



# **SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP AGENDA**



**Friday 4 September 2015**

**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 Copping, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland  
Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston, Chair of Youth Offending Board  
Julie Allan, Director of Offender Management, Tees Valley Probation Trust  
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 10 July 2015.



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

- 4.1 Addressing Barriers to Reporting Hate Crime affecting the LGBT+ Communities – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
- 4.2 Scrutiny Investigation into Hate Crime – Report and Action Plan – *Audit and Governance Committee and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*

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

- 5.1 Reducing Re-Offending Group Update – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
- 5.2 Domestic Violence Strategic Group Update – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
- 5.3 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
- 5.4 Proposed Closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*

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

Date of next meeting – Friday 16 October 2015 at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool



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

10 July 2015

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

## **Present:**

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)  
Councillor Marjorie James, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Clare Clark, Head of Community Safety and Engagement  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health  
Gordon Lang, Chief Superintendent, Cleveland Police  
Barry Coppinger, Police and Crime Commissioner  
Chief Inspector Lynn Beeston, Cleveland Police  
John Bentley, Safe in Tees Valley  
Steve Johnson, Cleveland Fire & Rescue Authority

In accordance with Council procedure rule 5.2 (ii) Danielle Swainston was in attendance as substitute for Sally Robinson and Gilly Marshall was in attendance as substitute for Stewart Tagg

## **Also present:**

Councillor Jim Lindridge, HBC  
Steven Hume, Independent Chair of the Review Panel,  
Stockton on Tees Borough Council  
Graham Strange, Safe in Tees Valley

Officers: Sharon Robson, Health Improvement Practitioner  
Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Maria Hinks, Personal Assistant

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Denise Ogden, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services, Barbara Gill, Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company, Stewart Tagg, Housing Hartlepool, Karen Hawkins, Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Clinical Commissioning Group, Neville Cameron,

Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and Rosana Roy, National Probation Service.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

None

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2015**

Confirmed.

## **4. Safer Hartlepool Partnership Communications Update** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

### **Purpose of report**

To provide a progress report on the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's Communications Strategy.

To give consideration to continuing with the existing implementation arrangements for the Strategy including its funding.

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

The report provided background information in relation to the Communications Strategy. During 2014/15 a number of members of the Partnership made a small financial contribution to delivery of the Communications Strategy, which was attached at Appendix A.

The Head of Community Safety and Engagement advised that great efforts had been made to ensure that the work in relation to the Communications Strategy reflected the following strategic objectives and priorities of the Partnership:-

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

The report included an overview of progress made over the last 12 months and outlined examples of some of the activity that had been undertaken. Much of the work of the Partnership was planned, co-ordinated via the Action Plan and Campaign Calendar which were attached as appendices to the report. The Action Plan and Campaign Calendar provided the focus for the Partnership's Communications activity. The areas identified to be developed included hate crime, the Partnership's website and social media issues.



In response to a query regarding timescales for financial contributions, Members were advised that Partnership Members would be contacted direct in due course.

The Police and Crime Commissioner referred to ongoing work around communication initiatives and the potential opportunity to promote funding opportunities for small local initiatives to which the Public Relations Officer agreed to explore with the Commissioner following the meeting.

The Chair referred to a recent decision of Finance and Policy Committee that funding of £196,000 be allocated to the Neighbourhood Services Committee and requested that the Neighbourhood Services Committee, when determining spend in relation to these monies, consider the benefits of the Respect Your Neighbourhood Campaign and the impact on resources as a result.

### **Decision**

- (i) That progress made to date to implement the Communications Strategy be noted.
- (ii) That an approach be made to all Safer Hartlepool Partners to seek a contribution towards the associated costs of implementing their Strategy during 2015/16.
- (iii) That the Neighbourhood Services Committee, when determining spend in relation to a recent funding allocation of £196,000 from Finance and Policy Committee, consider the benefits of the Respect Your Neighbourhood Campaign and the impact on resources as a result.

## **5. Tees Sexual Violence Needs Analysis Business Plan** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Partnership on the work of the Tees Sexual Violence Board.

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

The Head of Community Safety and Engagement reported that in 2014 the Tees Sexual Violence Board commissioned an in depth needs analysis in relation to sexual violence across Tees. A Tees Sexual Violence Needs Analysis, attached at Appendix A, had subsequently been produced and presented to the Board in January 2015. A business plan, attached at Appendix B, had since been developed which aimed to promote collaboration between partners across Tees in the commissioning of Sexual Violence Services to ensure similar standards and equal access for victims.

In support of the report, the Tees Sexual Violence Strategy Group Co-ordinator, who was in attendance at the meeting, provided a detailed presentation which focussed on the following:-

- What had been done in response to needs analysis
- Issues to address in relation to sexual violence across Teesside
- Commissioner's Forum established
- Key partners working together to develop collaborative approach
- Key activities/planned future activities
- Exploring activities of counselling service
- Looking to ensure consistent approach across Teesside
- Community Safety Partnership communication arrangements
- Preventative work includes working with young people and schools
- Establishing links with Community Safety Teams
- National and regional statistics

In response to a query regarding the future of SARC and whether the funding provision for commissioning of SARC would continue, the representative advised that the issue of funding required clarification and funding was one of the issues that would be explored by the Commissioner's Group.

The Director of Public Health welcomed the action plan and work that had been done to date. The importance of establishing links with the Health and Wellbeing Board were highlighted. The representative advised that the Commissioning Group had agreed to hold monthly meetings until such time as the business plan was established.

Partnership Members placed emphasis upon promoting the service to which the Police and Crime Commissioner commented on the benefits of inviting Chris Sadler (SARC Service Development Lead), who was leading on a communications plan in relation to sexual violence services being invited to a future meeting of the Partnership,

The Chair highlighted the requirement for all key partners to obtain ratification via their own governance arrangements to subscribe to joint commissioning. The representative indicated that terms of reference and a collective agreement would be produced in due course.

## **Decision**

- (i) That the Tees Sexual Violence Needs Analysis and Business Plan and comments of Partnership Members be noted.
- (ii) That an update report be presented to a future meeting of the Partnership.

- (iii) That links with the Health and Wellbeing Board be established, feedback from which to be included in the update report to the Partnership.

## **6. Substance Misuse Strategy Group** *(Director of Public Health)*

### **Purpose of report**

To inform and update the Partnership on the completion of the Substance Misuse Plan 2015/16.

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

The Health Improvement Practitioner reported on the background to the requirement to produce an annual Substance Misuse Plan. An annual refresh and subsequent update of the Plan had been undertaken. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Drugs and JSNA for Alcohol had been considered within this review of the Plan along with the recent SHP Strategic Assessment that also demonstrated the links between substance misuse and a wider range of crime and anti-social behaviour.

It was reported that the new plan incorporated the objectives that came from the previous Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) action plan. These actions would be monitored over a 12 month period to identify any change in alcohol activity, anti-social behaviour and young people within the CAP area. The 2015/16 Plan also showed details of the new treatment providers after the recent tendering and procurement exercise, along with details of what and how they would deliver an holistic service for those identified in need.

A Member expressed concern that the problem of individuals drinking alcohol in excess on trains was out of control and required urgent action. Personal experiences and examples of inappropriate behaviour had been observed in train stations and on trains to and from Hartlepool and Newcastle and Hartlepool and York which were shared with the Partnership. Concerns were raised regarding the safety of other travelling passengers, particularly those travelling with young families. The need to ensure measures were in place to prevent individuals from travelling who were not within an acceptable alcohol limit was emphasised. The importance of including the need to challenge behaviour of this type in the Plan was also suggested. In response, the Chief Superintendent indicated that the problem was wider than Hartlepool and impacted on a number of agencies. The Chair agreed to convey these concerns to the British Transport Police and provide feedback to a future meeting of the Partnership.

A discussion followed regarding the wider issues associated with excessive alcohol consumption including how this featured culturally as well as the

impact of shops selling strong, cheap alcohol. The Chair suggested that this issue be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services sought clarification on the detail of some of the actions within the Plan. The Chair requested that the Assistant Director liaise direct with the Health Improvement Practitioner in this regard and any modifications to the Plan as a result be reported to a future meeting of the Partnership.

### **Decision**

- (i) That progress in refreshing the Substance Misuse Plan be noted.
- (ii) The Partnership noted that quarterly updates on activity within the Plan would be reported to the Substance Misuse Strategy Group.
- (iii) Reference to the need to challenge inappropriate behaviour be included in the Plan.
- (iv) That the concerns of the Partnership in relation to alcohol related issues, as detailed above, be conveyed to the British Transport Police.
- (v) That the wider issues associated with excessive alcohol consumption be referred to the Health and Wellbeing Board for debate.

## **7. Integrated Offender Management (Verbal Update)**

*(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods thor)*

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

The Chief Superintendent from Cleveland Police, who was in attendance at the meeting, provided the Partnership with a verbal presentation in relation to integrated offender management. Members were advised that the top 25 individuals committing crime in Hartlepool had been targeted following a national review of Integrated Offender Management Schemes that had shown some positive results. The Chief Superintendent was responsible for the development of a multi-agency group to address integrated offender management which involved Community Safety Lead Officers from Hartlepool and Stockton. Thanks were expressed to Clare Clark and Steven Hume for their support in this regard. The Partnership was advised that a centralised hub had been developed based at Home House Prison, the benefits of which were outlined.

In the discussion that followed the Chief Superintendent responded to issues raised by Members. Clarification was provided in relation to the restorative justice approach which had seen significant results around the country including Hartlepool. The importance of adequate resources being in place to deal with offender management issues were highlighted.

### **Decision**

That the information given and comments of Partnership Members be noted.

## **8. Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance** *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods )*

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance for 2014/15.

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

The report provided an overview of the Partnership's performance during 2014/15, comparing the current performance to the previous year. In support of the report, the Head of Community Safety and Engagement provided a presentation which highlighted salient positive and negative data and responded to queries raised in relation to crime figures by type.

The potential reasons why crime figures had increased in the last year were debated. Police representatives advised that the changes to the national crime recording statistics would have impacted on the levels and there had also been an increase in the number of people reporting crime.

With regard to the increase in hate crime incidents, emphasis was placed upon the need to target schools at a primary level to raise awareness and influence improvements. The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that work was ongoing with schools with a view to delivering education programmes to raise awareness and understanding of such issues.

### **Decision**

That 2014/15 performance and comments of Members be noted.

## **9. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006**

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**Minute 10 – Domestic Homicide Review** – This item contained exempt

information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (para 2).

- 10. Domestic Homicide Review** (*Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*) This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (para 2)

**Purpose of report**

To consider the revised Domestic Homicide Review report into the death of Mrs X following Home Office recommendations.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Partnership considered the revised Domestic Homicide Review report that had been compiled by the Panel following a number of suggested revisions by the Home Office.

Further details were set out in the exempt section of the minutes.

**Decision**

That the revised Domestic Homicide Review Report be approved for submission to the Home Office.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am

CHAIR



## **SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP**

**4<sup>th</sup> September 2015**



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

**Subject:** ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO REPORTING HATE  
CRIME AFFECTING THE LGBT+ COMMUNITIES

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present a report commissioned by Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner into the barriers to the reporting of hate crime affecting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community in the Policing area of Cleveland Police.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following an event hosted by the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner in 2014, which sought to explore hate crime affecting Lesbian, Gay, and Transgender people in the force area, Gay Advice Darlington/Durham (GADD) were tasked to provide a report on:
- The barriers to reporting and how to reduce or remove those barriers.
  - Improving the relationship between the public sector criminal justice services and outcomes for the LGBT community.
- 2.2 Representatives from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and GADD will be in attendance to present this report and to receive comment from Safer Hartlepool Partnership members.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 That the Safer Hartlepool Partnership notes and comments on the report attached at **Appendix 1**.

#### 4. CONTACT OFFICERS

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# **Addressing the barriers to reporting of hate Crime affecting the LGBT+ communities of the Policing area of Cleveland Police.**

**Commissioned by the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner of Cleveland Police Service.**



**written by F Pilgrim for Gay Advice Darlington/Durham.**



**Registered Charity no. 1070857.**

## **Foreword**

**Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic hate crime is an insidious crime affecting peoples identity and lives. One in ten victims of homophobic hate crime are physically assaulted. One in eight victims have their homes or property vandalised.**

**The PCC for the Cleveland Policing area Barry Coppinger hosted an event in 2014 in hate crime affecting Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender people in his force area. One of the outcomes of that event was a realisation that the problem was greater than the either PCCs office or the Police actually realised. Underreporting, poor experiences of the LGBT community of the criminal Justice services, historic use of the Criminal Justice services as a tool of discrimination and stigma and the general lack of understanding of the impact of hostility on the individual and the community served to add to the problem.**

**The PCC then began a process of seeking a way to improve the lot of LGBT people in his area and to examine why this was happening and how things could be changed for the Community and the Force.**

**GADD as part of the process was tasked to provide this report on the barriers to reporting and how to reduce or remove those barriers to reporting and improve the relationship between the public sector, the criminal justice services and the LGBT community. Thus it will increase reporting and the outcomes for the community.**

**We have devised a communication strategy and recommendations that we believe can be delivered in a cost effective way so that the Police in Cleveland can feel they are moving in the right direction and working towards a better relationship with the LGBT community. It is a long term plan based on the principle that persistent strong cultural change takes time.**

**Emma Roebuck  
Chief Officer.  
GADD.**

## **Report on barriers to reporting of LGBT hate crime in Tees Valley**

### **Introduction**

This report was commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Cleveland Policing area into the barriers to the reporting of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime, to inform current practice and future planning of operational delivery.

### **The methodology used**

“Face to face” interviews proved difficult to arrange so the interviews were telephone interviews with LGBT agencies working in the Teesside area. In addition, the same questions were emailed to [local authority officers] and the responses added to the telephone interview data.

We asked the following questions ...

Do you encourage the recording of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime?

How do you encourage the recording of this hate crime?

Do you internally record homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime incidents?

How do you internally record these hate crime incidents?

Are these incidents reported to the police?

How are these incidents reported to the police?

Do the police engage with the reports in a meaningful way eg take them seriously and interview participants?

What are the views of your organisation in respect to the police involvement?

What is the view of your users in respect to the police involvement?

How could the police improve their response to hate crime notifications?

Are there any incidents that include other forms of hate crime (e.g. religious, race, ethnicity)?

### **Participants**

Hartgables, Cleveland Trans Association, TPA, Local Authority Community Support Partnerships

## **Results of the survey**

### *1 LGBT organisations*

All instances are recorded as part of the internal reporting process of recording 1-2-1 interviews with community members. Instances are reported to the police with the permission of the individual client. In every case, individuals are encouraged to report incidents to the police. It is suggested that reporting incidents to the police is very low if the individual does it themselves and not a great deal higher if done by the agency. The reasons for non reporting are given as

- lack of trust that they will be listened to
- fear of further incidents if they report it
- fear of outing themselves by reporting it
- generic reporting form seems complicated or overly bureaucratic
- police officers not understanding definitions of hate crime and dismissing the incident (and incidentally, it is then not recorded as a hate crime)
- no named, trained individuals to report to
- lack of consistency in approach by police
- lack of continuity of approach by the police
- trusted police officers change roles and someone new comes in who does not have the trust of individuals
- There are no longer any specialist community officers to whom to report incidents

Specific actions for the police to take to improve the service include

- police officers need to understand what it is, how it affects people and how they should deal with it
- police officers need to be less hostile
- police officers need to take LGBT hate crime as seriously as other forms of hate crime
- police need to be willing to listen
- police need to manage victim expectations and explain the process - what happens once it is reported? what is the process? Likely outcomes?
- More awareness for both police and the public - advertising, awareness training, promotional - making people aware of when and how and where they can report hate crime, what hate crime is etc
- Be more involved - be seen and known by community
- Mini conference with victims of LGBT hate crime - to promote narrative and feedback of personal experience - both of hate crime and of reporting it [One tool for this might be peacemaking circles - Stephen Twist of Dere Street Barristers can advise on this]

## *2 Local Authority Community Safety Partnerships*

All incidents are recorded and reported. Once the police acknowledge/realise it is hate crime, response is good and clients are satisfied with outcomes but sometimes it is difficult to get the police to see that it is hate crime. There is a view that despite the continued training in awareness of both council and voluntary reporting centres, advertising these centres and seeking to raise awareness hate crime generally and LGBT hate crime in particular, is under reported and that therefore there is much work required to help victims feel safe and confident coming forward. Councils report that police response to their referrals are appropriate and timely. Additional views from the Victim Services Officer in Hartlepool are given below

- Initial reporting of hate crime hits barriers at point of ringing 101 or at front desk of a police station - "Sometimes victims have been fobbed off and sent away, or the Police Officers dealing have not recognised the case as involving Hate Crime"
- A concern that police officers are deciding what is and is not hate crime rather than the victim or anyone else
- "In one case last year a victim was told that the graffiti on her house was not the duty of the police to deal with and that there was nothing they could do for her, but that she should contact her local Council to see if they could do anything to help her."

## **Conclusions**

- From this research, it would appear that there are several barriers to the reporting of hate crime to the police directly. In general, the consensus appears to be that if reported via a third party agency or the Local Authority, the issue is dealt with more appropriately and taken more seriously than if an individual reports directly to the police.
- The police need to do more to gain the trust of the community and to enable people to believe that they will be listened to and that appropriate action will be taken
- The community need to be able to understand the process followed by the police so that they have an understanding of what the police are able and not able to do
- There is a need for police officers to be aware of the definition of hate crime and who it is that defines it
- There is a need for training of police officers to understand the effects of hate crime on individuals and how their actions can either help the victim or make matters worse
- It would appear to be the case that much ground could be covered and understanding enhanced by face to face meetings of police and victims to exchange information. It should be realised, however, that participants may not be the ones who need the discourse.
- There is a perceived, by the community and agencies, lack of consistency and continuity on the part of the police in relation to LGBT hate crime reporting.

## **Recommendations - Summary**

- Training for police officers in what hate crime is, how it is defined, who defines it and what to do when it is reported (including how to engage with the victim)
- Awareness training in LGBT issues in order to assist officers to overcome any prejudices that they may have
- Greater interaction between grass roots community members and the police, including any other measures available to enable trust building between the community and the police (e.g. peacemaking circles)
- Awareness raising and provision of guidance as to what happens once a hate crime is reported and what the victim can expect to happen to be provided to the community
- Further discussion with LGBT agencies to work together to promote a culture of safety and confidence in reporting of hate crime by the LGBT community
- A steering group is established to oversee the implementation and monitor progress of the implementation of recommendations made.

## **Recommendations - Specific Actions**

### ***A steering group***

Establish a steering group to agree the overall strategy in response to the recommendations to oversee its implementation and monitor its effectiveness against criteria agreed with the PCC. The criteria could include

- increased reporting of hate crime incidents
- increased trust between police/CPS and community members/organisations
- greater cooperative collaborative approach to issues of hate crime
- gradually increasing understanding on part of the police on issues facing the community
- gradually greater understanding on the part of victims of issues facing the police
- improved understanding across the board of hate crime, what it is and how to report it
- improved response from the community on how the police deal with hate crime (identified through annual survey)

### ***Hate Crime Training for Police Officers***

It is recommended that a course of training for police officers be created in order to represent to them exactly what hate crime is (legal definition), who defines it, what to do when it is reported and how to deal with the victim of hate crime appropriately. This should involve all classifications of hate crime and should be delivered by members of each of the affected communities where expertise exists in delivering this training.

This training should also cover reporting, the circles of harm, awareness of what may cause further harm and how to avoid it.

There is a model for this type of training being delivered to Northumbria Police and it is recommended that a similar model should be used for the Cleveland Police area.

### ***Awareness Training for Police Officers***

It is recommended that agencies with a good track record of providing this training to the Police, CPS and other arms of the Criminal Justice System should provide this training to police officers in order to tackle internal prejudice.

### ***Provision of material explaining the process***

One barrier to reporting hate crime is uncertainty as to what happens next and will the person reporting it be subject to a higher instance of hate crime or more severe hate crime as a result of reporting it.

It is therefore recommended that a leaflet should be produced explaining the process, including an easy to understand flowchart/infogram, that could be made available through community events and interactions. A picture format of the infogram should be made available to post on websites and via social media by relevant community organisations.

### ***Indirect reporting of hate crime***

The evidence suggests that victims of hate crime are more confident of a satisfactory outcome if the incident is reported via a community organisation that is also able to support the individual through the process.

It is therefore recommended that

- the current practice of third party reporting centres should be abolished
- the funding used to support this initiative should be used to provide additional community resources across the Tees Valley
- all hate crime reporting should come via these agencies
- individuals contacting the police should be referred to one of these agencies for support throughout the process, including the reporting of the incident(s)
- closer links between local police and these agencies should be developed, perhaps with the reintroduction of a team of liaison officers

### ***Building trust***

It is recommended that initiatives be introduced with the aim of building trust between victims and their representative community organisations on one side and the police and CPS on the other. One such initiative is [peacemaking circles](#) (see appendix for further information)

## **Specific Action Plan**

- 1 Set up a steering group to agree which recommendations to implement, oversee implementation and monitor progress
- 2 Arrange specific interactive training to be delivered by organisations with a track record of training in the criminal justice system on hate crime and awareness training. To be cost effective this needs to be delivered to key influences in Police teams and shift patterns.
- 3 Arrange sharing of publication of leaflets and infogram on the process and expectation on how the police/CPS process a hate crime after it is reported
- 4 Work with local community organisations to make the information leaflet accessible to as many people as possible via all possible media
- 5 Re-evaluate current hate crime reporting mechanisms and prioritise using community based groups who can support individuals through the process rather than the current generic third party reporting system that is failing victims of hate crime. Include a consultation with the communities affected on what should be in the form used to report the hate crime.
- 6 Build an ongoing sustainable model of community engagement and participation to build trust between the police/CPS and the relevant communities.
- 7 As part of point 6, consider using peacemaking circles and training people from both police/CPS and local communities to be circle keepers, including as part of the training contract the provision of ongoing advice and support from the training organisation. This methodology could also be used as part of the ongoing training of officers and others involved in dealing with hate crime and its effects. Peacemaking Circles on an ongoing basis can then have two circle keepers, one from police/CPS and one from the community to facilitate confidence in the process on both sides.



## Communication Strategy

1 Use the existing community led community engaged organisations that have the confidence of their communities to inform, advise and enter into dialogue with the local communities (e.g. to distribute the leaflet on how the police process works and what they can expect to happen once an incident is reported) **Action PCC/POLICE/THIRD SECTOR develop common approaches**

2 Frequent participation of contact with local communities where they meet e.g. Gay Scene, Gay night in Darlington visiting venues, engaging with people, explaining the process, passing out leaflets etc

**Action Map POLICE/THIRD SECTOR possible opportunities for these contacts**

3 Use the existing specialist community organisations to report hate crime to the police to a named and trained group of officers who have been through the relevant training and will follow agreed protocol with an understanding of the effects on the victims.

**Action PCC/POLICE/THIRD SECTOR**

4 Build a communication action plan based on consistent messages to the Community and to the criminal justice services so that there is less chance of mixed messages and the opportunity to promote positive stories and manage any negative experience or stories.

**Action PCC/POLICE/THIRD SECTOR**

5 Use peacemaking circles or similar community engagement structures on a consistent basis to build trust and understanding on all sides, including those not involved or affected by hate crime where they wish to participate to gain an understanding of the issue(s). On an ongoing basis, recent victims of hate crime would be invited to attend and tell their story to promote greater understanding on all sides of the effects of hate crime on individuals.

**Action PCC/POLICE/THIRD SECTOR**

6 Social media is an effective tool to communicate with sections of the community. Use of key messages and as a possible reporting mechanism for third party reporting system or intelligence gathering. **Action PCC/POLICE/THIRD SECTOR**

## **Bibliography**

Challenge it. Report it. Stop it. The Government's plan to tackle hate crime - March 2012

Hate crime and crimes against older people report - CPS - 2011-2012

Empowering people to tackle hate crime - Trans women and disabled people working together with victim services in North East England - Equality and Human Rights Commission/GADD/Victim Support/Vision Sense - 2010

Hate Crime Manual - Tower Hamlets Race and Hate Inter Agency Forum

Cross-Government Action Plan on Hate Crime - Equality Impact Assessment - Home Office

Lincolnshire Hate Crime Strategy 2010 - 2012

Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Homophobic and Transphobic Hate Crime - CPS - 2007

Homophobic Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents - Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Summary 38

The Hate Crime Report - Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in London - Gallop 2013

## **Appendix - Peacemaking Circles**

### **What are peacemaking circles?**

Peacemaking Circles are a methodology handed down via the indigenous peoples of Canada as a means of creating harmony and peace from situations that are or might lead to conflict and harm in the community. They became known in criminal justice world after Judge Barrie Stewart used them as an alternative to the adversarial court system in Canada and held a sentencing Circle with the victim, the perpetrator, the legal counsel, the police, the relatives etc. Everyone had their say and then he pronounced the sentence.

Considered to be part of restorative justice by many, peacemaking Circles are more than a means for victim and perpetrator to meet to resolve their differences (the model common in the UK). Peacemaking Circles can involve all who have been harmed by an action or series of actions and can involve representatives of the wider community as well as those directly affected. It encourages individual and community accountability and responsibility.

Peacemaking Circles are effective at creating trust where trust has been broken or indeed, has not really been a factor. Participants are encouraged to speak from the heart and often it is this honesty in speaking their narrative that has the powerful effects witnessed in peacemaking Circles.

From [www.peaceofthecircle.com](http://www.peaceofthecircle.com):

Peacemaking circles are a structured yet flexible approach to communication.

Circles fulfill a range of purposes such as learning, decision-making, strategic planning, healing, conflict resolution and sentencing. Circles are used in families, schools, communities, workplaces and justice systems.

Success is built on collaboration. Circles invite contribution in an atmosphere of equality. Step into possibility and uncover innovative ideas. Encourage the strengths and gifts of one another.

Circles create a safe space for difficult conversations. In cases of conflict and harm, Circles facilitate dialogue among participants to find out what happened, what have been the affects and what needs to occur to move forward.

### **How do peacemaking Circles work?**

The Circle is a safe space created by the participants around our shared humanity and values. People connect as people, not as roles - so there is no longer a policeman and a member of the LGBT community but two or more people who are talking and listening to each other to gain awareness. There is no hierarchy in a Circle and everyone is treated with respect and equality.

Circle keepers, trained facilitators, guide the process. A unique tool of Circles is a talking piece. When someone holds the talking piece, everyone else actively listens, thus giving space and time for authentic, deep sharing.

### **Local experience of peacemaking Circles**

Darlington Neighbourhood Resolution hosted peacemaking Circles training in November 2014, provided by Dr Evelyn Zellerer, one of the top trainers of Circles in the world ([www.peaceofthecircle.com](http://www.peaceofthecircle.com)). She was also a keynote speaker at its celebration of its first year of operation. Mr Stephen Twist, a barrister living in Darlington, has considerable experience with restorative practice in the justice system and has undertaken this Circle training.

Dr. Zellerer is happy to travel and if this should be deemed a fit, she would be open to having a conversation about possibilities for Cleveland PCC.



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

4 September 2015



**Report of:** The Audit and Governance Committee and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

**Subject:** SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO HATE CRIME –  
REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek consideration of the Audit and Governance Committee's report following completion of its Hate Crime investigation and agree the Action Plan in response to the findings and recommendations contained within it.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2014/15 the Audit and Governance Committee undertook an investigation into Hate Crime in Hartlepool, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 2**. To assist the Partnership, a representative from the Audit and Governance Committee will be present at the meeting to introduce the report and the conclusions / recommendations contained within it.
- 2.2 To assist the Safer Hartlepool Partnership in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations, an action plan has been produced and is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## 3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 No options submitted for consideration other than the recommendation(s).

## 4. IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Details of any financial or other considerations / implications are included in the action plans.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 That the Safer Hartlepool Partnership:**

- i) Receives and approves the content of the Audit and Governance Committees investigation into Hate Crime in Hartlepool; and
- ii) Subject to approval of the report, approves the Action Plan compiled to respond to the recommendations contained within it.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The aim of Audit and Governance Committee investigation into Hate Crime in Hartlepool was to ‘ Gain an understanding of the level and impact of hate crime in Hartlepool, looking closely at how we deal with disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender hate crimes in our communities’.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **7.1 The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-**

- i) Audit and Governance Committee – Reports and Minutes of the following meetings:
  - 21 August 2014,
  - 13 November 2014,
  - 19 February 2015,
  - 19 March 2015,
  - 6 August 2015.

## **8. CONTACT OFFICER**

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**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN****NAME OF COMMITTEE:** Audit and Governance Committee**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** Hate Crime Investigation

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION <sup>+</sup>	FINANCIAL / OTHER IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE*
(a) That continuing emphasis be placed upon working with the Councils partners to raise awareness within vulnerable communities, and indeed the wider community, of what constitutes hate / race / mate crime, how it can be reported and the support available.	That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group	Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment	Clare Clark	Aug 2016
(b) That we raise awareness of mate crime as an issue and ensure we protect our most vulnerable victims.	That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group	Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment	Clare Clark	Aug 2016
(c) That work be undertaken with small business owners/operators in Hartlepool who operate as part of the towns night time economy to	That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group	Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing	Clare Clark	Aug 2016

reduce the prevalence of hate crimes and change the perception of what is acceptable.		establishment		
(d) That with recognition of the resources implications facing all agencies, ways of providing consistency in terms of staffing and points of contact be explored.	That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group	Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment	Clare Clark	Aug 2017
(e) That the excellent police training provided to full time officers to equip them to deal with the full range of hate crimes be extended to Special Constables and PCSO's.	That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group	Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment	Clare Clark	Aug 2016
(f) That given the diminished support for networks in the community following cuts in resources, ways be explored to work with associations / support groups and the Police to strengthen, sustain and promote groups such as the partnership group set up in Hartlepool as valuable sources of independent advice.	That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group	Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment	Clare Clark	April 2017



## 4.2 APPENDIX 1

<p>(g) That in relation to Safe Havens and Reporting Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Awareness of their existence / location be further raised, including the display of a list of the venues at the Civic Centre;</li> <li>ii) The distribution of safe havens across the town be reviewed including the absence of a venue on the Headland; and</li> <li>iii) Given low usage levels, the viability of reporting centres be explored.</li> </ul>	<p>That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group</p>	<p>Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment</p>	<p>Clare Clark</p>	<p>Aug 2016</p>
<p>(h) That all Councillors become Hate Crime Champions for their wards.</p>	<p>That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group</p>	<p>Resource implications in terms of officer time within the existing establishment</p>	<p>Clare Clark</p>	<p>Aug 2016</p>
<p>(i) That in relation to the CPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Given constrictions in the use of specialist courts rooms,</li> </ul>	<p>That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group</p>	<p>Resource implications in terms of officer time within the</p>	<p>Clare Clark</p>	<p>Aug 2016</p>

<p>the CPS be lobbied for the provision of specialist facilities for all victims to encourage the reporting of hate crime offences; and</p> <p>ii) The improved protection for victims through strengthening the law to cover all protected characteristics.</p>		existing establishment		
<p>(j) That vulnerable families be supported effectively when they are housed in new communities, including the involvement of social and private landlords.</p>	<p>That the actions be incorporated in to the activities of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Task Group</p>		Clare Clark	October 2016

<sup>+</sup> please detail any risk implications, financial / legal / equality & diversity / staff / asset management considerations

<sup>\*</sup> please note that for monitoring purposes a date is required rather than using phrases such as 'on-going'



**FINAL REPORT**

**HATE CRIME IN HARTLEPOOL**

**AUGUST 2015**

## SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

4 September 2015



**Report of:** Audit and Governance Committee

**Subject:** FINAL REPORT – HATE CRIME IN HARTLEPOOL

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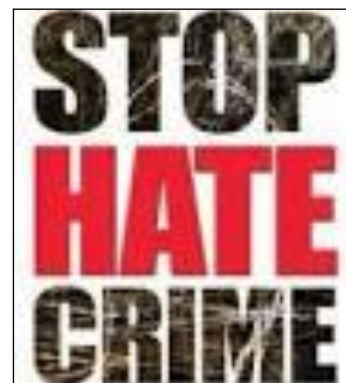
### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Audit and Governance Committee following its investigation into Hate Crime in Hartlepool.

### 2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 In fulfilling the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Council's Audit and Governance Committee, explored potential issues for consideration under its statutory crime and disorder scrutiny responsibilities.

- 2.2 The Committee was aware of the requirement within the 'Council Plan' for the Safer Hartlepool Partnership (SHP) to 'create confident, cohesive and safe communities' and noted with interest that:-



- i) A key action identified to achieving this was the improvement of reporting, recording and responses/interventions to vulnerable victims and victim of hate crime;
- ii) Public consultations undertaken during the formulation of the Community Safety Plan, had shown that residents felt the following actions needed to be undertaken to address hate crime in Hartlepool:
  - Greater community engagement and integration;
  - Improved intelligence gathering through Neighbourhood Policing;
  - Improved confidence and facilities for reporting hate crime; and
  - Promotion of greater specialist support services to victims of crime.

- 2.3 Whilst it was recognised that the SHP continues to work to better understand the true impact of hate crime across the communities of Hartlepool, and the issues facing vulnerable groups, the Committee noted with concern that there had been an increase in the levels of reported hate crimes during 2013/14 (compared to the baseline year 2012/13).
- 2.4 On this basis, the Committee at its meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014 identified 'Hate Crime' as its chosen topic for investigation during 2014/15, with all five of the identifiable strands of Hate Crime to be looked at.

### **3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to gain an understanding of the level and impact of hate crime in Hartlepool, looking closely at how we deal with disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender hate crimes in our communities.

### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of:
    - The level and impact of hate crime in Hartlepool and how it compares to the national picture; and
    - The role and responsibilities of the local authority, and its partners, in relation to the prevention and punishment of hate crime.
  - (b) To examine how disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender hate crimes are dealt with in Hartlepool and how partners work together in their prevention and punishment.
  - (c) To gain an understanding of national and local strategies/legislation in relation to the prevention and punishment of hate crime.
  - (d) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which services to prevent and punish hate crime in Hartlepool are provided.
  - (e) To explore good practice being implemented elsewhere in relation to the prevention and punishment of disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender hate crime.
  - (f) To seek the views of those individuals and communities that have experienced, or live in fear of, hate crime in Hartlepool.

**5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 The membership of the Audit and Governance Committee was as detailed below:-

Councillors Ainslie, S Akers-Belcher, Cook, Martin-Wells, Thompson, Sirs and Springer.

Standards Co-opted Members; Mr Norman Rollo and Ms Clare Wilson.  
Local Police Representative: Chief Superintendent Gordon Lang.

**6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

- 6.1 Members of the Audit and Governance Committee met formally on three occasions between the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2014 to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (a) Detailed Officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
- (b) Town wide Hate Crime Questionnaire;
- (c) Site visit facilitated by the Asylum Seekers and Refugee Group to discuss the issue and assist in the completion of the Hate Crime Questionnaire;
- (d) Evidence received from representatives including:
  - Police;
  - Crown Prosecution Service; and
  - Housing Hartlepool.
- (e) Evidence received from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland;
- (f) Leader of the Council (also Chair of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee);
- (g) Evidence / input was sought from Voluntary and Community Sector and other groups, including:
  - Hart Gables
  - Hartlepool Independent Advisory Group (IAG)
  - In – Controllable
  - Harbour

- Hartlepool MIND
  - Centre for Independent Living
  - Integrated Transport Services
- (h) Representatives of minority communities of interest or heritage (including those who have been victims of hate crime or live in fear of it):
- Salaam Community Centre;
  - Hartlepool Chinese Association;
  - Hartlepool Special Needs Support group;
  - Learning Disabilities Partnership Board;
  - Hartlepool Carers;
  - Blind Welfare;
  - Hartlepool Deaf Centre;
  - Vulnerable Victims of Crime Steering Group; and
  - Young Victims of Crime Steering Group.
- (i) Examples of Good Practice;
- (j) Local residents; and
- (k) Ward Councillors.

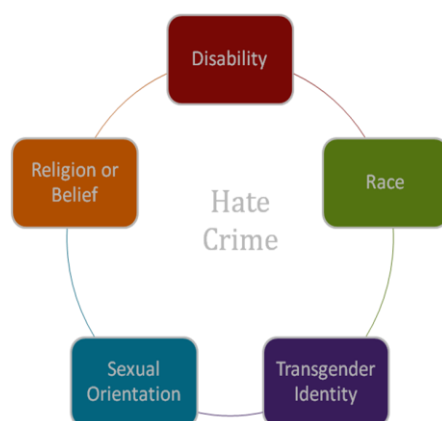
## FINDINGS

### 7 WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?

- 7.1 As a starting point for its investigation, the Committee explored the definition of Hate Crime and considered with interest the differentiation between a Hate Crime and Hate Incident.

A **Hate Crime** being 'any crime that is targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's:-

**Table 1 – The 5 Strands of Hate crime**



A **Hate Incident** being ‘any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.’

- 7.2 In considering each of the five strands of Hate Crime identified above, the Committee learned that Hate Crime relates not only to ‘the person’ but also ‘property’. Members noted with concern that a victim of Hate Crime did not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted and recognised that **anyone** can be a hate crime victim.

## 8 THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL PICTURE

- 8.1 The Committee felt that it was essential to obtain a clear understanding of the national position in relation to Hate Crime, against which local data and performance activity could be effectively compared. On this basis, the Committee, at its meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014, welcomed a detailed ‘setting the scene’ presentation by the Council’s Community Safety and Engagement Manager. The presentation informed discussions in relation to national data and generated initial views and comments regarding local issues, performance and activities.

### The National / Regional Position

- 8.2 The Committee was advised that National statistics showed that those committing these crimes were white males between 19 and 24 and 45 to 55 years old. It was highlighted that in 2013/14 a total of 44,480 hate crimes had been reported nationally, representing a 5% increase since 2012/13, with Home Office statistics showing that the vast majority of recorded hate crime related to race (84%). Table 2 below provides a breakdown of these figures across the five identified strands of hate crime.

**Table 2 – National Data 2013/14** (Home Office - October 2014)

<i><b>Hate Crime Type</b></i>	<i><b>Incidents in 2013/14</b></i>	<i><b>% Increase Since 2012/13</b></i>
<i>Race</i>	<i>37,484</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	<i>4,622</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Religion/Faith</i>	<i>2,273</i>	<i>45%</i>
<i>Disability</i>	<i>1,985</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Transgender</i>	<i>555</i>	<i>54%</i>
<i><b>Total</b></i>	<i><b>44,480</b></i>	<i><b>5% (overall increase)</b></i>

- 8.3 Drilling down in to the data, the Committee found that the upward national trend in reported Hate Crime was reflected in Cleveland Police data, with 370 hate crimes reported in 2013/14, compared to 287 in 2012/13. Table 3



over the page again breaks down these figures across the five identified strands of hate crime.

**Table 3 – Cleveland Data 2013/14** (Association of Chief Police Officers)

Hate Crime Type	No of Hate Crimes	
	2013/14 (% Increase from 2012/13)	2012/13
Race	309 (+16%)	266
Religion/Faith	23 (+1050%)	2
Sexual Orientation	21 (+163.5%)	8
Transgender	9 (+50%)	6
Disability	8 (+60%)	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>370 (+33%)</b>	<b>287</b>

8.4 Members noted that the overall increase in reported hate crime for Cleveland in 2013/14 equated to 33%, compared to a 5% increase nationally. It was also noted that:-

i) The majority of hate crimes reported both nationally and in Cleveland, related to race. Increasing by 4% nationally and 16% in Cleveland, when compared to the previous year;

ii) In Cleveland:

- Religion/faith, rather than sexual orientation, is the second most frequently reported strand of hate crime, with disability and transgender hate crime least frequently reported;
- A large amount of race hate crime centred on drunken arguments where race was thrown into the mix; and
- The largest percentage increase in reported hate crime related to religion/faith, followed by sexual orientation. This compared to the largest percentage increase nationally for transgender, followed by religion/faith hate crime.

8.5 In considering the data, Members accepted that increases may be as a result of improvements in education and awareness, encouraging people to report instances that they may not have in the past. However, it was noted that the level of unreported hate crime is still very much an issue nationally, as demonstrated by a variety of surveys:

- Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that **43% of personal hate crimes are not reported to the police.**
- Stonewall Gay British Crime Survey showed that over **75% of LGBT victims do not report it to the Police.**

- MENCAP Survey showed that **88% bullied in previous 12 months** (and one third on a daily basis) and **23% have been physically assaulted within public places** (street/public transport).
- 8.6 In considering why victims do not report hate crime, the Committee was advised of a number of issues identified nationally:
- Victims doubt whether the incident is serious enough/ don't recognise it is a criminal offence;
  - Incidents happening too often to report each one;
  - Concern that the police may not be able to do anything or that are prejudiced / unsympathetic;
  - Lack of access making reporting too difficult;
  - Fear of being outed for being gay or having mental health needs; and
  - Fear of victimisation for going to the police.
- 8.7 Members noted the issues identified nationally and sought to explore in greater detail the position in Hartlepool. Details of the Committees subsequent activities and findings, including the results of a detail local questionnaire, are explored in Sections 8.8 onwards below.

### The Position in Hartlepool

- 8.8 In exploring the issue of hate crime in Hartlepool, evidence from the Community Safety and Engagement Manager provided the Committee with baseline information regarding the town's population, demographic make-up and key issues facing residents.
- 8.9 Evidence showed that Hartlepool has a population of 92,000<sup>1</sup>, with:
- A number of wards falling nationally within the top 10% most deprived<sup>2</sup>;
  - The number of nationalities living in Hartlepool has doubled in the past few years with 46 different nationalities now being recorded, with 1% belonging to a black or ethnic minority community group<sup>3</sup>;
  - 1 in 4 of people has a disability or long term limiting illness<sup>4</sup>;
  - A growing elderly population, with expectations that by 2021 the number of people above retirement age will have increased by 27%<sup>4</sup>;
  - The majority (69%) of the Hartlepool population identify themselves as Christian<sup>3</sup>; and
  - Approximately 1.5% of the population identify themselves gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender<sup>3</sup>.
- 8.10 In terms of public perception, the Committee learned that a comparison of data from household surveys in 2008 and 2013 showed that residents are increasingly satisfied with their local area as a place to live and feel they

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<sup>1</sup> ONS Census 2011

<sup>2</sup> IMD 2010

<sup>3</sup> ONS Census 2011

<sup>4</sup> TVU 2012

belong. Whilst this is a positive achievement in the provision of services and activities of the Community Safety Team, it was noted with concern that as of 2013 a lower percentage of residents are happy with the following aspects of their lives and communities:

- 42% of people who think people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together (compared to 72% in 2008);
- 47% of people who feel part of their local community (compared to 54% in 2008);
- 12% of people who feel that they can influence decisions that affect their local area (compared to 33% in 2008); and
- 28% of people who feel unsafe after dark (compared to 32% in 2008).

**8.11** Members welcomed the provision of Hartlepool data from the perspective of both hate crimes and incidents, emphasising their equal importance as unacceptable behaviours. It was, however, noted that there are variations across the country in the recording of hate crime, i.e. Manchester records an additional category of 'Sub Culture', and attention was drawn to a missing strand of Hate Crime. The missing strand being 'Mate' crime, where people are befriended (often vulnerable elderly, mentally ill or disabled people) and then exploited.

**8.12** Drilling down in to the Hartlepool data provided, Members explored the level of hate crimes / incidents in Hartlepool across the five identified strands (as detailed in Table 4 below).

**Table 4 – Hartlepool Comparative Hate Crime/Incident Data 2012/13 - 2013/14**

<b>All Hate Incidents and Crimes</b>	<b>Oct 12 - Sept 13</b>	<b>Oct 13 - Sept 14</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>% Diff</b>
Racial	89	80	-9	-10.1
Transgender	3	5	2	66.7
Disability	3	2	-1	-33.3
Religion/Belief	9	5	-4	-44.4
Sexual Orientation	14	9	-5	-35.7
<b>All Hate Incidents*</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-14.4</b>

**8.13** The Committee welcomed indications that the overall number of reported hate crimes / incidents, in Hartlepool had decreased by 14.4%, between September 2013 and September 2014. The Committee commended the work of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership in its activities to better understand the true impact of hate crime across the communities of Hartlepool, and the issues facing vulnerable groups. It was noted that the downward trend bucks the national and regional upward trend, where there had been an increase of 33% in Cleveland and 5% nationally (details of which are provided in Sections 8.2 and 8.3 of this report).

**8.14** The Committee noted that the largest percentage decrease related to religion (-44.4%) and sexual orientation (-35%), with only the transgender

strand showing an increase, which equated to 66.7%. It was, however, emphasised that from a statistical perspective the actual number of transgender crimes/incidents was relatively low in comparison to other strands and that this was a factor in the large percentage increase. Despite this, it was strongly felt that any increase, no matter how small, is totally unacceptable.

- 8.15 Looking specifically at hate crime, the Committee noted evidence provided in Table 5 below,

**Table 5 - Hartlepool Comparative Hate Crime Data 2012/13 - 2013/14**

Hate Crimes only	Oct 12 - Sept 13	Oct 13 - Sept 14	Diff	% Diff
Racial	57	52	-5	-8.8
Transgender	2	3	1	50
Disability	2	0	-2	-100
Religion/Belief	4	3	-1	-25
Sexual Orientation	3	3	0	0
<b>Hate Crimes</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-10.3</b>

- 8.16 The data provided showed that:

- There had been a 10.3% decrease in the overall level of reported hate crime;
- Again, the transgender strand is the only area of increase;
- In terms of the sexual orientation strand, the level of reported hate crimes had remained static, with a reduction in the number of 'incidents' rather than 'crimes' being reported;
- Most hate crime incidents in Hartlepool relate to taxi drivers and local store keepers, the majority being public order / verbal abuse incidents with around 60% of these incidents recorded as a hate crime;
- Over 19 incidents of hate crime recorded locally over the last year; and
- Whilst no disability hate crimes had been reported during this period, disability hate crimes are still occurring and being reported.

- 8.17 In relation to the reporting of incidents Members questioned if witnesses could report incidents independently, why victims were generally reluctant to report incidents, Police prioritisation of incidents and how education could reduce this type of crime. The Head of Community Safety and Engagement indicated that witness reports were followed up whenever they were received. Police did prioritise all crime reports and there was improved following up of reported incidents.

- 8.18 Given the importance of schools as a fundamental part of wider Hartlepool community, Members received further data in relation to the level of hate incidents in the town's schools. It was highlighted that only racial incidents are recorded by schools and that the majority are dealt with through fixed term exclusions. **Tables 6** below, outlines trends in relation to racial incidents in Hartlepool schools and the number of resulting exclusions.

**Table 6 – Racial Incidents and Fixed Term Exclusions in Hartlepool Schools****Racial Incidents**

Academic Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Number of incidents	9	3	1	2

**Fixed Term Exclusions**

Reason	Incidents			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Racial Abuse	2	6	5	6

- 8.19 It was noted that the number of racial incidents in schools was low, with only 2 in 2013/14. Although this was a small increase from 2012/13. In terms of fixed term exclusions, it was highlighted that the number of exclusions had also increased by a very small amount between 2011/12 and 2012/13, although 2013/14 figures were not available at the time of the meeting.

## 9 NATIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES AND LEGISLATION

- 9.1 The Committee at its meeting on the 13 November 2014 explored the strategies and legislation that relate to the prevention and punishment of Hate Crime from a local and national perspective.
- 9.2 National statistics demonstrated that those committing these crimes are predominantly white males between 19 and 24 and 45 to 55 years old and emphasis was placed upon the probably that much could be achieved in educating people if there was more reporting in the press of the court sentencing. Information presented to the Committee, by the Head of Community Safety and Engagement, outlined the government's approach to engaging and empowering communities, as contained within the Localism Act. Members were advised that the Act embraces a number of community rights and other strategies, aimed at safeguarding and promoting cohesive communities. It was, however, noted with concern that the policy shift is away from addressing social inclusion to one of promoting voluntary effort and self-help. This poses a significant challenge for local Councils and their Partners.
- 9.3 Members noted the range of legislation, strategies and plans in place that relate to hate crime in some way, with particular attention drawn to those outlined over the page.
- 9.4 National Legislation.
- i) Homophobic, Transphobic and Disability Hate Crime: S146 CJA 2003.  
This act:

- Applies where, either at the time of committing the offence the offender demonstrates hostility towards the victim based on the actual or assumed sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability of the victim; or the offence was motivated, wholly or partly, by hostility towards persons of a particular sexual orientation or transgender identity; and
  - Requires the court to uplift the sentence, and declare in open court that it is doing so and by how much.
- ii) S145 Criminal Justice Act 2003. This Act requires that the court must increase the sentence and announce in open court the reason for and amount of the uplift where the:
- Where an offence is proved and the Court is satisfied that either at the time of the offence the perpetrator demonstrated hostility towards the victim based on the Victim's actual or presumed race or religion; OR
  - The offence was motivated by hostility towards the victim based on the victim's actual or presumed race or religion

**9.5 National Strategies / Plans.**

- i) Police and Crime Plan 2015/17. This act has five priorities:
- Retaining and developing Neighbourhood Policing;
  - Ensuring a better deal for victims and witnesses;
  - Diverting people from offending, with a focus of rehabilitation and the prevention of re-offending;
  - Developing better co-ordination, communication and partnership between agencies to make best use of resources; and
  - Working for better industrial and community relations.
- ii) Challenge it, Report it, Stop it The Governments Plan to Tackle Hate Crime (2012).

**9.6 Local Strategies and Plans:-**

- i) Safer Hartlepool Partnership Plan 2014 – 2017
- ii) Community Cohesion Framework 2012-2015
- iii) Hartlepool Sustainable Community Strategy 2014-20
- iv) Hartlepool Borough Council 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it!' Hate Crime Strategy. The fundamental aims of the strategy being to:
- Prevent Hate Crime – Tackling Attitudes and Intervening Early;
  - Increase reporting and access to support; and
  - Improve operational response to Hate Crime.

## 10 DEALING WITH HATE CRIME - PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT

10.1 The Committee explored activities in relation to the prevention and punishment of hate crime offences and, in doing so, considered evidence from the Council's Community Safety Team, the Cleveland Police Partnerships and Communities Team and key partner organisations / service providers. The views of the Committee are outlined below, broken down into the following sections:-

i) Hate Crime Prevention:

- Tackling Attitudes/ Early Intervention; and
- Increasing Reporting / Access to Support.

ii) Punishment of Hate Crime Offences - Improving operational responses.

### Hate Crime Prevention

10.2 The Committee, at its meeting on the 13 November 2014, received evidence in relation to hate crime prevention within Hartlepool, with particular attention drawn to the following activities undertaken through the Council's Community Safety Team:-

- i) Community Development and cohesion work;
- ii) Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Unit/Victim services;
- iii) Education - ASBAD;
- iv) The Safe Places Scheme;
- v) PREVENT - Community intelligence/monitoring tensions and
- vi) Community Integration work - support to various groups around the town.

10.3 The Committees attention was drawn to the number of victims accessing the ASB Unit and Victim Support Service, as detailed in **Table 7** below, and took the opportunity to commend the Community Safety Team on its work across the whole community safety agenda and particularly the Teams preventative activities.

**Table 7 - ASB Unit and Victim Support Service Hate Crime Activity**  
**Anti Social Behaviour Unit**

Hate Crime Victims	Oct 13 - Sept 14
Racial	3
Disability	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

### Victim Support

Hate Crime Victims	Oct 13 - Sept 14
Racial	7
Disability	10
Homophobic	4
Mate Crime	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

- 10.4 For the same period, details were provided of vulnerable victim cases by type, with attention drawn to the anomaly in figures relating to hate crime reporting and those accessing victim support services. Figures highlighting that whilst racially motivated crimes are the most commonly reported (as detailed in Section 8.15 of this report), Table 8 below shows that those subject to racially motivated crimes are the least likely to access victim support. Equally, those subject to disability hate crime are the most likely to access the service.

Table 8

Vulnerable Victim Case Type	No of Cases
Anti-Social Behaviour	17
Anti-Social Behaviour & Criminal Damage	6
Domestic Violence and Abuse	1
<b>Hate Crime - Disability</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Hate Crime - Homophobic</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Hate Crime - Racially Motivated</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>

- 10.5 As an integral part of the activities outlined in section 10.2, emphasis was placed on the value of **Community Integration work** with local asylum seekers. The views of residents from vulnerable groups were welcomed throughout the investigation, with particular attention drawn to work undertaken in Burbank to assist in social integration. In obtaining residents views, Members of the Committee were welcomed at a community meeting at St Jospehs Church, at which they spoke directly to vulnerable residents and sought their participation in the local hate crime survey. Details of the views obtained during the course of this meeting are outlined alongside the results of the survey.
- 10.6 As part of the investigation, Members were keen to gain an understanding of not only the position of the victim, but also the role of the wider community, businesses and individuals in the eradication of hate crime. In doing so, Members considered the ways in which anyone, and indeed everyone, can play an active role in making hate crime unacceptable in our communities. Particular attention was drawn to the operation of the **Safer Places Scheme** which involves local businesses in aiding hate crime prevention through the provision of safe havens. The Committee welcomed the scheme and assurances were given that participating businesses are full trained in their role , with the location of these safe places are denoted by the display of the 'Safer Places' logo (shown over the page).
- 10.7 Members questioned the location of safe havens around the town and specifically the lack of a venue in the Headland area. The Neighbourhood Safety Team Leader indicated that information had been circulated to the press and was on the Safer Hartlepool website. Members suggested that a list of the venues should be held at the Civic Centre possibly on a poster.



10.8 Attention was also drawn to other available options in relation to:

- Joining Neighbourhood Watch;
- Becoming a TPRC/Safe Place (i.e. somewhere where one who feels threatened or at risk can take refuge);
- Reporting incidents (whether you are a victim or witness to the crime);
- Not tolerating abuse towards you or anyone else;
- Joining an IAG/SIAG;
- Becoming a Hate Crime Champion ([www.hatecrimechampions.org.uk](http://www.hatecrimechampions.org.uk)); and
- Joining the Hate Crime Champions Network.



10.9 The Committee welcomed the breadth of activities identified in Section 10.2 above and highlighted the importance of the Community Safety Team's overarching activities in the development of cohesive communities across the whole community safety agenda. It was confirmed that performance in relation to community safety issues and activities are robustly monitored, on a quarterly basis, through the Safer Hartlepool Partnership, and in turn the Audit and Governance Committee as part of the Council's statutory arrangements. It was also welcomed that a key priority for 2015/16 in the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Plan 2014 – 2017 is to work with local communities to build confidence in reporting hate crime, ensuring victims can access third party reporting centres and rapidly receive the advice and support that they need.

10.10 Members discussed the provision of **Third Party Reporting Centres** and were advised of the existence of ten centres across Hartlepool, in the following locations (details of opening times and locations outlined in **Appendix B**):

Citizens Advice Bureau  
Havelock Centre  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Hart Gables  
Hartlepool Blind Welfare Association  
Library Service  
Central Library  
Library Service  
Seaton Carew  
Library Service  
Owton Manor  
Salaam Community Centre  
West View Advice & Resource Centre



10.11 Concern was expressed that the Committee was unaware of the existence, or location, of these reporting centres and the results of the local survey

demonstrated that this was reflective of the views of the wider community. It was brought to the attention of the Committee that under usage of reporting centre is not unique to Hartlepool and that a number of forces around the country were in fact withdrawing from the system of reporting centres as they were simply not being used by the community.

- 10.12 Members discovered that each of the centres operate with a dual purpose in terms of providing victim support in the reporting of incidents to the Police, whilst also acting as safe havens for those at risk. The Committee was assured that trained staff operates each of the reporting centres, implementing standardised practices, including reporting forms. No information is shared outside of the reporting centre without the permission of the victim; with the only exception being where an incident was so serious that not to pass it to the Police would fail to safeguard the individual.
- 10.13 Members supported all of the potential routes for engagement and reiterated the importance of effective reporting. Particular support was expressed for the **Hate Crime Champion** initiative and the ability for anyone, from any walk of life, to take up the position. Members were delighted to discover that one Councillor serving on the Committee had already volunteered to be a Champion for his Ward and had undertaken the training provided, equipping them to:
  - Understand and support vulnerable people, their families, carers and friends;
  - Look out for and identify a hate crime, hate crime, hate incident and other issues that should be reported to police;
  - Act as a mobile third party reporting centre; and
  - Know how to get the necessary evidence, what police want to have reported, how to deal with anonymity, and how to support people affected.
- 10.14 The Committee also welcomed the activities of the **Hate Crime Champions Network** and noted the breadth of involvement from differing strands of the community, including carers and professionals from diverse groups, community and faith leaders and minority group members. The key aim of the group being to help others identify themselves as victims and further encourage reporting.
- 10.15 The need to increase hate crime reporting was reiterated by Members and attention drawn the variety of factors that continue to prevent / deter the reporting:
  - Uncertainty as to whether incidents are serious enough, or are happening too often, still deters victims from reporting hate crimes;
  - Fear of being outed as gay or having mental health issues;
  - Fear that the Police might not take them seriously; and
  - It is just too difficult practically and emotionally to report.

- 10.16 The Committee learned that the data obtained through the Hate Crime Questionnaire reinforced these issues from a local perspective. Whilst Members were reassured that low levels of hate crime reporting both locally, and on a broader basis in Cleveland, mirrored the national position, they remained disappointed that despite all the work that had been undertaken, reporting levels remain a significant issue.
- 10.17 It was noted that, ultimately, it is the decision of the victim as to whether or not to report a crime. However, the Committee reiterated the importance of reporting hate crimes in:
- Preventing the continued, and repeated, perpetuation of offences across communities;
  - Providing data to inform government statistics and influence how these crimes are dealt with by the police and other parts of the criminal justice system.
  - Equipping officials with a full, and clear, picture of the types and levels of crime to enable them to deal effectively with the hate crime problem; and
  - Linking victims automatically to Victim Support Services, helping victims cope with the emotional and practical effects of the crime.
- 10.18 Attention was also drawn to other reporting options for victims of hate crime through:

- Calls via 999 & 101
- Reporting at a police station
- Third Party Reporting



- Reporting through True Vision
- Visit the website [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

- 10.19 The Committee was made aware of Police activities in promoting the 101 telephone number for reporting hate crime incidents and the 'True Vision' element of the national website 'report-it.org.uk' and the Cleveland Police's community connections website for sharing information relevant to local communities (clevelandconnected.co.uk). Members, however, noted with concern that Cleveland had only received two referrals through the True

Vision website in the past twelve months and were unaware of the existence of the Cleveland Connect site.

- 10.20 It was recognised that the factors outlined in Section 10.15 cannot be addressed by any one particular organisation or group and that a way forward could only be achieved through partnership working and the provision of co-ordinated services / interventions. Attention was also drawn to the success of race and religion campaigns such as those outlined below and the need to repeat this within other strands of diversity.

### Examples of successful campaigns



### **Punishment of Hate Crime Offences**

- 10.21 The Committee learned about the various powers available **and utilised by the Community Safety Team** in dealing with hate crime offences, as detailed below:
- Mediation / Restorative Interventions;
  - Verbal / Written Warnings;
  - Acceptable Behaviour Agreements;
  - Community Protection Notices;
  - Landlord action under a Tenancy Agreement;
  - Anti-social Behaviour Orders (replaced by Injunctions in Jan 2015);
  - Criminal Prosecution by Police; and
  - Repeat Caller Process and Vulnerable Victims Group.
- 10.22 Evidence provided by Inspector Maddison from Cleveland Police Partnerships and Communities Team, expanded the Members understanding of Police practices / activities in relation to hate crime prevention and prosecution. Members noted the Police commitment to dealing with hate crime issues and the prioritisation of hate crime as the only area of reported crime to be analysed so extensively.
- 10.23 Particular attention was drawn to the centralising of all functions relating to hate crime within the Cleveland Police Partnerships and Communities Team with the power to provide Mediation / Restorative Interventions, Verbal / Written Warnings, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements, Community Protection Notices, Landlord action under a Tenancy Agreement, Anti-social Behaviour Orders (replaced by Injunctions in Jan 2015) and Criminal Prosecution by Police. In addition to this, the appointment of a specialist Hate Crime Officer, the provision of hate crime/Incident forms in all case and the completion of vulnerability assessments.

10.24 It was highlighted that there currently isn't an age hate crime element to the Partnerships and Communities Team's work, however, it was confirmed that the team does look at crimes to see if there is an age element such as rogue traders preying on the elderly. Members welcomed this and assurances that:-

- i) Every hate crime incident is scrutinised:
  - By an officer's supervisor;
  - By Community Safety supervisors;
  - At Local Authority hate crime case group;
  - By Regional CPS Scrutiny Panels; and
  - By Independent Advisory Groups.
- ii) Every victim that reports a hate crimes can expect:
  - A quick, ethical and empathetic response;
  - Statements and Personal Impact Statements to be taken;
  - Evidence being gathered; and
  - Ultimately leading to offenders being brought to justice, victim Support and sentence uplift.

10.25 Despite these assurances, the Committee remained concerned about the perception of how hate crimes are viewed, prioritised and dealt with is very different, as demonstrated by low levels of reporting locally, regionally and nationally. In response to these concerns, attention was drawn to the complex, and variable, nature of the law in its protection of victims, and the significant calls for it to be overhauled to assist all parties. The need for an overhaul of the law was supported by representatives from groups supporting those susceptible to hate crime.

10.26 Members welcomed indications that the Police place equal importance on community involvement in prevention and reporting across all crimes. Looking in particular at the issue of hate crime, the Committee was advised of police involvement in:



- LGBT meetings;
- BME group meetings; and
- Meetings of the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Inclusion North Board; Strategic Victims Forum; Regional Migration Network; Individual Nationality Groups and Age Action Alliance.

10.27 Police efforts to improve their processes and practices in responding to hate crimes / incidents were welcomed. As part of this, attention was drawn to the benefit of 'non-uniformed' officers dealing with hate crime reports and the decision that the specialist team would not be responsible for the progression of prosecutions. Members, however, referenced a hate crime incident referred to the Police, where the victim had been given an

appointment with an officer for the following day rather than an officer attending what was considered to be a serious incident that day. It was confirmed that the Police did use an appointment system as the best way to manage workloads. External events had heightened the situation and the force was responding accordingly, however, it now had 400 less officers than five years ago to deal with the existing workload.

- 10.28 Members expressed reservations at the use of an appointment system for those that had experienced hate crime incidents. It was confirmed that the appointments system was widely used throughout the force to maximise officer time and an assurance given that an appointment would be only be used for a 'past' event and not something ongoing.
- 10.29 Members noted the positive impact this had on the perception of the specialist team in the community, however, concern was expressed that the rotation of police staff was hindering the establishment of working relationships that had in the past been beneficial in making people feel safe in reporting of hate crime. This view was supported by representatives from community groups and, with recognition of the resources implications facing all agencies, it was suggested that this needed to be explored in the development of hate crime prevention activities.
- 10.30 Whilst the Committee was assured that all Police Officers are trained in dealing with hate crime incidents, it was unclear as to whether this training extended to Special Constables. The Chief Superintendent was unable to clarify this position and was asked by the Committee to ensure that Special Constables and PDSO's are appropriately equipped to deal with these crimes. The Chief Superintendent indicated that he will become responsible for the training of Special Constables from the end of the month and would take this forward.
- 10.31 Concern was expressed by the Committee regarding problems in certain Wards with right wing groups and it was acknowledged by Police that there been issues in the past which had died down. However, the Police were aware of their increase again. Emphasis was placed upon the importance of reporting all instances if the issue was to be effectively dealt with.
- 10.32 In gaining an overall understanding of the prevention and punishment systems and practices in place, Members explored the process for the prosecution of hate crime offenders and the support available to victims. Evidence provided by the Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor, **Crown Prosecution Service North East (CPS)** highlighted the organisations role in the provision of early advice in complex cases and charging advice/decisions. Members were interested to learn that the CPS also provides victim support as cases go from referral to successful prosecution. Services including:
  - Automatic referrals to Victim Support, a Witness Care Unit – from first hearing – single point of contact for the victim;



- Witness Service – volunteer service to support victims and witnesses at court; and
- Special Measures: e.g. reporting restrictions; screens; video link; intermediaries.

**10.33** The Committee welcomed indications that the CPS looks to continually improve its services and found that a number of initiatives are in place to achieve this, including:

- CPS Hate Crime Scrutiny Panels;
- Cleveland and Durham Hate Crime Prosecutions Operational Group;
- Quarterly Performance Management meetings between CPS Area Hate Crime co-ordinator and police;
- Hate crime a national CPS priority – particularly Disability Hate Crime;
- Disability Hate Crime Refresher training delivered to prosecution; and
- Monitoring by Hate Crime Co-ordinators.

**10.34** Following receipt of data in relation to levels of hate crime, the Committee received further evidence from the Deputy Chief Crown, Prosecutor Crown Prosecution Service North East (CPS) regarding the level of hate crime referrals, reports made and prosecutions. *This evidence demonstrated that in 2013/14 the number of hate crime incidents referred to the CPS had increased nationally by 14% to over 14,700, with 84.7% of prosecutions successful. Tables 9 and 10 summarise the data provided.*

**Table 9 - Hate Crime Data 2013/14**



**Table 10 – Prosecuting Hate Crime 2013/14**

	National Volume	% Success	NE Vol	% success	Cleveland Vol	% success
All Hate Crime	14,702	84.7%	602	82.1%	139	79.1%
Racist/ Religious	12,368	85.2%	512	83.2%	116	82.8%
Homo-phobic/Tra ns-phobic	1,132	80.7%	44	72.7%	6	66.7%
Disability	574	81.9%	46	78.3%	17	58.8%

**10.35** The Committee explored the range of sentencing options available in dealing with hate crimes, these being discharge/fine, community order and imprisonment. Members noted with interest that the maximum custodial sentence in the Magistrates Court for these offences is 6 months for one offence, or a total of 12 months for more than one offence. However, confirmation was welcomed that more serious cases are dealt with in the Crown Court with the ability to impose tougher sentences. The Committee was encouraged to find that just fewer than 80% of hate crime prosecutions were successful in 2013/14, however, concern was expressed that this figure dropped further for homophobic/transgender or disability hate crime, with 66.7% and 58.8% respectively.

**10.36** In considering the issue of victim support, Members expressed concern regarding the problems often experienced by witnesses being in the same room as the perpetrators of hate crimes against them. In relation to the separation of victims and perpetrators, it was confirmed that this had been a problem in the past particularly with small court rooms court rooms were now available. However, it was highlighted that there are constrictions in the use of specialist courts rooms, with the nearest fully accessible court room for both disabled witnesses and defendants located in Preston. Members felt strongly that specialist facilities should be available for all victims and that this would encourage reporting of hate crime offences.

## 11 VIEWS OF PARTNER GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS AND RESIDENTS

**11.1** As a key part of the investigation, the views and experiences of a wide variety of partner groups / organizations, service providers and representatives from vulnerable communities were gathered. In obtaining the evidence, the Committee:

- Widely publicised its meetings, extending an open invitation to any individual or body to participate and targeted invitations to the groups;
- Involved groups representing minority communities in formal meetings. Representatives from three specific organisations, Hartgables, Halo Project Charity and Asylum Seeker and Refugee Group accepted an invitation to participate in the meeting held on the 19 February 2015.
- Participated in the face to face gathering and exchange of information / views including attendance at a community meeting at St Josephs Church;
- Involved groups representing minority communities in the development of a detailed questionnaire to obtain a true picture of Hate Crime in Hartlepool; and



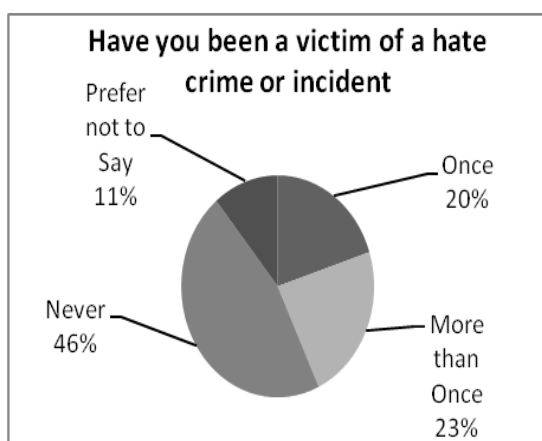


- Circulated widely a Hate Crime questionnaire to identify first hand experiences of hate crime in Hartlepool, utilising conventional paper questionnaires in addition to Survey Monkey.

11.2 During the course of discussions, the following issues were highlighted:-

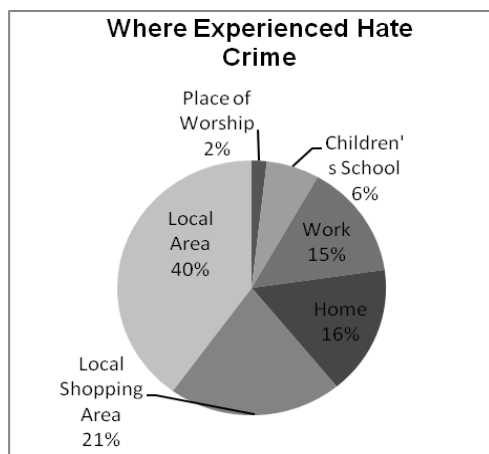
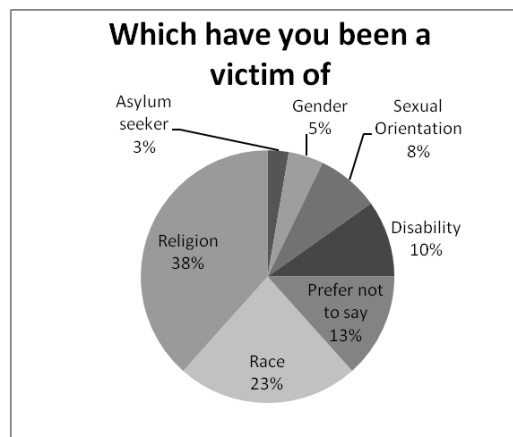
- i) There is a need for the working relationship between associations / support groups and the Police to be strengthened, to help sustain and promote groups such as the partnership group set up in Hartlepool to provide independent advice which had not met since October 2014:
- ii) Problems are being experienced by small business owners/operators in the town, particularly relating to late night opening when customers had been drinking.
- iii) There continues to be a lack of awareness within community groups about hate / race crime, with many not knowing it was against the law.
- iv) Reporting centres are underutilised and most groups don't know where they are or what they are for.
- v) Training provided by the Police was good quality and some of the officers were very passionate about hate crime. However, that was not always reflective of officers that attend hate crime incidents.
- vi) More could be done through the resident associations that most social landlords had to promote community building. There could also be some consolidation of the various partnerships that worked in this area to streamline the advice and support available.
- vii) More hate crime champions would help through the various service sectors to assist those experiencing hate crime issues in their community.
- viii) Support networks have diminished in the community following cuts to local services over recent years and in many areas these networks simply didn't exist anymore.
- ix) Tensions within communities have been noticeable recently following external international events, it being noticeable that women from BME (black and minority ethnic) groups are feeling more vulnerable in their communities. This had also been noticeable in places where they should feel safe such as women's refuges.
- x) There are issues regarding the placement of families from vulnerable groups in local communities where there was little or no support. This is an issue that social and private landlords need to address.

- 11.3 The Committee commended the activities of organisations across the town in providing support and assistance to residents from vulnerable groups and acknowledged the difficulties being experienced sustaining these services at a time of reducing financial support across all sectors, including the voluntary and community sector.
- 11.4 It was recognised by the Committee that many of the issues raised at the meeting on the 19 February 2015 had already been identified during the course of the investigation. Particular attention was drawn to the problems being experienced by local businesses as part of the night time economy and the perception that it is an occupational hazard, or not worth reporting. Members felt strongly that this was an unacceptable situation and consideration needed to be given to:
- How reluctant businesses could be encouraged to report events, to help deal with individual crimes and build up an evidence base to help address the broader issue;
  - The potential benefits of additional late night patrols that could help deter unacceptable behaviour as part time of the night time economy; and
  - Ways to encourage landlords to help tack perpetrators in the community by implementing sanctions under tenancy agreements.
- 11.5 In undertaking the Hate Crime Survey, 200 paper copies were circulated to key groups across the town (inc. Salaam Centre, Asylum Seekers and Refugee Groups, schools) alongside the use of Survey Monkey. The survey was publicised in the Hartlepool Mail and sent to businesses across the town, resulting in the receipt of 155 responses over a six week period.
- 11.6 Details of the results of the survey are outlined in **Appendix A**, with the key points summarised as follows.



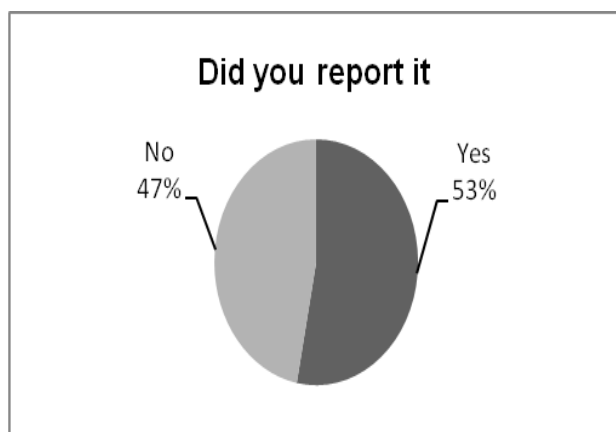
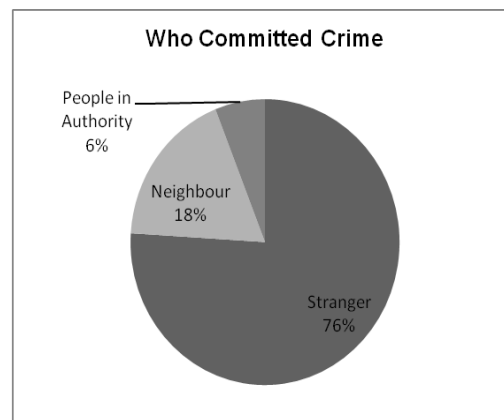
- A significant number, 46%, of people that had never suffered a hate crime incident.
- 20% have experienced a hate crime incident once and 23% more than once.

- Religion (43%) and Race (26%) recorded the highest incidents of hate crime.



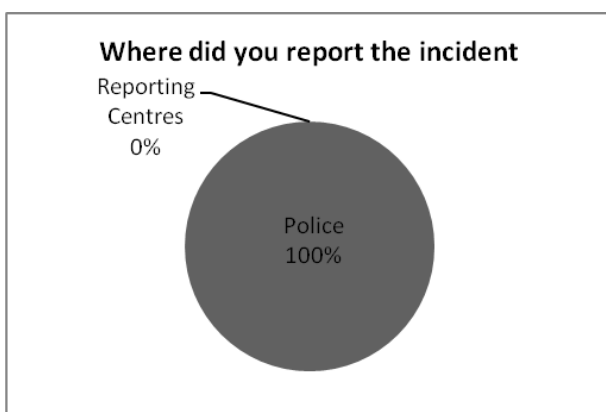
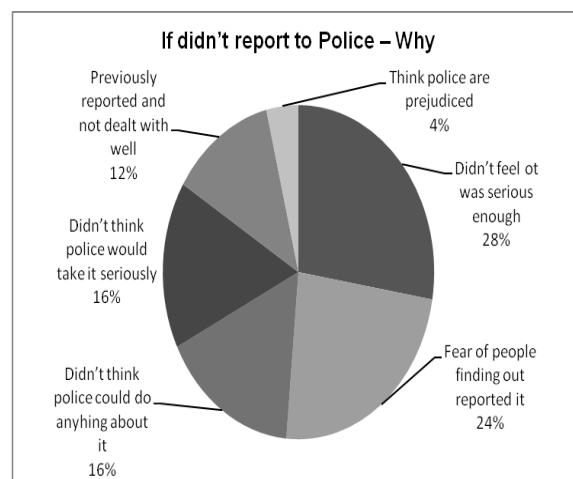
- Most incidents occurred in the victim's community (local area / street – 44% and local shopping area – 23%).

- Perpetrators of hate crime tended not to be known to the victim (strangers – 76%) though an alarming number (18%) reported incidents of hate crime from their neighbours.



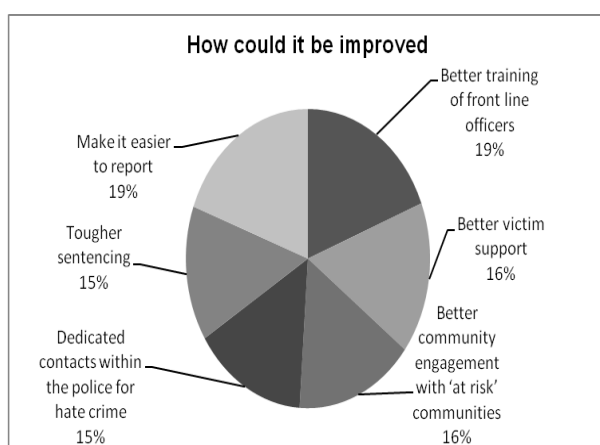
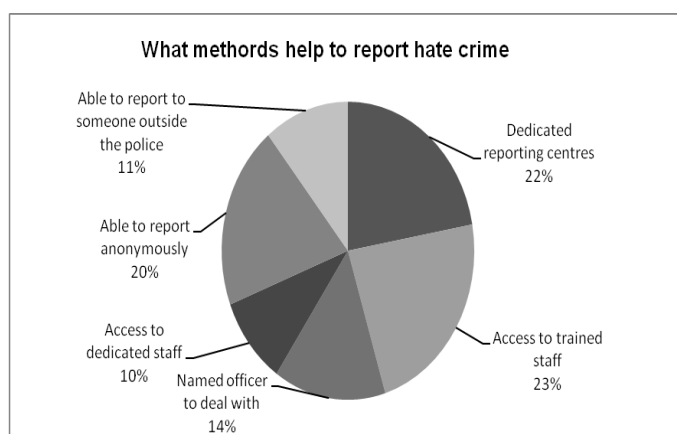
- Fewer than half of all incidents were reported – 43%, with fear of people finding out it had been reported (25%) being a major concern reported.

- The numbers of people fearing the police would do nothing about the incident (17%) or would not take it seriously (17%) or deal with the incident sensitively (8%) were concerning when taken in total. Only 4% of responders though the Police were prejudiced.



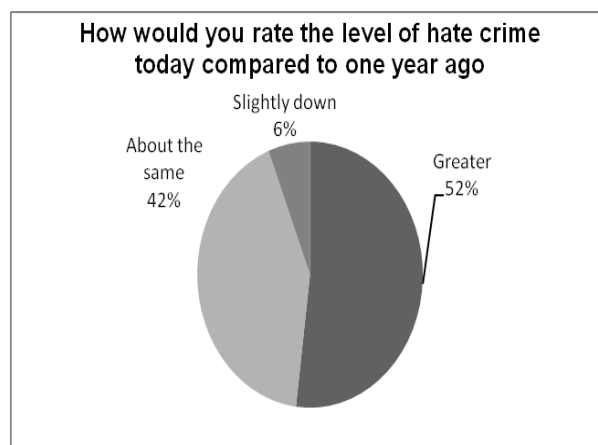
- When reported, all incidents were reported directly to the police; no one reported using the reporting centres. This reinforced concerns with the value and effectiveness of reporting centres.

- There was an obvious issue around the reporting centres with 51% saying there should be dedicated reporting centres with 25% saying they would wish to report incidents to someone outside the police force.



- Most people (52%) considered that front line officers needed better training with 45% feeling there needed to be better support for victims through the criminal justice process. 41% of responders had indicated that they thought there should be dedicated contacts within the police force for hate crime and this had been echoed in the meeting with groups at St Joseph's Church

- 49% of responders thought hate crime was a big or fairly big problem in their community. There also appeared to be an increase in hate crime over the past year.



- 11.7 Attention was drawn to the demographic makeup of the responders who were predominantly:
- Female;
  - Aged 35-35;
  - Heterosexual;
  - Employed;
  - British citizens; and
  - Christian.
- 11.8 Members drew attention to those who were subject to hate crime in their own homes and queried if these instances were recorded as domestic abuse. Confirmation of this was not available at the time of the investigation.

## 12 THE IMPACT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE BUDGET PRESSURES ON THE PREVENT AND PUNISH HATE CRIME IN HARTLEPOOL

- 12.1 Members welcomed evidence from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The PCC emphasised his commitment to ensuring a better deal for victims and witnesses of hate crime, changing attitudes and perceptions through community engagement, and its position as a key priority for Cleveland Police. In relation to disability hate crime, the Committee was advised that a lot had been done around the issue of insensitive parking of vehicles and the illegal use of disabled parking bays as mobility, both of which had been highlighted as a particular issue for the disabled. Attention was also drawn to the issue of the perception of what is and is not hate crime, with officers finding that some victims simply seeing it as bullying.
- 12.2 In light of the results of the survey, the PCC acknowledged that whilst there had been a considerable amount of work undertaken in training officers, there obviously needed to be more work in awareness raising and bringing the various agencies and groups together. Particular attention was drawn to the disability hate awareness training DVD which had been produced to assist in police training and had also been shown to staff from various partnership agencies including Council staff, Education and Social Care.

- 12.3 Members went on to see the DVD as part of the investigation and were particularly shocked by its hard hitting content which reinforced for them the view that even one incident of disability hate crime is one too many! Members also expressed support for the potential produce a similar DVD for use within schools, focusing on primary school children and raising awareness of the issues.
- 12.4 In taking this forward, the Committee welcomed indications that the PCC:
- Was to be responsible for the commissioning of victim support services from April 2015 and as such could take these issues into account in the development of services;
  - Visited community groups covering all strands of diversity across Cleveland to discuss their concerns around hate crime and community safety issues in general as part of his 'Your Force Your Voice' initiative.
  - Had worked extensively on the introduction of safe places for people to seek support and report issues and established Cleveland wide standards for Third Party Reporting Centres.
  - Had in 2013 held a summit focusing on disability hate with key areas of emerging focus around education of service providers to identify hate incidents and deal with appropriately together with education within the community to ensure victims and their carers recognise when they are being targeted and report incidents.
  - Launched Cleveland wide poster campaigns covering disability hate and also so called 'mate crime'.
  - Had commissioned Gay Advice Darlington and Durham to produce recommendations to address the key barriers to reporting homophobic and transphobic hate incidents and a communications plan to disseminate information regarding the proposed work to LGB&T communities.
  - Had commissioned Show Racism the Red Card to undertake a series of intensive education sessions within identified schools across Cleveland focusing on racist and religious hate. The work will involve a teacher training session for teachers from across all areas of Cleveland to allow them to deliver educational training sessions to pupils within their own schools.
  - Established a multi agency steering group focusing on improving confidence within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) community to report incidents and improving hate prosecutions through the criminal justice process.

- 12.5 The Committee learned that from 1 October 2014 funding for victims of crime services locally had transferred to PCC's from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and was encouraged to discover that in advance of receiving this funding the PCC had commissioned a review of victim services in the Cleveland area to identify challenges and opportunities. The review had supported the view that there are a large number of good services already in existence across Cleveland that are doing a great job in helping victims cope and recover.
- 12.6 The PCC's ongoing commitment to ensuring that Cleveland is a tolerant place for those who live and work here, and his insistence that hate crimes and incidents are dealt with robustly, were fully endorsed by the Committee. The importance of ensuring that communities feel confident to report issues to the Police and partnership agencies was also supported, with appreciation for the extensive work needed to connect with hard to reach ethnic community groups to assure them that 'officialdom' is on their side. The PCC acknowledged that these groups could be reluctant to deal with people in uniforms, often due to experiences in their home country, and highlighted the good work being undertaken by support groups in the community to build confidence.
- 12.7 Members questioned if the use of restorative justice really had an impact on perpetrators of hate crime and was more productive as many did see the court system as particularly weak. Much of the hate crime incidents involving children and young people were probably reflective of what they heard at home and there were many examples of homophobic language on local websites and forums. Emphasis was placed upon the role of Restorative Justice (RJ) in giving victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime, empowering victims by giving them a voice, holding offenders to account for what they have done and helping them to take responsibility. The broader community can also benefit from this approach in terms of reducing the impact of re-offending.
- 12.8 The PCC congratulated the Committee on the conduct of its investigation and welcomed the results of the survey which he considered needed further detailed assessment and highlighted the need for greater thought as to how housing providers could be involved in dealing with this issue. The Committee supported this view and highlighted the location of families from vulnerable groups / communities in the towns most deprived Wards. The PCC reinforced the need to consider thoughtfully the allocation of housing allocation needed to be considered thoughtfully to avoid the situation where vulnerable families are placed in situations where they would be even more vulnerable.

## **13 CONCLUSIONS**

- 13.1 The Audit and Governance Committee concluded:-

- (a) That the impact of hate crime on community cohesion must not be underestimated. As such, prevention and punishment must continue to be a priority for the Council and its partners, with the building of an ongoing dialogue with all sections of the community to be essential in achieving the early interventions and responses to concerns, essential to build confidence to report;
- (b) There continues to be a lack of awareness within vulnerable communities, and indeed the wider community, as to what constitutes hate / race / mate crime, which has a detrimental impact on levels of local identification and recording;
- (c) A large proportion of the race hate crimes are being experienced by small business owners/operators in the town, particularly relating to late night opening when customers had been drinking, and how we change the social perception that it goes with the job is a real issue;
- (d) That residents feel strongly that the rotation of police staff has a detrimental effect on the establishment of working relationships that have in the past been pivotal in making people feel safe in the reporting of hate crimes;
- (e) Training provided for police officers is of a good quality, with some officers very passionate about hate crime. However, residents are of the view that this is not always reflective across all police officers that attend hate crime incidents. It is also unclear as to whether training is extended to Special Constables and CPSO's;
- (f) Support networks have diminished in the community following cuts to local services over recent years and in many areas these networks simply didn't exist anymore. There is a need for the working relationship between associations / support groups and the Police to be strengthened, to help sustain and promote groups such as the partnership group set up in Hartlepool to provide independent advice which had not met since October 2014;
- (g) That there is a lack of awareness as to the location existence / location of safe havens and reporting centres around Hartlepool with the subsequent under usage of reporting centres drawing their viability in to question;
- (h) Hate crime champions, and in turn the Hate Crime Champion Network, is a valuable tool in dealing with hate crime within individual communities and would be beneficial across other service sectors;
- (i) That tension within communities has been noticeable recently following external international events, with indications that women from BME (black and minority ethnic) groups are feeling more vulnerable in their communities. This had also been noticeable in places where they should feel safe such as women's refuges;



- (j) There are issues regarding the placement of families from vulnerable groups in local communities where there was little or no support. This is an issue that social and private landlords need to address.
- (k) That there are constrictions in the use of specialist courts rooms, with the nearest fully accessible court room for both disabled witnesses and defendants located in Preston. Members felt strongly that specialist facilities should be available for all victims and it would encourage reporting of hate crime offences.

## **14 RECOMMENDATIONS**

14.1 The Audit and Governance Committee has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committee's key recommendations to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership are as outlined below:-

- (a) That continuing emphasis be placed upon working with the Councils partners to raise awareness within vulnerable communities, and indeed the wider community, of what constitutes hate / race / mate crime, how it can be reported and the support available;
- (b) That we raise awareness of mate crime as an issue and ensure we protect our most vulnerable victims;
- (c) That work be undertaken with small business owners/operators in Hartlepool who operate as part of the towns night time economy to reduce the prevalence of hate crimes and change the perception of what is acceptable;
- (d) That with recognition of the resources implications facing all agencies, ways of providing consistency in terms of staffing and points of contact be explored;
- (e) That the excellent police training provided to full time officers to equip them to deal with the full range of hate crimes be extended to Special Constables and CPSO's;
- (f) That given the diminished support for networks in the community following cuts in resources, ways be explored to work with associations / support groups and the Police to strengthen, sustain and promote groups such as the partnership group set up in Hartlepool as valuable sources of independent advice;
- (g) That in relation to Safe Havens and Reporting Centres:
  - i) Awareness of their existence / location be further raised, including the display of a list of the venues at the Civic Centre;

- ii) The distribution of safe havens across the town be reviewed including the absence of a venue on the Headland; and
  - iii) Given low usage levels, the viability of reporting centres explored.
- (h) That all Councillors become Hate Crime Champions for their wards;
- (i) That in relation to the CPS:
- i) Given constrictions in the use of specialist courts rooms, the CPS be lobbied for the provision of specialist facilities for all victims to encourage the reporting of hate crime offences; and
  - ii) The improved protection for victims through strengthening the law to cover all protected characteristics.
- (j) That vulnerable families be supported effectively when they are housed in new communities, including the involvement of social and private landlords;

**COUNCILLOR RAY MARTIN-WELLS  
CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**August 2015**

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Clare Clark, Community Safety and Engagement Manager  
Rachel Parker, Community Safety Research Officer  
Nicholas Stone, Neighbourhood Safety Team Leader  
Jayne Brown, Passenger Transport Services Team Leader  
Tara Davison, Neighbourhood Development Officer  
Sharon Robson, Health Improvement Practitioner (Drugs and Alcohol)  
Irene Cross, Neighbourhood Development Officer  
Chris Horn, Team Manager - Provider Services  
Rob Ryan, Team Coordinator, Day Services

External Representatives:

Barry Coppinger, Police and Crime Commissioner  
Sarah Wilson, Governance Officer (Consultation and Engagement), Police and Crime Commissioner's Office  
Inspector D Maddison, Cleveland Police  
John Dilworth, Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor, CPS North East  
Joanne Fairless and Sarah Lewis, Hartgables  
Yasmin Khan, Director, Halo Project Charity  
Lorraine Wilson, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Group  
Michael Slimmings, In – Controllable  
Lesley Gibson, Harbour  
Zeba Alam, Salaam Community Centre  
Ian Caldwell, Hartlepool MIND Young Victims of Crime Steering Group  
Desmond Dongo, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Group  
Elizabeth Animashaun, Healthy Wellbeing Group

## Appendix A

### **Survey Results**

**1) Have you been a victim of a hate crime or incident**

20% - Once  
23% - More than Once  
46% - Never  
11% - Prefer not to Say

**3) Which have you been a victim of**

26% - Race  
43% - Religion  
11% - Disability  
5% - Gender  
3% - Asylum seeker  
9% - Sexual Orientation  
15% - Prefer not to say

**4) Where Experienced Hate Crime**

18% - Home  
44%- Local Area  
23%- Local Shopping Area  
7%- Children's School  
16%- Work  
2%- Place of Worship  
20%- Town Centre  
7%- Outside town  
2%- Prefer not to say

**5) Who Committed Crime**

76% - Stranger  
18% - Neighbour  
6% - People in Authority

**6) What types of hate crime**

21% - Physical  
73% - Verbal  
21% - Intimidation  
10% - Graffiti

**7) Did you report it**

43% – Yes  
38% - No

**8) If didn't report to Police – Why**

- 17% - It happens so frequently
- 29% - Didn't feel it was serious enough
- 25% - Fear of people finding out reported it
- 17% - Didn't think police could do anything about it
- 17% - Didn't think police would take it seriously
- 8% - Don't think the police would treat it sensitively
- 13% - Previously reported and not dealt with well
- 4% - Think police are prejudiced
- 8% - Not sure how to report of reporting crime
- 13% - Had previous bad experience

**9) Where did you report the incident**

- 100% - Police
- 0% = Reporting Centres

**10) Have you ever witnessed a hate crime incident**

- 59% - Never

**16) Did you report it a hate crime you witnesses**

- 56% – Yes
- 22% - No

**19) What type of hate crime have you witnessed**

- 50% - Race
- 40% - Religion
- 26% - Disability
- 17% - Asylum Seeker
- 26% - Sexual orientation
- 14% - Prefer not to say

**20) Where did you witness a hate crime**

- 3% - In own home
- 50% - In local street / area
- 39% - In local shopping area
- 8% - At childrens school
- 22% - At place of work
- 3% - At place of worship
- 53% - In Hartlepool town centre
- 31% - Outside the Hartlepool area
- 3% - Prefer not to say

**21) Do you think hate crime is a problem in your local area**

28% - V big problem  
21% - Fairly big  
24% - Not very  
12% - Not a problem

**22) How would you rate the level of hate crime today compared to one year ago**

26% - Greater  
21% - About the same  
3% - Slightly down

**24) How could it be improved**

52% - Better training of front line officers  
45% - Better victim support  
43% - Better community engagement with 'at risk' communities  
41% - Dedicated contacts within the police for hate crime  
40% - Tougher sentencing  
53% - Make it easier to report  
50% - Raise awareness of what is available to victims

**25) What methods help to report hate crime**

51% - Dedicated reporting centres  
53% - Access to trained staff  
33% - Named officer to deal with  
22% - Access to dedicated staff  
46% - Able to report anonymously  
25% - Able to report to someone outside the police

**26) Composition of Respondee**

**Gender**

47% - Male  
25% - Female  
1% - Transgender

**Age**

17% - Up to 17 yrs  
10% - 18-24 yrs  
15% - 25-34 yrs  
30% - 35-44 yrs  
13% - 45-54 yrs  
11% - 55-64 yrs  
3% - 65-74 yrs  
25% - 75-84 yrs

**% of Responses by Ward**

Burn Valley – 4%  
De Bruce – 4%  
Fens and Rossmere – 3%  
Foggy Furze – 3%  
Hart – 1%  
Headland & Harbour – 5%  
Jesmond – 5%  
Manor House – 3%  
Rural West – 3%  
Seaton – 5%  
Victoria – 22%

**Sexuality**

90% - Heterosexual  
4% - Gay / Lesbian  
4% - Bisexual

**Religion**

24% - No religion  
40% - Christian  
9% - Hindu  
1% - Jewish  
21% - Muslim  
5% - Sikh

**How best describes**

27% - Employed full time  
19% - Part-time employed  
7% - Self employed  
1% - Government supported training programme  
15% - Full time education  
2% - Unemployed and available for work  
1% - Unable to work  
3% - Permanently sick  
6% - Retired  
7% - Looking for a home  
3% - Other

**How best describes**

13% - Asylum seeker  
4% - Leave to remain  
29% - Indefinite leave to remain  
55% - British Citizen

## Appendix B

**Cleveland Hate Crime Reporting Centres****Hartlepool****Reporting Centre****Address****Opening Hours**

Citizens Advice Bureau	87 Park Road Hartlepool TS26 9HP	Monday to Friday, 9:30 - 15:00 Tel: 01429 273223
Havelock Centre	1 Havelock Street TS24 7LT	Monday to Friday, 9:00 - 17:00 Tel: 01429 260583
Hartlepool Borough Council	Civic Centre Victoria Road TS24 8AY	Monday to Thursday, 9.00 - 17.00 Friday, 9.00 - 16.30pm Tel: 01429 523333
Hart Gables	220 York Road TS26 9EB	Monday to Friday, 9:00 – 14:00 Friday, 9:00 – 13:00 Tel: 01429 236790
Hartlepool Blind Welfare Association	32 Avenue Road TS24 8BB	Tues, Wed, Thurs, 9:00 – 17:00 01429 272494
Library Service Central Library	124 York Road TS26 9DE	Monday to Friday, 10:00 - 18:00 Saturday, 10:00 - 14:00 Tel: 01429 272905
Library Service Seaton Carew	Station Lane TS25 1BN	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, 10:00 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 18:00 Saturday, 10:00 – 13:00 Wednesday, Closed Tel: 01429 269808
Library Service Owton Manor	Wynyard Road TS25 3LQ	Mon – Thurs, 10:00 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 18:00 Saturday, 10:00 – 13:00 Tel: 01429 272835
Salaam Community Centre	St Pauls Hall Murray Street TS26 8PE	Monday to Friday, 10:00 – 17:00 Tel: 01429 284297
West View Advice & Resource Centre	The Community Centre Miers Avenue TS24 9JQ	Mon & Wed, 08:30 – 20:00 Tues, Thurs, Fri, 08:30 – 17:30 Tel: 01429 271275





# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

4<sup>th</sup> September 2015



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

**Subject:** REDUCING RE-OFFENDING GROUP UPDATE

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Safer Hartlepool Partnership on progress in relation to the Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan 2014/15.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership Reducing Re-offending Strategy 2014-2017, published in 2014, outlines the Partnership's approach to "break the cycle" of offending in Hartlepool by ensuring local services are coordinated in a manner that meets the needs of offenders, whilst at the same time ensuring local communities remain safe.
- 2.2 The strategy sets out the Partnership's three key objectives to address the issue of re-offending in Hartlepool which include:
- Improving pathways out of re-offending
  - Partnership working with the needs of offenders and public safety at the heart of service planning
  - Delivery of a local response to local problems through a better understanding of offending behaviour and the impact of interventions
- 2.3 The Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan (attached at **Appendix 1**) provides an overview of the work that is currently being undertaken by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Reducing Re-Offending Task Group during 2015/16.

## 3. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 Although progress against the action plan has been slow due to the transformation of rehabilitation services, key achievements in relation to the action plan are as follows:

(i) Improving pathways out of reoffending

- Housing – Housing Officer Post to work between custody and local housing teams and landlords established ; Compass housing application process has been streamlined to be more flexible for ex-offenders; Supported Housing Project under development
- Employment - Our Place funding successful – preparatory work undertaken on area based employment scheme will commence early September 2015; 'Through the Gate Scheme' established with one CRC Team leader and 5 support staff involved - 146 referrals to date from Durham (72); Holme House ( 62), Low Newton (12).
- Mental Health - Pilot Street Triage programme currently in place currently being evaluated, and diversion and liaison officer planned for Hartlepool custody suite

(ii) Partnership working with needs of offenders and public safety at heart of service planning

- IOM model - Integrated Offender Management system was implemented in May 2015. 35 offenders identified in cohort subject to intensive interventions to reduce their offending behaviour using multi agency offender management plans.
- Restorative justice – funding for coordinator role from PCC successful and in place – low level RJ Co-ordinator in process of recruitment to divert away from justice system
- Community Payback integrated into work of Neighbourhood Action Days
- Transition of young offenders into adult – portal developed to improve the transferring of information and documentation between the YOS/ Durham Tees Valley CRC and the National Probation Service.
- Substance misuse service adopting Team Around approach and service re-commissioned

(iii) Deliver a local response to local problems through a better understanding of offending behaviour and impact of interventions.

- The newly established Tees Integrated Offender Management Group overseeing development of Tees approach
- Standardised matrix scoring system for selection/de-selection of cohort members established to address local priorities and the criminogenic needs of offenders.
- Basket of performance indicators established by Tees Group

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

##### 4.1 The Reducing Re-offending Strategy contributes to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's ability to carry out its statutory obligations in ensuring a

coordinated approach to tackling crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The Safer Hartlepool Partnership is asked to note the report and consider the progress being made in delivering the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan.

## **6. CONTACT OFFICER**

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**Safer Hartlepool Partnership**  
**Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan Overview**

<b>Objective 1: Improving pathways out of re-offending</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Improve housing pathways for offenders within the custody setting.	☹️
Development of improved partnership working to ensure flexibility in local approaches to housing of offenders and ensure no stigma is applied to offenders in the allocation of housing.	☹️
Improve the offender pathways for those leaving custody.	☹️
Address unemployment and poor educational attainment in disadvantaged areas, to raise aspirations and challenge the cycle of offending behaviour across generations.	☹️
Improve offender mental health pathways through the early identification of problems and the early intervention of mental health/drug alcohol services.	☹️
Improve the finance and benefits pathway by developing better co-ordination of services to offenders on the day of release particularly around benefits.	☹️
Support families to maintain relationships where a family member receives a custodial sentence.	☹️

Objective 2 : All partners working together with the needs of offenders and public safety at the heart of service planning					
Action					Progress
Implement a co-ordinated approach to address the needs of offenders using a `Team around the Offender model and IOM principles as a template for the provision of holistic offender/centric services.					☹️
Embed a restorative approach to reducing re-offending and improving victim satisfaction with the punishment of offenders.					☹️
Improve the transition of young offenders re-offenders into adult services					☹️
Address unemployment and poor educational attainment in disadvantaged areas, to raise aspirations and challenge the cycle of offending behaviour across generations.					☹️
Ensure adequate substance misuse support services are in place for offenders that adopt a Team Around Approach to support integrated offender management					☹️

Objective 3 : All partners working together with the needs of offenders and public safety at the heart of service planning					
Action					Progress
Improve the identification of the most problematic offenders					😊
Agencies to have a shared understanding of the need and risk of offenders					😊
Avoid duplication and loss of effectiveness in service delivery following the reform of offender management services					☹️
Improve the understanding of the impact of interventions and benefits					☹️
Action incomplete	☹️	Action on track	☹️	Action complete	😊



**Safer Hartlepool Partnership Reducing Re-offending**  
**ACTION PLAN**

This action plan accompanies the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Reducing Re-offending Strategy and underpins its implementation. This plan details how we will achieve and monitor the objectives set out in the strategy. The actions contained within this plan contribute to the overarching aim of the strategy which, is to 'Ensure that local services are co-ordinated in a manner that meets the needs of offenders, whilst at the same time ensuring local communities safe'.

Objective 1: Improving pathways out of re-offending						
Priority	Key Action	Progress Measure	Responsibility Resource	Timescale	Progress	Outcome
1.1 Improve housing pathways for offenders within the custody setting.	Create a Housing Liaison post to work between the custody setting and local housing teams/landlords to help offenders to find tenancies in advance of release date.	Increase in the number of referrals into housing support services.  Increase in the number of offenders leaving the custody setting into suitable accommodation.	HBC Community Safety (Clare Clark)	November 2014	July- Successful applicant awaiting pre-employment checks etc	Offenders have improved access to appropriate accommodation on leaving the custody setting.
	Develop supported housing provision in Hartlepool for the most problematic offenders from the Hartlepool area.	Increase in the number of PPOs into supported accommodation on release from custody into the local area	Housing Hartlepool (Rachel Creevy)	September 2015	July - Housing Project under development. Proposed plan to be brought to group at September	Offenders leaving custody have access to supported accommodation in Hartlepool

					meeting.	
1.2 The development of improved partnership working with checks in place to ensure flexibility in local approaches to the housing of offenders, and that there is no stigma applied to offenders in the allocation of housing.	<p>Housing advice to begin in adequate time prior to release from custody</p> <p>Review and streamline the Compass application process, including housing history</p>	<p>Increase in the number of offenders receiving Housing advice no less than 3 months prior to release from custody</p> <p>New process agreed and in place</p>	<p>Offender Accommodation Officer</p> <p>HBC Housing Services (Karen Kelly)</p>	<p>January 2015</p> <p>December 2014</p>	<p>See 1.1</p> <p>July – Improved application process now in place. 3 years housing history instead of 6. No longer ask for character references and other references are verified at the back end of the process enabling bids for available properties. Options being explored to make the process easier to shortlist applicants for properties in the area of their choice</p>	<p>Offenders in custody have improved access to housing advice</p> <p>Offenders receive an improved service through the housing options centre that is non-discriminatory and flexible to their address needs resulting in increased access to appropriate housing.</p>

1.3 Improve the employment pathway for those leaving custody.	Explore local involvement with schemes similar to the 'Change for Change' scheme operated at Deerbolt Prison encouraging the provision of employment /apprentice opportunities for ex-offenders with businesses and within the local authority context	Increase in the number of offenders leaving custody going into training and employment within the local authority area	HBC Economic Development (Patrick Wilson) CRC (Barbara Gill)	June 2015	July- Team leader and 5 support staff involved in Through the Gate scheme. Referrals since May 16 <sup>th</sup> Durham 72, Holme House 62, Low Newton 12, nothing from Kirk Levington.	Offenders leaving custody have increased employment and training
1.4 Address unemployment and poor educational attainment in disadvantaged areas, to raise aspirations and challenge the cycle of offender behaviour across generations.	Pilot the Our Place programme in the Dyke House Area of Hartlepool by developing a partnership of employment and training providers linking employment and training opportunities to the Hartlepool vision	Pilot Programme commenced in the Dyke House area		September 2015	July – Our Place Scheme will go live 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 - project aimed at getting young men (18+) from the Dyke House area into employment by raising aspirations and building confidence	A network of employment and training providers is in place to raise aspirations of the Local residents in the Dyke House area
1.5 Improve offender mental health pathways through the early identification of problems and the early intervention of mental health /drug alcohol services.	Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service be developed in Hartlepool.	Number of offenders/those at risk of offending receiving a mental health assessment and referrals to appropriate mental health/drug and alcohol services	Sharon Robson Helen Marriot -Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion	July 2015	Pilot Street Triage programme currently in place, based within Middlehaven but coverage to Hartlepool - plans for worker to be based in Hartlepool	Offenders with mental health /substance misuse problems have improved access to health and social services at the earliest opportunity



		Plans are in place for the joint commissioning of the criminal justice liaison and diversion service considered by the CCG/public health and PCC	CCG (Karen Hawkins)	March 2014	- update to be provided at September meeting  Criminal liaison and diversion service subject to evaluation (post custody)	
1.6 Work to improve the finance and benefits pathway by developing better co-ordination of services to offenders on the day of release from custody particularly around benefits	Explore the introduction of a 'one-stop shop' to bring services and benefits directly together for offenders upon their release.	Increase in the number of offenders receiving co-ordinated services on release from custody	CRC (Barbara Gill)	February 2015	July- Part of the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda to provide 'one stop shop' work in progress in relation to this -	Offenders are provided with the services they need on release from custody to prevent them from reoffending and re-entering the prison system
1.7 Support families to maintain relationships where a family member receives a custodial sentence	Ensure as far as possible prison placements to be within the local area  Process for Team Around Meetings to be established across the custody setting, linking with Troubled Families agenda.	Number of individuals from Hartlepool receiving a custodial sentence being placed in a local prison  Number of team around meetings taking place in prisons	CRC (Barbara Gill)  CRC (Barbara Gill) Think Family/Think Community (Danielle Swainston)	June 2015  June 2015	July- Current work is on going with NEPAC working via family centres. Carry out more work in custody before release. Currently 80% of Holme House inmates, serving last 3 months of sentence, are local.	Offenders and their families are able to maintain their relationships beyond the prison gate and have the opportunity to joint plan for release to reduce the risk of reoffending

**Objective 2: All partners working together with the needs of offenders and public safety at the heart of service planning.**

Priority	Action	Progress Measure	Responsibility Resource	Timescale	Progress	Outcome
2.1 Implement a co-ordinated approach to address the needs of offenders, using a Team around the Offender' model and IOM principles as a template for the provision of holistic offender-centric services	Ensure continuation of IOM model through the new Community Rehabilitation Company	Number of PPOs/HCCs/DRR offenders supported through the IOM approach	CRC (Barbara Gill)	March 2015	July - IOM cohort identified as 35 offenders. HUB Staffing consists of Police Sergeant, Research Officer, RJ Coordinator, Prison Officer. Probation Officer planned to join from CRC Bid submitted by Police for more staffing RJ coordinator to work with PPO	IOM cohort identified and receiving co-ordinated and intensive interventions to reduce their offending behaviour.  Multi-agency holistic offender management plans are used by all agencies working with offenders incorporating criminogenic needs.
	The continued development and delivery of holistic/offender centric plans incorporating risk, criminogenic needs, and the inclusion of a range of sanctions falling outside those attached to sentencing	Increased offender engagement with services and an increase in the breadth of sanctions used to ensure compliance with offender management plans	HBC (Karen Clark)	March 2015		
2.2 Embed a restorative approach to reducing re-offending and improving victim satisfaction with the punishment of offenders	Ensure restorative interventions are offered to all victims of crime.	Increase in the number of victims of crime receiving restorative interventions	Tees Single IOM (Clare Clark)	April 2015	RJ funding successful and co-ordinator under recruitment	Offenders have a Increased awareness of the impact of their offending behaviour resulting in subsequent reductions in offending  Victims feel that justice has been done and have an improved satisfaction with the criminal justice process
	Explore with Cleveland Police the further development of the extension to the Restorative Justice Scheme	RJ scheme expanded with an increase in adult offenders receiving punishments outside of the court processes	Police (Danielle Gibson)	February 2015	March - May total of 51 people received Level 1 RJ intervention from the Police	

	<p>Those working with offenders to receive training in restorative interventions</p> <p>The Community Payback scheme to be supported, and in taking it forward additional training be provided for staff to equip them to effectively interact with ex-offenders in a work environment</p>	<p>Increase in the number of those working with offenders receiving training in restorative interventions</p> <p>New agreement established for the continuance of Community Payback in Hartlepool in conjunction with the CRC, and HBCs Community Safety and Environmental Services</p> <p>Toolbox Talk developed – increase in the number of HBC staff trained on how to interact with offenders in the workplace</p>	<p>CRC (Barbara Gill) Think Family/Think Communities (Roni Checksfield) YOS (Mark Smith)</p> <p>HBC (John Wright)</p> <p>Neighbourhood Services (John Wright)</p>	<p>September 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>January 2015</p>	<p>July -Community Payback Scheme now involved in Neighbourhood Action Days, Allotment and Fly Tipping actions. (Risk assessments in place).</p>	<p>Increased visibility in justice being done within the community setting and an increase in the number of offenders putting something back into the community</p>
2.3 Improve the transition of young re-offenders into adult services.	Review the needs of 16/17 year re-offenders current to YOS.	Assessments are in place for all young offenders moving from child to adult offender management services	HBC Youth Offending Service (Mark Smith) Think Family/Think Communities (Roni Checksfield) CRC (Barbara Gill)	September 2015	Course in place to help with transition of moving from YOS to Probation. July – YOS / National Youth Justice Board created a portal to	Services have a better understanding of the needs of this group of offenders and are able to improve the support provided resulting in a reduction of the reoffending rate of this

					improve the transferring of information and documentation between the YOS and CRC/NPS.	particular group
2.4 Address unemployment and poor educational attainment in disadvantaged areas, to raise aspirations and challenge the cycle of offender behaviour across generations	Pilot the Our Place programme in the Dyke House area of Hartlepool by developing a partnership of employment and training providers linking employment and training opportunities to the Hartlepool vision	Pilot Programme commenced in the Dyke House area	HBC Community safety and Engagement Team (Tracy Rowe)	November 2014	See 1.4	
2.5 Ensure adequate substance misuse support services are in place for offenders that adopt a Team Around Approach to support delivery of integrated offender management plans  Plans for the joint commissioning of the criminal justice liaison and diversion service considered by the CCG/public health and PCC	Review and Re-commission drug support services through Criminal Justice Interventions Team	Drug services are reviewed and successfully commissioned to ensure integration and support for the delivery of offender management plans	HBC Public Health (Sharon Robson)	March 2015	July – Service commissioned and delivered by Lifeline and Addaction under the umbrella of 'HART' (Hartlepool Action Recovery Team). Integrated model includes; Care Co-ordination support; Psychosocial Interventions; and targeted support for individuals within the Criminal Justice System.	Offenders with substance misuse issues are provided with a holistic wrap around service that address their criminogenic needs to improve outcomes across health, employment, housing, and reduced reoffending behaviour

**Objective 3: Delivering a local response to local problems through a better understanding of offending behaviour and impact of interventions.**

Priority	Action	Progress measure	Responsibility Resource	Timescale	Progress	Outcome
3.1 Improve the identification of the most problematic offenders.	Review the current Integrated Offender Management (IOM) selection and de-selection process.	Standardised matrix and selection/de-selection process in place that addresses local priorities and the criminogenic needs of offenders	Single IOM Group (Clare Clark)	March 2015	Implemented 1 <sup>st</sup> May see update at 2.1	Improved knowledge and effective management of offenders resulting in a reduction in the reoffending rate of the IOM cohort and improved public safety
3.2 Agencies to have a shared understanding of the need and risk of offenders	Explore the feasibility of introducing the use of one risk assessment form, accompanied by a workable risk management plan (as practised in Durham)	Risk assessment agreed and in place	CRC (Barbara Gill)	March 2015	<b>Complete.</b>	The risks to the community in relation to re-offending are shared and there is improved management of risk between agencies.
3.3 Avoid duplication and loss of effectiveness in service delivery following the reform of offender management services	New NPS and CRC to be represented on the SHP as statutory partners with accountability for the management of offenders within the community and the protection of the public	Members are invited and are attending partnership meetings  SHP are provided with regular progress and performance updates from NPS and CRC including PBR claims etc	HBC Community Safety (Clare Clark)  CRC (Barbara Gill)  NPS (Julie Allan)	July 2014  April 2015	Ongoing representatives from NPS and CRC attending meetings	The new NPS and CRC are integrated into local partnership arrangements resulting in improved pathways and management of offenders and reduced risk of harm to the public
	Reducing Re-offending Task Group to take responsibility for management of the reducing reoffending strategy action plan	Reducing Re-offending group established supported by HBC Community Safety Team and Director of	HBC Community safety (Clare Clark)	July 2014		

	SHP /HBC to be represented on Teeswide Single IOM Steering Group	CRC (Chair)  Safer Hartlepool to agree Single IOM terms of reference and Partnership involvement in the Teeswide single IOM group	HBC Community safety (Clare Clark)	March 2015	<b>Complete</b>	
3.4 Improve understanding of the impact of interventions and benefits	Adopt a suite of indicators that adequately demonstrate the impact and progress in relation to multi-agency approaches to reducing reoffending	Basket of performance indicators produced to measure the impact of interventions	Single IOM Group (Clare Clark)	January 2015	July- Performance indicators produced and agreed by IOM strategic group.	Improved understanding of the impact of interventions and benefits within the new landscape



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

4<sup>th</sup> September 2015



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

**Subject:** DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGIC GROUP  
UPDATE

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an overview of activity undertaken by the Hartlepool Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy Group during 2014/15

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The main function of Domestic Violence and Abuse Group (DVAG) is to reduce domestic abuse and the impact on those affected by it in Hartlepool through implementation of the domestic violence and abuse strategy action plan.
- 2.2 As outlined in the Terms of Reference the DVAG is accountable to both the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the HSCB.
- 2.3 The domestic violence and abuse action plan is reviewed annually by the Domestic Violence and Abuse Group, and following the HSCB development day in 2014 additional actions aimed at reducing incidents of domestic abuse with a focus on the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people were developed.
- 2.4 Supporting delivery of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy, the overarching Domestic Violence and Abuse action plan has four key strategic objectives: Prevention and Early Intervention; Provision of Services; Partnership Working; Justice Outcomes and Risk Reduction for Victims. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Action plan is attached at appendix A.

## 3. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 In general good progress has been made against the Domestic Violence and Abuse Action Plan with the following representing some key achievements over the last year.

(i) Prevention and Early Intervention:

- The roll out of training on the different forms that abuse can take, the signs to look out for, and what to do when disclosure is made (62 this year participating)
- Continuation of the North Tees Hospital Link Worker role
- Evaluation and continuation of the Healthy Relationships Programme in Schools
- The launch of 'Operation Encompass' and the North Tees MACH in April 2015.

(ii) Provision of Services: The locally commissioned specialist domestic violence and abuse service was reviewed in the autumn/winter of 2014/15. Following the review the service has been remodeled to include:

- a specialist children and young peoples service
- an increase in IDVA provision
- additional support for the MACH
- through a successful application to the DCLG the strengthening of refuge provision in Hartlepool.

(iii) Partnership Working:

- A draft Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy has been developed.
- Hartlepool Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has been quality assessed by CAADA with some positive feedback on the support provided for victims examples of safeguarding children.

(iv) Justice Outcomes:

- As of June 2015 there were 27 applications for Domestic Violence Disclosures and 6 disclosures were made.
- There have also been 24 successful applications for Domestic Violence Protection Orders to date with only 1 refusal and 5 breaches.
- Cleveland Domestic Violence performance for cases charged to court has significantly improved with the Constabulary Area ranking seeing Cleveland move from 29th out of 42 in 2013/14 to 8<sup>th</sup> in Q4 of 2014/15.

3.2 Some actions remain ongoing such as the planned intensive approach to the small number of repeat cases that dip in out of the MARAC which will be looked at over the forthcoming year following Cleveland Police evaluation of the different approaches taken to repeat victimisation across the Tees area.



#### **4 ACTION PLAN 2015/16**

- 4.1 The Domestic Violence Action Plan has been refreshed following discussion at the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategic Group in June 2015. Additional actions this year include:

- A review of research materials and tools that have been developed to improve assessment, planning, and support to families affected by domestic abuse
- Development of multi-agency practice clinics to support workforce development around domestic abuse
- Strengthening the relationship and accountability between the MARAC and Domestic Violence Strategic Group
- Publicity campaigns / awareness events around 4 key theme areas including, older women, LGBT, Diversity Event; and Students
- Learning from DHR review
- Strengthening work with Perpetrators

- 4.2 The Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy is now in its third year and work will be begin in to refresh the strategy in the forthcoming months

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Good progress against has been made by the DVG group over the last year with some notable new developments in place to safeguard individuals, children and their families from the impact of domestic abuse. The number of domestic abuse incidents in Hartlepool is also moving in the right direction having reduced year on year since 2011/12 when the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy and action plan was developed.
- 5.2 In particular the development of Operation Encompass; the Healthy Relationships Programme, the Public Health Link Worker; and the specialist domestic violence service delivered by Harbour are delivering positive outcomes for both victims, and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 5.3 However, Hartlepool continues to experience high levels of domestic abuse and has the second highest rate of recorded domestic incidents per 1000 population in Cleveland Police Force area. During 2013/14, 2166 domestic abuse incidents were recorded and of those 1046 children and young people were present in the home at the time of the domestic incident.
- 5.4 From 2011/12 to date the repeat domestic incident rate in Hartlepool has also been steadily increasing. Of the 2166 domestic incidents recorded during 2013/14, just over half (1145) were repeats with the repeat incident rate standing at 52.9% during 2013/14 - the highest across the Cleveland Force area.
- 5.5 During 2014/15 126 referrals were made to the MARAC (high risk of harm cases) – an increase of 30 on the previous year. The number of children

involved in the MARAC increased from 160 to 183. However the repeat MARAC rate reduced from 34% to 26% in 2014/15.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no equality of diversity implications.

## **7. SECTION 17**

- 7.1 The Domestic Violence Strategy and Action plan a key role in reducing crime and disorder in Hartlepool.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Safer Hartlepool Partnership notes and comments on achievements and progress made to date against the Domestic Violence and Abuse Action Plan.
- 8.2 That the Safer Hartlepool Partnership notes new actions included in the 2015/16 action plan and makes any further recommendations for inclusion.

## **9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Domestic Violence and Abuse is a key priority contained within the Community Safety Plan 2014 – 17.

## **10. CONTACT OFFICERS**










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**Safer Hartlepool Partnership**  
**Domestic Violence & Abuse Action Plan 2014/15 Overview**

<b>Objective 1: Prevention and Early Intervention</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Deliver key messages in line with national and regional campaigns	
Promote healthy relationships within the primary, secondary and college education setting and the use of 'This is Abuse' teacher resource pack.	
Delivery of targeted healthy relationship interventions to LGBT community and young people aged between 16-24yrs at risk of being victims/perpetrators of domestic violence & abuse.	
Work with key partners to host a series of HBV and FGM awareness raising workshops.	
Implement local pilot of Operation Encompass to support the development of North Tees MASH	
Work with key partners including local business representatives to develop workplace policies and procedures to respond and support employees who may disclose being a victim or perpetrator of domestic and/or sexual violence/abuse	
<b>Objective 2: Provision of Services</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Undertake a review of locally commissioned domestic violence and abuse services.	
Identify and profile top 10 serial repeat MARAC cases. Utilise a 'Team around' approach to address the needs of victims and perpetrators, using learning from the MARAC plus approach piloted in Middlesbrough.	

Objective 3: Partnership Working	
Action	Progress
Reshape Hartlepool Domestic Violence Forum, identifying key individuals from organizations across Hartlepool to develop a network of domestic violence and abuse champions.	
Improve links with health, through the appointment of a Domestic Violence Health Link Worker, awareness raising sessions with staff and patients at Sandwell Park, introduction of routine screening of sexual health clients and rollout of GP domestic violence and abuse training and awareness programme.	
Quality assess MARAC in accordance with CAADA guidance.	
Objective 4 : Justice Outcomes and Risk Reduction for Victims	
Action	Progress
Assess the IDVA service.	
Conduct a SDVC health check audit.	
Improve the number of successful prosecutions processed by the SDVC.	
Implementation of Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)	
Implementation of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO's)	
Reduce the risk of Domestic Homicides, through effective learning and review of recent cases.	

Action incomplete		Action on track		Action complete	
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**Safer Hartlepool Partnership Domestic Violence & Abuse Action Plan 2012 -2015**

**YEAR THREE ACTION PLAN**



This action plan accompanies the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Domestic Violence Strategy 2012 – 2015 and underpins its implementation. This plan details how we will achieve and monitor the objectives set out in the strategy. The actions contained within this plan contribute to the overarching aim of the strategy which, is to 'break the cycle of domestic violence in Hartlepool, leading to improved outcomes for everyone affected by this issue'.

The Plan sets out actions under four key areas that we aim to achieve:

**Objective 1: Prevention and Early Intervention**

Through work to prevent violence we will increase awareness and knowledge of the impact of domestic violence, services and options available to intervene early to reduce violence and the escalation of violence.

**Objective 2: Provision of Services**

We will continue to provide support to victim/survivors, and children whose lives are blighted by domestic violence and to perpetrators and ensure that they face minimal barriers in accessing the support they need.

**Objective 3: Partnership Working**

We will continue to work closely with our Partners to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families.

**Objective 4 : Justice Outcomes and Risk Reduction for Victims**

We will take action to reduce the risk to victims and their family. Will we empower and support victims to bring perpetrators to justice through the criminal justice process.

**Objective 1: Prevention and Early Intervention**

Through work to prevent violence we will increase awareness and knowledge of the impact of domestic violence, services and options available to intervene early to reduce violence and the escalation of violence.

Desired Outcome	Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ how will impact be demonstrated?	Progress Update	RAG Rating
Increase awareness of domestic violence and abuse across agencies and communities.	Deliver key messages in line with national and regional campaigns	Safer Hartlepool Partnership Communications Group	March 2015	Number of campaigns undertaken	<p>Cleveland Police Domestic Violence website re-launched with links to Hartlepool support services.</p> <p>March- Harbour hosted information stall at launch of Operation Encompass 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.</p> <p>June- Plans to hold awareness events over the coming year to include:- Older Women, LGBT, Diversity Event and Students (during Freshers Week). Harbour have purchased the viewing rights for the BBC docudrama 'Murdered by my Boyfriend'</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p> <p><b>AMBER</b></p>
	Promote healthy relationships within the primary, secondary and college education setting and the use of 'This is Abuse' teacher resource pack.	Harbour	March 2015	Number of schools and colleges engaged and participating	<p>Healthy relationships November healthy relationship in schools evaluated with positive results – 3 secondary schools involving 724 year 10 pupils and 20 primary schools involving 800 pupils participated in the event.</p> <p>Feb - ASBAD event 2015 attended by just over 1000 year 8 and included scenarios around healthy relationships.</p> <p>Teacher feedback from the event suggested the ASBAD event was well received raising awareness of the different forms of abuse.</p>	<b>AMBER</b>

					June - Harbour linking in with school's for awareness sessions in new 2015/16 curriculum.	
Desired Outcome	Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ how will impact be demonstrated?	Progress Update	RAG Rating
Increase awareness of domestic violence and abuse across agencies and communities – continued.....	Delivery of targeted healthy relationship interventions to LGBT community and young people aged between 16-24yrs at risk of being victims/perpetrators of domestic violence & abuse.	Harbour Hart Gables	March 2015	Number of people engaged.	LGBT Healthy Relationships programme launched at the GAYMES.  The first session of the Rainbow Respect project delivered by Harbour in partnership with Hart Gables took place October.  June -This project to now be rolled out at Middlesbrough	AMBER
Increase public understanding of Honour Based Violence (HBV), Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).	Work with key partners to host a series of awareness raising workshops.	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner Halo	March 2015	Number of workshops held and levels of agency/community attendance.  Number of referrals into support services.	Training has been provided to 2 x Diversity & Equality Groups Housing Options and ASB team in Hartlepool. Work is ongoing in relation to an e-learning package accessed via the HALO website.  June – Web Site was due to be live May 15, now hoped to be end of June/early July and event will be held to promote its launch by HALO.  Number of referrals into to support services to be provided by RK at next meeting (September)	AMBER

Improve information sharing and the early identification of children and families affected by domestic violence and abuse	Local pilot of Operation Encompass to support the development of North Tees MASH	Clare Clark, Helen Eustace Sally Robinson	March 2015	Number of children and families identified for intervention  Pilot evaluation	Encompass and Safeguarding Hub launched 26th March 2015 In the first two months of operation (April/May) 430 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by Cleveland Police involving 83 children present/witnessing abuse. 54 referrals made to schools/academies/6 <sup>th</sup> form colleges. 44 incidents were triaged by the MACH i.e. 44 cases that were not already open to socials services.	GREEN
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Desired Outcome	Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ how will impact be demonstrated?	Progress Update	RAG Rating
Employers recognise and support victims of domestic and/or sexual violence/abuse at the earliest opportunity.	Work with key partners including local business representatives to develop workplace policies and procedures to respond and support employees who may disclose being a victim or perpetrator of domestic and/or sexual violence/abuse	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner Steven Carter Clare Clark	March 2015	Implementation of workforce policy.  Number of organisations signed up to policy.	Policy Presented to Trade Union single table meeting on 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2015. June- draft policy complete -going through HBC process. Once adopted intention is to promote with other organisations via the Better Health at Work Forum.	AMBER

**Objective 2: Provision of Services**

We will continue to provide support to victim/survivors, and children whose lives are blighted by domestic violence and to perpetrators and ensure that they face minimal barriers in accessing the support they need.

Desired Outcome	Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ how will impact be demonstrated ?	Progress Update	RAG Rating
Locally commissioned services will provide high quality, effective and accessible services which meet the needs of individuals and families affected by domestic violence and abuse.	Undertake a review of commissioned services.	Community Safety	February 2014	Evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data, including support services data, service user focus groups and practitioner questionnaire.	March - A review of the currently commissioned Domestic Violence and Abuse Support Service provided by Harbour complete – service remodelled following review to include specific focus on children, support to hub, IDVS and strengthening of refuge provision	GREEN
Reduce the number of repeat MARAC cases through the provision of an enhanced multi-agency response to serial MARAC repeat cases	Identify and profile top 10 serial repeat MARAC cases.  Utilise a 'Team around' approach to address the needs of victims and perpetrators, using learning from the MARAC plus approach piloted in Middlesbrough.	Community Safety  Harbour	March 2015	Reduction in MARAC repeats	June - feedback from the Police evaluation of repeat schemes across awaited.	AMBER

**Objective 3: Partnership Working**

We will continue to work closely with our Partners to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families.

Desired Outcome	Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ how will impact be demonstrated?	Progress Update	RAG Rating
Establish a network of Domestic Violence and Abuse Champions across a range of public, private and voluntary organizations.	Reshape Hartlepool Domestic Violence Forum, identifying key individuals from organisations across Hartlepool, develop DVA champion role profile and development programme.	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner Harbour Community Safety	March 2015	Establishment of DVA Champion Network.  Number of DVA Champions and breadth of organizations.	Links with Office of Police and Crime Commissioner VAWG Action Plan.  DVA Champions still under development - Champions training 1 <sup>st</sup> session delivered by PCC 20 <sup>th</sup> April  Further dates throughout the year have now been advertised by PCC – Hartlepool Champions to be identified once policy agreed	AMBER
Better engagement with Health	To be developed through the appointment of a Domestic Violence Health Link Worker to work across Hartlepool and North Tees hospital sites, and the local rollout of the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) general practice-based domestic violence and abuse training and referral programme.	Harbour Community Safety CCG	March 2015	Increased referral into support services from Healthcare Professionals	April 2014 - Public health funded Harbour worker joined North Tees hospital Adult Safeguarding Team. Worker funded for second year to develop a sustainable systemic approach to identifying and supporting patients experiencing abuse.  December 2014 – report received by DVA group – positive early results with referrals increasing - between 2007 and 2011 there were only 14 alerts on to the system for DV. From mid May there have been 37 cases identified. JD is now being contacted regularly for advice on cases. Pathways to MARAC also improving.	AMBER

					June - Work to engage with GPs to take place as part of time out sessions –Harbour to have a stall	
We continue to deliver an effective and well attended MARAC.	MARAC to be quality assessed, in line with CAADA guidance.	Police	October 2014	Outcome of review  CAADA insights	May - a positive CAADA quality assessment report has been received with some recommendations for development. One of the recommendations is that a steering group be established for effective management of the MARAC	AMBER

**Objective 4 : Justice Outcomes and Risk Reduction for Victims**

We will take action to reduce the risk to victims and their family. Will we empower and support victims to bring perpetrators to justice through the criminal justice process.

Desired Outcome	Action	Lead Officer/Group	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ how will impact be demonstrated?	Progress Update	RAG Rating
Victims receive effective support and guidance when seeking justice through the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC).	Assess the IDVA service.	Harbour Community Safety	February 2015	Number of victims taking up support  Number of successful prosecutions.	This was incorporated into the review of commissioned services in Hartlepool.	GREEN
	Conduct a SDVC health check audit.	SDVC Operational Group	March 2015	Audit carried out	June – progress report provided at meeting - outcome of the review was positive and the SDVC Strategic group (which sits above the Operational group) were content that the SDVC function continues to meet the requirements. Cleveland DV Performance for cases charge to court improved from ranking of 29 to 8.	GREEN

	Improve the number of successful prosecutions processed by the SDVC.	Police/CPS	March 2015	Establish baseline re percentage of successful prosecutions -	<p>The CAADA data set 12 months to October 2014 highlights the following criminal justice outcomes – 96% of reports to the police resulted in a charge. The most common charge was common assault (70% followed by harassment 30%) All cases were heard in the SDVC with 9% of clients applying for and being granted special measures. There was a guilty verdict in 74% of cases and a restraining order was imposed in 59% of cases.</p> <p>June Hartlepool court figures still pending at time of sending</p>	GREEN
Effective use of new tools and powers to protect victims and families from domestic violence and abuse.	Implementation of Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)	Police Harbour	June 2014	<p>Number of applications made.</p> <p>Number of disclosures made.</p>	<p>DVDS Panel has been established, chaired by the Police and comprising of representatives from Harbour and Probation.</p> <p>June – Hartlepool total 14 requests with 5 disclosures</p>	GREEN
	Implementation of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO's)	Police Harbour	July 2014	Number of DVPO's secured	June 2015 - running total for Hartlepool 18 DVPO's applied for with 14 being granted	GREEN
Reduce the risk of Domestic Homicides, through effective learning and review of recent cases.	Implement recommendations and organise an event to share the learning from the recent DHR in Hartlepool	Community Safety	March 2015	Recommendations implemented/ Event held and evaluated	June - DHR completed and returned to Home Office – to be reported to Group once agreed by the Home Office	AMBER



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

4<sup>th</sup> September 2015



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

**Subject:** SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP  
PERFORMANCE

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance for Quarter 1 – April 2015 to June 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 1, 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 1.

## **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 background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

Safer Hartlepool Partnership – Community Safety Plan 2014-17

## **9. CONTACT OFFICER**

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**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 Apr 15 - Jun 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
All Recorded Crime	7308	Reduce	1997	+494	+32.9%
Domestic Burglary	348	Reduce	93	+47	+102.2%
Vehicle Crime	571	Reduce	137	+10	+7.9%
Shoplifting	1038	Reduce	279	+100	+55.9%
Local Violence	1422	Reduce	434	+121	+38.7%
Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence – MARAC	26%	Reduce	26%	-3	-6%

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

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015/16	Current Position Apr 15 - Jun 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
Number of substance misusers going into effective treatment – Opiate	676	3% increase	692	- 6	- 0.9%
Proportion of substance misusers that successfully complete treatment - Opiate	7%	12%	6.2%	+6	+1%
Proportion of substance misusers who successfully complete treatment and represent back into treatment within 6 months of leaving treatment	36.7%	10%	39.4%	+3	+2.4%
Reduction in the rate of alcohol related harm hospital admissions	154	Reduce	35	-1	-1%
Number of young people found in possession of alcohol	85	Reduce	9	-12	-57.1%



Strategic Objective: Create Confident, Cohesive and Safe Communities

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015/16	Current Position Apr 15 – Jun 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
Anti-social Behaviour Incidents reported to the Police	7721	Reduce	1749	-220	-11.2%
Deliberate Fires	393	Reduce	126	+38	+43.2%
Criminal Damage to Dwellings	500	Reduce	129	+24	+22.9%
Hate Incidents	115	Increase	34	+9	+36.0%

Strategic Objective: Reduce Offending & Re-Offending

Indicator Name	Baseline 2014/15	Local Directional Target 2015-16	Current Position Apr 15 - Jun 15	Actual Difference	% Difference
Re-offending rate of young offenders*	1.3	Reduce	1.4	-0.3	-17.6%
First-Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice System	38	Reduce	18	+8	+80%
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	143		
Number of Troubled Families where results have been claimed	290	143	0		

\* 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 Jun2015.

\*\*Phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme commenced in April this year with a completely different cohort to last year. In 2014/15 All 290 families were claimed for and closed. This year we are mandated to work with a minimum of 143 families. There hasn't been an opportunity to claim for this cohort yet. (the first opportunity will be September 2015).

**Recorded Crime in Hartlepool****April 15 – June 15**

Publicly Reported Crime (Victim Based Crime)				
Crime Category/Type	Apr 14 - Jun 14	Apr 15 - Jun 15	Change	% Change
<b>Violence against the person</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>38.7%</b>
Homicide	2	0	-2	-100.0%
Violence with injury	171	217	46	26.9%
Violence without injury	140	217	77	55.0%
<b>Sexual Offences</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>83.3%</b>
Rape	7	10	3	42.9%
Other Sexual Offences	17	34	17	100.0%
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>260.0%</b>
Business Robbery	2	1	-1	-50.0%
Personal Robbery	3	17	14	466.7%
<b>Acquisitive Crime</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>39.0%</b>
Domestic Burglary	46	93	47	102.2%
Other Burglary	66	124	58	87.9%
Bicycle Theft	35	42	7	20.0%
Theft from the Person	6	9	3	50.0%
Vehicle Crime (Inc Inter.)	127	137	10	7.9%
Shoplifting	179	279	100	55.9%
Other Theft	228	271	43	18.9%
<b>Criminal Damage &amp; Arson</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>1818</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>35.4%</b>

Police Generated Offences (Non -Victim Based Crime)				
Crime Category/Type	Apr 14 - Jun 14	Apr 15 - Jun 15	Change	% Change
<b>Public Disorder</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
<b>Drug Offences</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-14.0%</b>
Trafficking of drugs	15	20	5	33.3%
Possession/Use of drugs	71	54	-17	-23.9%
<b>Possession of Weapons</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>88.9%</b>
<b>Misc. Crimes Against Society</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64.3%</b>
<b>Total Police Generated Crime</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME IN HARTLEPOOL</b>	<b>1503</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>32.9%</b>



**Recorded Crime in Cleveland****April 15 – June 15**

Publicly Reported Crime (Victim Based Crime) Apr 15 - Jun 15										
Crime Category/Type	HARTLEPOOL		REDCAR		MIDDLESBROUGH		STOCKTON		CLEVELAND	
	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop
<b>Violence against the person</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2367</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Homicide	2	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.0
Violence with injury	171	1.9	256	1.9	426	3.1	326	1.7	1179	2.1
Violence without injury	140	1.5	275	2.1	434	3.2	337	1.8	1186	2.2
<b>Sexual Offences</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Rape	7	0.1	34	0.3	28	0.2	33	0.2	102	0.2
Other Sexual Offences	17	0.2	41	0.3	66	0.5	64	0.3	188	0.3
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Business Robbery	2	0.0	3	0.0	4	0.0	3	0.0	12	0.0
Personal Robbery	3	0.0	14	0.1	32	0.2	19	0.1	68	0.1
<b>Acquisitive Crime</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>1315</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>1729</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>1518</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>5249</b>	<b>9.6</b>
Domestic Burglary	46	1.1	118	2.0	200	3.5	131	1.7	495	2.1
Other Burglary	66	0.7	296	2.2	133	1.0	172	0.9	667	1.2
Bicycle Theft	35	0.4	33	0.2	94	0.7	59	0.3	221	0.4
Theft from the Person	6	0.1	16	0.1	38	0.3	23	0.1	83	0.2
Vehicle Crime (Inc Inter.)	127	1.4	205	1.5	241	1.8	179	1.0	752	1.4
Shoplifting	179	2.0	318	2.4	576	4.2	495	2.6	1568	2.9
Other Theft	228	2.5	329	2.5	447	3.3	459	2.4	1463	2.7
<b>Criminal Damage &amp; Arson</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>2513</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>2832</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>10012</b>	<b>18.2</b>
Police Generated Offences (Non -Victim Based Crime) Apr 15 - Jun 15										
Crime Category/Type	HARTLEPOOL		REDCAR		MIDDLESBROUGH		STOCKTON		CLEVELAND	
	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop	Crime	Per 1,000 pop
<b>Public Disorder</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Drug Offences</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Trafficking of drugs	15	0.2	9	0.1	26	0.2	23	0.1	73	0.1
Possession/Use of drugs	71	0.8	64	0.5	134	1.0	87	0.5	356	0.6
<b>Possession of Weapons</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Misc. Crimes Against Society</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Crime</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1034</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME</b>	<b>1503</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>2045</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>3759</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>3125</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>10432</b>	<b>19.0</b>

**Anti-social Behaviour in Hartlepool****April 15 – June 15**

Incident Category	Apr 14 - Jun 14	Apr 15 - Jun 15	Change	% Change
AS21 - Personal	511	552	41	8.0%
AS22 - Nuisance	1400	1156	-244	-17.4%
AS23 - Environmental	58	41	-17	-29.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1969</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>-220</b>	<b>-11.2%</b>

**Anti-social Behaviour in Cleveland****April 15– June 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	511	5.6	900	6.7	1171	8.6	1037	5.5	3619	6.6
AS22 - Nuisance	1400	15.4	1594	11.9	2285	16.7	1973	10.5	7252	13.2
AS23 - Environmental	58	0.6	131	1.0	113	0.8	91	0.5	393	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1969</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>2625</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>3569</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>3101</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>11264</b>	<b>20.5</b>
<b>Quarterly Year on Year Comparison</b>	<b>Increased by 0.7%</b>		<b>Reduced by 2.96%</b>		<b>Increased by 0.25%</b>		<b>Reduced by 13.74%</b>		<b>Reduced by 4.67%</b>	



# SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015



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

**Subject: PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HARTLEPOOL  
MAGISTRATES' COURT AND COUNTY COURT**

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Safer Hartlepool Partnership of a report to Council following the Ministry of Justice announcement of proposals to close Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At their meeting on 6 August, Council were informed of correspondence from the Leader of the Council to a number of organisations involved in the criminal and civil justice system seeking their views on the proposed closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court with the intention of providing a detailed report to the Finance and Policy Committee on 28 August, and a subsequent report to Council on 17 September, to enable a formal Council response to the Ministry of Justice prior to the close of their consultation on 8 October.
- 2.2 It was also agreed that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership would receive a report on this matter for their information. For the information of Safer Hartlepool Partnership Members, the report prepared for Finance and Policy Committee and Council is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## 3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Safer Hartlepool Partnership notes and comments on the report attached at **Appendix 1**.

#### 4. CONTACT OFFICERS

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## FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

28<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2015



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

**Subject:** **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HARTLEPOOL MAGISTRATES' COURT AND COUNTY COURT**

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### 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non-key decision.

### 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To consider Ministry of Justice proposals to close Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court.

2.2 To make recommendations to Council following the referral from their meeting on 6 August.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On July 16 the Ministry of Justice announced a proposal to close 91 Courts and Tribunals in England and Wales, including Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court. The proposals also includes the integration of a further 31 Courts and Tribunals. The proposals for closure affects 57 Magistrates Courts, 19 County Courts and 2 Crown Courts, whilst the integration will involve 2 Magistrates Courts, 11 County Courts, 2 Crown Courts, 15 Tribunal hearing centres and one Combined Court. In all 257 Magistrates Courts rooms would close representing 23% of the current figure. A further 21 Crown Court rooms closing would represent 4% of the total figure.

3.2 These proposals are similar to the closure programme announced in December, 2010, which saw the closure of 141 Courts. The current proposals would see the work from Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court transferred to the Teesside Magistrates Court and County Court in Middlesbrough. Further, the Durham Elevet House Tribunal would be integrated within other tribunal sites in County Durham. Whilst the Middlesbrough Tribunal Hearing Centre would be integrated within the



Teesside Magistrates Court, and the Quayside House Newcastle Tribunal would be integrated with the North Shields (King Court) Tribunal. Other proposed closures in our region include the Consett Magistrates Court and Morpeth County Court.

- 3.3 Although this programme of proposed closures is aimed at addressing Court buildings that are not fully utilised and the greater use of technology through video and telephone conferencing, it is also suggested that other public buildings could be used, particularly in rural locations, where security arrangements are considered to be low. The Ministry of Justice consultation on the proposals closes on 8 October.
- 3.4 At their meeting on 6 August, Council were informed that the through the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council had written to a number of organisations involved in the criminal and civil justice system seeking their views on the proposed closure with the intention of providing a detailed report to the Finance and Policy Committee on 28 August, and a subsequent report to Council on 17 September, thus enabling a formal Council response to be provided to the Ministry of Justice within the requisite timescales. The Safer Hartlepool Partnership will also receive a report on this matter for their information.

#### 4. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE CASE FOR CHANGE

- 4.1 As highlighted in the Ministry of Justice consultation documentation (Attached as Appendix A) the underlying rationale for the proposed closure /integration of a number of courts and tribunals nationally is that the current Courts and Tribunal Service estate does not meet the strategic requirements of the organisation, with the current size and associated cost of the estate being unsustainable in the current financial context.
- 4.2 There are currently 460 courts and tribunal hearing centres in England and Wales and the proposals relate to the closure of 115 buildings where work will be transferred/integrated with another court or tribunal. In considering which courts/tribunal centres should close and be integrated into other centres the Ministry of Justice has been guided by the following principles:
- **Value for money** – which it is anticipated will be achieved by reducing the current and future running costs of the estate and maximising capital receipts from disposals to allow for reinvestment in the estate.
  - **Access to justice** – which it is anticipated will be maintained by ensuring that any court to be considered for closure is within a reasonable distance of a retained court by public transport
  - **Enabling efficiency longer term** – which it is anticipated will be achieved by hearing the same amount of cases within a rationalised estate; maintaining capacity within estates; and keeping larger easily upgradable buildings.

- 4.3 At the heart of the programme for reform are the use of modern technology and the principle of proportionality. It is felt that straightforward transactional matters (such as probate or pleading guilty and paying a fine) can be dealt with using digital technology. Equally it is felt that straightforward cases do not need face to face hearings and that judges will be able to reserve court hearings for more sensitive or complex cases.
- 4.4 It is also envisaged that modern technology could result in wider reductions in costs to the justice system as a whole by removing the need for the transportation of prisoners for bail hearings, or the police taking full days off their priority work to sit in a court room. Some existing examples highlighted in the consultation include Police Officers giving evidence over a live video link, and users in some jurisdictions having cases progressed or considered through telephone hearings or on papers, so that they do not need to attend a hearing in person. Where attendance at a hearing is needed other civic or public buildings could be used for hearings where security requirements are low.
- 4.5 The proposals for closure that would impact on the Hartlepool community include the local Magistrates' Court and County Court ; Middlesbrough Tribunal Hearing Centre (to be transferred to Teesside Magistrates); Quayside House Newcastle Tribunal (to be transferred to North Shields Kings Court).

## **5. PROPOSALS TO CLOSE HARTELPOOL MAGISTRATES COURT AND COUNTY COURT**

- 5.1 Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court is one of two Magistrates' Courts and one of two County Courts operating in Cleveland, the other Magistrates court being Teesside Magistrates Court and the other County court being Middlesbrough County Court which is part of Teesside Combined Court. Of historical note, the former Guisborough Magistrates' Court and Stockton County Court were subject to closure under earlier reforms, with work passing to the Teesside Courts.
- 5.2 Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court were purpose built in 1979 as a Magistrates Court and was later adapted to accommodate Hartlepool County Court. It comprises 5 court rooms where criminal, civil and family hearings are held; and 2 county court district judges hearing rooms. There are also 10 cells in the building with secure access to 3 out of the 5 courtrooms. The court has a prison video link and facilities for vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link to one courtroom. The court room has separate waiting facilities for prosecution and defence witnesses and there are interview rooms available for private consultation.
- 5.3 Teesside Magistrates' Court and Teesside Combined Court Centre are also said to offer good facilities for Courts and Tribunal Service users. However the courts at Teesside and Hartlepool are both under used with the

consultation highlighting that during 2014/15 Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court was utilised at approximately 47% of its capacity.

- 5.4 Given the underuse of Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court it is proposed to close the 'Hartlepool Courts' and transfer relevant business to the courts at Teesside, with the Teesside Combined Court also absorbing tribunal work following the proposed closure of the County Court. The proposed closure of the Quayside Court at Newcastle will also see employment tribunal work transfer to North Shields Kings Court.
- 5.5 The Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to the proposals accepts that these proposals may give rise to users experiencing longer travelling times, and higher costs due to the need to travel further. The road and rail, and bus links between Hartlepool and Middlesbrough, and the approximate cost of a rail ticket (£4.50) and a bus ticket (£7.70) are not judged to impact adversely on access to justice.
- 5.6 To illustrate the impact of changes that would result should the court close, a travel model has been adopted which looks at the current catchment area of the court and the population within it, and the travel time from the centre of the catchment area to the existing and proposed court by both car and public transport based on the existing court workload. Travel time data pre and post closure is illustrated below:

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	97%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	3%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	90%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	9%		30-60min	7%
	60-120min	0%		60-120min	91%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	2%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	97%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	3%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
	0-30min	90%		0-30min	0%

By Public Transport	30-60min	9%	By Public Transport	30-60min	7%
	60-120min	0%		60-120min	91%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	2%

County workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	79%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	21%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	67%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	31%		30-60min	5%
	60-120min	1%		60-120min	92%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	3%

## 6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As outlined in the background to this report to enable a considered response to the Ministry of Justice proposals, correspondence was sent to relevant partners operating within the criminal and civil justice system seeking their views on the proposals to close Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court. It is also acknowledged that organisations such as the Law Society are also concerned as to these proposals on the basis of 'promoting and protecting access to justice for all'.
- 6.2 Responses to the consultation were received from across Council departments; Cleveland Police; the Leader of Sunderland Council; Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner; the Chairman of the Bench for the Local Justice Area of Hartlepool; a local solicitors practice, and voluntary sector organisations delivering victim services and benefits and debt advice (Harbour and West Advice and Resource Centre). The responses received are attached at **Appendix A** - informal responses to the consultation have not been included).
- 6.3 A summary of the responses received is outlined below in the same format being used by the Ministry of Justice in their consultation:

### Q1) Do you agree with proposals / what overall comments would you like to make on the proposals?

There is a full understanding of the financial pressures and the need to streamline services along with the opportunities presented by the

development of new technologies in the administration of justice to relieve these pressures. But the Council and partners remain extremely concerned that the proposal to close Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court will limit access to justice, and undermine local confidence in the justice system. As one colleague commented 'It is integral that communities feel part of the justice system and that they can see the effects of that working in their areas. When services are moved away from the local areas that they serve communities can feel disengaged in the whole process.'

**Q2) Will the proposals have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.**

The Council remains concerned about the impact of the proposals on their own services and resources, and the services and resources of other agencies, and businesses serving the Hartlepool community. Time spent travelling to court, costs of fuel, and possible wasted journeys where hearings are adjourned were all raised as concerns by staff from across the Council who are currently using local courts. Continuing budget cuts has meant that staff are working in much smaller teams and the time spent travelling to court with several members of the team needing to be in attendance will result in fewer staff on the ground, and a reduced level of service to the community.

From a Police perspective the need to travel to Middlesbrough would also result in already low numbers on the streets being further depleted, and the limited availability of Police vehicles if used for court attendance would leave a shortage in Hartlepool. There would also be a knock on effect if defendants did not attend court when required due to distance and cost with any resultant warrants issued increasing workload for the Police.

Local Solicitors predict increased charges to clients as a result of the additional travelling required, and local Victims Services and Childrens Services Teams raise concerns about the additional pressures placed on their time in ensuring families and victims remain engaged with the court process.

**Q3) Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunal Service should take into account when making a decision?**

In general it is felt that the Impact Assessment used by the Ministry of Justice which is based on the monetised, and non monetised costs of greater travelling distances, is limited and fails to take account of the following which would impact upon access to justice, the delivery of justice outcomes, and public confidence in the justice system.

- ***Lengthy delays in getting cases to court which could take longer as a result of transferring the workload from Hartlepool to Middlesbrough.*** Hartlepool Magistrates currently covers a population of

92,000, if the court was transferred to Middlesbrough this would increase the population covered by Teesside Magistrates to 376,663. This gives rise to questions over whether a centralised court will necessarily mean a more efficient court. There are already concerns in relation to delays at Teesside Magistrates which would be exacerbated by the proposals to close the Hartlepool Courts. Local experience tells us for example that the Specialist Domestic Violence Court at Middlesbrough is already extremely busy to the point that not all cases are being held in an appropriate specialist court.

Recent budget cuts have had a direct impact on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour as the number of Police Officers and other services reduce. This will in turn increase the workload of the courts.

- ***The quality/lack of facilities in relation to courts where business would be transferred has not been fully considered.*** Teesside Magistrates' Court has only limited seating capacity in the witness room, and there is no meeting room to meet with legal representatives which means that solicitors and clients cannot speak in confidence. Recent experiences of Council officers and Victims Services are of Solicitor and client struggling to hear each other over the noise – the impact on the quality of the court user experience and potential adverse impact on justice outcomes needs further consideration.
- ***The need to have access to a Magistrates Court for urgent matters such as issuing warrants for enforcement; RIPA applications; Closure Orders; Domestic Violence Protection Orders; and dealing with breaches of Court Orders has not been considered.*** Failure to have such a facility would impact on the ability of a number of local enforcement agencies to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour within the Hartlepool community and bring perpetrators to justice. Ultimately giving rise to increases in crime and anti-social behaviour, and therefore greater costs on local services.
- ***The financial impact on court users has not been fully considered.*** The cost of public transport should not be underestimated for those individuals and families living in poverty. Hartlepool has high levels of deprivation with a large proportion of the population on low wages and in receipt of benefits - with further cuts in benefits proposed. As such a large section of the Hartlepool population could be adversely affected by the proposals. Add to this childcare expenses and our most vulnerable families will struggle to access justice. As an example Childrens Services currently work with a number of families facing eviction that can currently access the court to challenge it, but if this transfers to Middlesbrough it is unlikely families will travel with the consequence of more evictions.
- ***The impact assessment fails to take into account the social and health impacts of people using the service.*** Hartlepool has high levels of deprivation; a growing elderly population; and a large proportion of the

population with health needs. Many clients are vulnerable and often incapable of travel outside of town. The proposals will deter vulnerable individuals from attending courts/tribunals.. The move to digitisation also fails to take into account the need for Courts to be accessible to individuals wishing to appeal against a decision who are not computer literate. Given the levels of deprivation in Hartlepool and health needs the Hartlepool community will be disproportionately affected by the Ministry of Justice proposals.

- ***There is no real consideration given to the impact of the proposals on victims, along with the potential withdrawal of criminal cases and potential increase and escalation of criminal behaviour.*** The following statement from the Councils Victim Services officer provides an insight into the victims experience should the proposal take place:

*'Going to court as a victim is already a traumatic experience and one that will be made worse by adding a longer journey to what could be an unfamiliar place. Court expenses are paid retrospectively and some victims would not be able to pay the travel costs upfront. The added journey time can also impact on child care that may be needed - . Friends and family may not be able to afford to accompany victims and this will have a detrimental effect on them, this support is vital for witnesses to be able to have the strength to give their evidence.*

*Unless victims have access to a car they could be faced with the extremely distressing situation of being on the same bus or train as the accused. This would be bad for any victim but imagine the fear of a vulnerable witness or domestic violence victim? There are security guards that offer a level of protection at court against intimidation but this would not apply to public transport.*

*Trials are often adjourned now and victims have to go two, sometimes three times before the case goes ahead and I am concerned that this will be worse if we have one magistrates court covering the whole of Cleveland. People build themselves up into a frenzy with the worry of giving evidence, often not sleeping or eating and the impact of this can lead them to seeking medical help.*

*Victims can often not start to recover from the effects of crime till after the trial is over and added waiting times for a case to be heard will have a negative effect on people and the worry is that they will not bother reporting the incidents to the Police in the first place.*

*I have recently been to Middlesbrough Magistrates and there was not enough seats in the witness room and it was chaotic to say the least. Solicitors couldn't talk to their clients in confidence and struggled to be heard over the noise. This happened when other Magistrates were still operating.*

- ***The Impact on the concept and practice of local justice has not been considered.*** The transfer of Hartlepool Magistrates court work to Middlesbrough would dilute the concept and practice of local justice – given the expanded jurisdiction of the Teesside Magistrates' Court and sheer volume of cases it is unlikely that Hartlepool Magistrates would sit on Hartlepool cases leading to a loss of local awareness of community issues and knowledge of the local area and geography in decision making.

The impact on local relationships and communications between Hartlepool Magistrates and victim support services which have been developed over the years will also be negatively impacted.

**Q4) Do you have any comments on the evidence used or conclusions reached in the MOJ impact assessment**

As in Q 3 above - the limitations of the Ministry of Justice Impact Assessment.

In relation to the evidence used in the Impact Assessment the actual data provided in the 'travel model' is based on the 'perfect journey'. In reality, even travelling by car, 97% of people will not get to Middlesbrough in 0-30 minutes. The assessment does not take into account constant roadworks, the sheer volume of traffic at peak times, and the road traffic accidents, or time finding a parking space.

Public transport is likely to take longer whether this is by train or bus (1-2 hours). For those not living in the centre of Hartlepool two buses would be required. Courts often list cases at 10am but all parties are required to attend at 9.30am. Some court users particularly those with children will struggle to drop children off at school and then travel out of town to court for 9.30.

The report states that Hartlepool County Court operates a counter system from 2pm to 5pm (a three hour slot). However current actual hours are from 10am to 2pm (a four hour slot).

Whilst the Ministry of Justice report highlights that Hartlepool courts were underused during 2014/15 by 47% there is no similar analysis by way of a comparison presented in the report in relation to the workloads of the Middlesbrough Courts.

**Q5) Are there alternatives to travelling to physical buildings that would be of benefit to some users**

It is acknowledged that the use of digital technology provides an opportunity in terms of the development of the courts and tribunal service.

The Ministry of Justice consultation document also highlights the good facilities offered at the Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court building and their compliance with the Equality Act including 5 court rooms where criminal and family hearings are held; and 2 county court district judges hearing rooms. There are also 10 cells in the building with secure access to 3 out of the 5 courtrooms. The court has a prison video link and facilities for vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link to one courtroom. The court room also has separate waiting facilities for prosecution and defence witnesses and there are interview rooms available for private consultation.



Should the Hartlepool Magistrates' Court close the Court Service must ensure that these facilities remain available in Hartlepool and are linked to the Middlesbrough Courts. This could assist in resolving many of the concerns highlighted in relation to for example non-attendance of victims and witnesses and retaining Police Officers to spend more time on the streets.

In addition to digital technology it would also be possible for some other functions to be retained locally in the interests of accessing justice swiftly. For example if Teesside and Hartlepool Local Justice Areas were merged this would lend itself to the modification of existing facilities which could provide a satellite court offering custody courts and breach hearings, and a digital court in a leased office. There are also proposals for the potential amalgamation of the Hartlepool and Teesside coronial areas, but which recommend the continuation of Inquests being held in Hartlepool (as per the Business Case) and which are currently held within the Hartlepool Court complex.

A recent Council Scrutiny investigation into Hate Crime received evidence from the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to the constrictions in the use of specialist courts rooms, with the nearest fully accessible court room for both disabled witnesses and defendants located in Preston. Members felt strongly that specialist facilities more locally based should be available for all victims and that this would encourage reporting of hate crime offences. Given the lack of appropriate courts locally and the existing facilities in Hartlepool could consideration be given to Hartlepool Courts acting as a specialist court of this nature.

#### **Q6) Please provide any additional comments you may have**

Hartlepool Borough Council would like to have further discussions with the Ministry of Justice in relation to the proposed closures, as soon as practicable prior to any final decision being made.

## **7. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Should the Ministry of Justice proposals go ahead as planned there is 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.
- 7.2 To mitigate this risk the Council should enter into a discussion with the Ministry of Justice about their proposals and explore potential alternatives.

## **8. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County (HMCTS) buildings are currently held on a 99 year lease until 3004 by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service.

- 8.2 The lease requires HMCTS to keep the property in repair and pay a service charge to Hartlepool Borough Council to cover the costs associated with maintaining the common parts and external fabric of the property.
- 8.3 As there is no provision within the lease for a break clause HMCTS are responsible under the terms of the lease for the continued payment of costs associated with its maintenance and upkeep until the expiry date of the lease.
- 8.4 Within the terms of the lease HMCTS have the option to assign the lease however the Council need to grant consent for any variation to the user covenant should this be required. Alternatively the Council may consider options to accept a surrender of the lease subject to negotiations to mitigate any financial losses to the Council.

## **9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court would not result in any financial losses to the Council as HMCTS are responsible for the payment of any ongoing costs associated with maintenance and repair. If requested the Council may consider the option to accept a surrender of the lease. However this would be the subject to negotiations to mitigate any loss or liability to the Council.
- 9.2 Hartlepool Magistrates and County Court have adequate facilities that are compliant with the Equality Act 2010. It may be possible that HMCTS consider that part of the building may be used as a satellite court with limited functions. One proposal highlighted in the consultation suggests that the building could house a mediation/citizens advice service.

## **10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 The Court buildings in Hartlepool are currently held by HMCTS on a long term 999 year lease. Early indications are that the closure programme will be completed by April 2017. Discussions will need to take place with HMCTS/MOJ regarding the proposed timescales if the proposals are to go ahead, and options for the future use of the building.

## **11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 As highlighted under 2.1 of this report the proposals will have a significant impact on staff due to time spent traveling to court who are already experiencing difficulties due to reduced resources. Teams are smaller and several members of a team may need to attend the same court hearing leaving no staff in Hartlepool to deal with issues.

## **12. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 The Ministry of Justice proposals will adversely affect those that are already vulnerable within the locality who will struggle to get to court and fail to access justice and ensure that justice is delivered locally.
- 12.2 Hartlepool has high levels of deprivation; a growing elderly population; and a large proportion of the population with health needs. Many clients are vulnerable and often incapable of travel outside of town. The proposals will deter vulnerable individuals from attending courts/tribunals and without their attendance there is an increased risk of losing an appeal. The move to digitisation also fails to take into account the need for Courts to be accessible to individuals wishing to appeal against a decision who are not computer literate.
- 12.3 Given the levels of deprivation in Hartlepool and health needs the Hartlepool community will be disproportionately affected by the Ministry of Justice proposals.

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

- 13.1 The Ministry of Justice proposals could result in fewer victims attending Court to give evidence leading to a reduction in successful convictions and a rise in crime and anti-social behaviour. The proposals would also undermine local confidence in the justice system.

## **14. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 That the Finance and Policy Committee note the Ministry of Justice proposals to close Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court.
- 14.2 That the Finance and Policy Committee refers the contents of this report and its recommendations to Council for consideration and debate at the meeting to be held on 17 September to allow for a response to be made to the Ministry of Justice before the stated deadline.
- 14.3 That the Chief Executive Officer and Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods finalise that response to the Ministry of Justice in consultation with the Leader of the Council and that Members be made aware of that response.
- 14.4 That if the Ministry of Justice proposals to close Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court go ahead, that Officers commence negotiations regarding the termination of the lease in the interests of securing the best deal for the Council.

## **15. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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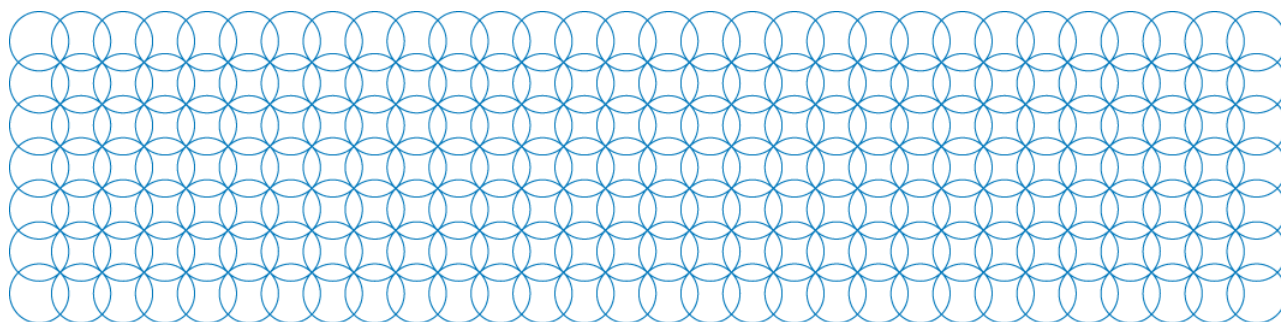
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# Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North East region

This consultation begins on 16 July 2015 This  
consultation ends on 8 October 2015



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## **Proposal on the provision of court and tribunal services in the North East region**

**A consultation produced by the Ministry of Justice. It is also available on the Ministry of Justice website at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)**



## About this consultation

**To:** The consultation is aimed at court users, magistracy, judiciary, and anyone else with an interest in the provision of local justice arrangements in the North East region.

**Duration:** From 16/07/2015 to 08/10/2015

## Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:

HMCTS Consultation  
Ministry of Justice  
Post point 1.13  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 0161 240 5021

Fax: 0870 761 7768

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

### How to respond:

Please send your response by 08/10/2015 to:

HMCTS Consultation  
Ministry of Justice  
Post point 1.13  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 0161 240 5021

Fax: 0870 761 7768

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

## Additional ways to feed in your views:

If you cannot respond to this paper by means of e-mail or letter, please contact the Ministry of Justice using the details provided above.

### Response paper:

A response to this consultation exercise will be published in due course at: [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)

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## Foreword

HM Courts and Tribunals Service is committed to working with the judiciary to reform our services so they better meet the needs of the public in the modern age. Considerable investment will enable us to transform how justice is delivered, creating a modern, efficient service. Taking this opportunity, however, will require challenging decisions about the current system. One such decision relates to the courts and tribunals estate.

I am responsible for managing the operations of HM Courts & Tribunals Service in the North East region, and I have reviewed the court and tribunal estate against the estates principles set out in the national consultation. I have identified buildings where I believe our ability to deliver an efficient service has been compromised by poor facilities, where usage is low and where the building does not provide appropriate value for the public money spent on it.

I have carefully considered the impact of the proposed changes – both locally and across the North East. This consultation is an opportunity for the public to use their knowledge of their local areas to review and help us with our proposals.

Of course, staff would be affected by these proposed changes. Although the impact will be limited, I will make sure this is managed properly. Any transition to new arrangements will take place in a fair and transparent manner in consultation with the Departmental Trade Union.

I understand that these proposals could result in some people having longer journeys to the courts and tribunals. I am committed to working with rural communities to provide alternative ways for the public to access the justice system. These could include the use of civic or other public buildings for occasional hearings, video links or telephone or paper hearings to avoid travel altogether. It is vital we understand the demand for alternative provision as we plan services for the future.

I am keen to hear people's views on the different ways they would like to interact with their courts and tribunals, particularly from those in rural communities. It is important we understand the demand for these different methods as we plan provision for the future.

Thank you for considering this consultation.

**Mark  
Swales  
Delivery  
Director**

**HM Courts & Tribunals Service North East**

## Introduction

This consultation for the North East is part of a national consultation on the future of the court and tribunal estate in England and Wales. The national consultation document provides important information about the reform of courts and tribunals and how we have decided which buildings to consult on. It also includes a full list of the courts and tribunals we are consulting on and our other plans to integrate courts into existing buildings within a local area.

## **You should make sure you read the national consultation document alongside this.**

The national consultation sets out:

- the requirement for changes to the estate;
- the utilisation levels across the estate;
- the accompanying Impact Assessment; and
- implications for local justice areas and listing changes.

Responses to questions in both the national consultation and this consultation are welcome but need not be duplicated.

## **HM Courts & Tribunals Service**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is an agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It is responsible for the administration of the criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales<sup>1</sup> and non-devolved tribunals in Scotland and Northern Ireland. It operates as a partnership between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals.

In March 2014, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and the Senior President of Tribunals announced details of a programme of reform for the courts and tribunals. This will improve the court and tribunal estate, deliver greater use of technology, modernise practices and processes, and improve services for our users.

At the heart of this programme are the use of technology and the principle of proportionality. Straightforward, transactional matters (such as the administration of probate or pleading guilty and paying a fine) can be dealt with using digital technology to make the processes as straightforward as filing a tax return, or renewing car tax online. Straightforward cases do not necessarily need face to face hearings; judges will be able to reserve the full proceedings of a court hearing for the more sensitive or complex cases. Modern technology can be used not just to make the justice system more accessible but also to reduce the costs of the whole justice system by not requiring extensive

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Some tribunals which are part of HMCTS in England are devolved to the Welsh Government in Wales.

transportation of prisoners for bail hearings, or the police to take full days off their priority work to sit in a court room.

Ahead of full implementation of the reform programme, we are seeking views on the closure of courts and tribunals which we believe do not meet our ideas of how best to deliver justice in the future.

## **Access to justice**

We recognise that the public should not have to make excessively long or difficult journeys to attend hearings at courts and tribunals. We also know, however, that in an increasingly digital age, the public expect to be able to engage with any service through a variety of channels, and many prefer to do that digitally. They do not always want or need to attend hearings in person. Delivering effective access to justice does not necessarily mean providing access to a building. This challenges the assumption that there needs to be a court or tribunal in every local area.

We already have well established alternative ways that users can access the justice system. 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 having cases progressed or considered through telephone hearings or on papers, meaning that they do not need to attend a hearing in person at all. Where attendance at a hearing is needed other civic or public buildings could be used for hearings where security requirements are low.

These types of alternative provision could be particularly useful in rural communities and/or areas with limited public transport, for example, Northumbria. We are very keen to hear views on alternative provision, for example video link in civic or other public buildings.

## **Deciding which courts to include in the proposals**

In order to achieve a radical transformation of the justice system, any investment must be targeted and sequenced across all three key areas of ICT, estates and business processes to create the efficiencies that will allow HM Courts & Tribunals Service to modernise its current practices and to adopt more streamlined ways of working. We are therefore, as a first priority, addressing the current surplus capacity within the HM Courts & Tribunals Service estate. This will enable us to use the remaining estate more intelligently and flexibly, to reduce our running costs, to focus our investment on improving the estate we need for the future and to increase the multifunctional court space – allowing different court and tribunal jurisdictions to share locations. The intention is that capital receipts from the sale of any surplus assets would be reinvested as part of the funding for the reform programme.

To ensure we deliver business effectively and meet our future strategic requirements, HM Courts & Tribunals Service has applied a set of principles against which the proposals in this consultation were developed.

The principles are:

## **Ensuring Access to Justice**

- To ensure continued access to justice when assessing the impact of possible closures on both professional and lay court and tribunal users, taking into account journey times for users, the challenges of rural access and any mitigating action, including having facilities at local civic centres and other buildings to ensure local access, modern ICT and more flexible listing, when journeys will be significantly increased.
- To take into account the needs of users and in particular, victims, witnesses and those who are vulnerable.
- To support the requirements of other agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service, Social Services, Police Forces and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).

## **Delivering Value for Money**

- To reduce the current and future cost of running the estate.
- To maximise the capital receipts from surplus estate for reinvestment in HM Courts & Tribunal Service.

## **Enabling Efficiency in the longer term**

- 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.
- 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.
- To increase the ability to use the estate flexibly across the criminal jurisdiction and separately across the Civil, Family and Tribunal (CFT) jurisdictions.
- To move towards an estate that provides dedicated hearing centres, seeking opportunities to concentrate back office function where they can be carried out most efficiently.
- To improve the efficient use of the estate by seeking to improve whole system efficiency, taking advantage of modernised communication methods (wi-fi and video links) and adopting business processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- To increase the efficient use of the estate wherever possible irrespective of current administrative boundaries.

## **Responding to the consultation**

We are keen to obtain views on the proposals to change the provision of court and tribunal estate and how we can make sure the public can still access the justice system. We have committed to consider each response. The responses will help us make sure that the courts and tribunals are based where the work is and that communities can access the justice system and that cases are heard in buildings with suitable facilities.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office. It will run for 12 weeks.

This consultation and the consultation stage Impact Assessment are also available at [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk).



## The proposals

This consultation proposes the closure of the following courts<sup>2</sup> and tribunals:

- 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

The consultation is aimed at court users, judiciary, court staff, and anyone else with an interest in the provision of justice in the North East Region.

## Travel times

We have modelled potential travel times to court to illustrate the changes that would result should the court close. The model is based on the current catchment area of the court and the population within it, calculated to the smallest geographical area available with current national statistics (known as a Lower Super Output Area or LSOA). The model calculates the travel time from the centre of each LSOA to the current court separately by car and public transport and then calculates the proportion of the population could travel to court in set time bands. The model then calculates new journey times based on the location of the court where the work would be heard should the court close. These travel times are displayed in a table format within each site proposal.

Copies of this consultation paper will be sent to stakeholders in the affected locations, and is also available on the justice website at [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)

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<sup>2</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.

## **Integrations**

An integration is when HM Courts & Tribunals Service move work to allow jurisdictions to operate from less locations in a local area. This allows the closure of a building or buildings while retaining jurisdictions locally.

In addition to the proposed closures in this consultation the following integrations will be taking place or have already been recently completed in the North East region:

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

Work on this integration will commence in the summer of 2015 and will reduce the HM Courts & Tribunals Service estate in Doncaster from four buildings to two (the current Magistrates' Court and Crown Court buildings) which are located on the opposite side of the same road in the centre of Doncaster. The integration will see the relocation of all Doncaster County Court, Civil and Family work to the Magistrates' Court building. In addition the Justices Clerk for Humber and South Yorkshire, her clerkship Judicial Support Unit (JSU) and the office currently housing the Regional Delivery Director would relocate to the Crown Court building from the Magistrates' Court. This would enable county court staff including the centralised divorce team for Humber and South Yorkshire to be accommodated in the Magistrates' Court building. No enabling works are required to accommodate this move. The integration will enable more flexibility in the listing of cases and allow a more efficient use of staff and judicial time. The impact on customers will be minimal as all venues are situated in the centre of Doncaster.

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

Work on this integration will commence in the summer of 2015 and will reduce the HM Courts & Tribunals Service estate in Doncaster from four buildings to two (the current Magistrates' Court and Crown Court buildings) which are located on the opposite side of the same road in the centre of Doncaster. The Crown Court building currently houses the Coroner and occasional crown court hearings (on the first floor) the very large jury assembly suite on the ground floor would be relocated to existing office space which will enable the creation of two tribunal hearing rooms and associated facilities in the current jury assembly area and other available space on the ground floor. Disabled access (platform lift) for the Social Service and Child Support (SSCS) judiciary would be provided from the judicial car park. This site also provides a permanent presence for the Coroners Court in Doncaster. The integration will enable more flexibility in the listing of cases and allow a more efficient use of staff and judicial time. The impact on customers will be minimal as all venues are situated in the centre of Doncaster.

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

This integration will enable the workload to be moved to other larger centres within the same geographical area and this will allow staff to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more efficiently and effectively.

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

This will enable the workload to be moved to a larger centre and will allow the staff to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more efficiently and effectively. This integration will not impact on the current sittings at Sheffield Combined Court.

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

This integration is already underway and is due to complete by the end of 2015. The integration will move all magistrates', civil, family and occasional tribunals work in to a single building in Harrogate. The integration will enable more flexible and improved utilisation of the modern fit for purpose magistrates' court building and allow more efficient use of staff and judicial time. The impact on customers will be minimal as the two current venues are situated next to each other in the centre of Harrogate.

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

This will enable the workload to be moved to a larger centre within five minutes walking distance of the existing hearing venue. It will allow the staff to be more responsive and flexible with the listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more efficiently and effectively.

## **Quayside House Newcastle Tribunal to be integrated within North Shields (Kings Court) Tribunal**

In March 2015 HM Courts & Tribunals Service exercised a lease break on Quayside House in Newcastle, an expensive commercial leasehold property providing accommodation for the employment tribunal in Newcastle. With declining workload and poor utilisation of Quayside House an extension of the lease could not be justified as value for public money. We are currently working with judiciary, staff and employment tribunal users to ensure a smooth transition of work to the modern fit for purpose multi-jurisdictional centre in Kings Court, North Shields, approximately eight miles away, by September 2015.

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

This integration will provide a more flexible and efficient use of time and resources, enabling cases to be managed more effectively in order to meet customer and workflow demands.

## Consett

## Magistrates' Court

## Proposal

Consett Magistrates' Court is one of five magistrates' courts operating in the County Durham local justice area, the others being Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe and Darlington Magistrates' Courts and the Durham Civil and Family Court. The magistrates' court is open every day but is under used. The court deals with criminal court business which is a mix of custody and non-custody work in the adult and youth courts. There are also county court sittings arranged at Consett on a regular basis; sitting three to four times a month every Wednesday.

It is proposed that the custody work from Consett Magistrates' Court is transferred to Peterlee Magistrates' Court. The non-custody work and family work will be transferred to Durham County and Family Court, although this venue does not have any cells so consideration would be given when listing criminal cases. In some instances, work may be moved to Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court if specific facilities are required.

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

Should the court close it would enable the work to be moved within a single local justice area. It would also enable the other courts to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved more efficient service can be delivered with courts being utilised more efficiently and effectively.

## Accommodation

Consett Magistrates' Court was built in 1973. The facilities are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. There are baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilet facilities, two interview rooms, hearing enhancement facilities and refreshments are available. There are a total of five cells which are all operational.

The building is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, however the property is old and in need of repair. There is significant work which is still outstanding including extensive work to the brickwork, roof and windows. At present patch repairs are carried out as and when required. The building is also within an area that has undergone significant redevelopment in recent years and it now looks out of place with local development plans in terms of both condition and location.

Peterlee Magistrates' Court offers good quality facilities for HM Courts & Tribunals Service users. The facilities include baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilet facilities, six interview rooms, hearing enhancement facilities and refreshments are available. There are a total of eight cells which are all operational. Two of the courtrooms have secure docks which can be accessed from all of the cells.

Durham County and Family Court also offers good quality facilities for users. The facilities include baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilets and five interview rooms.

Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court has three courtrooms and court rooms one and two both have secure docks. There are 12 cells and these are all accessible from all three court rooms. There is also a prison to court video link set up in one of the court rooms. Other facilities include baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilet facilities, five interview rooms, hearing enhancement facilities and a cafeteria.

## Workload

Consett Magistrates' Court is open every weekday and has a total of three courtrooms which are under used. During the 2014/15 financial year, the court was utilised for approximately 25% of its capacity. One of the court rooms does not have any sittings on a Monday or a Thursday. County Court work is heard on a Wednesday three to four times a month.

Peterlee Magistrates' Court, Newton Aycliffe and Durham County and Family Court all have sufficient capacity to accommodate the hearings from Consett Magistrates' Court.

Both Peterlee Magistrates' Court and Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court are under used. Peterlee Magistrates' Court has three courtrooms and only uses two of these on a weekly basis. Newton Aycliffe has three hearing rooms and only uses two of these on a weekly basis with the exception of a Wednesday when criminal work is listed.

Durham County and Family Court has two courtrooms and two district judges' hearing rooms. The district judges' hearing rooms are well used however the courtrooms are under used and only sit family work every Tuesday in one of the courtrooms and on a Thursday in both of the courtrooms.

## Location

Consett Magistrates' Court is situated 26 miles from Peterlee. The nearest train service runs from Stocksfield approximately seven miles from Consett. The travel time by train from Stocksfield to Seaham which is five miles from Peterlee is approximately one hour. The approximate cost of a return ticket is £12.40. Travel time by car is approximately 50 minutes.

Consett Magistrates' Court is situated approximately 14 miles from Durham Civil and Family Court. The nearest train service is from Stocksfield which is approximately seven miles from Consett to Durham central station and the journey takes approximately 50 minutes. The approximate cost of a return fare is £12.10. The approximate journey time by car is 20 minutes.

There is a bus service that runs from Consett bus station to Durham bus station which takes approximately 40 minutes and is an hourly service. A return ticket is £4.00. There is also a bus service that runs from Durham bus station to Peterlee bus station every 20 minutes and this takes approximately 20 minutes and a return ticket is £3.00.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	69%	By Car	0-30min	30%
	30-60min	28%		30-60min	60%

	60-120min	3%		60 - 120min	10%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	25%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	31%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	18%		60-120min	69%
	>120min	23%		>120min	16%
	no data	3%		no data	3%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	67%	By Car	0-30min	29%
	30-60min	30%		30-60min	61%
	60-120min	3%		60 - 120min	10%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	25%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	30%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	19%		60-120min	70%
	>120min	22%		>120min	16%
	no data	4%		no data	2%

## Staff Implications

There are approximately three members of staff working at Consett Magistrates' Court.

## Other information

Consett Magistrates' Court is a freehold property.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Consett Magistrates' Court were approximately £174,000.

The Crown Prosecution Service, National Probation Service and Citizens Advice Bureau



for witnesses all have one room each within the building, and alternative arrangements would need to be made should the decision to close the court be taken.

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

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

It is proposed that the Halifax County and Family Court closes and its work is transferred to Bradford County Court at Bradford Combined Court Centre. The facilities at Halifax are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. Some enabling works would have to be carried out to accommodate the staff and judiciary including an additional multi-purpose hearing room.

Bradford Combined Court offers good quality facilities in a modern, purpose built building for users.

Should the court close it would enable the workload to be moved to a larger court centre and will enable the court to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved and more efficient service can be delivered with courts being used more efficiently and effectively.

The population of West Yorkshire would also be able to access justice at county courts in Leeds, Huddersfield and Wakefield.

## **Accommodation**

Halifax County Court and Family Court was built in 1872 and is a Grade II listed building. The facilities are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. In addition to the one courtroom and district judges' hearing room there are also two waiting rooms and two interview rooms available for private consultations. There are no video link facilities at the county court. There are no private waiting facilities which can cause some difficulties with managing vulnerable witnesses where rooms are used for domestic violence or some family cases. The county court operates a counter system Monday to Friday 10am until 2pm.

Some members of the public may experience difficulties accessing the courtrooms on the first floor. The building is not fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 due to its listed status. It is old and no longer fit for modern day court business. The structure, roof and windows are in need of repair and due to the listed status patch repairs are currently being carried out.

The facilities at Bradford Combined Court, constructed in 1992, include 18 interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access and toilet facilities, a prayer and quiet room, baby changing facilities and a children's room, a hearing loop system, wireless internet access, a cafeteria for customers and video conferencing and prison video link facilities. The county court would require some enabling work involving the creation of a

multi-purpose courtroom which would allow for more flexibility within one building with more up to date facilities. Bradford County Court has three district judges' hearing rooms and three civil and family courtrooms. These are all fully utilised. There are four district judges' that sit in the county court daily and the other two rooms are used by either a family judge or a circuit judge on a regular basis. There will be minor enabling works required to create an additional multi-purpose hearing room in the county court with an associated chambers to accommodate the work from Halifax County Court.

## Workload

Halifax County Court and Family Court hosts one courtroom and two district judges' hearing rooms. One of the hearing rooms is only accessible via the courtroom from the public side of the building so it cannot be used if the court is sitting. The court can therefore only have two lists running on any given day, and during the 2014/15 financial year, utilisation was approximately 22% of its capacity.

## Location

Halifax County Court is situated nine miles from Bradford. There is a frequent train and bus service between Halifax and Bradford. The travel time by train is approximately 15 minutes and by bus it is approximately 40 minutes. The approximate cost of a return train ticket is £3.90. A West Yorkshire return ticket by bus is approximately £4.70.

The journey time in a car is approximately 25 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	92%	By Car	0-30min	73%
	30-60min	8%		30-60min	25%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	2%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	58%	By Public Transport	0-30min	5%
	30-60min	39%		30-60min	78%
	60-120min	3%		60-120min	17%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

## Staff implications

There are approximately 14 members of staff working at Halifax County Court and Family Court.

## **Other information**

Halifax County Court and Family Court is a freehold property.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Halifax County Court and Family Court were approximately £115,000.

# **Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ Court and Family Court Proposal**

Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ Court and Family Court is one of five magistrates’ courts operating in West Yorkshire; the others being at Leeds, Huddersfield, Wakefield and Bradford. The court deals with criminal court business in the adult and youth courts as well as private law family work.

It is proposed that Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ Court and Family Court is closed and its work transferred to Bradford Magistrates’ Court. Some enabling works would be needed at Bradford Magistrates’ Court to accommodate the staff and judiciary.

The facilities at Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ Court and Family Court are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. Some members of the public may experience access issues in part of the building as there are some building constraints due to its listed status. The property is old and no longer fit for modern day court business. Bradford Magistrates’ Court offers good quality facilities for users.

Should the court close it would enable the work to be moved to a larger court centre and will enable the court to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved more efficient service can be delivered with courts being utilised more efficiently and effectively.

Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

## **Accommodation**

Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates’ Court and Family Court was built in 1898 and is a Grade II listed building. The facilities are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users.

The court has a total of seven court rooms, one courtroom without a dock which is used as a youth court for monitoring offences, one court room without a dock used for family hearings, and one court room is not used and has been converted into a youth café. The court has ten cells, nine of which are operational.

Some members of the public may experience access issues in parts of the building, including in the well of the court, the witness box and in the public seating areas in courts.

The court has separate waiting facilities for prosecution witnesses but no separate facilities for defence witnesses. There are prison video link facilities for intimidated and vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link in one courtroom.

There are some building constraints as the court is not fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The property is old and no longer fit for modern day court business due to its listed status including access issues and non-compliant courtrooms.

Bradford Magistrates’ Court offers good quality facilities for HM Courts & Tribunals

Service users. These facilities include baby changing facilities, four interview rooms, hearing enhancement facilities; refreshments are available from the cafeteria on site, video conferencing and prison video link facilities. The cells have been recently updated in April providing a total of 25 cells which will be compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

## Workload

The court has seven court rooms which were utilised for approximately 33% of its capacity during the 2014/15 financial year. In addition to one of the courtrooms being used as a youth café, two of the courtrooms are not in use on Mondays, one on Tuesdays, three on Thursdays and two on Fridays. Bradford Magistrates' Court has ten courtrooms. One of the courtrooms is not used and three of the other courtrooms are only used for half a day. There is sufficient capacity to accommodate the hearings at Bradford from Halifax Magistrates' Court

## Location

Halifax Magistrates' Court is situated nine miles from Bradford. There are frequent train and bus services between Halifax and Bradford. The travel time by train is approximately 15 minutes and by bus approximately 40 minutes. The approximate cost of a return train ticket is £3.90 and by bus a West Yorkshire ticket return is approximately £4.70.

The journey time in a car is approximately 25 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates' and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	89%	By Car	0-30min	73%
	30-60min	9%		30-60min	25%
	60-120min	2%		60 - 120min	2%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	57%	By Public Transport	0-30min	4%
	30-60min	38%		30-60min	75%
	60-120min	3%		60-120min	20%
	>120min	1%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	1%

## Staff implications

There are approximately 19 members of staff working at Halifax Magistrates' Court.

## **Other information**

Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' Court and Family Court is a freehold property.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Halifax (Calderdale) Magistrates' Court and Family Court were approximately £380,000.

The Witness Service and the Crown Prosecution Service occupy part of the building, and alternative arrangements would need to be made should the decision to close the court be taken.

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

## **Court Proposal**

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court is one of two magistrates' courts and one of two county courts operating in Cleveland, the other magistrates' court being Teesside Magistrates' Court and the other county court being Middlesbrough County Court which is part of Teesside Combined Court.

It is proposed that Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court closes and that its work is transferred to Teesside Magistrates' Court and Middlesbrough County Court. There are no enabling works required to accommodate the work from Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court.

Should the court close it would enable the workload to be moved to larger court centres and would allow the court to be more responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved and a more efficient service could then be delivered with courts being used more efficiently and effectively.

Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

## **Accommodation**

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court was purpose built in 1979 as a magistrates' court and was later adapted to accommodate Hartlepool County Court.

There are five courtrooms. In addition, there are two county court district judges' hearing rooms. There are ten cells in the building with secure access to three of the five courtrooms.

The court has a prison video link and facilities for vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link to one courtroom. The court has separate waiting facilities for prosecution and defence witnesses. There are interview rooms available for private consultation. Hartlepool County Court operates a counter system from 2pm until 5pm Monday to Friday. The court is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and there are no security issues.

Both Teesside Magistrates' Court and Teesside Combined Court Centre offer good facilities for HM Courts & Tribunals Service users. In order to accommodate the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal (SSCS) work from Hartlepool County Court and Middlesbrough Tribunals, reconfiguration of the hearing space at Teesside Magistrates' Court will be required to accommodate a further waiting room by removing the old fines counter and creating a disabled access door.

The facilities at Teesside Magistrates' Court include baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilet facilities and eight interview rooms. There is also hearing enhancement facilities, a cafeteria, video conference and prison video link equipment.

The facilities at Teesside Combined Court include baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilet facilities, five consultation rooms in the district judges' area and a further six on the first floor, hearing enhancement facilities, a cafeteria and video conferencing facilities. There is a counter system in the county court which operates Monday to Friday from 10am until 2pm.

## **Workload**

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court is under used. There are five courtrooms and two of these are used for crime work. Family work is listed in one of the courtrooms every Tuesday. One of the courtrooms is used for tribunal hearings on an ad hoc basis and the remaining courtroom is not used as the facilities are out of date.

There are 16 courtrooms at Teesside Magistrates' Court and these are not fully used so there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the hearings from Hartlepool Magistrates' Court. One courtroom is currently used for training purposes and three of the courtrooms are used for tribunal hearings on an ad hoc basis.

In Hartlepool County Court there are two district judges' hearing rooms. Both district judges' hearing rooms are not used on a Monday or a Thursday. The court rooms allocated to the county court in Teesside Combined Court are not fully used so there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the hearings from Hartlepool County Court.

During the 2014/15 financial year, Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court was utilised at approximately 47% of its capacity.

## **Location**

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court is situated approximately 14 miles from Middlesbrough and there are excellent road, rail and bus links. There are frequent bus and train services to Middlesbrough with journey times by train of approximately 30 minutes and by bus approximately 45 minutes. The approximate cost of a return rail ticket is £4.50 and a return bus ticket costs £7.70 (bus north east all zone tickets).

The journey time by car is approximately 25 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:



Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	97%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	3%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	90%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	9%		30-60min	7%
	60-120min	0%		60-120min	91%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	2%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	97%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	3%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	90%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	9%		30-60min	7%
	60-120min	0%		60-120min	91%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	2%

County workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	100%	By Car	0-30min	79%
	30-60min	0%		30-60min	21%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	67%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	31%		30-60min	5%
	60-120min	1%		60-120min	92%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	1%		no data	3%

## **Staff implications**

There are approximately eight members of staff working at Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and seven full-time members of staff working at Hartlepool County Court.

## **Other information**

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court is a leasehold property and has a 99 year lease until 2075.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Hartlepool Magistrates' Court and County Court were approximately £345,000.

## **Morpeth County Court Proposal**

Morpeth County Court is one of six county courts operating in Northumbria, the others being 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. There are regular sittings at both Morpeth County Court and Berwick upon Tweed Courthouse. All administration is based in Morpeth County Court.

It is proposed that Morpeth County Court closes and its work is transferred to Newcastle County Court with the exception of regular hearings at Berwick upon Tweed Courthouse which will continue to be administered from Newcastle County Court. Morpeth County Court is reasonably fit for purpose however due to a break in the lease in 2017 the proposed move would enable the work to be moved to a larger court centre and would allow the court to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved and efficient service can be delivered with courts being utilised more efficiently and effectively.

Newcastle County Court is located within Newcastle Combined Court and offers good quality facilities in a modern, purpose built building for users. The change will have no impact on existing sittings at Newcastle County Court.

The population of Northumberland would also be able to access North Shields County Court, with local hearings continuing at Berwick upon Tweed courthouse and if required at South East Northumberland Magistrates' Court (Bedlington), which is situated five miles from Morpeth.

## **Accommodation**

Morpeth County Court occupies the upper floors of a building owned by the Department for Work and Pensions, who occupy the ground floor. The building is adequate but under used.

The accommodation comprises of one civil courtroom and one district judges' hearing room. There are two interview rooms available for private consultations. There is a counter system which operates by prior appointment only. Although the car parking is not fully secure, there is a dedicated entrance for staff and the judiciary.

Newcastle Combined Court, which opened in 1990, is a much larger centre fit for modern day HM Courts & Tribunals business. Facilities include; interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access, parking, toilet and baby changing facilities, a hearing loop system, wireless internet access and a cafeteria for customers. There is sufficient appropriate accommodation for the judiciary, public and staff at Newcastle to accommodate the move from Morpeth County Court. There is a bailiff counter operating Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm. The court counter is open 10am until 4pm Monday to Friday by prior appointment only.

The county court also offers a service called the Personal Service Unit (PSU) which is an independent service offering support to people going through the court process without legal representation. They do not provide legal advice but they do provide practical guidance and/or emotional support. The service is free, independent and confidential and is offered to anyone who asks. The office is open between 9.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

## Workload

There are two hearing rooms at Morpeth County Court, and these were used for approximately 44% of their capacity during the 2014/15 financial year. The court operates on a four weekly rota. The district judges' hearing rooms are only used three weeks out of four on a Friday. The civil courtroom is used every day during the four week period except Wednesday and Thursday afternoon during the first two weeks. Newcastle County Court is a larger court centre with more flexibility to accommodate the hearings from Morpeth County court.

## Location

Morpeth County Court is situated approximately 17 miles from Newcastle. There is a frequent train and bus service between Morpeth and Newcastle. The travel time by train is approximately 20 minutes and by bus is approximately 35 minutes. The approximate cost of a return ticket is £6.60 by train and is £7.00 by bus. The journey time by car is approximately 30 minutes.

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.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	72%	By Car	0-30min	23%
	30-60min	18%		30-60min	60%
	60-120min	10%		60 - 120min	17%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	15%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	41%		30-60min	12%
	60-120min	25%		60-120min	70%
	>120min	17%		>120min	14%
	no data	2%		no data	4%

## Staff implications

There are approximately seven members of staff working at Morpeth County Court.

## **Other information**

The building is occupied under a Memorandum of Term of Occupation (MOTO) with the Department of Work and Pensions.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Morpeth County Court were approximately £255,000.

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

Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is one of four magistrates' courts and one of four county courts operating in South Yorkshire; the others being at Doncaster, Sheffield and Barnsley. The court deals with criminal work in the adult and youth courts as well as civil and family work.

It is proposed that Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is closed, its criminal work transferred to Sheffield Magistrates' Court and the county court work transferred to Sheffield County Court. This would enable the workload to be moved to larger court centres and will allow the court to be responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved and more efficient service can be delivered with courts being used more efficiently and effectively.

Although there is sufficient capacity to meet the current and anticipated workload demand from Rotherham, some enabling works are required at Sheffield Combined Court to accommodate an additional district judges' hearing room.

Both Sheffield Magistrates' Court and Sheffield Combined Court Centre offer good quality facilities for HM Courts & Tribunals Service users.

Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

## **Accommodation**

Rotherham Magistrates' Court was built in 1994. The court has ten courtrooms. In addition, there are two county court district judges' chambers. There are 11 cells in the building with secure access to eight of the ten courtrooms.

The court has no prison video link but has facilities for vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link to two courtrooms. The court has separate waiting facilities for prosecution witnesses but no separate waiting facilities for defence witnesses. There are interview rooms available for private consultation. Rotherham County Court and Family

Court operates a counter system from 10am until 2pm.

The court is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and there are no security issues. Both Sheffield Magistrates' Court and Sheffield Combined Court Centre offer good quality facilities for HM Courts & Tribunals Service users.

The facilities at Sheffield Combined Court include interview rooms for private consultations, disabled access, toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, a hearing loop system, wireless internet access and a cafeteria. The county court also accommodates a Personal Service Unit (PSU) which is an independent charity where assistance is provided to court users to complete court forms. The service is free and available to everyone who asks.

Sheffield County Court offers a counter system which operates from Monday to Friday 10am until 2pm by prior appointment only. Sheffield Magistrates' Court has 15 cells which are all operational. There are a total of 16 courtrooms. The facilities include baby changing facilities, disabled access and toilets, private interview rooms, portable induction hearing loops, video conferencing, video link facilities and a cafeteria located on the ground floor.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court also accommodates a support group - Addiction Team - who are located on the lower ground floor.

## **Workload**

There are ten courtrooms and two district judges' hearing rooms at Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court. The two district judges' hearing rooms are not fit for purpose due to their size and are not currently used for hearings. The court rooms that adjoin the district judges' hearing rooms are used for county court hearings. However, one of these courtrooms is only used on Tuesdays for trials and possession lists, and on Wednesdays it is used for the coroner's court. Two of the courtrooms are not used unless there is a requirement to list a tribunal hearing once or twice during the month.

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

Sheffield Magistrates' Court has 16 court rooms and five of the courtrooms are currently under used. All court rooms are fit for purpose and there is sufficient capacity to move criminal work into Sheffield Magistrates' Court from Rotherham.

Sheffield County Court at Sheffield Combined Court Centre will require some enabling works to accommodate an additional hearing room; this will provide flexibility within the court building with more up to date facilities.

## **Location**

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

There are frequent bus and train services to Sheffield with journey times by train of approximately 20 minutes and by bus of approximately 30 minutes. The approximate cost

of a return rail ticket £3.80. A return First Day Ticket by bus costs approximately £3.90. The journey time by car is approximately 20 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates' workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	99%	By Car	0-30min	78%
	30-60min	1%		30-60min	22%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public	0-30min	41%	By Public	0-30min	5%

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
Transport	30-60min	54%	Transport	30-60min	59%
	60-120min	5%		60-120min	36%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	99%	By Car	0-30min	78%
	30-60min	1%		30-60min	22%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	41%	By Public Transport	0-30min	5%
	30-60min	54%		30-60min	59%
	60-120min	5%		60-120min	36%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

County workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	99%	By Car	0-30min	79%
	30-60min	1%		30-60min	21%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%

	<b>no data</b>	0%		<b>no data</b>	0%
<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	40%	<b>By Public Transport</b>	<b>0-30min</b>	6%
	<b>30-60min</b>	52%		<b>30-60min</b>	59%
	<b>60-120min</b>	8%		<b>60-120min</b>	35%
	<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%		<b>&gt;120min</b>	0%
	<b>no data</b>	0%		<b>no data</b>	0%

## Staff implications

There are approximately 18 members of staff working at Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court.



## **Other information**

Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is freehold and forms part of a civic complex.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Rotherham Magistrates', County Court and Family Court were approximately £640,000.

The Crown Prosecution Service, National Probation Service, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) have rooms allocated within the building. Alternative arrangements would need to be made should the decision to close the court be taken.

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

Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is one of four magistrates' and three county courts operating in Humberside, the other magistrates' courts being at Beverley, Grimsby and Hull and the other county courts being at Hull and Grimsby. The court deals with criminal business in the adult and youth courts as well as civil business, district registry, bankruptcy, adoptions, and family work.

It is proposed that Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court closes and its work is transferred to Grimsby Magistrates' and Grimsby Combined Court. Overall utilisation is low, specifically in relation to courtrooms used by the magistrates' business. Should the court close it would enable the workload to be moved to larger court centres and would allow the court to be more responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved and more efficient service can then be delivered with courts being used more efficiently and effectively.

There will be some enabling works required at the combined court to create additional family hearing capacity.

The main courthouse at Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is compliant with the Equality Act 2010. However, the administrative centre which forms part of the accommodation is not.

Grimsby Magistrates' Court and Grimsby Combined Court Centre offer good quality facilities for HM Courts & Tribunals service users.

Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

## **Accommodation**

Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court was purpose built as a magistrates' court and later adapted to accommodate Scunthorpe County Court. Two properties now make up Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court. One of these buildings is the administration centre known as Scunthorpe Charter Hall.

The court comprises three courtrooms and one hearing room. There is also one county court district judge's chambers. There are 14 cells in the building with secure access to three of the four courtrooms. The cells belong to Scunthorpe Police Station.

The court has prison to court video link and has facilities for vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link to two courtrooms. Scunthorpe County Court and Family Court operates a counter system open from 10am until 2pm Monday to Friday.

The court does not have separate waiting facilities for prosecution and defence witnesses. There are interview rooms available for private consultation.

The main courthouse is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and there are no security issues. However Scunthorpe Charter Hall is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010

The facilities at both Grimsby Combined Court and Grimsby Magistrates' Court are good and include interview rooms for private consultations, five at the combined court and two at the magistrates' court, disabled access, parking and toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, a hearing loop system and wireless internet access. Grimsby Combined Court operates a counter system Monday to Friday open from 10am until 2pm. There is also free public parking at/or nearby Grimsby Magistrates' Court. A further hearing room will be created to consolidate all family and civil work within Grimsby Combined Court in the old disused cafeteria area. This area already has public toilet facilities.

## Workload

There are four courtrooms at Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court, which were utilised at approximately 30% of their capacity during the 2014/15 financial year.

One of the courtrooms deals with some criminal lists and video link cases on Wednesday afternoons only. Therefore the court room is not used for the remainder of the week. Another court room is used for family work on Monday mornings and Friday mornings only and is not used for the remainder of the week.

The district judges' hearing room is used more effectively with the exception of Thursdays every third week.

Grimsby Magistrates' Court currently has the capacity to accommodate hearings from Scunthorpe Magistrates' Court. Grimsby Combined Court will have the capacity to accommodate hearings from Scunthorpe County Court and Family Court once the enabling works to create an additional courtroom have been undertaken.

## Location

Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court is situated 28 miles from Grimsby and there are excellent road and rail links.

There is a frequent train service to Grimsby with journey times by train of approximately 35 minutes. The approximate cost of a return rail ticket is £15.60 and the cost of a bus day ticket is £8.50. The approximate time of a bus journey is 50 minutes

The journey time by car is approximately 40 minutes.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates' and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	76%	By Car	0-30min	2%
	30-60min	24%		30-60min	74%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	1%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	23%
By Public	0-30min	45%	By Public	0-30min	0%

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
Transport	30-60min	20%	Transport	30-60min	0%
	60-120min	25%		60-120min	55%
	>120min	6%		>120min	13%
	no data	4%		no data	32%

County workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	74%	By Car	0-30min	2%
	30-60min	26%		30-60min	75%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	1%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	22%
By Public Transport	0-30min	44%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	20%		30-60min	0%
	60-120min	26%		60-120min	54%
	>120min	7%		>120min	16%
	no data	3%		no data	30%

## Staff implications

There are approximately 16 members of staff working at Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court.

## Other information

The main Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court building is leasehold and the landlords are the Humberside Police with a 999 year old lease. Scunthorpe Charter Hall Administration Centre is Freehold.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Scunthorpe Magistrates', County Court and Family Court were approximately £268,000.

The National Probation Service and Citizens Advice Bureau occupy the building on a daily basis, and the Youth Offending Team once a week. Alternative arrangements would need to be made should the decision to close the court be taken.

## Wakefield Magistrates' Court Proposal

Wakefield Magistrates' Court is one of five magistrates' courts operating in West Yorkshire the others being in Leeds, Huddersfield, Bradford and Halifax. The court deals with criminal court business in the adult and youth courts. From mid-January 2013, public law and private law work in the Family Court moved to the new Wakefield Civil Justice Centre.

It is proposed that Wakefield Magistrates' Court closes and the criminal work moves to Leeds Magistrates' Court where there is ample accommodation for staff and hearings. There are 21 courtrooms at Leeds Magistrates' Court, with only ten to 12 being used on a daily basis at present. There will be no enabling works required to accommodate the workload from Wakefield.

The facilities at Wakefield Magistrates' Court are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. The building is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010 due to its listed status and the courtroom accommodation, in particular, is in need of modernisation. The building has five courtrooms and is currently well used, however there is sufficient capacity at Leeds and Wakefield Magistrates' Court offers poor standards of accommodation.

Leeds Magistrates' Court offers excellent quality facilities in a modern purpose built building for HM Courts & Tribunals Service users.

In the 2010 Court Estate Reform Programme proposals, it was agreed that Pontefract Magistrates' Court would close and the work would move to Wakefield Magistrates' Court. This took place in March 2013 and Wakefield Magistrates' Court now houses some of the staff and work from Pontefract. A small number of the staff were accommodated at Leeds Magistrates' Court. As part of this arrangement, the family work from both Pontefract and Wakefield Magistrates' Courts was to be dealt with within the new Wakefield Civil Justice Centre which opened in January 2013. More recently with the introduction of the single Family Court in April 2014, all issue of family proceedings are now dealt with at Leeds County Court. Wakefield Civil Justice Centre is still used as a hearing centre for the Family Court.

The closure of Wakefield Magistrates' Court was not considered as part of the estate reform proposals in 2010 as at that time the workload from both Wakefield and Pontefract could not be accommodated in Leeds Magistrates' Court. Since 2010 reductions in magistrates' court criminal work at both Pontefract and Wakefield and the relocation of the family court work, now allows for Wakefield Magistrates' Court to be considered as part of these proposals.

Should this proposal go ahead the Judicial Business Group (JBG) would undertake local stakeholder engagement to consider the need for the merger of Local Justice Areas.

## Accommodation

Wakefield Magistrates' Court was built in 1777 and is a listed building. The accommodation comprises of five courtrooms, four formal courtrooms and one informal courtroom. The facilities are sub-standard and out of date for staff, judiciary and all court users. The building is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010 due to its listed status and the courtroom accommodation in particular, is in need of modernisation. The property is

old and is no longer fit for use. There are constant maintenance issues with equipment in particular relating to the fire alarm system and courtroom security. The system is old and in need of repair. The structure, roof and windows are also in need of repair and due to the listed status patch repairs are currently being carried out.

Access to the building is difficult for some people with a disability and there is no access to the four courtrooms on the first floor for people with some disabilities. The only courtroom on the ground floor is usually used for family and youth courts. The cell facilities are in poor condition and have limited capacity.

The court has separate waiting facilities for prosecution witnesses but no separate facilities for defence witnesses. Wakefield Magistrates' Court has prison video link facilities and facilities for vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence via video link in one courtroom. The court has interview rooms available for private consultation.

Leeds Magistrates' Court offers excellent quality facilities in a modern purpose built building for users. The facilities at Leeds Magistrates' Court include interview rooms for private consultations, video link facilities, disabled access and toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, hearing enhancement facilities, parking for disabled customers and refreshment facilities for all court users.

## **Workload**

Wakefield Magistrates' Court has five courtrooms and was utilised at approximately 56% of its capacity during the 2014/15 financial year.

Leeds Magistrates' Court has 21 courtrooms however only half of these are fully used with three of the courtrooms used currently as meeting venues. There is capacity to accommodate hearings from Wakefield Magistrates' Court to ensure flexibility in a larger centre with better facilities.

## **Location**

Wakefield Magistrates' Court is situated 12.5 miles from Leeds. There is a frequent train and bus service between Wakefield and Leeds. The travel time by train is approximately 20 minutes and by bus approximately 35 minutes.

Pontefract is situated 17 miles from Leeds. There is a frequent train via Wakefield between Pontefract and Leeds via Wakefield with a journey time of approximately 50 minutes. There is a frequent direct bus service to Leeds from Pontefract with a journey time of approximately 50 minutes.

The cost of a return train ticket from Pontefract to Leeds is £3.90. A West Yorkshire ticket can be purchased for return travel by bus and costs £4.70. The cost of a return train ticket from Wakefield to Leeds is £5.90. A West Yorkshire ticket can be purchased for return travel by bus and costs £4.70.

The journey time by car is approximately 25 minutes from Wakefield and 35 minutes from Pontefract.

Travel time data for this court pre and post closure is shown below:

Magistrates' and Family workload:

Before	Time	%	After	Time	%
By Car	0-30min	99%	By Car	0-30min	86%
	30-60min	1%		30-60min	14%
	60-120min	0%		60 - 120min	0%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%
By Public Transport	0-30min	35%	By Public Transport	0-30min	0%
	30-60min	51%		30-60min	53%
	60-120min	14%		60-120min	47%
	>120min	0%		>120min	0%
	no data	0%		no data	0%

## Staff implications

There are approximately 28 members of staff working at Wakefield Magistrates' Court.

## Other information

Wakefield Magistrates' Court is a freehold property.

During the 2014/15 financial year, operating costs at Wakefield Magistrates' Court were approximately £268,000.

Witness Service, National Probation Service and the Youth Offending Team occupy part of the building, and alternative arrangements would need to be made should the decision to close the court be taken.



## Questionnaire

We would welcome responses to the following questions.

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals?

Question 2: Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Question 3: Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts & Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

Question 4: Our assessment of the likely impacts and supporting analysis is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying this consultation. Do you have any comments on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

Question 5: Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

Question 6: Please provide any additional comments that you have.

Thank you for participating in this consultation exercise.

## About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

<b>Full name</b>	
<b>Job title</b> or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (e.g. member of the public etc.)	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Company name/organisation</b> (if applicable):	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	
If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	(please tick box) <input type="checkbox"/>
Address to which the acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above	

**If you are a representative of a group**, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

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## Contact details/How to respond

Please send your response by 8 October 2015 to:

HMCTS Consultation  
Ministry of Justice  
Post point 1.13  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

**Tel:** 0161 240 5021

**Fax:** 0870 761 7768

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

## Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Ministry of Justice at the above address.

## Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available on-line at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj).

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested [please see details above].

## Publication of response

The response to this consultation exercise will be available on-line at [www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj).

## Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

## Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Ministry.

The Ministry will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

## Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment for proposals likely to affect businesses, charities, voluntary sector or the public sector – see guidance on: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-assessment-template-for-government-policies>)

## 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.

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Consultation-Principles.pdf>

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



**Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland  
Cleveland Police Headquarters  
Ladgate Lane  
Middlesbrough  
TS8 9EH**

Email: [pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk)  
Website: <http://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk>

Police and Crime Commissioner:  
Chief of Staff (Chief Executive &  
Monitoring Officer):  
Chief Constable:

Barry Coppinger

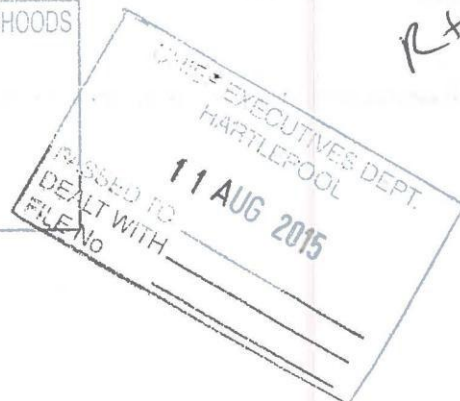
Tel: 01642 301653

Simon Dennis BA, Solicitor  
Jacqui Cheer QPM

Tel: 01642 301653  
Tel: 01642 301217

7 August 2015

Gill Alexander  
Chief Executive  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Hartlepool  
TS24 8AY



Dear Gill

**Closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court**

Thank you for your letter of 24 July 2015 to Police & Crime Commissioner Barry Coppinger. In his absence on leave, the Commissioner has asked me to respond on his behalf.

In short, the PCC shares the analysis set out in your letter.

Both the Commissioner and Cleveland Police recognise the need to achieve efficiencies in the management of the Ministry of Justice estate and also the advantages presented by the increasing use of technology in the context of both civil and criminal justice.

The Commissioner's overarching concerns are those of

- access to justice by court users; and
- justice being seen to be done in the locality

He therefore shares Hartlepool Borough Council's perspective in that the closure of the local court facilities will impact negatively on access to local justice.

In particular, the MoJ analysis appears to underestimate the impact for court users of limited means, for whom the costs of travel (which the MoJ appear to suggest are low) may be a significant barrier to accessing court facilities outside of Hartlepool.



*The Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland is an accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation.*

The Commissioner will offer the following answers to the specific questions set out in the consultation; the formal consultation closes in October and the OPCC may amplify the responses in time for submission to the MoJ.

**1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals.**

*Both the Commissioner and Cleveland Police recognise the need to achieve efficiencies in the management of the MoJ estate and also the advantages presented by the increasing use of technology in the context of both civil and criminal justice.*

*The Commissioner's overarching concerns are those of*

- access to justice by court users; and*
- justice being seen to be done in the locality.*

*He therefore shares Hartlepool Borough Council's serious concerns in that the closure of the local court facilities will impact negatively on access to local justice.*

**2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.**

*The proposals will impact directly upon*

- Cleveland Police;*
- Victims of crime;*
- Other court users involved in the criminal justice process;*

*for whom the PCC shares an overarching remit. Save for the incidental points made in the MoJ consultation document about the facilities offered at the Teesside Magistrates and Combined Court centres, there appear to be no positive advantages to the proposals in respect of the above stakeholders.*

**3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.**

*The MoJ analysis appears to underestimate the impact for court users of limited means, for whom the costs of travel (which the MoJ appear to suggest are low) may be a significant barrier to accessing court facilities outside of Hartlepool.*

**4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.**

*The PCC would wish to make the same point as at (3) above – the impact assessment, in common with the substantive consultation document, does not*



## R. BELL & SON

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PARTNERS:

TERENCE CREED, B.A., LL.M. Member of The Law Society's Children Panel

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Member of Solicitors for the Elderly

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CHRISTINE WALLER

DURHAM HOUSE,  
32A VICTORIA ROAD,  
HARTLEPOOL,  
TS26 8DD

OUR REF: TC/CW/JW/  
YOUR REF: KS

06 August 2015

Please reply to/ask for:-  
Mrs C Waller

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF GILL ALEXANDER**



Dear Sirs

**Re: CLOSURE OF HARTLEPOOL MAGISTRATES COURT AND COUNTY COURT**

We refer to your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and note its contents. With regard to the Questionnaire you provided, we would reply as follows:

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals?

**We do not agree with the proposals for closure for the reasons set out below.**

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

**The proposals for closure will have direct impact upon ourselves. By travelling out of town to attend Court, will result in our costs to our clients being increased due to additional travelling. We also anticipate that a larger centralised Court does not necessarily mean a more efficient Court as it becomes difficult to speak to the same person for continuity or to track correspondence which has been forwarded to a Court, due to its size and the volume of work it is dealing with. Consolidating Courts in one larger building seems to be seen as more efficient but in practice, they are too big, correspondence/documentation cannot always be retrieved and dealt with for urgent hearings and the sheer bulk of the work can cause delay in it being dealt with or even lost in the system.**

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Court and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

Community  
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There would be a particular impact upon our clients who generally have to privately fund their cases and it will involve not only additional travelling costs for them by having to attend a Court out of town but additional legal costs incurred by their legal representatives having to do so. Clients already struggle in providing childcare during school holidays but a journey to a Court out of town also lengthens the period of time when childcare will be necessary. Courts often list cases at 10am but all parties are required to attend at 9.30am and clients struggle to drop children off at school at approximately 8.45am and then travel out of town to a Court for 9.30am. It is stated in the proposal that a bus journey is likely to take 45 minutes and at the moment, 90% of clients are likely to take under 30 minutes to arrive at Court but following implementation of the proposals, such a journey would ensure 91% would take between 60 and 120 minutes to attend Court. Consequently, it would not be considered more efficient for clients and it appears to restrict their access to Justice particularly following the significant limitation/ almost non-existence of Legal Aid for the majority of them.

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

**See travel time details above at Question 3. The Report also states the Hartlepool County Court operates a counter system from 2pm to 5pm (a 3 hour slot) but, in fact, it is actually 10am to 2pm (being a 4 hour slot).**

5. Are these alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

**If it is proposed that the building which houses the Magistrates and County Court is not being fully used, then could it not be used to accommodate Mediation, Citizens Advice Bureau or a Contact Centre, the latter of which has always been in such demand but not readily available in this town. The use of technology appears on the surface to be a suitable alternative to travelling to Court but it is highly unlikely that lay persons would have access to such facility.**

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

**As above.**

Yours faithfully  
R BELL & SON

Chief Executive's Department  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
HARTLEPOOL TS24 8AY



## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals  
*No*
2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.  
*No*
3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.
4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.
5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

I AGREE THAT LAW COURTS SHOULD STAY IN  
HARTLEPOOL. GREAT YOU ARE TRYING, BUT THIS GOVERNMENT  
WILL NOT RECOGNISE NORTH EAST BEING LABOUR STRONGHOLD  
AFRAID WE ARE THE NEW "EAST END OF LONDON FROM  
VICTORIAN TIMES AND THAT IS WHERE THEY WANT US  
SEE THEM LAUGHING NOW AT YOUR BRAVE EFFORTS

*[Signature]*

HARTLEPOOL  
Y472  
18 AUG 2015  
COUNTY COURT/  
MAGISTRATES COURT

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals **NO**
2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details. **NO**
3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details. **HARTLEPOOL RESIDENTS ARE UPSET AT ALL THE SERVICES MOVED FROM THE TOWN**
4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful. **N/A**
5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.
6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

HARTLEPOOL  
Y472

10 AUG 2015

COUNTY COURT/  
MAGISTRATES COURT

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

I do not agree with the proposals. Justice should be easily accessible to all and to say that in a modern age we should be making more use of digital technology to enable people to access Courts and Tribunals, pay fines etc, does not take into account the impact this will have on the more vulnerable individual in society.

It is a fundamental right of our legal system for the accused to be able to face their accusers in open Court. Up until now there are very few cases where this right is denied. By using video links the accused are denied their right. In my opinion the Ministry of Justice has already undermined our legal system by the breaking up of the Probation Service and this proposal breaks it up even further.

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Not unless I need to access Justice Services however I work for an organisation that provides Independent Domestic Violence Advocates to Hartlepool Specialist Domestic Violence Court.

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

The main concern I have is the impact on Courts in surrounding areas. How does the proposal address this issue? Our organisation provides an IDVA to Teesside Magistrates Court and I believe that the Specialist Domestic Violence Court there is already extremely busy to the point that not all cases are being held in the appropriate Court. I have great concerns that with the extra cases coming from Hartlepool more cases will be heard in Courts that have no specialisation.

There is also the impact on accused and witnesses having to travel further afield to access Court. Not only is it time consuming but there is the additional travel costs. The statement outlines these costs as between £4.50 and £7.70 which is a large sum of money to people on benefits. I am aware



that witness can reclaim the money spent on travel but they need to have the money in the first place to get to Court.

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

The impact assessment states the following "Should the court close it would enable the workload to be moved to larger court centres and would allow the court to be more responsive and flexible with the throughput and listing of cases meeting customer and workflow demands more effectively. An improved and a more efficient service could then be delivered with courts being used more efficiently and effectively." Where is the evidence that closing Hartlepool Courts would enable these efficiencies? How would they become more efficient? Making a statement without evidence should not be included in an impact assessment.

5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

As I have already stated in the opening question your proposal undermines the rights of the accused by allowing witnesses not to be present in Court. I accept that when witnesses may be put at risk video links should be used but this should be the only time.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

None

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals  
harbour feels that this is the wrong decision for the town as once again it feels like Hartlepool is turning into a suburb of a larger area,
2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details. Yes these proposals will have a direct effect on harbour and the clients we support. Financial as clients will need to fund travel to other courts, childcare as most of our clients are women and where as a visit to Hartlepool court may still take up a few hours the additional time of attending a court in another area could prove difficult if people have to relies on public transport. We as a charity will face additional costs and resourcing issues due to the impact of using the IDVA service outside of Hartlepool. We had built up a positive working relationship with the courts that commented on as good practise as working well and not facing the issues that the Middlesbrough court had about making the same process followed in Hartlepool work in Middlesbrough.
3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details. Clients may withdraw criminal proceeding's which in its self as cost implications for the work done previously on the case and the possible escalation in repeat visits to the property
4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful. We think that there has been enough consideration to the practical aspects of this on the actual clients who may be affected. I note that they have said the cost of travel but if people are on low wages or benefits and the proposed further cuts in these than it feels that this would end people feeling we have a justice system in this country.
5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand



requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible. If this was going to be a suggestion as a possible solution I would question why the pilot for use of technology has been funded in Middlesbrough when for me the best place to have tried this out should have been Hartlepool to gauge peoples acceptance and use of this facility from outside the area where the court would be.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

No, Harbour believe this decision will have a detrimental effect on the victims in Hartlepool. We believe that withdrawals will increase as a result of the court being closed. Transport, finances and childcare could all be impacted when looking at victims personal circumstances.

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

We believe that the Hartlepool IDVA has excellent links with Hartlepool court and communications are extremely positive. There is a possibility that the close working links could be affected by the closure. Harbour also feel that the use of our local resources would be stretched by the time taken and expense of travelling to another court. As we have IDVA'S covering Middlesbrough and Durham courts, the increase of cases could impact on their roles also.

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

Will the closure impact on lengths of time waiting for hearings and trials?

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

Video links or alternative buildings could be a possibility for hearings.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

We have been raising our concerns for some time within the SDVC meeting with regards to the impact on Hartlepool clients if the court closes.

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

Whilst I appreciate the requirement for financial savings to be made, I am naturally concerned about the provision of services being removed from Hartlepool as this will impact upon victims and witnesses as well as Cleveland Police.

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Moving Magistrates court to Middlesbrough will impact hugely on policing in Hartlepool. Staff are required, almost daily to attend court and the current court building is next to the police station. Officers having to travel to Middlesbrough to attend court would result in the already low numbers available being further depleted. Provision of vehicles is extremely limited and this proposal would require vehicles being utilised for court attendance, leaving a shortage within Hartlepool. Fuel costs for the force would also increase with a 30 mile round trip for every attendance.

I can foresee a likelihood of more defendants not attending court when required due to distance and cost involved. This would in turn result in increased workload for police when warrants are issued, when resources are at their lowest level and still decreasing.

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

Whilst the document indicates that there is capacity at Teesside Magistrates courts for the workload from Hartlepool, I am concerned that cases would take longer to actually get to court. There is no information in the document regarding current timescales and what they would be following any closure.

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

In relation to Hartlepool there will be an increase in travel time and cost and this will not be offset by any benefits as suggested may be the case in the impact assessment.

I think the effect of the extra cost for victims/witnesses cannot be underestimated (minimum of around £5 per day) and may result in non attendance and subsequent loss of cases.

- 5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.**

Use of video conferencing for police witnesses working in Hartlepool would be hugely beneficial. This technology is utilised on a daily basis for internal force wide meetings and would reduce the extra cost implications for the force and result in police officers spending less time off the streets.

If a similar system could be implemented for victims and witnesses, this would be much more acceptable and reduce the risk of non attendance due to finance/distance.

- 6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.**

Closure of the magistrates court in Hartlepool is likely to result in subsequent closure of the custody facility also, as the rationale for its existence has been to service the courts. This would also remove police officers from the streets of Hartlepool as every arrest would need to be transported to Middlesbrough.



## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals – NO, would mean excessive travel for not only myself, travelling regularly from Durham but to tenants having to make way to Middlesbrough
2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details. – as above
3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details. – location & accessibility means it will become very unrealistic that defendants will be able to make this journey, parking costs also will be an issue, not ideal at all
4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.
5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.
6. Please provide any additional comments you may have. – as stated above moving the Court to a central location may be ideal financially but for a town like Hartlepool, Peterlee etc it makes it difficult for the regular users of Court services to access and in my case a round trip of almost 60 miles simply to attend a court hearing

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals  
Do not agree. Significant impact upon police resources.
2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.  
Police resources reduced considerably , this will place greater burdon around fewer people.
3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.  
Impact of less police officers
4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.  
  
No Comment
5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.  
Is there a technical solution that would be accepted by the CJ system ?
6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

Do not agree because of resource implications and concerns regarding accessibility for officers & residents

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Yes

Resource implications will include:

Increased time and travel costs: We estimate that a return journey would take at least 90 minutes possibly longer if there are traffic issues or problems finding suitable parking in a busy town centre. We are concerned about wasted journeys where hearings are adjourned etc e.g. if parties do not attend and officers may have to sit through other cases before their case is heard. Parking is expensive. On occasion several staff need to attend. The impact on other staff will be significant as we are a small division within the Council

Accessibility to Magistrates for urgent matters eg issuing warrants for enforcement matters, RIPA authorisations, Hygiene Emergency Prohibition action, Closure Orders etc.

We anticipate that there will be an increased delay in getting Court dates. In our experience we already have to wait a considerable time to get a Court date

We may experience difficulties getting witnesses to attend Court & may incur costs e.g. we may use members of the public as witnesses in Licensing Appeals and may not be able to recover the costs incurred

Court needs to be accessible to people who wish to Appeal against Enforcement Notices etc

In our experience it is currently difficult to get a meeting room at Middlesbrough Magistrates Court to speak with legal representatives. The position is likely to be worse with increased use of the Court



Access to photocopiers etc is limited and expensive. We are currently able to get material copied at Civic Centre in adjoining building to Hartlepool Magistrates Court & this would no longer be possible.

When we need to exhibit physical evidence the use of videos etc is not possible / practical. The evidence needs to be presented to the Court for inspection. In complex cases officers are required to transport significant volumes of material eg case files, physical evidence etc and this has implications for the number of officers required to attend, parking access etc.

Some people may not have access to a computer or may not be computer literate in order to use on line services to appeal against notices etc so will need to attend court in person. (Hartlepool has a high level of deprivation)

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

No comment

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

No Comment

5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

Is there a technical solution that would be accepted by the CJ system ?

For us technical solutions are not going to work. Officers will need to attend Court to get warrant signed, exhibit physical evidence etc.

Availability of suitable alternative public buildings/accommodation is very limited. There may be security issues.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

Access to photocopiers etc is limited and expensive. We are currently able to get material copied at Civic Centre in adjoining building to Hartlepool Magistrates Court & this would no longer be possible.

When we need to exhibit physical evidence the use of videos etc is not possible / practical. The evidence needs to be presented to the Court for inspection. In complex cases officers are required to transport significant volumes of material eg case files, physical evidence etc and this has implications for the number of officers required to attend, parking access etc.

Some people may not have access to a computer or may not be computer literate in order to use on line services to appeal against notices etc so will need to attend court in person. (Hartlepool has a high level of deprivation)

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

No comment

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

No Comment

5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

Is there a technical solution that would be accepted by the CJ system ?

For us technical solutions are not going to work. Officers will need to attend Court to get warrant signed, exhibit physical evidence etc.

Availability of suitable alternative public buildings/accommodation is very limited. There may be security issues.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.



## Questionnaire

### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

*I do not agree with the proposals, it would be yet another service taken away from Hartlepool. The time data provided is obviously based on the perfect journey. In reality even travelling by car 97% of people will not get to Middlesbrough in 0-30 mins. I don't think this has taken account of the constant roadworks, sheer volume of traffic at peak times and the road traffic accidents. The A19 and all other routes to Middlesbrough are the maximum of 2 lanes.*

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

*Whilst the proposals will not have a direct impact on us as an organisation, it will impact directly on our clients, many of whom are vulnerable and often incapable of travel outside of their own town. It will deter people from attending tribunals. Without their attendance there is an increased risk of losing the appeal.*

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

*In the consultation the facilities at Hartlepool are well described. There doesn't seem to be any major refurbishment needed, it is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and no security issues. It is ideally located, so the tribunal need to take into account the economic impact on the residents using the court and tribunal services.*

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

*Several years ago Tribunals for Hartlepool were moved to Middlesbrough. It had a negative impact on the residents of Hartlepool, as they faced increased financial costs in both travel and time. For organisations attending to accompany clients, listings were not made in a logical manner, thus increasing costs to the organisations.*

*Has this consultation used the evidence that must have been gathered during this period, as the decision was made to re-list tribunals in Hartlepool.*

Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

*Using local public buildings often comes with its own difficulties, i.e. availability, security, cost etc. I understand these were some of the reasons initially removing the tribunal service from Hartlepool. Which is why the law court was used to re-instate the tribunal service in Hartlepool.*

5. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

*The costs of re-commissioning as well as decommissioning should be taken into consideration. Whilst we understand the intention is to centralise services, mainly for cost benefit, having lived through several centralisations and then re-localisations, as it is realised that the centralisation only works for those living close to the centralised services, there will be a need and indeed a cost involved in re-commissioning/re-establishing services locally.*

*Therefore whilst this may appear to make savings initially, in the long run it will end up costing double.*

Going to court as a victim is already a scary experience and it is going to be made considerably worse adding a longer journey to what could be an unfamiliar place. Currently, court expenses are paid retrospectively and some victims would not be able to pay the travel costs upfront. The added journey time can also impact on child care that may be needed.

Friends and family may not be able to afford to accompany victims and this will have a detrimental effect on them, support is vital for witnesses to be able to have the strength to give their evidence.

Unless victims have access to a car they could be faced with the extremely distressing situation of being on the same bus or train as the accused. This would be bad for any victim but imagine the fear of a vulnerable witness or DV victim ? There are security guards that offer a level of protection at court against intimidation but this would not apply to public transport.

Trials are often adjourned now and victims have to go two, sometimes three times before the case goes ahead and I am concerned that this will be worse if we have one magistrates covering the whole of Cleveland. People build themselves up to a frenzy with the worry of giving evidence, often not sleeping or eating and the impact of this can lead to them having to seek medical help.

Victims can often not even start to recover from the effects of the crime till after the trial is over and added waiting times for a case to be heard will have a negative effect on people and the worry is that they will not bother reporting the incidents to the Police in the first place.

I have recently been to Middlesbrough magistrates and there was not enough seats in the witness room and it was chaotic to say the least. Solicitors couldn't talk to their clients in confidence and struggled to be heard over the noise. This happened when other magistrates were still operating.



## Response from Children's Services Division

### Questionnaire

#### Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

**We understand savings need to be made across services and think that there may be better ways to use technology and remote access. A proportion of our work regarding family court takes place at Teesside currently and we already have some difficulties ensuring families are present and engaged. The moving of the Hartlepool court will continue to reinforce this pattern of difficulties engaging our most vulnerable families. It will therefore lead to our most vulnerable families being at a disadvantage when accessing the justice system.**

**The Youth Court recently transferred to Teesside. This has added pressure on our teams due to staff needing to support young people to be transported and supported outside of Hartlepool which takes significantly more time.**

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

**We work with families and a number of these will have dealings with the Hartlepool court therefore as stated above it will impact on our most vulnerable families – most struggle to access services and many will struggle to access outside. In particular the FCSH work with a number of families facing eviction. They can currently access the Hartlepool Court to challenge the eviction. However if the court transfers to Teesside it is unlikely that families will travel and we may see more evictions for our most vulnerable families.**

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

**Increased staff resource needed to support families to access court if transferred.**

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

**Nothing else to add**

5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

**The courts are an intimidating place for families and often workers. There is a lot of wasted time and money in the current system in relation to all parties involved and other alternatives may provide a more efficient system. Engaging remotely or using other venues maybe preferable to users as well as saving time and money (as long as these plans are developed and technology and alternative venues are fit for purpose.) This may also engage our most vulnerable families.**

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

**Teesside may not seem too much of a distance for those of us who are regular travellers. However for our most vulnerable families who may have mental health problems, health problems or other needs Teesside feels like a world away and significant support will be needed to support our most vulnerable families to access the justice system.**

**From:** Cllr Paul Watson [mailto:Cllr.Paul.Watson@sunderland.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 07 August 2015 08:50

**To:** Gill Alexander

**Subject:** RE: Closure of Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court - Consultation Document - Deadline Friday 7 August

**Importance:** High

SENT ON BEHALF OF CLLR PAUL WATSON, LEADER

Dear Gill

Please find below Cllr Watson's reply.

Kind Regards

Sue

**Questionnaire**  
**Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court**

1. Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

We understand that in this time of austerity that there is a need to cut costs and streamline services to make them as effective as possible but this should not be at the detriment of outcomes for our local communities.

2. Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

The changes will not have a direct impact on Sunderland, however we can sympathise with colleagues and the communities from Hartlepool as the impacts of the travelling to Middlesbrough Court for every hearing could be onerous.

3. Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

It is integral that our communities feel a part of the justice system and that they can see the effects of that working in their areas. When services are moved away from the local areas that they serve communities can feel disengaged from the process.

4. The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

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As with all decisions of this nature we would support the use of an integrated impact assessment to understand not only the financial impact but the social and health impacts of the clients using the service.

5. Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

The use of technology is integral for service development in the future, however safeguards around its use must be in place to help maintain its integrity and assurance in its use.

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have.

Susan Clark  
Executive Assistant to the Leader of the Council  
Sunderland City Council

Tel. 0191 561 1322  
[www.sunderland.gov.uk](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk)



## Questionnaire

### **Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court**

This questionnaire is being completed by Nicholas Stone – Neighbourhood Safety Team Leader on behalf of Hartlepool's Anti-social Behaviour Unit. This Unit consists of Anti-social Behaviour Officers employed by Hartlepool Borough Council who investigate complaints regarding anti-social behaviour and a Victim Services Officer employed by Victim Support who works with and supports victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals?

No. The closure of Hartlepool Magistrates' and County Courts will both decrease, and make it more difficult for victims of crime and anti-social behaviour residing in Hartlepool to access justice.

- Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Yes. By requiring all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour to attend court hearings in Middlesbrough rather than in Hartlepool it is very likely that this will decrease the number of victims who attend court.

It is often very difficult to persuade victims to report crime or anti-social behaviour, to give evidence and then to attend court and testify about their experiences.

This often requires extensive support work with victims to explain the criminal justice system and court processes, and to support them to enable them to be able to attend court and testify.

The vast majority of victims almost always have no experience of attending and testifying at court. Victims often find the prospect very daunting with them often being fearful of going to court.

By requiring victims to travel outside of their local town, away from their home, community and support networks this is likely to increase victims fear of attending court, and so decrease the number being willing to attend court.

In addition the changes could also result in confrontational situations where victims travelling to attend court on public transport may end up travelling on the same transport as defendants or their families. i.e. as they are each going to the same court at the same time, from the same location. The mere thought of this possibly occurring could in itself also deter victims who are unable to attend court without using public transport from attending court.

In addition the changes mean that victims are also less likely to be accompanied and supported at court by their friends and family due to the increased time and costs that this would incur.

In addition, it should be understood that Hartlepool Borough is an area with historically high levels of deprivation, unemployment, under employment and a low wage economy.

While the report acknowledges the good public transport links between Middlesbrough and Hartlepool and the cost of these, it fails to recognise that many Hartlepool households would be simply unable to afford these transport costs and so would be simply unable to afford to attend court outside of Hartlepool.

In addition where victims work hourly rates the extra loss of income through further increased travel times places a further charge on low wage victims which again decreases their ability to attend court. (This all also assumes that victims will be able to obtain this additional travel time off from work in the first place from their employers.)

Finally there will be an impact upon Hartlepool Borough Council Officers having to attend court in Middlesbrough.

Hartlepool Borough Council has experienced mainstream budget cuts of 39% with a further 30-40% predicted over the next 3 years. This has, and will continue to result in significant changes to council services and staffing levels.

This has required both Council Services and Officers to increasingly prioritise workloads and time spent on providing services.

By requiring Council Officers to spend increased time and resources travelling to, and from court by having to attend court outside Hartlepool in Middlesbrough away from the Civic Centre (rather than at Hartlepool Magistrates' and County Court located right next to the Civic Centre) this will result in decreased time and resources that Officers will be able to spend on other work for the public.

- Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

None.

- The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

No comment.

- Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible. Is there a technical solution that would be accepted by the CJ system ?

Hartlepool Magistrates' Court has video link and video conferencing facilities to enable for defendants to be seen at Holme House Prison and to allow for testimony under special measures for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.

Should the Hartlepool Magistrates' Court close the Court Service must ensure that these facilities remain available in Hartlepool and are linked to the Middlesbrough Courts. This could assist in resolving many of the concerns previously discussed above.

- Please provide any additional comments you may have.

There is a risk that the changes result in decreased confidence in the criminal justice system, public services and democracy as residents see yet another local service being taken away from Hartlepool and centralised outside of the town for financial reasons against the wishes of the general public and their elected representatives.

## Questionnaire

### **Proposed Closure Hartlepool Magistrates Court and County Court**

Do you agree with the proposals? What overall comments would you like to make on the proposals

Do not agree. Significant impact upon police resources.

Will the proposals for the provision of court and tribunal services have a direct impact on you? If yes, please provide further details.

Police resources reduced considerably , this will place greater burdon around fewer people.

Are there other particular impacts of the proposals that HM Courts and Tribunals Service should take into account when making a decision? Please provide details.

Impact of less police officers

The Ministry of Justice assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals is set out in the Impact Assessment accompanying the consultation. Do you have any comment on the evidence used or conclusions reached? Please provide any additional evidence that you believe could be helpful.

No Comment

Are there alternatives to travelling to a physical building that would be a benefit to some users? These could include using technology to engage remotely or the use of other, civic or public buildings for hearings as demand requires. Please explain your answer, with specific examples and evidence of the potential demand for the service where possible.

Is there a technical solution that would be accepted by the CJ system?

Please provide any additional comments you may have.