaign is a multi-agency 'day of action' organised by the Council which is primarily enforcement orientated, but also includes measures to improve neighbourhood safety and resolve quality of life issues.
- 3.2 As originally agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Committee, Neighbourhood Action Days are underpinned by a problem solving approach involving the analysis of community concerns, visual audits, and partnership data. It operates on one day per month, with all eleven wards within Hartlepool benefiting from the initiative on a rotational basis.

3.3 Depending upon what the issues are in any particular area on the basis of the evidence collated, Neighbourhood Action Days could include:

- Litter, dog fouling, dogs off lead enforcement;
- Planning enforcement activity such as section 215;
- Highways enforcement such as overhanging trees;
- Illegal Parking enforcement;
- Housing standards enforcement;
- Proactive anti-social behaviour patrols;
- Trading standards and environmental health activity including illegal waste carrying, noise nuisance and pest control;
- Arson reduction activity;
- Community and/or school litter picking;
- Off road bikes;
- Scrap metal theft; and
- Community Payback completing reparation work – such as street furniture repairs / refreshing painting.

3.4 The 'Respect Your Neighbourhood Initiative' is accompanied by a coordinated media campaign with an updated case study report, illustrated with "before" and "after" photographs. The campaign has been extensively covered in the local press and an example article that appeared in the Mail on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December is attached for information at **Appendix B**.

#### **4. DAYS OF ACTION 2015/16 - SUMMARY**

4.1 During 2015/16, nine of the eleven annual action days have been undertaken. In April the Neighbourhood Action Day did not take place due to the Purdah period in the run up to the May elections. The July Neighbourhood Action Day was rescheduled to take place in December due to key staff being involved in an emergency enforcement operation in July. As a result two Neighbourhood Action Days will take place in January 2016, one in the Foggy Furze Ward, and one in Jesmond Ward.

4.2 Case studies have been completed for each of the Neighbourhood Action Days that have taken place during 2015. The following provides a summary of outcomes achieved over the nine days of action:

- 14 warning issued to inconsiderate parkers
- 5 untaxed vehicles seized
- 3 Penalty Charge Notices issued for illegally parked vehicles
- 17 warnings issued under section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act
- 17 actions carried out in relation to Section 215 of the Housing Act
- 8 Fixed Penalty notices issued for dog fouling/littering
- 50 locations/streets benefiting from permanent signage in relation to dog fouling
- 40 households benefiting from free bulky waste collections (sponsored through ward member budgets)
- 3 locations benefiting from graffiti removal
- 1,212 properties letter dropped in relation to bin presentations

- 15 abandoned bins removed from rear alleyways
- 209 properties letter dropped in relation to anti-social behaviour
- 11 repairs undertaken to property within the public realm e.g. fences; footpaths; play equipment
- 7 locations cleared of fly tipped rubbish
- 11 locations/properties made safe and secure
- 78 Homes benefiting from home fire safety visits

4.3 The above outcomes suggest that the Respect Your Neighbourhood Campaign as a whole has continued to be a successful method of tackling local environmental problems that matter to local residents. Outside Neighbourhood Action Days, the Environmental Enforcement team has employed a sustained and widespread education campaign around environmental issues such as dog fouling across all wards. Ongoing action using evidence emerging from Neighbourhood Action Days is also underway, such as several cases currently being prepared for prosecution in relation to fly-tipping.

4.4 To ensure resources are maximised to increase the number of actions carried out on Neighbourhood Action Days there has also been improved co-ordination between existing work programmes and Neighbourhood Action Days over the last year. For example, action days, where possible, are now tied into street cleansing rounds. The Enforcement Team have also co-ordinated their work programme to fit in with the action days by spending a week in the target area ahead of the action day gathering up to date intelligence. Further partnership working in the future with VOSA and the Economic Development Team will increase the ability to tackle waste carrier vehicles travelling through town with inadequate or missing nets allowing litter to escape. New legislative powers allowing for the seizure of vehicles found to be involved in fly tipping offences will further enhance the teams ability to undertake enforcement action in the future

## **5. REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION DAYS**

5.1 As Neighbourhood Action Days have been rolled out across the wards of Hartlepool for almost two years now, the Community Safety and Engagement Team has undertaken a quick review of Neighbourhood Action Days to date. This review will identify any learning points that could be used to improve the days of action in the future. The review is based upon the experience of those responsible for co-ordinating neighbourhood actions days, along with feedback received from those involved in delivery, and other key individuals involved in the process such as Ward Councillors and residents.

5.2 The Co-ordination of Neighbourhood Action Days is currently undertaken by the Community Safety and Engagement Team on the basis of a programme agreed by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Joint Action Group. This process was agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Committee at their meeting in November 2013. As outlined in the background to this report, the process is underpinned by a problem solving approach involving the analysis of community concerns, visual audits, and partnership data. The following provides an overview of what has worked well under the current system:

- Strong support from the Council's Environmental Enforcement team, Neighbourhood Development Officers, Private Sector Housing Team and Cleveland Fire Brigade
- A wide range of actions achieved during neighbourhood action days from issuing enforcement notices to undertaking street repairs
- Improvements have been made over the year to Neighbourhood Action Days to ensure best use is made of agency resources.
- Linking the action days to the Joint Action Group (JAG) to identify the priorities for each area using Partnership data has helped to target agency resources
- There has been good involvement from local residents who have raised issues and priorities that have been fed into the action plan for their ward neighbourhood action day through attending the audit.

5.3 The following provides an overview of what has not worked well over the last year:

- Changes of date and/or location for some action days have meant that the link between the action day and the cleansing and enforcement work programmes was lost making it more difficult for these teams to participate
- As the target areas were identified through the community intelligence process this meant that in some wards the 2014 and 2015 action days were in the same location, whilst in other wards the location changed. Feedback from Ward Councillors in some of those wards where the location was duplicated would have preferred a different location
- Disappointing level of support due to other demands from some partners
- Some Ward Councillors and residents were unable to fully participate in Neighbourhood Action Days due to poor communication / insufficient notice being given.
- During discussion at the Neighbourhood Services Committee in March last year some Members requested that consideration be given to rotating the annual schedule of Neighbourhood Action Days so that their wards benefited from action days taking place at different times of the year.

## **6 PROPOSALS**

6.1 To ensure the continued success of the Respect Your Neighbourhood campaign it is apparent that improvements need to be made in relation to the planning of Neighbourhood Action Days to ensure the full participation of all agencies and Ward Councillors, and those residents that wish to participate. As such, it is proposed that an annual schedule for Neighbourhood Action Days outlining the months and wards where neighbourhood action days will take place is agreed in advance by the Neighbourhood Services Committee in January of each year with April remaining dormant due to Purdah. A proposed schedule for 2016/17 Neighbourhood Action Days is attached at **Appendix A**.

6.2 Under this proposal the schedule could be altered on an annual basis to ensure days of action took place in different months, thereby taking account of seasonal variations and the desire from Ward Councillors for rotation. To preserve the



integrity of potential enforcement activity that will take place on Neighbourhood Action Days the actual dates of Neighbourhood Action Days will not be published in advance. However the dates will be agreed with relevant Ward Councillors in advance, at the beginning of each year to enable Ward Councillors and agencies to arrange diaries alongside other commitments. Discussions with Ward Councillors will also take place in relation to the proposed areas for action to ensure flexibility within Wards. This will include a discussion of the major issues collated in relation to the ward from Partnership data along with intelligence from Ward Councillors. Once agreed, key residents will be informed when their Neighbourhood Action Day and Audit will take place to ensure they are fully involved in setting priorities.

## **7. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no risk implications to this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

## **9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 There are no legal considerations associated with this report save ensuring the Councils statutory enforcement powers are appropriately discharged.

## **10. CHILD POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

10.1 There are no child poverty considerations associated with this report

## **11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

11.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations associated with this report.

## **12. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS**

12.1 The 'Respect Your Neighbourhood' Initiative assists the Council in addressing its Section 17 obligations. Environmental crime has a significant impact on communities' feelings of safety and if these issues are not addressed at the earliest opportunity, there is a risk that more incidents, disorder, or serious crime may occur.

12.2 A delayed and uncoordinated response to this type of crime can also signal to communities that no-one cares about them, leading to a downward spiral in community cohesion, an increase in anxiety and fear, and changes in behaviour to protect themselves.

**13. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 13.1 There are no staff considerations associated with this report.

**14. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 That the Neighbourhood Services Committee notes and comments on the current progress to date on the 'Respect Your Neighbourhood' – Environmental Crime Campaign.
- 14.2 That the Neighbourhood Services Committee considers and agrees the proposed changes to the planning of Neighbourhood Action Days, and agrees the 2016 Neighbourhood Action Day Schedule attached as **Appendix A**.

**15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 15.1 'Environmental Crime Campaign' - Neighbourhood Services Committee, November 2013.
- 15.2 'Respect Your Neighbourhood - Environmental Crime Campaign Update' - Neighbourhood Services Committee January 2015.
- 15.3 Previously published Action Day Cases Studies are available in the Members room.

**16. CONTACT OFFICER**

Alastair Smith  
Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods)  
Level 3  
Civic Centre  
Hartlepool  
TS24 AY

Tel: (01429) 523802  
Email: [alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Clare Clark  
Head of Community Safety and Engagement  
Level 4  
Civic Centre  
Hartlepool TS24 8AY

Tel: (01429) 523100  
Email: [clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk)

**‘Respect Your Neighbourhood’ Action Day Programme 2016**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Proposed location and actions</b>
February	Headland and Harbour	
March	Manor House	Week commencing 14 <sup>th</sup> March to fit with the bulky waste scheme. Audit last week in Feb. Area to include Macrae Rd, Eaglesfield Road across to Doyle Walk, Gulliver Road and part of Masefield Road.
April		Elections purdah period
May	Victoria	
June	Rural West	
July	Jesmond	
August	Foggy Furze	
September	Seaton	
October	De Brus	
November	Burn Valley	
December	Hart	
January	Fens and Rossmere	

4 | HARTLEPOOL MAIL

NEWS

facebook.com/hartlepoolmailnews

NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIDE CAMPAIGN CARRIES OUT DAY OF ACTION IN AREAS OF TOWN

# Community task force targets ward nuisances

By PETER TENNICK  
peter.tennick@hmail.co.uk  
@gettennick

Hartlepool's Victoria ward has been the latest focus of an ongoing campaign to ensure that neighbourhoods take pride in their area.

The Respect Your Neighbourhood campaign saw untaxed vehicles seized and officers looking into targeting environmental nuisances.

The campaign, led by Hartlepool Borough Council, but involving organisations, including the police and fire brigade under the banner of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership, involves a full day of action in a particular area of town one day a month, aimed at improving local neighbourhoods.

Prior to the day, the key organisations involved worked with the ward councillors and public to help identify issues which needed tackling.

The Victoria Ward day of action concentrated on the area from Chester Road and Brougham Terrace to the north, Clarence Road to the east, the Mill House Leisure Centre car park to the south and Jesmond Road to the west. Among the range of activities on the day were:

- The council's enforcement team patrolled the area, seizing four untaxed vehicles and issuing a fixed-penalty notice for dog fouling.
- The enforcement team also removed 15 bins which had been left out in back streets and carried out a letter drop in 13 streets, reminding people to store their bins on their property, rather than leaving them out in the back streets, where they block access to the council's cleansing teams and become arson targets.
- Eight locations were drawn to the attention of the council's Private Sector Housing Team for action. These include properties which were not properly secured, one with rubbish stockpiled in the yard, which posed an arson risk, and an empty house – which was notified to the police – where thieves had broken into the property and removed the copper piping.
- New permanent metal warning signs were issued in the back lane of Derwent Street to caution people that it is not to be used as a dog toilet and exercise area, and dog fouling warning stickers were put on signs and lamp-posts in the wider area.
- The council's cleansing team carried out litter picking and mechanical sweeping and the hedges and bushes along Middleton Road were trimmed and fallen leaves were removed.

Councillor Marjorie James, chairwoman of the council's Neighbourhood Services Policy Committee, said: "We have listened to residents' comments and have taken prompt action on the things which concern them in their local area."

"One other issue which was flagged up to us was parking congestion around the Raglan Quoit Club and discussions are ongoing to find a mutually acceptable solution."

**NOW HAVE YOUR SAY**  
facebook.com/hartlepoolmailnews  
@gettennick



From left, Hartlepool Borough Council neighbourhood caretaker Brent Atkinson, housing standards officer Michael Croft, Kate Ainger of the Community Safety and Engagement Team and Victoria ward Councillors Trisha Lawton and Carl Richardson, taking part in the day of action.



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP  
PERFORMANCE

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance for Quarter 3 – October 2015 to December 2015 (inclusive).

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Community Safety Plan 2014-17 published in 2014 outlined the Safer Hartlepool Partnership strategic objectives, annual priorities and key performance indicators 2014/15.
- 2.2 The report attached (**Appendix A**) provides an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance during Quarter 3, comparing current performance to the same time period in the previous year, where appropriate.

## 3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 No options submitted for consideration other than the recommendations.

## 4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no equality of diversity implications.

## 5. SECTION 17

- 5.1 There are no Section 17 implications.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership note and comment on partnership performance in Quarter 3.

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership is responsible for overseeing the successful delivery of the Community Safety Plan 2014-17.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 The following backgrounds papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
- 8.2 Safer Hartlepool Partnership – Community Safety Plan 2014-17

## **9. CONTACT OFFICER**

Denise Ogden  
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
(01429 523301)  
[Denise.ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Denise.ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Clare Clark, Head of Community Safety and Engagement  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
(01429) 523100  
[clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX A

**Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance Indicators  
2015-16****Strategic Objective: Reduce Crime & Repeat Victimisation**

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015/16	Current Position Oct 15 - Dec 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
All Recorded Crime	7308	Reduce	1997	-127	-6%
Domestic Burglary	348	Reduce	74	-54	-42.2%
Vehicle Crime	571	Reduce	158	+5	+3.3%
Shoplifting	1038	Reduce	281	-32	-10.2%
Local Violence	1422	Reduce	470	+50	+11.9%
Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence – MARAC	26%	Reduce	36%	+1	+7%

**Strategic Objective: Reduce the harm caused by Drugs and Alcohol**

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015/16	Current Position Oct 15 - Dec 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
Number of substance misusers going into effective treatment – Opiate	676	3% increase	690	-5	-0.8
Proportion of substance misusers that successfully complete treatment - Opiate	7%	12%	5.8%		-19.2
Proportion of substance misusers who successfully complete treatment and represent back into treatment within 6 months of leaving treatment	36.7%	10%	18.9%		14.42
Reduction in the rate of alcohol related harm hospital admissions	154	Reduce	Q3 data unavailable		
Number of young people found in possession of alcohol	85	Reduce	9	-5	-36%



## APPENDIX A

Strategic Objective: Create Confident, Cohesive and Safe Communities

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015/16	Current Position Oct 15 - Dec 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
Anti-social Behaviour Incidents reported to the Police	7721	Reduce	1480	-345	-18.9%
Deliberate Fires	393	Reduce	71	-57	-45%
Criminal Damage to Dwellings	500	Reduce	124	-24	-16.2%
Hate Incidents	115	Increase	26	+1	+4%

Strategic Objective: Reduce Offending & Re-Offending

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015-16	Current Position Oct 15 - Dec 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
Re-offending rate of young offenders*	1.3	Reduce	1.4	-0.3	-19%
First-Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice System	38	Reduce	9	0	0%
Re-offending rate of Prolific & Priority Offenders		Reduce	Not currently calculated		
Re-offending rate of High Crime Causers		Reduce	Not currently calculated		
Number of Troubled Families engaged with **	290	143	206		
Number of Troubled Families where results have been claimed	290	143	35		

\* Re-offending figure is based on Cohort tracking – new cohort starts every quarter and this cohort (i.e. of Young Persons) is then tracked for a period of 12 months. Example: Jul 2013 to Jun 2014 and tracked until end of Jun 2015.

\*\*Phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme commenced in April 2015 with a completely different cohort to 2014/15. This year we are mandated to work with a minimum of 143 families.

## APPENDIX A

**Recorded Crime in Hartlepool**  
**October 15 – December 15**

Publicly Reported Crime (Victim Based Crime)				
Crime Category/Type	Oct14 - Dec14	Oct15 - Dec15	Change	% Change
<b>Violence against the person</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
Homicide	2	0	-2	-100.0%
Violence with injury	205	220	15	7.3%
Violence without injury	213	250	37	17.4%
<b>Sexual Offences</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>52.8%</b>
Rape	18	19	1	5.6%
Other Sexual Offences	18	36	18	100.0%
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-10.0%</b>
Business Robbery	1	4	3	300.0%
Personal Robbery	9	5	-4	-44.4%
<b>Acquisitive Crime</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>-106</b>	<b>-10.6%</b>
Domestic Burglary	128	74	-54	-42.2%
Other Burglary	89	98	9	10.1%
Bicycle Theft	47	31	-16	-34.0%
Theft from the Person	7	13	6	85.7%
Vehicle Crime (Inc Inter.)	153	158	5	3.3%
Shoplifting	313	281	-32	-10.2%
Other Theft	265	241	-24	-9.1%
<b>Criminal Damage &amp; Arson</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>-55</b>	<b>-12.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1928</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>-93</b>	<b>-4.8%</b>
Police Generated Offences (Non -Victim Based Crime)				
Crime Category/Type	Oct14 - Dec14	Oct15 - Dec15	Change	% Change
<b>Public Disorder</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-12.2%</b>
<b>Drug Offences</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-16.9%</b>
Trafficking of drugs	10	17	7	70.0%
Possession/Use of drugs	61	42	-19	-31.1%
<b>Possession of Weapons</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-33.3%</b>
<b>Misc. Crimes Against Society</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-25.0%</b>
<b>Total Police Generated Crime</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>-17.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME IN HARTLEPOOL</b>	<b>2124</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>-127</b>	<b>-6.0%</b>

## APPENDIX A

**Recorded Crime in Cleveland**  
**October 15 – December 15**

Publicly Reported Crime (Victim Based Crime) Oct15 -Dec15										
Crime Category/Type	HARTLEPOOL		REDCAR		MIDDLESBROUGH		STOCKTON		CLEVELAND	
	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop
<b>Violence against the person</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>2895</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Homicide	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Violence with injury	220	2.4	248	1.9	454	3.3	352	1.9	1274	2.3
Violence without injury	250	2.7	315	2.4	615	4.5	441	2.3	1621	3.0
<b>Sexual Offences</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Rape	19	0.2	19	0.1	38	0.3	29	0.2	105	0.2
Other Sexual Offences	36	0.4	61	0.5	66	0.5	55	0.3	218	0.4
<b>Theft</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>1282</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>1666</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>1708</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>5561</b>	<b>10.1</b>
Domestic Burglary	74	1.8	111	1.9	226	4.0	161	2.0	572	2.4
Other Burglary	98	1.1	289	2.2	158	1.2	261	1.4	806	1.5
Bicycle Theft	31	0.3	41	0.3	82	0.6	77	0.4	231	0.4
Theft from the Person	13	0.1	17	0.1	45	0.3	30	0.2	105	0.2
Robbery – Personal	5	0.1	10	0.1	19	0.1	32	0.2	66	0.1
Robbery - Business	4	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.0	3	0.0	10	0.0
Vehicle Crime (Inc Inter.)	153	1.7	206	1.5	200	1.5	304	1.6	863	1.6
Shoplifting	281	3.1	296	2.2	469	3.4	432	2.3	1478	2.7
Other Theft	241	2.6	312	2.3	460	3.4	408	2.2	1421	2.6
<b>Criminal Damage &amp; Arson</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2458</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>2568</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>3621</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>3209</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>11233</b>	<b>20.5</b>

## APPENDIX A

Police Generated Offences (Non -Victim Based Crime) Oct15 -Dec15										
Crime Category/Type	HARTLEPOOL		REDCAR		MIDDLESBROUGH		STOCKTON		CLEVELAND	
	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop
Public Disorder	72	0.8	48	0.4	181	1.3	135	0.7	436	0.8
Drug Offences	59	0.6	64	0.5	136	1.0	111	0.6	370	0.7
Trafficking of drugs	17	0.2	13	0.1	20	0.1	29	0.2	79	0.1
Possession/Use of drugs	42	0.5	51	0.4	116	0.9	82	0.4	291	0.5
Possession of Weapons	10	0.1	6	0.0	20	0.1	18	0.1	54	0.1
Misc. Crimes Against Society	21	0.2	31	0.2	48	0.4	53	0.3	153	0.3
Total Police Generated Crime	162	1.8	149	1.1	385	2.8	317	1.7	1013	1.8
TOTAL RECORDED CRIME	1997	21.9	2717	20.3	4010	29.5	3526	18.8	12250	22.3

## APPENDIX A

**Anti-social Behaviour in Hartlepool**  
**October 15 – December 15**

Incident Category	Oct 14 - Dec 14	Oct 15 - Dec 15	Change	% Change
AS21 - Personal	560	607	47	8.4%
AS22 - Nuisance	1216	837	-379	-31.2%
AS23 - Environmental	49	36	-13	-26.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1825</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>-345</b>	<b>-18.9%</b>

**Anti-social Behaviour in Cleveland**  
**October 15– December 15**

Incident Category	HARTLEPOOL		REDCAR		MIDDLESBROUGH		STOCKTON		CLEVELAND	
	ASB	Per 1,000 pop	ASB	Per 1,000 pop	ASB	Per 1,000 pop	ASB	Per 1,000 pop	ASB	Per 1,000 pop
AS21 - Personal	607	6.7	932	7.0	1325	9.7	1206	6.4	4070	7.4
AS22 - Nuisance	837	9.2	1573	11.7	2073	15.2	1661	8.8	6144	11.2
AS23 - Environmental	36	0.4	71	0.5	68	0.5	72	0.4	247	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>2576</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>3466</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>2939</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>10461</b>	<b>19.0</b>
<b>Quarterly Year on Year Comparison</b>	<b>Reduced by 19%</b>		<b>Increased by 12%</b>		<b>Increased by 9%</b>		<b>Increased by 3.5%</b>		<b>Increased by 3%</b>	



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** HOME OFFICE CONSULTATION - ENABLING CLOSER WORKING BETWEEN EMERGENCY SERVICES

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Safer Hartlepool Partnership of Government Plans to introduce new legislation to enable closer working between emergency services.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 11 September 2015, the Government published a consultation paper seeking views on a range of proposals to increase joint working between the emergency services ie Police; Fire and Rescue Service; and NHS Ambulance Service. The consultation ran for six weeks, ending on 23 October 2015, with the results of the consultation being published on 26 January 2016.
- 2.2 Having considered the consultation responses, in summary, the Government intends to legislate to:
- Introduce a high level duty to collaborate on all three emergency services, to improve efficiency or effectiveness;
  - Enable Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on the functions of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made;
  - Where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of their local FRA, further enabling him or her to create a single employer for police and fire personnel;
  - In areas where a PCC has not become responsible for fire and rescue services, enabling them to have representation on their local FRA with voting rights, where the local FRA agrees; and

- Abolish the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and give the Mayor of London direct responsibility for the fire and rescue service in London.

2.3 Further details on these measures and how the consultation has informed them, are set out within the document 'Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services' which can be accessed using the following link

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/495371/6.1722\\_HO\\_Enabling\\_Closer\\_Working\\_Between\\_the\\_Emergency\\_Services\\_Consult....pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/495371/6.1722_HO_Enabling_Closer_Working_Between_the_Emergency_Services_Consult....pdf)

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That the Safer Hartlepool Partnership notes and discusses the contents of the report.

### **4. CONTACT OFFICER**

Denise Ogden  
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 3  
Email: Denise.Ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523300

Clare Clark  
Head of Community Safety & Engagement  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 4  
Email: Clare.Clark@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523100



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** VEMT (VULNERABLE, EXPLOITED, MISSING AND TRAFFICKED) UPDATE

## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2. To update members of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership on the work being undertaken in relation to VEMT (Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked).

## 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 It is the responsibility of all the partners of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to work together to protect children and young people from harm. Over the last couple of years it has come to light that a large number of children and young people have been subject to sexual exploitation across England. It is therefore critical that all organisations in Hartlepool work together to reduce this risk.

3.2 This report sets out the current national context and the work that is ongoing within Hartlepool to reduce the risk of children and young people being subject to sexual exploitation.

## 4. DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

4.1 The UK National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) developed a definition that is now used in statutory guidance for England.

"Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them



performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

- 4.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. As with all types of abuse, it can have a devastating impact on the child or young person who is being exploited. Child sexual exploitation is a shocking crime with consequences that can exact a toll on the young people who are subjected to it, for some, throughout the course of their lives. It can disrupt their social lives and education, and have an impact on their health.

## **5. NATIONAL CONTEXT**

- 5.1 The government published “Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation action plan” in November 2011 setting out actions for government and local areas to work together to protect children from sexual exploitation.
- 5.2 In 2014 an Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham was published which highlighted failings in protecting children subject to sexual exploitation over a number of years. It found that Rotherham’s Safeguarding Children Board and its predecessor oversaw the development of good inter-agency policies and procedures applicable to CSE. The weakness in their approach was that members of the Safeguarding Board rarely checked whether these were being implemented or whether they were working. The challenge and scrutiny function of the Safeguarding Board and of the Council itself was lacking over several years at a time when it was most required.
- 5.3 Following this inquiry Ofsted undertook a thematic inspection “The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn’t happen here, could it?” Recommendations were set out for Local Authorities and partners and LSCBs, Ofsted and government. These recommendations, the findings within the Rotherham report and recent government publication “Tackling Sexual Exploitation” have been used in the development of the Hartlepool VEMT action plan.

## **6. LOCAL CONTEXT**

- 6.1 All Tees Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards have identified VEMT as a priority and a Tees sub group has been established for all partners to work together to protect children from sexual exploitation. Cleveland Police chair this meeting and the Assistant Director, Children’s Services attends this meeting representing Hartlepool. In addition there is a Hartlepool group that

meet every 6 weeks that is made up of all partners (schools, police, Barnardos, social care, licensing, one stop shop.) This group is chaired by the Assistant Director, Children's Services. This group has the responsibility of developing a local action plan and reporting to the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) the progress against the objectives.

- 6.2 This group has developed a partnership action plan that takes into account the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) **Appendix A**, national research, information provided by Cleveland Police and local information. This action plan is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 6.3 In addition there is a VEMT Practitioners Group which is a group made up of front line workers and managers. This group identifies any children/young people identified at being at risk of sexual exploitation and ensures that there is effective support in place for these children.
- 6.4 A VEMT conference is planned for April 2016. The aim of this conference is to raise awareness of VEMT with schools and look at ways that schools can discuss these issues with children and young people.

## 7. CHILDREN/ YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM HOME/CARE

- 7.1 Children who go missing from home or care are particularly vulnerable to being exploited and it is important that all practitioners are aware of this and work to support these children. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board receives quarterly reports to highlight the current position to ensure that this is monitored closely.

## 8. CURRENT HARTLEPOOL SITUATION

- 8.1 The VEMT Practitioners Group in Hartlepool currently has 17 children open on its agenda. All 17 children are female and aged between 12 years and 17 years. The ages of these children are:  
Aged 12 = 1 Aged 13 = 2 Aged 15 = 4 Aged 16 = 6 Aged 17 = 4

All 17 children are known to services with 6 being Looked After, 2 subject to Child Protection Plans, 8 Children in Need and 1 open to early Help Services.

14 of the 17 children have been identified as having CSE as a concern. 2 are on the agenda as a result of going missing from home or care and 1 child was identified as being vulnerable.

4 of the children identified as CSE concerns and 1 for missing have social media identified as a risky behaviour. 5 children identified as having CSE concerns also have substance misuse identified as an issue.

- 8.2 Multi agency Plans are in place for all these children and the plans are monitored closely to understand whether support services are reducing the risks.

## **9. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 A partnership approach is critical in protecting children from harm and there is a risk that if partners do not work together that children will be at increasing risk of sexual exploitation.

## **10. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no financial considerations within this report.

## **11. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no legal considerations within this report.

## **12. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 We need to be mindful that although any child is at risk from being exploited that children living in poverty may be more at risk if “gifts” or payments are offered for sexual acts.

## **13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 13.1 All children are at risk of being sexually exploited however a number of children may be at a higher risk (see JSNA appendix A). It is important that all practitioners are vigilant in their approach to Child Sexual Exploitation.

## **14. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 14.1 The work highlighted within this report is to aim to prevent the exploitation of children and young people. Partners are working together to share intelligence to reduce the numbers of children at risk of sexual exploitation.

## **15. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 15.1 There are no legal considerations within this report.

## **16. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 16.1 There are no legal considerations within this report.

## **17. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 17.1 For members of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership to note the work being undertaken in relation to VEMT and to be vigilant to the risks of child sexual exploitation.

## **18. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 18.1 It is critical that all partners work together to improve the lives of our children and young people. This is especially important for those children at risk of child sexual exploitation.

## **19. CONTACT OFFICER**

Danielle Swainston  
Assistant Director  
Children's Services

Tel: 01429 523732

E-mail: [danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk)



**Tees JSNA**

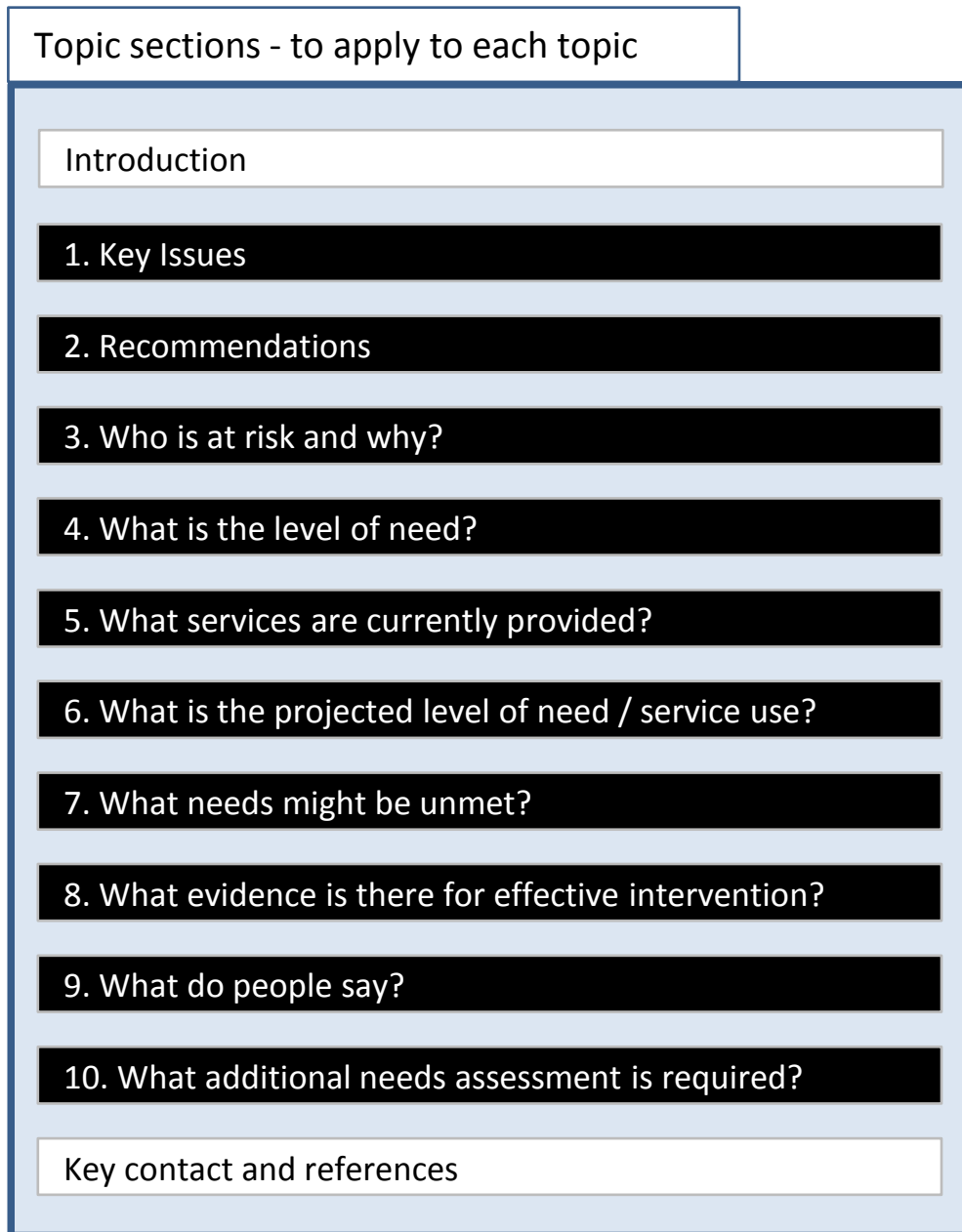
# **Draft Child Sexual Exploitation**

**Deborah Clark**  
**Health Improvement Practitioner**

**August 2015**

## Tees JSNA

Figure 1. Tees JSNA topic section structure



Each topic within the JSNA is composed of ten sections, plus an introduction and contact information with references.

Introduction	Updated 08/01/16
<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. As with all types of abuse, it can have a devastating impact on the child or young person who is being exploited. Child sexual exploitation is a shocking crime with consequences that can exact a toll on the young people who are subjected to it, for some, throughout the course of their lives. It can disrupt their social lives and education, the health impact on victims of CSE are broad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term sexual physical and psychological harm</li> <li>• Developing drug and alcohol misuse habit</li> <li>• Increased sexually risky behaviour (in some cases leading to teenage pregnancy)</li> <li>• Domestic servitude, neglect and violence</li> <li>• Self-harm and suicide</li> </ul> <p>The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (2008) define Child Sexual Exploitation as involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.</p> <p>CSE can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.</p>	

1. Key issues	Updated 08/01/16
---------------	------------------

### **Confusion around sexual activity and the issue of consent**

The fact that young people are engaged in what they view as consensual sexual activity does not mean that they are not being exploited.

- Victims of sexual exploitation may be coerced into sexual activity with the perpetrators or they may feel unable to say no.
- Some young people may not recognise they are being sexually exploited, instead believing they are behaving as they wish.
- 16 and 17 year olds are often viewed as being more in control of their own choices and so less vulnerable to exploitation.
- Sexual activity between young people of the same age is often perceived as being consensual, but exploitation may still be occurring.

### **Child sexual exploitation and risk-taking behaviour**

Victims of sexual exploitation often display challenging, offending or risk taking behaviour. Negative attitudes from professionals who view these children as 'troublemakers' can prevent them from getting the protection they need. However risk-taking behaviour is a key indicator of abuse.

- When dealing with troubled children, practitioners need to see young people as vulnerable children in need of protection rather than focusing on their challenging behaviour.
- Victims of exploitation who engage in offending behaviour should not be criminalised, but instead need protection and support.
- Perseverance is required to engage with young people. They may not realise they are being exploited, have had negative experiences with professionals in the past, or be scared of the consequences of talking about their abuse.

### **Vulnerability of children in local authority care, foster care or residential care**

Being in care can make young people more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Many have had difficult starts to their lives and experienced neglect, abuse or trauma. Perpetrators target children's homes because of the high vulnerability of the children placed there and how easily they can make contact with the children.

### **Disclosure of sexual exploitation**

Young people are unlikely to disclose sexual exploitation due to:

- fear of perpetrators
- loyalty to perpetrators
- lack of knowledge or acceptance that they are being exploited
- or lack of trust and fear of authorities.



### 2. Recommendations

Updated 08/01/16

Based on the Tees CSE strategy and the VEMT action plan the following recommendations have been identified:

#### **2015/01**

To ensure the implementation of CSE referral form/risk assessment Tool

#### **2015/02**

To ensure the assessment of multi agency intelligence submissions regarding CSE concerns to the Police

#### **2015/03**

To train all frontline staff (universal and targeted) to recognise, protect and refer children who are, or are at risk of CSE

#### **2015.04**

Identify both potential and validated training packages for use with :

- i) children and young people
- ii) parents
- iii) schools
- iv) safeguarding professionals

#### **2015/05**

To develop a coordinated VEMT awareness raising and communication strategy to increase public understanding of CSE and increase confidence in a VEMT approach

#### **2015/06**

To develop an effective performance management data set and reporting arrangements to effectively manage CSE performance paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.

#### **2015/07**

To ensure that elected members and senior managers understand the impact of child sexual exploitation.

### 3. Who is at risk and why?

Updated 08/01/16

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys and young men as well as girls and young women. However, some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include children and young people who have a history of running away or of going missing from home, those with special needs, those in and leaving residential and foster care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, children who have disengaged from education, children who are abusing drugs and alcohol, and those involved in gangs.

The English Children's Commissioner estimated 16,500 to be at risk in the year to March 2011 and identified 2,409 victims; where gender was known, seven in 10 were girls and one in 10 were boys. The age range of those affected appears to be going down too, with evidence of some 10 year olds being involved and an incident with a four year old. Some of the children and young people also have other vulnerabilities, including a history of familial child abuse, but children from any background irrespective of class or ethnicity may be affected. Young people themselves may be involved in recruiting their friends and also act as perpetrators too.

The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse<sup>1</sup>:

- living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues and criminality)
- history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- recent bereavement or loss
- gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships
- attending school with young people who are sexually exploited
- learning disabilities
- unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- homelessness
- lacking friends from the same age group
- living in residential care
- low self-esteem or self-confidence
- young carers
- mental health of young person.

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited<sup>2</sup>

- missing from home or care
- physical injuries
- drug or alcohol misuse
- offending
- repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- absence from school

## **Tees JSNA**

- change in physical appearance (i.e. significant weight loss)
- evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- estranged from their family
- receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- poor mental health.
- self-harm
- thoughts of/ or attempts at suicide
- recruiting others into potentially exploitative and risky situations.

#### 4. What is the level of need in the population?

Updated 08/01/16

There is currently no national dataset for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) so at present we are unable to compare Hartlepool's data against other areas. Data currently available from the VEMT meetings is presented to the HCSB on a quarterly basis and informs the multi-agency action plan for combating sexual exploitation. A common dataset has been agreed between the safeguarding boards in Teesside and a new comprehensive dataset will be published each quarter from March 2016.

The main model of Child Sexual Exploitation in Hartlepool illustrated by the VEMT data is the boyfriend model and exploitation of younger girls by older men. Social networks/media is a key factor in this model of exploitation. There is little evidence of organised exploitation by groups or gangs.

The available data for Hartlepool from April 2014 – March 2015 tells us that:

- From April 2014 to March 2015 a total of 50 cases were discussed in the Hartlepool monthly VEMT practitioners Group meetings. It should be noted that the status of each child can change from one meeting to the next. Therefore, the figures below show the status of the child at the end of the reporting period.
  - Number of children open to VEMT = 8
  - Number of children discussed, but not added to agenda = 21
  - Number of children deferred pending further information = 6
  - Number of children closed to VEMT = 24 (this equates to 21 children)
- 84% of the cases discussed in VEMT have been made for girls and 16% for boys
- Young people between the ages of 10 and 18 have been referred into the VEMT practitioners group. The table below shows the breakdown of gender by age:

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Number Females	1	0	1	7	7	15 (12 individuals)	8	9	1
Number of males	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	5 (3 individuals)	0

- Over 60% of referrals have concerned young people (mainly girls) between the ages of 14 and 15
- Referrals into the VEMT have only been collected since February 15 and the main referrals have been made by Children's Services, Planning and Information Officer FCSH.

## Tees JSNA

- Main reasons for young people being referred into the VEMT include young people being at risk and becoming exploited through, going missing alone or with friends, being groomed through social media and associating and becoming exploited by older men
- 78% of young people referred into the VEMT are open to statutory social services; 24% of the referrals were made for children who are looked after (LAC) and 42% of referrals were made for children in need (CIN); 2% of young people were subject to child protection plans; 6% were looked after children placed in Hartlepool by another Local Authority; 4% of records were restricted therefore we assume known to social services and 22% of young people are from the general population.

### 5. What services are currently provided?

Updated 08/01/16

- **Barnardos** A CSE worker has been commissioned from Barnardos and is based within the Interventions Team, they are responsible for training practitioners to build capacity and resilience, prevention work with schools and hold a case load of young people who are at risk or victims of CSE.
- **ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advocate Service):** - Work with anyone under 18 who has experienced sexual violence and reported it to the police, workers support young people through the criminal justice process, there is a specialist worker who supports therapeutically if a case has been nfa'd or if there has been a re-traumatisation at court.
- **Bridgeway A** Therapeutic Service, Sexual Harmful Behaviour Work - Healing work for young people who have experienced sexual abuse. Working with young people who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour.
- **Stay Safe Project** - Operation Stay Safe – supporting young people on the streets at risk of CSE. Working in partnership with police social care and 0-19 the priority of this operation is to identify vulnerability in under 18s on the streets of Hartlepool usually Friday nights 10pm-4am.
- **Locality Teams (North and South)** – provide early intervention programmes to young people who have been identified as been at risk of CSE

### 6. What is the projected level of need?

Updated 08/01/16

Due to the problems understanding the scope of the level of need it is difficult to know what the projected level of need is. However, what we do know is that the likelihood is that the numbers of young people who are at risk or who are victims of CSE will increase.

**7. What needs might be unmet?**

**Updated 08/01/16**

- a. There is a requirement to establish clear referral pathways for all agencies to identify CSE concerns
- b. There is a lack of assessment/collation and development of intelligence concerning CSE around victims/perpetrators/locations
- c. There is a gap in training regarding recognising, protecting and referring children for practitioners in respect of CSE
- d. There is a need to build awareness and resilience in children and young people to help prevent them being sexually exploited
- e. There is a requirement to develop a communication strategy to raise awareness of CSE
- f. There is currently no effective performance management data set and reporting arrangements to effectively manage CSE performance
- g. There is requirement to inform elected members and senior managers about the impact of child sexual exploitation.

## 8. What evidence is there for effective intervention?

Updated 08/01/16

Given that targeted approaches to tackling CSE are still relatively new, there is limited evidence about 'what works'.

Following a thematic review across 8 local authorities nationally and drawing on feedback from over 15 children and young people, Ofsted (2015) concluded that 'children and young people are more effectively protected from child sexual exploitation when Locals Safeguarding Children's Boards have an effective strategy and action plan that supports professionals to work together and share information well. This activity, when combined with a whole system approach of awareness raising, the early identification of both victims and perpetrators and disruption and prosecution, is the only route to the effective protection of children and young people from CSE in our towns and cities'.

## 9. What do people say?

Updated 08/01/16

An independent enquiry into young people's views about CSE in Northern Ireland (2014) demonstrated the following common themes:

### Awareness of CSE

- Very few young people said they had an understanding of CSE prior to the session - those who had heard of it, tended to describe more general child abuse than specific CSE behaviours
- Young people said that apart from some 'stranger danger' information or talks about keeping safe on-line, the subject was not covered in schools – many felt that this was part of a general prohibition around talking about sex in any form
- Young gay people said that there was no mention to LGBT relationships or safe sex advice in schools
- Many participants felt that young people could find themselves being sexually exploited without realising it
- Some young people felt that a relationship between an older and younger person wasn't always exploitative – it would depend on the balance of power

### Identifying those at risk

Participants suggested a comprehensive range of young people who might be at particular risk. These included those:

- With very little money – from poorer backgrounds
- In care
- With a disability
- With low self esteem
- Who are LGBT (through being bullied/black mailed)
- Who aren't aware of CSE



## Tees JSNA

- From broken homes/bad family situations
- Who are quiet/isolated with few friends
- Who have a mental illness
- Who are young carers
- Who are young mothers
- Who are on the streets
- Who are involved in drinking or taking drugs

All groups made the point that anyone can be vulnerable.

### 10. What additional needs assessment is required?

Updated 08/01/16

Map universal service provision regarding CSE in order to understand what is being provided.

## Tees JSNA

Key contact and references	Updated 21/12/15
<p>Key contact: Title, forename and surname</p> <p>Job title:</p> <p>e-mail:</p> <p>Phone number:</p> <p><b>References</b></p> <p>1 Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Home Office (2009) Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance to Working together to safeguard children (PDF). London: Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).</p> <p>2. Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2012) “I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world.” The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Interim report</p> <p>3. Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009). Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children London: HMSO; 2009.</p> <p>4. Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009). Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children London: HMSO; 2009.</p> <p>5. NSPCC (2011) Sexual Abuse: A Public Health Challenge</p> <p>6. Ofsted (2014) Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework) and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (130216),</p> <p>7. Ofsted (2014) The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn’t happen here, could it?</p> <p>8. Paula Keenan, Children in Northern Ireland (2014) Young People’s Views on child sexual exploitation</p>	

## APPENDIX B

## VEMT (Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked)

## Action Plan January 2016 – December 2016

PREPARE					
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timescales	Progress	Status
Understand VEMT needs across Hartlepool and use information to improve practice and shape services	Complete JSNA and publish on website	Health Improvement Practitioner	January 2016	Completed – January 2016	
	Complete quarterly RMHC reports	Planning and Information Officer - GB	Q3 Oct '15 – Dec '15 Q4 Jan '16 – Mar '16 Q1		
	Complete quarterly CSE reports	Planning and Information Officer - GB	Quarterly		
	Review capturing of information of children missing from education and attendance and develop process to map info with CSE/ RMHC info	Planning and Information Officer – GB Performance and Information manager - KF Attendance Team Manager -JW	Quarterly		
	Complete audit of RMHC interviews – present to VEMT group	Team Manager – SB Head of Service - KDW	Bi annually		
	Audit of VPG cases	Team Manager – SB	Bi annually		

## APPENDIX B

		Head of Service - KDW			
	Complete CSE themed audit	Assistant Director, Children's Services (DS)	Bi annually		
	Complete HSCB annual report and report to Children's Services Committee	HSCB Business Manager PT	Annual		
	Review all VEMT information within HSCB themed meeting	HSCB Business Manager PT	March 2016		
	Carry out mapping of work carried out in schools	HSCB Business Manager PT	February 2016		
	Identify key issues highlighted within the Tees analysis report and respond to findings	VEMT group	April 2016	Issues highlighted include: esafety,	
	Develop effective performance management data set that informs planning	Small group identified to take this forward  Planning and Information Officer – GB to support	April 2016		
PREVENT					

**APPENDIX B**

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timescales	Progress	Status
To ensure that the workforce is equipped to identify CSE and respond appropriately	Deliver CSE training	LSCB training group	Ongoing		
	CSE worker to work with social workers on specific cases to offer advice and guidance and improve skills of workforce	CSE worker (Barnardos)	Ongoing		
To understand reasons for missing episodes to either support individuals vulnerabilities or identify similarities across the cohort (e.g certain areas/ certain individuals)	Work with children's workforce to ensure that return interviews are of a high quality	HBC children's management team	To review July 2016		
	Commission independent agency to undertake return interviews	Children's Strategic Commissioner RS	April 2016		
Increase public understanding of CSE and increase confidence in a VEMT approach.	Work with Tees colleagues to develop recognisable brand and literature.	HSCB Business Manager PT /Police	June 2016		
Improve confidence within workforce	Identify rep for Tees e-safety group	Assistant Director, Children's Services	March 2016		

## APPENDIX B

about e-safety in order to support children/young people and parents		(DS) / Assistant Director, Education (MP)			
	Deliver e-safety training to all children's workforce	LSCB training group	Ongoing within training programme		
Use licensing powers to improve the safeguarding of children and young people	Licensing – taxi drivers to undertake online training in order to fulfil licensing requirements.	Head of Licensing	April 2016		
<b>PROTECT</b>					
Objective	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales	Progress	Status
Ensure that all workers are vigilant to CSE and notify police asap	Raise profile of partner information form (police)	Police – W	February 2016		
Ensure that young people identified at risk of CSE who are becoming adults are safeguarded	Track a case through from children's services to adult service to understand pathways and any barriers	Head of Service - KDW	Complete April 2016		
Ensure that young people identified at risk of CSE are effectively supported to improve their	Review VPG process to ensure that risk assessments are being carried out and all partners are	Team Manager – SB Head of Service - KDW All members of VPG	July 2016		

**APPENDIX B**

outcomes	referring young people at risk				
	Review VPG process to ensure that Missing from Home/Care and Missing from Education are also considered	Team Manager – SB Head of Service - KDW All members of VPG	July 2016		
	Monitor targeted specialist CSE support to measure impact	Head of Service - KDW	Quarterly		
	Review therapeutic support available for children and young people who have been subject to CSE (under 18 and over 18)	Head of Service - KDW	September 2016		
Ensure that agencies recognise that children with learning disabilities are at higher risk of CSE than their peers	Identify a LD representative for VEMT group	Assistant Director, Children's Services (DS)	February 2016		
Ensure that all agencies work together to reduce	Develop multi agency risk management panel	Head of Service - KDW	May 2016		

**APPENDIX B**

risks for children and young people					
-------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--





# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

11<sup>th</sup> March 2016



**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL ON THE  
PROVISION OF COURT AND TRIBUNAL SERVICES  
IN THE NORTH EAST REGION

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Safer Hartlepool Partnership on the outcome of the recent Ministry of Justice consultation in relation to proposals to close the Hartlepool Magistrates and County Courts.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On July 16 2015 the Ministry of Justice published a national consultation on the provision of court and tribunal estate in England and Wales. This included proposals to close eight courts and tribunals in the North East and information on plans to integrate a further eight courts and tribunals in the region.
- 2.2 The results of the consultation and Ministry of Justice response were subsequently published on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016. This highlighted the decision to close Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court which will be moved to Teesside Magistrates' Court and Teesside Combined Court. Further details are attached at **Appendix A and B**.
- 2.3 Initial implementation dates giving an indication of when these courts will cease to provide a public facing service are January – March 2017.

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Partnership notes the Ministry of Justice response and proposed timescale for closure of the Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court.

#### **4. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 Following consultation with partners Hartlepool Borough Council submitted a detailed response to the proposed court closures October 2015 outlining their objections to the proposals on the basis that closure posed a real risk that access to justice for the Hartlepool Community would be seriously undermined, together with a loss of confidence in the ability of the justice system to deliver outcomes for the local community.

#### **5. CONTACT OFFICER**

Denise Ogden  
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 3  
Email: Denise.Ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523300

Clare Clark  
Head of Community Safety & Engagement  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Civic Centre  
Level 4  
Email: Clare.Clark@hartlepool.gov.uk  
Tel: 01429 523100



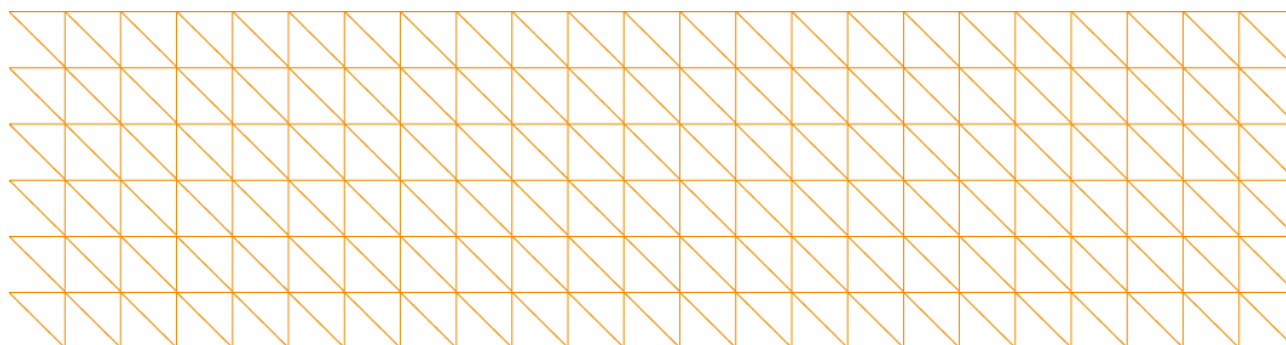
Ministry  
of Justice



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# **Response to the proposal on the provision of court and tribunal estate in the North East region**

This response is published on 11 February 2016







Ministry  
of Justice



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

## **Response to the proposal on the provision of court and tribunal estate in the North East region**

**Response to consultation carried out by HM Courts & Tribunals Service, part of the Ministry of Justice. This information is also available at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)**



## Contents

Introduction and contact details	3
Foreword	4
Background	5
Summary of responses	7
Decision	9
Responses to individual proposals	10
Consultation principles	47
Annex A – List of respondents	48

---





## Introduction and contact details

This document is the response to the consultation paper, *'Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North East region'*.

It will cover:

- the background to the consultation
- a summary of the responses to the consultation
- detailed points in reply
- next steps

Further copies of this report and the consultation paper can be obtained by contacting **HMCTS Consultation** at the address below:

**HM Courts & Tribunals Service**  
**Post Point 1.13, 1<sup>st</sup> floor**  
**102 Petty France**  
**London SW1H 9AJ**

**Telephone: 0161 240 5021**

**Fax: 0870 761 7768**

**Email: [estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)**

This report is also available at **[www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)**

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from [estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:estatesconsultation@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk) or by calling 0161 240 5021

### Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact HM Courts & Tribunals Service at the above address.

## Foreword

On the 16 July 2015 the national consultation on the provision of court and tribunal estate in England and Wales was published. This included proposals to close eight courts and tribunals in the North East and information on plans to integrate a further eight courts and tribunals in the region.

Working with the judiciary, we want to reform our services so that they better meet the needs of the public in the modern age. The consultation put forward proposals to make changes to our estate where buildings are no longer able to provide a modern service due to poor facilities, where usage is low and where sites no longer provide value for money.

A total of 176 consultation responses and three petitions including over 1100 signatures, were received for the North East region. As the Delivery Director responsible for managing the operations of HM Courts & Tribunals Service in the North East region I am very grateful to everyone for taking the time to provide their views on our proposals and help us to reach the best solutions. It is clear from the responses that our courts and tribunals continue to be valued by society and that it is important to maintain effective access to justice.

The Lord Chancellor has agreed to close eight courts in the North East region. Seven sites will close as proposed in the consultation, with a further one taking place but with changes to the original proposal. Further details are included on a court-by-court basis in the summary of responses

The decision to close a court will mean that in some cases court users will need to travel further to attend court. We have modified some of our plans using the local knowledge provided in responses to the consultation, to reduce the travel time impact to court users. We will continue to investigate and develop alternative ways for users to access our services to improve access to justice.

Staff and judiciary who work hard to deliver our justice system will obviously be affected by these changes. I am committed to working closely with the judiciary on the implementation of these changes. I am also committed to supporting our staff through these changes and the transition to new arrangements will take place in a fair and transparent manner in consultation with the Departmental Trade Union.

Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

**Mark Swales**

**Delivery Director  
HM Courts & Tribunals Service North East**

## Background

The consultation paper 'Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North East region' was published on 16 July 2015. It invited comments from anyone with an interest in local justice to ensure that courts and tribunals can meet the demand of local communities; that communities continue to have access to court and tribunal buildings where they need to attend or through alternative methods; and that cases are heard in buildings with suitable facilities.

This consultation proposed the closure of the following courts<sup>1</sup>:

- Consett Magistrates' Court
- Halifax County Court and Family Court
- Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' Court and Family Court
- Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court
- Morpeth County Court
- Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court
- Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court
- Wakefield Magistrates' Court

### Integration of services and jurisdictions

To provide users with an overview of all proposed change to the estate, the consultation also included information on where HM Courts & Tribunals Service plan to integrate courts within the same town or city. Local stakeholders will be notified of these changes when they take place.

An integration is when HM Courts & Tribunals Service moves work to allow jurisdictions to operate from fewer locations in a local area. This allows the closure of a building or buildings while retaining local jurisdictions, with a limited impact on service provision. Integrations are managed by HM Courts & Tribunals Service operational leads as part of the normal running of the business.

#### **Doncaster County Court to be integrated within Doncaster Magistrates' Court**

The exit of Doncaster County Court as an integration is already in progress and targeted for the end of March 2016.

#### **Doncaster Tribunal (Portland Place) to be integrated within Doncaster Crown Court.**

The exit of Doncaster Tribunal as an integration is already in progress and targeted for the end of March 2016.

**Durham Elvet House Tribunal to be integrated within other locations within the County Durham estate, including Durham County and Family Court**

Although we are not due to exit Durham Elvet House Tribunal until the latter half of 2016 we have already started discussions and planning with the staff and judiciary.

**East Parade Sheffield Tribunal to be integrated within Sheffield Combined Court**

The proposals for exiting East Parade Sheffield have been agreed with the relevant judiciary and courts. The aim is to progress in early 2016 subject to funding being available.

**Harrogate County Court**

Integration within Harrogate Magistrates' Court completed in December 2015.

**Middlesbrough Tribunal Hearing Centre to be integrated within Teesside Magistrates' Court**

Although we are not due to exit Middlesbrough Tribunal (Centre North East) until the early part of 2017, we have already started discussions and planning with the staff and judiciary.

**Quayside House Newcastle Tribunal integrated within North Shields (Kings Court) Tribunal.**

Completed in August 2015.

**Wilberforce Court (Hull Employment Tribunal Centre) to be integrated within Hull and Holderness Magistrates' Court and Kingston Upon Hull Combined Court**

The proposal is to exit Wilberforce Court early to mid 2016 however this is subject to funding and we will aim to exit well in advance of the lease end in 2017.

The consultation closed on 8 October 2015 and this report summarises the responses, including how the consultation process influenced the final shape/further development of the policy/proposal consulted upon.

The Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation was updated to take account of evidence provided by stakeholders during the consultation period. The updated Impact Assessment is attached.

---

<sup>1</sup>Reference in this document to magistrates' courts, county courts, crown courts and combined courts refers to buildings (a singular structure providing the physical hearing rooms for criminal, civil, family and tribunal cases) which house that activity in a particular location. Strictly, legislation provides that there is a single crown court, county court and family court.

## Summary of responses on the proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North East region

The majority of consultees responded to proposals on specific courts rather than the whole regional consultation document.

A total of 176 individual responses to the North East Region consultation paper were received. Of these:

- 39 were from members of the public
- 35 were from magistrates
- 30 were from professional users
- 21 were from other public sector bodies
- 20 were from members of the judiciary
- 13 were from criminal justice partners
- 10 were from members of staff
- seven were from Members of Parliament
- one was from a union or staff group

Of the responses received 23 related to the region as a whole. Of these responses 12 were opposed, four were supportive and seven were neutral in their response to the proposals.

A stakeholder list of all respondents is at **Annex A**.

Some respondents commented on more than one proposal and so their views have been considered for each site mentioned in their response.

Eight responses were received from Tribunal Judiciary and each raised concerns with either:

1. capacity at receiving sites
2. tribunal users being intimidated by the physical formality of attending a court building.

In response to point one, a full feasibility study has been undertaken in connection with all closing and integrating sites. There have been no concerns raised with regard to capacity at the receiving sites and workload can be incorporated into current schedules.

Secondly, all work that is due to take place at the receiving sites will include the ability to seat tribunal users in separate waiting areas to court users. Areas for different court users

will reinforce the multi-jurisdictional use of the building and allow users to feel more comfortable with their surroundings.

In addition, we aim to use our estate more intelligently and flexibly to reduce running costs and to increase the multi-functional court space, allowing different court and tribunal jurisdictions to share locations.

To ensure that access to justice is maintained, even in more rural locations, we are committed to providing alternative ways for appellants to access our services, including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

### **County court utilisation**

The county court utilisation figures provided in the site by site consultation proposals used sitting hour's workload data as a share of total court room capacity. HM Courts & Tribunals Service is aware that some county courts occasionally use chambers and informal rooms to hear county court work and this may not be recorded in the workload data for some of these courts. A number of responses highlighted that work heard in county court chambers should also be considered as part of the overall usage of the court, therefore supplementary data on judicial work held in chambers and informal rooms was considered before final decisions were made.

These points and the rest of the responses are considered in the remaining sections of the document for each court.

### **Operating costs**

The operating costs included in this document have been updated from those published in July. They have been adjusted to reflect current prices.

## Decision

After careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided the following court will close, though with changes to the original proposals in the consultation. We have identified an alternative venue to receive some of the workload in order to reduce the impact of the closure on court users. Further details are included on a court-by-court basis in the responses to individual proposals;

- Consett Magistrates' Court

The following courts will close as proposed;

- Halifax County Court and Family Court
- Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' and Family Court
- Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court
- Morpeth County Court
- Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court
- Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court
- Wakefield Magistrates' Court

## Responses to individual proposals

### Consett Magistrates' Court

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Consett Magistrates' Court should close.

A total of 16 responses were received relating to Consett Magistrates' Court. Of these:

- four were from magistrates
- three were from members of the public
- two were from criminal justice partners
- two were from members of the judiciary
- two were from other public sector bodies
- two were from professional court users
- one was from a union or staff group

Of these responses none were in favour of the proposals, five were neutral whilst 11 were opposed.

### Access to justice

Consett Magistrates' Court is situated approximately 26 miles from Peterlee and 14 miles from Durham Civil and Family Justice Centre.

All responses made reference to access to justice issues.

"The greatest impact on travelling times is on those individuals from rural areas, e.g. Consett. It does not seem just that such individuals have to travel further and spend more because of where they live." (Magistrate)

"What the proposals fail to recognise is that court users, whether at Consett (or indeed Durham) will not start their journeys from there. Consett Magistrates' Court serves the surrounding area." (Professional user)

Users should not have to make excessively long or difficult journeys to attend hearings, and we know that, in an increasingly digital age, users will not always need to attend hearings in person in order to access the justice system. To ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural areas, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services, including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

In exceptional cases, start times of hearings may be delayed to allow later attendance due to travel difficulties but this would be considered on a case by case basis.



Although increased journeys have the potential to impact on some people, we consider it unlikely that this will result in a particular or substantial disadvantage to the majority of court users given the limited number of occasions they will need to access courts and tribunals services. Some of the services traditionally accessed by face to face visits to court are being offered online, for example make a plea service. Some court hearings can also be conducted by phone or video link and court users are being offered local alternatives to court hearings, for example a witness has the option to give evidence via video link and from a local venue. All these measures are reducing the need to travel to court buildings to access services.

We are mindful of the infrequency with which people need to attend court and the small proportion of people who would use public transport to reach court. Any travel impacts as a result of closing a court or tribunal need to be considered alongside low utilisation, whether the building is fit for purpose and the need to provide a good service to court users.

### **Value for money**

During the 2014-15 financial year, operating costs at Consett Magistrates' Court were approximately £176,000. Consett Magistrates' Court would require significant investment to bring it up to the required standard.

None of the responses raised issues around value for money.

The site is freehold and given the significant redevelopment and investment in the immediate locality, is likely to generate interest on the open market.

### **Operational efficiency**

Consett Magistrates' Court is currently utilised for approximately 25% of its capacity.

A number of responses made reference to operational efficiency:

"If Consett Magistrates' Court is to close, careful consideration must be given to the practicalities of redistributing the workload, having due regard to the risks involved listing criminal cases at venues without cells and prisoner escort staff."  
(Professional user)

There will be no enabling work required to accommodate the transfer of work as there is sufficient capacity in the receiving sites to meet the current and anticipated demand in the County Durham local justice area.

Closure would enable the work to be moved within a single local justice area. It would also enable other courts to be more responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer demand and workflow demands more effectively.

Careful consideration will be given to the listing of cases and the practicalities of redistributing the workload.

## Alternative provision of service

“Can you inform us when and if the decision is taken to close Consett Magistrates’ Court the reason why our residents cannot attend Chester Le Street or Durham Courts?” (Professional user)

Chester-Le-Street is the administration centre for the north of the county. The building previously had courtrooms which have been decommissioned and there are no cells and therefore no hearings take place at this location. This building is not fit for purpose to re open as a court house and HM Courts & Tribunals Service are currently reviewing its future use.

Some non–custody work can transfer to Durham Civil and Family Justice Centre. There is also an acceptance that certain hearings may be more suited to either the Gateshead or Newcastle estate, again due consideration will be applied on a case by case basis to specific postcode locations.

“Attending a dedicated courtroom has a certain gravitas about which town or community hall would not. Indeed the attendees may have been at, say, a dance or bingo session the day before. Not the right environment. If such rural venues are required would it not be better to equip a mobile facility, such as a bus, to meet the requirements.” (Magistrate)

“To reduce the reliance on buildings with poor facilities, can I suggest that Magistrates should be consulted on what facilities they require to maximise their efficiency. For example adequate retiring rooms, improved pre-case information, improved access to some basic legal guidelines, improved refreshment facilities etc.” (Magistrate)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service has already established alternative ways users can interact with our services, such as the use of video link, and we are looking to expand these provisions to provide more choice than is currently available. This includes exploring whether we can appropriately make use of civic buildings for certain types of hearings. Full consideration as to the suitability of buildings to host court hearings will always be given before any decision is made.

We have carefully considered the access to justice arguments made in response to the consultation. In relation to hearings for those in custody we will, where appropriate, use Gateshead as an alternative to Peterlee. Travel times from Consett to Gateshead are around 30 minutes by car and 46 minutes by bus (which run every 30 minutes). The court in Gateshead is within five minutes walking distance of the bus station. In addition we have identified sites within Consett itself which may be suitable for locating a remote video link to enable victims and witnesses (and others where appropriate) to give evidence without needing to travel to court.

An important aspect of reform is to strengthen our working relationships with our judicial and Criminal Justice System (CJS) partners and work together to achieve realistic outcomes.

“If a defendant commits an offence when subject to a suspended order, there may be presumption that a sentence is activated and is often activated there and then. Contempt situations may arise and the magistrates need the option of committing the contemnor to the cells.” (Professional user)

Careful consideration will be given to the listing of cases and the practicalities of redistributing the workload.

One response made reference to provisions for youths should Consett Magistrates' Court close.

A review was undertaken of the cell accommodation at the magistrates' courts in Cleveland and Durham and as a result action was taken to centralise youth courts. For example Hartlepool youths now attend at Teesside Magistrates' Court. We will ensure that all the appropriate provisions are made before relocating youth court hearings to the receiving site.

### **Other considerations**

A concern was raised that the Durham Civil and Family Justice Centre (CFJC) did not have the capacity to receive bail and family work from Consett. A full analysis has been undertaken which supports the proposition for the receiving of work. It is proposed that bail cases will be dealt with at Durham Civil and Family Justice Centre alongside tribunal work from the Elvet House integration, which is also to be housed there.

### **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Consett Magistrates' Court and move its custody work to Peterlee Magistrates' Court. Family work will move to Durham Civil and Family Justice Centre. In some instances work may be moved to Durham Civil and Family Justice Centre, Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court or Gateshead Magistrates' Court, based on whichever best meets the individual requirements of a case.

### **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Consett Magistrates' Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

## **Halifax County Court and Family Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Halifax County Court and Family Court should be closed and the work moved to Bradford Combined Court.

A total of 26 responses were received relating to Halifax County Court and Family Court. Of these:

- six were from members of staff
- six were from professional court users
- five were from members of the judiciary
- five were from members of the public
- one was from a magistrate
- one was from a Member of Parliament
- one was from another public sector body
- one was from a union or staff group

Of these responses none were in favour of the proposals, three were neutral and 23 were opposed.

## **Access to justice**

Halifax County Court and Family Court is one of five county courts operating in West Yorkshire, the others are at Leeds, Huddersfield, Wakefield and Bradford. The court deals with civil matters, bankruptcy, high court, divorce and children matters.

Halifax County Court and Family Court is situated nine miles from Bradford Combined Court.

All responses made reference to access to justice.

"The journey times set out in the proposal assume that all court users will travel only from Halifax to Bradford. This is simply not the case many of them have significant journeys to get to Halifax before travelling on to Bradford. The time estimates and costs of journeys in the proposal are seriously flawed." (Judiciary)

Closing courts inevitably results in some people needing to travel further to reach their nearest court; this was the primary concern for many consultees. It is important to note that the nearest court is not always the one which people will be required to attend. For county courts, in some cases people can select the court where the case is heard but for other cases the venue is mandated based on the address of one of the parties. In some cases there is no need to attend court at all.

“We have concerns over the accuracy of travel times due to the nature and geography of the Calderdale area. It is a large and often rural area and a significant proportion of the population does not live within 20 minutes of a train station, nor is transport always straight forward. We estimate an increase in travel time of 100% for some of our current court users.” (Magistrate).

“The court covers a larger geographical area. Some areas within our jurisdiction are very rural.” (Staff member)

In more rural areas we are committed to providing alternative ways to access our services, including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

The court will consider applications to conduct business with the court by alternative means where possible. In exceptional cases start times of hearings may be delayed to allow later attendance due to travel difficulties, this would be considered on a case by case basis.

The changes we are making will make it easier for people to access justice. Going to court can be very stressful, especially for vulnerable people. We are reforming the system so that fewer people will need to physically attend court.

“The proposals do not take into account the impact on our local economy of moving the courts to Bradford. Calderdale has a thriving legal services industry. It is anticipated that a number of criminal and civil law firms will close their Calderdale office should the proposals go ahead. This in turn will have a knock-on impact in those local businesses that service the law firms.” (Public Sector)

Whilst local economies may experience some impact in towns where courts and tribunals close, this is expected to be slight and the overall effects minimal as services are transferred to areas nearby.

“We are keen to ensure that justice is served in the local community. Local Magistrates apply in-depth knowledge and understanding of our local communities to apply fair and equitable judgements.” (Magistrate)

Magistrates are valued members of the judiciary and work well together for the benefit of the communities they serve, wherever they are delivering justice. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with individuals to ensure, where possible, that any needs are met and reasonable adjustments are made as and when necessary. We expect the process of local people being tried by local magistrates to continue, with magistrates covering larger areas than at present.

### **Value for money**

During the 2014-15 financial year the operating costs at Halifax County Court and Family Court were approximately £96,000. Halifax County Court and Family Court would require investment for maintenance work.

Some responses made references to value for money.

"The enabling works at Bradford County (not even able to accommodate current needs) will be substantial - in the order of hundreds of thousands of pounds. There will be delays costing at least £175,000 in transferring the County Court to Bradford whilst substantial enabling work is done, if indeed it can be achieved."  
(Judiciary)

Substantial enabling works are required at Bradford Combined Court which involves the creation of one or two additional hearing rooms for district judges. A feasibility study has been conducted as to how this can happen and it is evident that the savings associated with the closure of the two buildings in Halifax far outweigh the cost of the enabling works.

"The proposal states that the operating costs of the Halifax County Court and Family Court during 2014/2015 was £115,000. We assume that this sum does not include any costs that would still have to be supported wherever the Court conducted its business, but the proposal does not give any details." (Magistrate)

Annual running costs associated with the building being proposed for exit are based on the 2014-15 financial accounting data for HM Courts & Tribunals Service and include rents, variable costs (such as printing and postage), fixed costs (such as rates and service charges) and semi-variable costs (such as telecoms and maintenance). This reflects the most up to date actual financial information available. Running costs do not include other costs such as staff costs (such as staff salaries), PFI charges, judicial costs (such as judicial salaries), trial costs (such as payment to jurors) or noneconomic costs (such as depreciation).

### **Operational efficiency**

Reference was also made to operational efficiencies.

"The proposal describes utilisation as 22%. I understand that it is accepted that this figure is incorrect. Had the calculation been based solely on the use of District Judge Chambers then the percentage utilisation rate would have been significantly higher." (Judiciary)

The utilisation figure in the consultation (22%) was incorrect as it was based on three hearing rooms being available for use but we accept that only two hearing rooms are usable at any one time, therefore the utilisation figure has been understated. The workload from Halifax County Court will not be an issue for the receiving site as the updated figure has been calculated on sitting data rather than utilisation data.

"The proposal recognises that enabling works would be required at Bradford County Court to provide an additional multi purpose hearing room with associated chambers. There is clearly no accommodation to provide for extra judiciary in Bradford." (Judiciary)

"Social housing have a lot a short hearings listed for 5 or 10 minutes...Will Bradford have the spare capacity for the additional workload, especially with digitalisation around the corner, would these hearing rooms be needed as part of the bigger plan?" (Professional user)

There will be sufficient capacity after the proposed enabling works at Bradford Combined Court to accommodate the civil and family hearings from Halifax County Court and Family Court. Consideration will also be given to listing hearings at Huddersfield County Court and Leeds Combined Court in addition to Bradford Combined Court and these will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Alternative provision**

Numerous responses made reference to alternative provisions and a number of these raised the possibility and benefits of co-locating Halifax County Court and Family Court into Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' and Family Court.

"The Prescott Street building should close at the end of December. A consolidated Combined Court (and Tribunal) Centre should be established at the current Magistrates building." (Judiciary)

"If a decision is taken to close both Halifax Courts I struggle to see the reasoning behind the family work to Bradford. They do not have the judicial resource or space and the move is totally against the principles of single Family Court in terms of centralisation. Surely the obvious venue is Leeds? Arguments that there are insufficient resources here are weak – there are insufficient resources in Bradford." (Judiciary)

"Co-location of the two jurisdictions and the Tribunal Service in the Calderdale Magistrates building (creating the "Calderdale Combined Court), and locating all Bradford Family work (both Magistrates and District judge) in the Bradford Magistrates court building (creating the 'Bradford Magistrates Court and Family Law Centre') would avoid all the costs and detrimental effects that relocation of the Halifax Courts to Bradford would generate." (Magistrate)

In an increasingly digital age, users will not always need to attend hearings in person in order to access the justice system and whilst we have already established alternative ways users can interact with our services, we are looking to expand these provisions to provide more choice than is currently available. For example through making better use of technology, including video conferencing and exploring whether we can appropriately make use of civic buildings for certain types of hearings.

We also need to reduce the current costs of running our estate by increasing the utilisation rate at our courts.

It may be that due to the geographical location of some of our users, it would be more appropriate for hearings to be listed at other court sites across the cluster and in order to ensure that access to justice is maintained, consideration will be given on a case by case basis to some of the work being listed at, for example, Huddersfield County Court.

### **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Halifax County Court and Family Court and move its work to Bradford Combined Court.

## **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Halifax County Court and Family Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.



### **Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' and Family Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' and Family Court should close and move the work to Bradford Magistrates' Court.

A total of 24 responses were received which related to Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' and Family Court. Of these:

- eight were from professional court users
- three were from magistrates
- three were from members of the judiciary
- three were from members of the public
- two were from members of staff
- two were from other public sector bodies
- one was from a criminal justice partner
- one was from a Member of parliament
- one was from a union or staff group

Of these, all were opposed to the closure.

### **Access to justice**

Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' and Family Court is situated nine miles from Bradford Magistrates' Court.

All responses made reference to access to justice.

"There is a significant difference between cost cutting and fair and equitable justice e.g. someone on a low/no wage would struggle financially in getting from the far side of Halifax to Bradford, would face the prospect of no legal aid and would be faced with disastrous court fees if found guilty." (Magistrate)

"Residents at the far end of the Calder Valley, from the towns of Hebden Bridge and Todmorden, would struggle to get to Bradford within an hour by car."  
(Professional user)

Whilst it is accepted that some journeys to reach court may take longer particularly for those who reside in more rural areas, we are committed to providing alternative ways to access our services, including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

The court will consider applications to conduct business by alternative means where possible. In exceptional circumstances start times of hearings may be delayed to allow later attendance due to travel difficulties, this would be considered on a case by case basis.

"The closure proposals ignore the impact on the local economy of moving all criminal and civil work to Bradford: at least eight criminal law firms and a similar number of civil law firms will have to close their offices and it is very doubtful indeed that many will be able to transfer offices and staff to Bradford."  
(Professional user)

Whilst local economies may experience some impact in towns where courts and tribunals close, this is expected to be slight and the overall effect minimal as services will be transferred to areas nearby.

Consideration will be given when listing cases in relation to both criminal and civil work depending on the nature of the work and the geographic location of the court user.

### **Value for money**

Some responses made reference to value for money.

"The substantial part of £36000 already invested in the digitalisation of the Calderdale Magistrates would be wasted." (Judiciary)

In relation to the investment for the installation of click share at the court, the equipment can be relocated to any site within the Ministry of Justice estate where there is a need.

"Furthermore I believe the Calderdale Magistrates Court, a beautiful listed building, may prove difficult to sell. If this were to remain empty it will still need to be maintained by the Ministry of Justice thus making no real savings. There are court buildings which stand empty and still remain unsold from the last courts closure programme." (Member of the public)

The last round of reform, Court Estates Reform Programme (CERP), throughout the North East Region showed that all buildings, with the exception of two that are currently under negotiation, have either been sold, handed back to the landlord at the end of the lease or the long leaseholds (999 years) were surrendered back to the authorities, such as the police.

### **Operational efficiency**

Few responses raised issues in respect of operational efficiency.

"We accept that all courtrooms are not fully utilised every day but that is likely to be the case in most Courts given their workload and the number of available magistrates. In the past Halifax has undertaken road traffic cases for West Yorkshire and there are clearly facilities available to undertake this role in the future given the likelihood of additional case pressures on larger courts locally."  
(Professional user)

We need to move towards an estate with buildings which are more efficient and enable flexible listing of court and tribunal business whilst also giving users more certainty when their cases will be heard.

We need to increase our ability to use the estate flexibly across the criminal jurisdiction and separately across the civil, family and tribunal (CFT) jurisdictions. We will consider listing at other court sites inclusive of those in Kirklees and Leeds.

## **Alternative provision**

Some responses mentioned alternative provisions.

“Looking locally for shared access to another venue in which to hold regular hearings. However this would have to be suitable to meet the needs of waiting and interview space as well as the hearing and be a suitable building from which the bailiffs could operate for the safety of other users.” (Professional user)

“For the court users in Calderdale it would be beneficial not to close the courts. However, if that is still going to be the decision after the consultation then it will be worth considering whether other buildings in Halifax can be used.” (Professional user)

To enable efficiency in the longer term HM Courts & Tribunals Service needs to increase the use of the estate wherever possible irrespective of current administrative boundaries. We also need to reduce the current cost of running of our estate by increasing the utilisation rate at our courts.

“Co-location of the two jurisdictions and the Tribunal Service in the Calderdale Magistrates building (creating the “Calderdale Combined Court), and locating all Bradford Family work (both magistrates and District judge) in the Bradford Magistrates court Building (creating the ‘Bradford Magistrates Court and Family Law Centre’) would avoid all the costs and detrimental effects that relocation of the Halifax Courts to Bradford would generate.” (Calderdale Bench)

“We are concerned that the use of public buildings would have a greater risk to court users and legal professionals.” (Professional user).

The proposed closure of Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ and Family Court requires no enabling works and the overall savings from the closure of both Halifax sites will be greater than any sums which may be required for any enabling works in Bradford Combined Court.

Some consideration will be given to work being listed at Kirklees Magistrates’ Court in relation to the geographical location of court users and to ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural locations. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will also explore whether we can appropriately make use of civic buildings for certain types of hearings. Full consideration to the suitability of such buildings to host hearings and security will always be given before any decisions are made.

## **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ and Family Court and move its work to Bradford Magistrates’ Court.

## **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Halifax Magistrates’ Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

## **Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court should be closed and the work moved to Teesside Magistrates' and Teesside Combined Court.

A total of 27 responses were received which related to Hartlepool Magistrates' and County Court. Of these:

- 10 were from magistrates
- five were from members of the public
- five were from other public sector bodies
- three were from criminal justice partners
- three were from professional court users
- one was from a union or staff group

Of these responses one was in favour of the proposals, one was neutral and 25 were opposed.

### **Access to justice**

All of the responses made reference to access to justice.

"Geography and economics appear to have had no bearing upon this decision. Hartlepool is a long distance from Middlesbrough on public transport. It is costly to obtain a return ticket to the same." (Professional User)

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court is located approximately 14 miles from Middlesbrough and there are excellent road, rail and bus links.

The cost of an anytime return rail ticket is £4.50 and the cost of a day rider plus which allows unlimited travel throughout Teesside and Hartlepool is £5.10. Whilst there is an acceptance that travel will be costly, attending court is an infrequent occurrence for the vast majority of people.

In addition, the changes we are making to our services will mean fewer people physically going to court, which will in turn make access to justice easier. To ensure that access to justice is maintained, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services.

The cost of travel for victims and witnesses can be claimed subject to regulations. Likewise if a defendant was acquitted following a hearing then travel costs can be claimed subject to similar regulations.

"The victim may end up using the same public transport as the defendant."  
(Magistrate)

The possibility of parties to a case travelling to court by the same form of public transport is one that exists at present. If a party to a case believes that they will travel to court in the same bus or train as another party and is concerned for their safety, the court may consider applications made by parties to be represented at court by other means, where possible.

“Court start times are not conducive to the needs of certain court user groups.”  
(Magistrate)

In exceptional cases, start times of hearings may be delayed to allow later attendance due to travel difficulties, this would be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Value for money**

During the 2014-15 financial year, operating costs at Hartlepool Magistrates’ Court and County Court were approximately £348,000.

Several responses raised concerns about value for money.

“Is the saving regards the building lease a real saving, if it is left empty or used by another Civil Service it becomes a case of merely moving the cost from one department to another.” (Magistrate)

“Unless able to sell the court building to another owner, would not save the operating costs approximately £345,000 per year that is mentioned; since it is a purpose built property, it is unlikely to easily use it for something else.” (Magistrate)

The building is owned by the local authority and is subject to a 999 year peppercorn rent lease. If HM Courts & Tribunals Service were to vacate the building, operating costs would be saved. During this period only rates would be payable. HM Courts & Tribunals Service would have the opportunity to either surrender the lease back to the Local Authority or sell our interest in the lease.

In summary, savings would be made until disposal.

“The building could be sold but previously more than 100 courts were closed and only 3 have actually been sold, but buildings still have to be maintained.”  
(Magistrate)

The last round of reform; Court Estates Reform Programme (CERP), throughout the North East Region has shown that all buildings, with the exception of two which are currently under negotiation, have either been sold, handed back to the landlord at the end of the lease or are long leaseholds (999 years) which were surrendered back to the appropriate authorities.

“The issue of the lift calls into question the validity of the consultation process or at least suggests that others have made decisions effecting Hartlepool with one eye on a possible closure agenda.” (Magistrate)

The lift at Hartlepool Magistrates’ Court and County Court was taken out of service on 5 February 2015 as the floor selector and panel were beyond repair. It became clear that given the antiquity of the lift and from a value for money and operational efficiency viewpoint, repairs were not only extremely costly but a major refurbishment or

replacement was required. As the capital funding for such schemes is limited and has to be prioritised year on year, this work at Hartlepool was deferred to a later years maintenance programme as higher priority works at other sites had to take precedence.

“Hartlepool has just undergone significant investment with Clickshare.”  
(Professional user)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service owns the click share equipment that has been installed into Hartlepool Magistrates’ Court and County Court. The equipment can therefore be relocated to any site within the Ministry of Justice estate.

### **Operational efficiency**

Hartlepool Magistrates’ Court and County Court is underused. During 2014-15 financial year, Hartlepool Magistrates’ and County Court was utilised for approximately 47% of its capacity. There are five courtrooms one of which is not used as the facilities are out of date.

Some responses referred to operational efficiency.

“The utilisation figures are flawed. They do not take into account short term and planned resource restructuring actions undertaken by the JBG.” (Magistrate)

Utilisation figures are accurate and have been calculated using the 2014-15 sitting hours workload data from the HM Courts & Tribunals Service performance database for crown, magistrates’ and county courts as a share of total hearing room capacity. Capacity is based on an assumption of 248 sitting days per year and five hours per day for each room.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service regularly reviews workload trends across all jurisdictions and the proposals included in the consultation are based on current and projected workloads. Any exceptional changes would be handled through flexible use of the court capacity at that time. Nationally there is an acceptance that there are low volumes of certain case types and to overcome this, it is a common occurrence for Judicial Business Groups to consider the amalgamation of lists across clusters to maximise efficiency.

“If Hartlepool’s court is allowed to close, could this be the demise of services currently offered by Probation and treatment services, and would they move to where the court building is?” (Magistrate)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service accepts that any proposed changes are likely to have an impact on other service providers and we are committed to working with them in order that mutually agreeable solutions are reached.

Probation, Witness Care, Crown Prosecution Service and Drug Treatment Services all have offices within Teesside Magistrates’ Court.

### **Alternative provision of Services**

“Sunderland work could be embraced within Peterlee and the opportunity to transfer work from Hartlepool to Peterlee has not been considered.” (Magistrates)

There is capacity at Peterlee Magistrates' Court, and listing of work there will be considered, however, this could cause some difficulties as there will be a cross over of police force areas between Cleveland and Durham, although these are not considered insurmountable.

"The SMT unanimously supports the use of digital technology however part of the Northern Pennines are incapable of achieving a signal...broadband is patchy."  
(Judiciary)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service understands that in some remote areas, IT services can be restricted. We remain committed to providing an effective and efficient service to all our users, and consideration will be given to any issues on a case-by-case basis. For instance, we are exploring whether we can appropriately make use of civic buildings for certain types of hearing, and in some exceptional cases start times of hearings may be delayed to allow later attendance due to travel difficulties. We acknowledge that this is however an issue for the minority and improvements continue to be made in an ever expanding digital age.

"An alternative maybe to install video link rooms in the town for people to attend a virtual court." (Magistrate)

"Set up a digital Hartlepool court in the part of the existing building or a leased office." (Magistrate)

Where appropriate, HM Courts & Tribunals Service is committed to providing alternatives to attending court; both suggestions would be deemed appropriate and negotiations with other organisations to explore these options will be considered.

"There will be a necessity to have Youth Courts centralised in order to ensure that the adoption of the 'Birmingham ruling' remains prevalent." (Professional user)

Following a review undertaken of the cell accommodation at the magistrates' courts in the cluster, action was taken to centralise youth courts, from Hartlepool to Teesside, therefore this issue has already been addressed.

### **Other considerations**

"The long held and respected concept of Local Justice will not be possible under the proposed closure and the idea that Hartlepool Magistrates would sit on the Hartlepool cases would become impossible to sustain." (Magistrate)

Magistrates are valued members of the judiciary and work well together for the benefit of the communities they serve, wherever they are delivering justice. Access to justice is not just about proximity to a court.

"The proposal will leave a town already in crisis in a more deprived state and will not help/support offenders to find a better quality of life." (Professional user)

Whilst local economies may experience some impact in towns where courts and tribunals will close, this is expected to be slight and the overall effect minimal as services are transferred to areas nearby. We must have due regard to ensure our estate is utilised to deliver justice efficiently and effectively while providing value for money.

“How much time will police waste having to travel to Teesside to obtain a warrant on a daily basis?” (Magistrate)

An important aspect of reform is to strengthen our working relationships with our justice partners, including exploring alternative methods of dealing with our work, it does not necessarily follow that attendance at court will always be required. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will explore modern technology not just to make the justice system more accessible but to reduce the costs of the whole justice system.

### **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Hartlepool Magistrates’ Court and County Court and move its work to Teesside Magistrates’ and Teesside Combined Court.

### **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Hartlepool Magistrates’ and County Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.



## **Morpeth County Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Morpeth County Court should be closed and its work moved to Newcastle Combined Court.

A total of 19 responses were received which related to Morpeth County Court. Of these:

- seven were from professional court users
- four were from magistrates
- three were from members of the judiciary
- three were from members of other public sector bodies
- one was from a professional user
- one was from a union or staff group

Of the responses none were in favour of the proposals, two were neutral whilst 17 were opposed.

## **Access to justice**

Morpeth County Court is a stand alone county court and there are a further five combined county courts operating in Northumbria; the others are at Gateshead, Newcastle, North Shields, South Shields, and Sunderland. The courthouse is situated in Morpeth and covers the North and South East parts of Northumberland.

All responses made reference to access to justice issues.

“We do not find your data helpful. It takes no account of the practical difficulties involved in travelling from Northumberland to Newcastle at peak times. Because of traffic congestion a one way journey can take nearly one hour without taking into account parking difficulties.” (Other public sector body)

Travel times information and public transport costs were provided as a guide only. The main towns in Northumberland are all served by a frequent bus service to Newcastle. Journey times to South East Northumberland are between 30 minutes and one hour.

There are a number of park and ride facilities available just outside of Newcastle and buses run every 10 minutes into the centre. An approximate cost of a day ticket is £3.20.

“One of the reasons used to justify the closure of Alnwick was the availability of the court at Bedlington; Family proceedings were subsequently transferred to Morpeth to enable two tiers of the Family judiciary (District Judges and Lay Justices) to work together in a local Hearing Centre of the Family Court.” (Magistrate)

The towns of Alnwick and Amble have a regular public transport service to Bedlington although journeys by public transport are just over one hour. Where a longer journey would be necessitated to arrive at court for 10:00am, listing arrangements can facilitate a

later scheduling of cases to assist those with transport issues. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

Users should not have to make excessively long or difficult journeys to attend hearings, but we also know that in an increasingly digital age, users do not always need to attend hearings in person in order to access the justice system. To ensure that access to justice is maintained including in rural areas, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services, including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

### **Value for money**

During the 2014-15 financial year, operating costs at Morpeth County Court were approximately £258,000.

“We consider that financial savings made by closing Morpeth County Court would be minimal.” (Magistrates Association)

“Costing within the impact assessment allude to the operational cost of the court being £255,130. Following further examination it was said by HMCTS to be £198,182. HMCTS occupies the accommodation within the property by way of Memorandum of Term of Occupation which is renewable yearly. There is no indication that the building is to be vacated or sold by the owner and it is our suggestion that the MOTO should be renegotiated on more favourable (cheaper) terms. If cost is the only reason to close Morpeth Court, and we can see no other, this is an opportunity to reduce the cost.” (Magistrate)

At the time of consultation the total operating costs for Morpeth County Court were approximately £255,000. This figure has been revised to approximately £258,000 to reflect current prices. The figure of £198,182 when broken down relates to fixed costs which unfortunately can not be broken down any further. This is an annual charge from the Department for Work & Pensions via their facilities management provider. It is essentially a single service charge for HM Courts & Tribunals Service occupation of part of the building and covering the proportionate share of rent, rates, ongoing maintenance and cleaning; in effect a share of all the fixed running costs of the building except variable costs such as utilities and security. Whilst the figure does seem quite high we can confirm it is accurate and the figure which appears in our published and audited accounts.

The estate is both costly and underused. There are 460 buildings in England and Wales, costing taxpayers £500 million per year. Last year, a third of those buildings sat empty for more than half their available hearing time.

### **Operational efficiency**

Several responses made reference to operational efficiency.

“The figure of 44% said to reflect courtroom occupancy appears to have omitted the Family Proceedings.” (Magistrate)

The utilisation figure of 44% provided in the Morpeth County Court consultation proposal did not include family magistrates court sitting days. Supplementary data on judicial work held in chambers and informal rooms was therefore considered in addition to the published utilisation figure before a final decision was made regarding Morpeth County Court.

“We seriously doubt that Newcastle can absorb 32 extra court sitting days, there is already chronic overcrowding in Newcastle for the public and the judiciary.”  
(Member of the judiciary)

A full analysis of sitting day allocation for both Morpeth and Newcastle has now been undertaken. To accommodate the Morpeth sittings, an additional district judge's chamber is required at Newcastle Combined Court and the analysis has indicated that this will not prove a difficulty. In conjunction with this, there is also the possibility of additional capacity at the Moot Hall which could accommodate any overspill.

“Courts already use telephone hearings for non contested matters. This would not be possible in civil disputes such as trials where a Judge needs to hear oral evidence and see the witness.” (Professional user)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will assess the criteria of certain applications and work with the judiciary in achieving the right outcomes. Where attendance at a hearing is needed, the use of other civic or public buildings will be taken into consideration ensuring that policies have been applied for example in relation to security.

### **Alternative provision of services**

Responses included a number of suggestions to look at listing cases at other venues for example family cases due to the nature and complexity of the matters including emergency applications which require attendance at court.

“An alternative to closing the courts would be to rent other space within the same towns to allow members of the public, particularly those who are elderly or have disabilities to travel to their local court.” (Professional user)

“Should the Morpeth court ultimately close as proposed, we would seek assurances that the court office in Berwick upon Tweed remains open for local hearings.” (Professional user)

The consultation does not change the current position in relation to the courthouse in Berwick upon Tweed. We can confirm that the types of cases currently heard in Berwick will continue to be heard there so there is no impact on witnesses from the Berwick area as a direct result of this proposed merger of Local Justice Areas.

The exceptional geographic location of Berwick will continue to be taken into account from an access to justice perspective if any change is considered to listing of cases in the future. Any such proposals would be the subject of further consultation with court users and through that process of consultation the question of reasonableness and proportionality would be addressed.

“If Morpeth closes the family panel work should move to Bedlington and Berwick.”  
(Magistrate)

An important aspect of reform is strengthening our working relationships with our stakeholder partners and it is essential that we take a staged approach to the development of our technology requirements.

Although the logistics of such arrangements would need to be carefully considered with our stakeholders we will consider alternative proposals in relation to the family work

currently heard at Morpeth to be heard at Mid and South East Northumberland Magistrates' Court (Bedlington) and Berwick in addition to Newcastle.

### **Other considerations**

A number of comments related to poor accommodation at Newcastle Combined Court and that no suitable provision has been made in relation to magistrates sitting at Newcastle.

"Family Proceedings moved to Newcastle Combined Court from Gosforth Magistrates' Court some years ago. Two rooms were converted for use by the Family Magistracy, now courts 14 and 15. Court 14 has no secure entrance for magistrates. There was not then, and is not now, any designated room to which Family JP's can retire to prepare for sittings or consider cases. A section of the Judges' Dining room is used, unless it is required by the senior members of the judiciary for a meeting." (Magistrate)

Newcastle Combined Court accommodates the Centralised Family Team who have revisited the system in relation to providing a designated space for retiring magistrates. The court staff recently put in place a "rota key" system whereby they control the booking of magistrates sitting in the family courts. Although there are currently no designated retiring rooms, plans are in place to ensure that where possible, the judicial dining room can be used for this purpose and if not available, then as an alternative, a courtroom is secured for use.

### **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Morpeth County Court and move its work to Newcastle Combined Court.

### **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Morpeth County Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

### **Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court should be closed and the work moved to Sheffield Magistrates' Court and Sheffield Combined Court.

A total of 16 responses were received which related to Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court. Of these:

- four were from members of the public
- three were from members of the judiciary
- two were from magistrates
- two were from other public sector bodies
- two were from professional court users
- one was from a criminal justice partner
- one was from a Member of Parliament
- one was from a union or staff group

Of these responses three were in favour of the proposals and two were neutral whilst 11 were opposed.

### **Access to justice**

Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court is situated nine miles from Sheffield and there are excellent road, rail and bus links.

All responses made reference to access to justice.

"Though some of the population of Rotherham will have the means to travel to Sheffield, whether they are defendants, witnesses, victims or involved in a family hearing, it is likely that many may find such a journey daunting and expensive." (Member of the judiciary)

"Bus services throughout the Borough are provided by a number of different operators and as such a single return ticket would not be available, instead requiring multiple tickets and increased costs." (Member of Parliament)

"There is a real problem that Rotherham people with limited means, mental health issues or disabilities will see the journey to Sheffield and its attendant cost as a real barrier to local justice." (Magistrate)

There are frequent bus and train services to Sheffield with journeys taking between approximately 20 and 30 minutes. If travelling by car, a number of park and ride stations are available around Sheffield at a cost of £4.50 per day, which include bus and tram fares. Buses and trams run every 10 minutes from the park and ride stations into

Sheffield. For travel throughout the whole of the South Yorkshire area a travel master gold day ticket can be purchased at a cost of £7.60.

The cost of travel for victims and witnesses can be claimed, subject to regulations. Likewise, if a defendant was acquitted following a hearing then travel costs can be claimed, subject to similar regulations.

In exceptional cases start times of hearings may be delayed to allow later attendance due to travel difficulties, this would be considered on a case by case basis.

A number of train and bus companies operate localised discount schemes and there are a number of schemes for the disabled. The City Council assesses the individual's needs and then works with the individual to discuss travel arrangements.

Access to justice is not just about proximity to a court. We are committed to providing alternatives to travel. The changes we are making will make it easier for people to access justice. We are reforming the system so that fewer people will need to physically go to court.

### **Value for money**

During the 2014-15 financial year operating costs at Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court were approximately £646,000.

One response made reference to value for money.

"The consultation states running costs to be £640,000 in 2014-15. We understand that much of these costs are made up by business rates which stand at approximately £250,000 and a centralised contract for services including security and cleaning which amount to £200,000 per year. These costs are out of proportion with other premises of similar size and could represent an opportunity to reduce expenditure and enable the court to continue to operate." (Member of Parliament)

The amount payable for business rates is based on the rateable value. All magistrates' courts are assessed for business rates on the notional rebuild of the property as at 1 April 2008 and the valuations are influenced mainly by the age and size of the property. Rotherham Magistrates' Court is a modern property, built in 1994, and so the unit price will be relatively high compared with an older property of a similar size. These costs are in line with other courts of a similar size.

### **Operational efficiency**

During the 2014-15 financial year, utilisation at the court was approximately 32% of its capacity.

Three responses related to operational efficiency.

"We believe the usage figure which the consultation document states to have been approximately 32% in 2014-15 to be inaccurate. Four of these courtrooms have never been put into use and as such the overall figure used in the consultation is skewed." (Member of Parliament)

Utilisation figures are calculated using the 2014-15 sitting hours workload data from the HM Courts & Tribunals Service performance database for crown, magistrates' and county courts sharing a total of hearing room capacity. Capacity is based on an assumption of 248 sitting days per year and five hours sitting per day for each room.

"I issue emergency applications without notice in Rotherham Court, sitting and waiting while a DJ fits us in due to the good working relationships we have with court staff and will no longer be able to do this. Sheffield is already very busy and it concerns me that they will not be able to fit in such applications so quickly."  
(Professional user)

Where appropriate, emergency applications will always be dealt with on the day of issue, this is commonplace across all court sites and Sheffield is no exception. Given that there are greater numbers of judiciary sitting at Sheffield Combined Court compared to Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court, this should build in additional flexibility to hear such cases.

An important aspect of reform is working closely with our stakeholder partners. There is significant work already underway to modernise our court procedures. The judiciary themselves have been leading the thinking on reforming the courts and tribunals.

"The consultation states that Rotherham's workload could be absorbed by facilities in Sheffield, which are stated to be underused. However no figures are given for the available capacity of these facilities." (Member of Parliament)

A full analysis of the sitting day allocation for both Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court and Sheffield Magistrates' Court and Combined Court has been undertaken. Both crime and family hearings conducted by magistrates from both Rotherham Magistrates' Court and family work currently heard in Sheffield Combined Court can be incorporated into the sitting patterns at Sheffield Magistrates' Court, without additional courtroom allocation. There is sufficient cell capacity at Sheffield Magistrates' Court to cope with future integration demands. Sheffield Magistrates' Court is currently utilised to approximately 44% of its capacity and Sheffield Combined Court to approximately 59% of its capacity.

### **Alternative provisions of service**

Some responses made reference to alternative provisions.

"Rotherham is pretty much in the middle of a triangle formed by Barnsley, Sheffield and Doncaster. Is there merit in splitting the Rotherham catchment area, in particular work from the east of Rotherham might conveniently be re- assigned to Doncaster." (Member of the judiciary)

Consideration will be given on a case by case basis to the postcode location of our users which will determine how the work will be allocated in relation to the geographical split and whether some of the work from Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court might more appropriately be heard in either Barnsley Law Courts or Doncaster Magistrates' Court and Family Court.

To ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural locations, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

“Some sort of video conferencing may be useful but realistically it will not work in many cases and I don’t know where you would set this up.” (Member of the public)

We already have well established alternative ways that users can interact with our services. For example; enabling police officers to give evidence over a live link; processes to enable victims, witnesses and defendants to attend hearings over video link; and users in some jurisdictions have cases progressed or considered through telephone hearings or no papers meaning that they don’t need to attend a hearing in person at all.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will explore whether we can make appropriate use of civic buildings for certain types of hearings. Full consideration as to the suitability of such buildings to host court hearings will always be given before any decisions are made.

### **Other considerations**

“Magistrates in the Community....This is unlikely to survive in the present form if the court closes and magistrates are dispersed to other areas.” (Magistrate)

The success of the “Magistrates in the Community” programme form an important part of the Rotherham community and HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with its members to ensure continuation of the project.

### **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Rotherham Magistrates’ Court, County Court and Family Court and its work moved to Sheffield Magistrates’ Court and Sheffield Combined Court.

### **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Rotherham Magistrates’ and County Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.



### **Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court should be closed and the work moved to Grimsby Magistrates' Court and Grimsby Combined Court.

A total of 37 responses were received which related to Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court. Of these:

- 14 were from magistrates
- six were from members of the public
- five were from professional court users
- four were from criminal justice partners
- three were from members of the judiciary (individual and collective responses)
- two were from members of HM Courts & Tribunals Service staff
- one was from a Member of Parliament
- one was from a public sector body
- one was from a union or staff group

Of these responses, one was in favour, three were neutral and 33 were opposed to the closure.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service would like to apologise for an error in the consultation document. It was stated that there are four magistrates' courts operating in Humberside. The correct number is five, Bridlington Magistrates' Court being the fifth.

### **Access to justice**

Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is situated 28 miles from Grimsby and there are road, rail and bus links to and from the receiving site.

The majority of responses made reference to access to justice, the main themes being:

#### **1. Public transport challenges**

"Public transport times into Scunthorpe do not necessarily allow connection to the trains and buses in Grimsby in order to be there for 9.30am." (Professional user)

"Many villages only have a rudimentary bus service at best and those living in villages with small stations which are served by the railway line are not served by the Transpennine Express which goes to Grimsby." (Judiciary in the Humber Group of Courts)

“Are applicants and respondents in family law cases – perhaps already struggling with money and child care – to be forced to travel 80 miles a day to seek justice from the courts?” (Magistrate via Member of Parliament)

There is an acceptance that of all the proposed North East court closures, Scunthorpe has the longest travel distance to the receiving site (28 miles), however, access to justice is not just about proximity to a court. We are committed to providing alternatives to travel. The changes we are making will make it easier for people to get access to justice.

Users should not have to make excessively long or difficult journeys to attend hearings, we also know that, in an increasingly digital age, users will not always need to attend hearings in person in order to access the justice system. To ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural areas, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services, including (where appropriate) the use of other civic buildings.

Attending court is an infrequent occurrence for the vast majority of people but for those who do become involved, the listing of the relevant hearing will, where such circumstances are advised to the listing department, take account of any likely travel difficulties. It is accepted, and regrettable, that some attendees will face significant journeys but they are a small minority and we must have greater regard for the majority.

## **2. Cost of travelling**

“Many of our customers are on low incomes or benefits and struggle to meet the cost of day to day living. If they are then expected to travel to Grimsby many will not be able to afford it and may decide not to attend.” (Staff members)

“...in our area it is not feasible for ‘local justice’ to be served when there is a 5 hour round trip at a cost of probably one third of the weekly benefit rate.” (Magistrate)

Victims and witnesses are entitled to recover expenses subject to regulations. If a defendant was acquitted following a hearing then travel costs can be claimed subject to similar regulations.

Going to court can be a very stressful experience, especially for vulnerable people and we are reforming the system so that fewer people will need to physically go to court. As stated above, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services.

## **3. Vulnerable victims/witnesses will be disadvantaged**

“Our Women’s Centre in Scunthorpe is located almost directly across the road from the Court Centre, in the building we offer free crèche facilities. Unfortunately, due to the time restraint on our crèche facilities, should our service users be required to travel this would not be a service we would be able to offer.” (Professional user)

“People involved in Domestic Violence cases or a particular volatile divorce, or children’s proceedings will also be placed in a vulnerable position by potentially travelling on the same public transport for longer scheduled periods of time.” (Staff members)

The possibility of all parties to a case travelling to court by the same form of public transport is one that exists at present. If a party to a case believes that they will travel to court in the same bus or train as another party, and they are concerned for their safety, the court may consider an application made by them to be represented at court by other means.

To ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural locations, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services.

There are provisions in place to enable some categories of victims and witnesses (such as children, vulnerable adults and victims of sexual assault) to give evidence using screens, in private or by video link without having to come to court and we are looking to expand these provisions to include all witnesses and to provide more choice than is currently the case.

#### **4. The dispensation of local justice**

“.....Justice should be a priority at the local level to dispense a sentence with local knowledge.” (Magistrate)

“Our Magistrates have many years of experience with a fundamental knowledge of Scunthorpe and its surrounding area.” (Professional user)

“.....real barriers will be placed in the way of those people participating in the magistracy with the likely impact of the magistracy becoming less diverse.” (Magistrate)

Magistrates are valued members of the judiciary and work well together for the benefit of the communities they serve, wherever they are delivering justice. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with individuals to ensure, where possible, that their needs are met and reasonable adjustments are made as and when necessary. We expect the process of local people being tried by local magistrates to continue, with magistrates covering larger areas than at present.

#### **Value for money**

During the 2014-15 financial year operating costs at Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court were approximately £271,000.

Few responses raised concerns about value for money.

“...by shutting Scunthorpe it will save £268,000, not taking into account the relocation of some court services, the scaling down of the building and redundancy payments, probably more than could be saved will be spent.” (Magistrate via Member of Parliament)

“There is very little data available, but clearly the running costs of Scunthorpe are mainly operational costs that would follow the workload.” (Member of the public)

The majority of operating costs at Scunthorpe would be saved. Operating costs do not include staffing costs and as such would not follow the workload.

The 999 year lease has no significant value and would be surrendered back to the police, whereas the Charter Hall building could be sold to generate revenue.

### **Operational efficiency**

During the 2014-15 financial year, utilisation at Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court was approximately 30% of its capacity.

"It is stated that the overall utilisation is 30%. Whilst those responding do not have full access to the statistics and how those figures are calculated, it is clear this includes the Criminal Magistrates' Courts as well as family, housing and civil. The District Judge Hearing room is stated to be at 80% utilisation." (Professional user)

"There is a perception that Criminal work has been moved away from Scunthorpe by the MOJ to other courts and it is this strategy, whether deliberately in preparation for this consultation or not, that has led to the claim that the criminal courts in Scunthorpe are under utilised." (Professional user)

Utilisation figures are calculated using 2014-15 sitting hours workload data from the HM Courts & Tribunals Service performance database for crown, magistrates' and county courts sharing a total of hearing room capacity. Capacity is based on an assumption of 248 sitting days per year and five hours sitting per day for each room. As stated in the consultation document, the utilisation of the court is very low at approximately 30%.

We need to respect the traditions of our court system, yet court attendance is time consuming and often an inefficient process for everyone involved. A more proportionate approach to court attendance would eliminate wasted time and enhance confidence in the administration of justice.

Nationally there is an acceptance that there are low volumes of certain case types and to overcome this it is a common occurrence for lists to be amalgamated across clusters to ensure maximum efficiency.

### **Alternative provisions of service**

There were some responses which made reference to alternative provisions.

"Travel to Doncaster and Hull from some parts of North Lincolnshire would be less difficult than to Grimsby. It is also easier to travel to Hull than to Grimsby or Doncaster from some parts of North Lincolnshire." (Professional user)

"It would be highly desirable for parties, their representatives and witnesses in proceedings to be able to appear by video link from suitable premises in Scunthorpe." (Professional user)

"The use of video link requires significant wider thinking – when this has been considered previously, in the main only the prison, police and probation have been able to access or co-ordinate this. Treatment providers and other agencies would not have the same access rights." (Professional user)

"The freehold building can be vacated and sold by moving the administration function into the main court building (which is on a peppercorn rent)." (Staff member)

“....I would suggest keeping the court open, but only sit on 3 days per week; the case load can then be combined into these 3 days.” (Staff member)

Consideration will be given to how the work can be allocated in relation to the geographical split and to ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural locations.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service will consider some work being listed in both Doncaster and Hull.

We already have well established alternative ways that users can interact with our services. There are examples of this; enabling police officers to give evidence over a live link; processes to enable victims, witnesses and defendants to attend hearings over video link; and users in some jurisdictions have cases progressed or considered through telephone hearings or no papers meaning that they do not need to attend a hearing in person. We are taking a staged approach to the development of our technology requirements.

Housing possession cases/lists were raised as an issue by both professional users and the judiciary in the Humber group of courts, specifically regarding the duty scheme and on the day advice available to users and concerns arising from alternative provision proposals. HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with both the judiciary and local solicitors to ensure that these issues can be overcome.

### **Other factors raised**

“As far as we are concerned it would add around £50 to the cost of each attendance at court and also reduce our capacity to provide advice to the public as staff will be occupied for nearly 2 hours additional travelling time for each attendance.” (Professional user)

“DRR assessments - if the court closes this will incur a cost per day to the service. Staff time lost to travelling is also a factor.” (Professional user)

“A real positive for treatment services is being co-located within walking distance of police, courts and service to ensure multi-agency wraparound and response.” (Professional user)

We accept that any proposed changes are likely to have an impact on other service providers and we are committed to working with them in order that mutually agreeable solutions are reached.

“At Scunthorpe Court, our partnership has run a Respect Court, an informal Court run to provide young people and children on the cusp of offending with a court based experience. The Respect Court is highly regarded by families whose children have been the subject of this intervention, agencies such as the Youth Offending Team, North Lincolnshire Unitary Authority, local Magistrates and Judiciary, the Police etc.” (Criminal justice partner)

The ‘Respect Court’ initiative and the successful outcomes form an important part of the Scunthorpe community and HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with members to ensure the continuation of the project.

“Lack of attendance of witnesses is likely to lead to more cracked trials and consequent decreased efficiency for the justice system.” (Magistrate)

“The professional judgment from a number of agencies is that the additional effort to get to court will mean that the number of fail to appear warrant will inevitably increase. This clearly puts additional pressure on Police resources.” (Criminal justice partner)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service has considered the impacts of proposals on stakeholders and justice partners as part of the decision making process. We will continue to work closely with the aforementioned during implementation.

“Another significant difficulty presents to people who need to make an urgent application. If a fee is payable this means a visit to the counter is required unless the delay from making a postal application is acceptable. We would expect the counter service at Grimsby to have extended opening hours – at least until 3pm – to accommodate this.” (Professional user)

“Any ideas that suggest video conferencing or online sentencing is the way forward ignore the government’s woeful experiences with IT.” (Member of the public)

Courts can be contacted during the hours of 9am and 5pm, prior arrangement can be made by phoning the court and advising that an urgent application is to be issued and this should be sufficient to allow this to happen outside of counter opening times. HM Courts & Tribunals Service also operates an out of hours urgent court business scheme.

One response referred to the Lincolnshire Lakes development and the likely upturn of residents. Although in its early stages, outline planning permission of the development of approx 3,000 homes has been approved. As mentioned previously, only a very small number of the population will ever come into contact with the justice system and HM Courts & Tribunals Service regularly reviews trends in workloads across all jurisdictions and the proposals included in the consultation are based on current and projected workloads. Any exceptional changes to workload would be handled through flexible use of the court capacity at that time.

There were also general responses highlighting personal impacts for individuals who include staff, magistrates and judiciary. These will need to be addressed through specific one to one meetings where HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with individuals to identify what, if any, appropriate reasonable adjustments are required.

## **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Scunthorpe Magistrates’ Court, County Court and Family Court and move the workload to both Grimsby Magistrates’ Court and Grimsby Combined Court.

## **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Scunthorpe Magistrates' and County Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

### **Wakefield Magistrates' Court**

The Lord Chancellor has decided that Wakefield Magistrates' Court should be closed and its work moved to Leeds Magistrates' Court.

A total of 30 responses were received which related to Wakefield Magistrates' Court. Of these:

- eight were from members of the public
- eight were from other public sector bodies
- four were from magistrates
- three were from criminal justice partners
- three were from Members of Parliament
- one was from a member of the judiciary
- one was from a member of staff
- one was from a professional court user
- one was from a union or staff group
- A petition was submitted by the Member of Parliament for Wakefield signed by 165 residents of the Wakefield constituency

Of these responses four were in favour of the proposals, one was neutral whilst 25 were opposed.

### **Access to justice**

Wakefield Magistrates' Court is located in Wakefield town centre and is approximately 12 miles from the proposed receiving court; Leeds Magistrates' Court.

The majority of responses made reference to access to justice.

"The travel times on the Consultation Paper do not take account of the distance from Leeds Magistrates' Court to Leeds train and bus stations." (Member of Parliament)

"Public transport to Leeds from many parts of Wakefield district is difficult, especially for those with mobility problems and very time consuming. For those travelling by car, parking is expensive and the main car parks are some distance from the courts." (Professional user)

Whilst HM Courts & Tribunals Service acknowledge and accept that some people will need to travel further to reach their nearest court and for some the journey, if made by public transport, may be over an hour, for the majority of people the closure will have little



impact. We are mindful of the infrequency with which people need to attend court and the small proportion of people that would use public transport to reach court.

Users should not have to make excessively long or difficult journeys to attend hearings, but we also know that, in an increasingly digital age, users do not always need to attend hearings in person in order to access the justice system. To ensure that access to justice is maintained, including in more rural areas, we are committed to providing alternative ways for users to access our services, including, where appropriate, the use of other civic buildings.

Buses run regularly from Pontefract bus station, an adult day ticket which allows travel anywhere in West Yorkshire costs £4.70.

There are car parks situated in Leeds City Centre and on the outskirts of the city centre. Leeds offers a park and ride service from Elland Road and buses run every 10 minutes to the city centre. A day return ticket costs £3.00.

The cost of travel for victims and witnesses can be claimed subject to regulations. Likewise if a defendant was acquitted following a hearing then travel costs can be claimed subject to similar regulations.

“If Magistrates are still required then it is likely that their travelling expenses will increase significantly.” (Judiciary)

The impact assessment notes that the overall impact on the judiciary has not been monetised, in part because whilst some journeys may take longer, there will be fewer journeys to a consolidated hearing estate. For example, the need to attend hearings at five sites on the region instead of 10. Any increase in travelling expenses would not outweigh the reduction in running costs and the benefits of a more efficient and flexible justice system.

### **Value for money**

The operating costs for Wakefield Magistrates' Court for 2014-15 were £271,000. Wakefield is a listed building and the facilities are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. Wakefield Magistrates' Court would require significant investment to bring it up to the required standard.

Some responses made reference to value for money.

“The building in itself is far from fit for purpose and no doubt in terms of maintenance and future development, would not be financially viable. In balance from an organisational perspective there would be agreement for the proposal.” (Professional user)

There is an acceptance that Wakefield Magistrates' Court building is not fit for purpose, however Leeds Magistrates' Court offers excellent quality facilities for users in a modern purpose built building for court users. The close proximity of the receiving court, its size, condition and underuse requires consideration.

“We do not accept that the running costs claimed are going to be saved by the proposed closure.” (Professional user)

There will be savings in the operating costs of running the building such as cleaning, security and waste, as well as fuel and other utilities.

“With regard to asset sales, previous attempts to dispose of court estate in the area have a dismal record.” (Wakefield and Pontefract bench)

The last round of reform; Court Estates Reform Programme, (CERP) throughout the North East region has shown that all buildings; with the exception of two which are currently under negotiation, have either been sold, handed back to the landlord at the end of the lease or are long leaseholds (999 years) which were surrendered back to the appropriate authorities.

### **Operational efficiency**

Two responses accepted the utilisation figures for Wakefield as set out in the consultation document.

“Court utilisation at Wakefield is good, as the consultation paper acknowledges.” (Member of the judiciary)

“It is accepted that in the consultation document that Wakefield Magistrates’ Court is currently well used. It must therefore be a better option to improve the facilities it already has.” (Professional user)

Although Wakefield Magistrates’ Court was utilised for approximately 56% of its capacity during the 2014-15 financial year this alone does not justify keeping the court open when the receiving court can absorb the workload without any enabling works. Combining the workload to one location would improve efficiency and enable savings to be made.

“Owing to the presence of the West Yorkshire Police Headquarters in Wakefield City Centre, West Yorkshire Police use Wakefield Magistrates’ Court on a daily basis. Since 2003, all Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) applications have been issued and determined in Wakefield.” (Professional user)

An important aspect of reform is to strengthen our working relationships with our justice partners, including the police, the National Probation Service and the wider National Offender Management Service as well as the Crown Prosecution Service. We also need to move towards an estate with buildings which are larger and facilitate the more efficient and flexible listing of court and tribunal business whilst also giving users more certainty when their cases will be heard.

### **Alternative provision of services**

A number of responses made comments on the supply of alternative provisions.

“Pontefract Court Buildings are still vacant. They were purpose built for court services and in practice until a few years ago. There are five courtrooms available at Pontefract and could be increased with little adjustment.” (Professional user)

Whilst we are aware that the old Pontefract Magistrates’ Court site is still vacant it does not fulfil the requirements of modern day court users. Pontefract Magistrates’ Court does not have any holding cells and therefore used to rely on the police cells adjacent to the court. The facility previously provided by the police is no longer available since its closure

in the summer of 2014 when they relocated to a new site in Normanton. We also need to reduce the reliance on buildings with poor facilities and to remove from the estate buildings that are difficult and expensive either to improve or to upgrade.

“Observations by Family Court Magistrates are that on any one day there are three or more unused courtrooms at Wakefield Civil Justice Centre (WCJC) and to employ these for criminal work would both increase its usage and reduce the case-cost to HMCTS.” (Wakefield and Pontefract Bench)

We acknowledge that there is some capacity at Wakefield Civil Justice Centre and will actively look to list local cases where appropriate. However, there are constraints to consider such as the lack of cell accommodation and the need to take into consideration the appropriate mix of court users from different disciplines who may attend court on any given day.

“The use of technology and video conferencing could be extremely useful and would be welcomed. This would not only allow a local link to the delivery of justice but would also aid with efficiencies.” (Professional user)

There are provisions in place to enable some categories of victims and witnesses (such as children, vulnerable adults and victims of sexual assault) to give evidence behind screens, in private or by video link without having to come to court. We are looking to expand these provisions to include all witnesses and to provide more choice than is currently available.

### **Other considerations**

“Far too many services and businesses have moved to Leeds and elsewhere in recent years, diminishing the city centre and making it harder still for remaining businesses to prosper.” (Professional user)

“Impact on the Wakefield District economy should be considered as the loss of the District’s only remaining magistrates’ court has the potential to impact legal professions in Wakefield.” (Judiciary)

HM Courts & Tribunals Service accepts that the closure of the court may impact some people more than others, including those with local businesses, however, we must have due regard to ensure our estate is used to deliver justice efficiently and effectively whilst providing value for money.

For small businesses, including solicitors, there may be a small increase in time and travel costs due to the additional travel necessary to conduct business at the nearest court. However, some or all of this could be offset by fewer journeys to court due to cases being listed more flexibly and efficiently.

“The Youth Offending Team have a number of specific programmes for offenders that are judged to be very successful but these are local to the Wakefield area and are not available in Leeds; this service would be lost if Wakefield closes.” (Judiciary)

The success of the ‘Magistrates in the Community’ programme and the programme currently run by the Youth Offending Team form an important part of the Wakefield community and HM Courts & Tribunals Service will work with members to ensure continuation of the projects.

“The proposal will have a negative impact on other agencies including Probation and the Police.”(Professional user)

Part of the decision making process has been to consider the impacts of proposals on our stakeholders and justice partners. We will continue to work closely with both of the aforementioned during implementation to ensure that we manage the impacts of any closures.

### **Decision**

All the points raised by respondents to the consultation have been analysed and following careful consideration, the Lord Chancellor has decided to close Wakefield Magistrates' Court and move its work to work Leeds Magistrates' Court.

### **Implementation**

Consultation with the Departmental Trade Union on staffing impacts will take place over the coming months. There are a number of factors to consider before Wakefield Magistrates' Court can close. Attached with this document is an indicative timetable for implementation. Please note this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

## **Consultation principles**

The principles that Government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

## Annex A – List of respondents

In addition to the 39 members of the public who responded to the consultation, the following named individuals and organisations provided a response:

Ackworth Parish Council	Councillor for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Alderson Law LLP	Councillors of Hartlepool
Andrea Jenkyns, Member of Parliament for Morley and Outwood	Deputy Head of the National Probation Service North East
Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Member for Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed	District Judge Atherton
Bench Chairman Rotherham Law Courts	District Judge Gardner
Bishop of Durham	District Judge Good
Bond Dickinson LLP	District Judge Lower
Citizens Advice Bureau	District Judge Stephenson, Scunthorpe and Grimsby Court Centres
Calderdale Council	District Judge Underwood, on behalf of Bradford District Judges
Calderdale Local Authority	Durham Magistrates Bench
Castleford Community Partnership	Finn Gledhill Solicitors
Chair of Calderdale Magistrates' Bench	Four Housing
Chair of Northumbria Family Panel	GEOAmey Prisoner Escort Custody Service UK Ltd
Chair of South Yorkshire Resolution	Grimsby and Scunthorpe Rape Crisis Ltd
North Lincolnshire Magistrates Bench Chairman	Halifax and Huddersfield Junior Lawyer Division of the Law Society
Chairman County Durham & Darlington LJA	Halifax and Huddersfield Junior Lawyers
Chairman, Hartlepool local Justice Area	Hartlepool Council
Chief Executive Hartlepool Council	Hartlepool Local Justice Area
Chief Superintendent Harwin, Rotherham District Commander, South Yorkshire Police	Hartlepool Magistrates Bench

HH Judge Gosnell, Designated Civil Judge for Leeds, North Yorkshire and the Bradford Group of Courts

HH Judge Hillier, Designated Family Judge for West Yorkshire Family Court Coverdale House, Leeds

HH Judge Hudson, Designated Family Judge for Northumbria and North Durham

HH Judge Richardson QC, on behalf of Judiciary in the Humber group of courts

HH Judge Robinson, Designated Civil Judge for Sheffield and South Yorkshire

HMCTS Staff Members

Holly Lynch, Member of Parliament for Halifax

Humberside Criminal Justice Board

Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company (HLNY CRC)

Ian Wright, Member of Parliament for Hartlepool

Income Manager, Pennine Housing 2000 LTD

Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service

Jon Trickett, Member of Parliament for Hemsworth

Judge Ashton-Smith, Tribunal Judge

Judge Findlay, Regional Tribunal Judge

Judge Heatherington, Tribunal Judge

Judge Hindmarsh on behalf of Tribunal Judges, First tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) Residential Property (RPT)

Judge Jefferson, Residential Property Tribunal

Judge Lee, Regional Employment Judge, Yorkshire & Humber Region

Judge Males, on behalf of the Presiding Judges and the FDLJ of the Northern Eastern Circuit.

Leaders of West Yorkshire and York local authorities

Legal Services Manager, Northumberland County Council

Local Justice of the Peace

Local practicing Barristers

Magistrates Association

Mary Creagh, Member of Parliament for Wakefield

Newcastle Citizens Advice Bureaux

Newcastle Employment Tribunal Judiciary

Newcastle upon Tyne Law Society

NHS England Health & Justice, Cumbria and the North East

Nic Dakin, Member of Parliament for Scunthorpe

Normanton Town Council

North Lincolnshire Magistrates Bench Chairman

North Lincolnshire Council

North Lincolnshire Magistrates Bench

North Northumbria Magistrates association

Northumberland County Council

Northumberland County Council's Child Care Legal Team

Northumbria Citizens Advice Bureaux

Northumbrian Water Ltd	The Grove Community and Residents Association
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner West Yorkshire	UK Association of Part Time Judges
Oxley & Coward Solicitors LLP	Wakefield and Pontefract Magistrates Bench
Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)	Wakefield Civic Society
Pennine Housing 2000 LTD	Wakefield Youth Offending Team
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland	Wilkinson Woodward Beadders Solicitors
Police & Crime Commissioner for Humberside	Yorkshire Probation Service
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire	Yvette Cooper, Member of Parliament for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford
Police Officer, Humberside Police	
Pontefract Town Centre Partnership	
Presiding Judges and FDLJ of the North Eastern Circuit	
Ramsdens Solicitors	
Rotherham Borough Council (Legal and Democratic Services)	
Sarah Champion, Member of Parliament for Rotherham	
Scunthorpe Citizens Advice Bureaux	
Sharlston Parish Council	
Short Break & Parent Participation Officer, Hartlepool	
Smith & Graham Solicitors	
Solicitors who practice within Scunthorpe	
South Yorkshire Resolution	
Superintendent Houchin, Chair of the North Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership	



[leave blank – inside back cover]





© Crown copyright 2016

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Alternative format versions of this report are available on request from the Ministry of Justice (please see above for contact details).



## HM Courts & Tribunals Service

### Potential implementation dates

These dates give an indication of when courts will cease to provide a public-facing service. Please note that this timetable is subject to change as the programme progresses.

London	Date
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b>	
Richmond-upon-Thames Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Hammersmith County Court (formerly West London County Court)	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b>	
None	Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b>	
Bow County Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Pocock Street Tribunal Hearing Centre	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Waltham Forest Magistrates' Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b>	
Greenwich Magistrates' Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b>	
Tottenham Magistrates' Court	Apr 17 - Jun 17
Woolwich County Court	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b>	
Feltham Magistrates' Court	Jul 17 - Sep 17
Lambeth County Court	Jul 17 - Sep 17

<b>South East</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b>	
Basildon Social Security and Child Support Tribunal (Acorn House)	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Dartford Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Lowestoft Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
West Berkshire (Newbury) Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b>	
Bury St. Edmunds Magistrates' Court and Family Court and Bury St. Edmunds Crown Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
King's Lynn County Court and Family Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b>	
Aylesbury Magistrates, County Court and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Chichester Magistrates' Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Dover Magistrates' Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Eastbourne Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
St Albans County Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Tunbridge Wells County Court and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Watford Magistrates' Court and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b>	
Bedford and Mid Beds Magistrates' Court and Family Court and Bedford County Court and Family Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
Bicester Magistrates' Court and Family Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
Chichester Combined Court (Crown and County)	Jan 17 - Mar 17
Colchester County Court and Family Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
Colchester County Court Offices	Jan 17 - Mar 17
Harlow Magistrates' Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
Redhill Magistrates' Court and Family Court and Reigate County Court and Family Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b>	
None	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b>	
None	Jul 17 - Sep 17

<b>South West</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b> Barnstaple Crown Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b> Cheltenham Rivershill House Tribunal Gloucester Magistrates' Court Stroud Magistrates' Court Dorchester Crown Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16 Jul 16 - Sep 16 Jul 16 - Sep 16 Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b> Bournemouth Magistrates' Court Fareham Magistrates' Court North Avon (Yate) Magistrates' Court Torquay Magistrates' Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16 Oct 16 - Dec 16 Oct 16 - Dec 16 Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b> None	Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b> Chippenham Magistrates' Court, Civil Court and Family Court	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b> None	Jul 17 - Sep 17

<b>Midlands</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b>	
Shrewsbury Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Solihull Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Worksop Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Buxton Magistrates' Court and County Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Corby Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Grantham Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Kettering Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b>	
Burton-upon-Trent Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Hinckley Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Sandwell Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Skegness Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b>	
Kettering County Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Stafford Magistrates' Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b>	
None	Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b>	
Birmingham Youth Court	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b>	
None	Jul 17 - Sep 17

<b>North East</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b> Morpeth County Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b> Consett Magistrates' Court Wakefield Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16 Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b> Halifax County Court and Family Court Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' Court and Family Court Rotherham Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16 Oct 16 - Dec 16 Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b> Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court, County Court and Family Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17 Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b> None	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b> None	Jul 17 - Sep 17



<b>North West</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b>	
Accrington County Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Accrington Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Kendal Magistrates' Court and County Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Ormskirk Magistrates' Court and Family Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
St Helens Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Tameside County Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Trafford Magistrates' Court and Altrincham County Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b>	
Macclesfield County Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Macclesfield Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Oldham Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Warrington County Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b>	
Bolton County Court and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
Runcorn (Halton) Magistrates' Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b>	
Bury Magistrates' Court and County Court	Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b>	
Oldham County Court	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b>	
None	Jul 17 - Sep 17

<b>Wales</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b><u>Tranche 1</u></b>	
Carmarthen Law Courts (The Guildhall)	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Holyhead Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Prestatyn Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
Dolgellau Crown Court and Magistrates' Court	Feb 16 - Jun 16
<b><u>Tranche 2</u></b>	
Bridgend Law Courts	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Neath and Port Talbot Civil and Family Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Pontypridd Magistrates' Court	Jul 16 - Sep 16
Wrexham Tribunal (Rhyd Broughton)	Jul 16 - Sep 16
<b><u>Tranche 3</u></b>	
Llangefni Civil and Family Court	Oct 16 - Dec 16
<b><u>Tranche 4</u></b>	
Brecon Law Courts	Jan 17 - Mar 17
<b><u>Tranche 5</u></b>	
None	Apr 17 - Jun 17
<b><u>Tranche 6</u></b>	
None	Jul 17 - Sep 17