

Date of issue: 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2013

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	TUESDAY, 23RD JULY, 2013 AT 7.00 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	FLEXI HALL, THE CENTRE, FARNHAM ROAD, SLOUGH, SL1 4UT
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	CATHERINE MEEK  01753 875011

### **SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS**

The following Papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting:-

\* Items 5 and 6 were not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

#### **PART 1**

<b><u>AGENDA ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>REPORT TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>	<b><u>WARD</u></b>
5.	Recommendations of the Cabinet from its meeting held on 15th July, 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statutory Service Plans</li></ul>	1 - 86	All
6.	Community Governance Review of Parish Council Arrangements within the Borough of Slough	87 - 106	All

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council

**DATE:** 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Nick Pontone, Democratic Services Officer  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875120

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET FROM ITS MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2013**

**STATUTORY SERVICE PLANS**

**1 Purpose of Report**

To advise the Council of the recommendation of the Cabinet on approval of the Statutory Service Plans (SSPs) for 2013/14 in relation to.

- Food Safety Service
- Health and Safety Service
- Trading Standards Service

in accordance with the requirements laid down by external agencies.

**2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Council is requested to Resolve that the Statutory Service Plans in relation to the Food Safety, Health & Safety and Trading Standards work undertaken by the Council be endorsed.

**3 The Slough Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan**

**3a. Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The SSPs ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its statutory obligations under the relevant Regulatory Services legislation. However, the focus of projects within all the Services is geared towards Sloughs specific community and business needs, based on local intelligence, our work with partners and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Examples of where the plans contribute to the SWS priorities include:

- **Economy and Skills**
  - Supporting local businesses in meeting their legal requirements ' through low cost training; 'Buy with Confidence' and Food Hygiene courses; recognising good standards in food businesses with the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
  - Partnerships with businesses in the Primary Authority Scheme, providing regulatory compliance advice for businesses trading beyond the boundaries of Slough, reducing the regulatory burden upon those businesses and contributing to the prosperity of the town.

- **Health & Wellbeing**

- Supporting and encouraging all the cuisines in Slough to provide safe and healthy eating (Catering for Health) choices, including importation of ethnic foods.
- Reducing risks in the work place with specific projects based upon Sloughs needs such as Legionella Control.
- Increasing awareness of food labelling and healthy eating, contributing to reducing obesity and CHD rates in Slough.

- **Regeneration and Environment**

- Advice for Slough businesses on waste and pest control; animal by-products waste disposal; safe asbestos disposal.

- **Safer Communities**

- Underage sales education and enforcement; projects to reduce the incidence of violence in retail and licensed premises e.g. Loan Shark project;
- Safeguarding migrant and other vulnerable workers

- **Housing**

- Supporting owners and landlords to provide Energy Performance Certificates for accommodation

3b. **Slough Wellbeing Strategy: Cross-Cutting themes**

**Civic responsibility**

The majority of businesses in Slough want to be able to comply with legal requirements concerning food safety, fair trading and health & safety, The Service Delivery Plans are designed to help support businesses towards compliance with a graduated enforcement approach commencing with advice and sign posting to detailed information. Schemes such as Buy with Confidence and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme recognise and reward businesses that do well; encouraging residents to use their local services and shops.

In addition, Estates Excellence is a partnership scheme supported by landlords such as SEGRO helping business to manage risks themselves.

Innovative work detailed in the SDPs illustrate the importance of increasing nutritional awareness through Catering for Health linked schemes supporting people to make healthy choices about the food they eat with vital links to reducing obesity and the associated poor health outcomes

**Improving the image of the town**

The Statutory Service Plans set out how the Council will meet its statutory obligations to maintain the pre-requisites that residents and visitors expect in a town like Slough; to be able to eat out without becoming ill, go to work without being injured, buy safe goods in the town's shops. The plans detail essential work that will both protect the reputation of Slough and improve its image.

A core part of the SSPs is the provision of assured regulatory advice to 32 national and international businesses, such as Mars, Honda, and Reckitt Benkiser. Slough has become a leader in the provision of Primary Authority advice contributing to the prosperity of the town and identifying Slough as a town that aims to reduce the regulatory burden for businesses.

## **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

Key SSPs objectives are informed by evidence from the JSNA and aim to deliver positive outcomes via both legislative action and behaviour approaches to improve public and workplace health for example:

- **Reduce Inequalities in health.** Smoke free enforcement, tobacco control, underage sales test purchasing and counterfeit or illegally imported tobacco products investigations in partnership with SBC Licensing, Thames Valley Police and the UK Border Agency.
- **Reduce Adult and childhood Obesity.** In Slough the prevalence of obesity among children entering school in reception and at age 10/11 remains statistically *above* national rates at 11.3% and 21.2% respectively. The SPPs detail work on nutritional awareness and the roll out of catering for health in the Slough Community, together with a school meals survey which provides baseline data.
- **Improve the quality and availability of housing and environment for Slough residents.** Support for the Slough Sheds project with Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) enforcement and advice
- **Increase skills and employment opportunities.** Provide assured advice for businesses in Slough and specialist training for food handlers. Supporting legitimate businesses to prosper.
- **Reduce violent crime, domestic abuse and sexual abuse.** Advice and support in relation to control of underage sales of alcohol and knives, provision of proof of age cards

### **3c Corporate Plan 2012/13**

The SSPs link directly to the Corporate Plan and the Council's vision through the food safety, health and safety, and trading standards action plans for the front line delivery of services;

- Improve customer experience – we seek and act upon feedback from our customers and work with MyCouncil advisors support and signpost customers. We have a clear Customer Charter
- Deliver high quality services to meet local needs. Services are based upon local evidence of risk and need and are targeted specifically for Slough's residents, visitors and businesses.
- Develop new ways of working, deliver local and national change, develop a skilled and capable workforce. The recently formed Consumer Protection & Business Compliance group of services work collaboratively to develop and delivery innovative and flexible, value for money services such as the Olympic response Team and primary Authority Partnerships
- Achieve value for money. Officers will have completed the assessment process for the national Regulators Developments needs Analysis by September 2013 and each will have an individual training programme to compliment development identified during their annual appraisal

## **4 Other Implications**

### **(a) Financial**

It is anticipated that the plans will be implemented within existing resources. However, the situation will be closely monitored as unplanned reactive pressures,

such as major investigations, will have resourcing implications which will be reported to members for their consideration.

Costs recovered from Primary Authority work will fund additional specialist officers at no extra cost to the Council.

(b) Risk Management

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal	None	
Property	None	
Human Rights	None	The work of the Teams protects worker and consumer rights in Slough
Health and Safety	None for SBC workforce. Risk Assessments are in place for all officer activities	The work of the Teams supports businesses in Slough toward sensible risk management, enhancing health & safety conditions in Slough.
Employment Issues	None	Costs recovered from Primary Authority work can be used to employ additional officers at no increased cost to the Council, helping to maintain a flexible and resilient workforce
Equalities Issues	None. Equality Impact Assessments have been completed	The work of the teams actively supports equality in the work place for example, with disability access and awareness issues.
Community Support	None	The teams engage in neighbourhood and Community action events
Communications	None	The Teams engage with businesses and residents on a daily basis and are able to engage with them on key issues passing on important information. In newsletters. Regular press releases are issued via the Councils Comms Team and the Trading Standards Team has a regularly interview slot on BBC Radio Berkshire

Community Safety	None	The Teams work closely with SBC Community Safety, Licensing and TVP particularly in relation to underage sales, rogue traders, loan sharks
Financial	Risk from complex criminal investigations or outbreaks that demand considerable officer time resulting in pressure upon resources to complete statutory inspections within timescales set by national enforcement bodies. Mitigated by the re-prioritisation of resources where possible.	The income from Primary Authority work can be used to employ additional officers at no increased cost to the Council
Timetable for delivery	Risk from complex criminal investigations or outbreaks that demand considerable officer time resulting in pressure upon resources to complete statutory inspections within timescales set by national enforcement bodies. Mitigated by the re-prioritisation of resources where possible.	
Project Capacity	Risk from complex criminal investigations that demand considerable officer time resulting in pressure upon resources to complete statutory inspections within timescales set by national enforcement bodies. Mitigated by the re-prioritisation of resources where possible.	
Other Failure to endorse the SDPs	Serious risk to delivery of statutory obligations, failure to delivery on projects that impact positively on health & well being issues in Slough. Potential risk to Slough Borough Council reputation.	

## Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications, the work detailed in the SDPs is based upon UK and European legislation that has already been assessed in terms Human Rights Act Implications

## Equalities Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact assessments have been completed on key policies contained within the SDPs. However, the work detailed in the SDPs is based upon UK and European legislation that has already been assessed in terms of Equality Impact Assessment

## **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 National guidance on the delivery of the Authority's enforcement activities is issued by The Food Standards Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and the Department for Businesses, Innovation and Skills; setting out standards for service provision, monitoring and auditing arrangements, in order to ensure that local enforcement activities are undertaken in a fair and consistent manner.
- 5.2 Statutory Service Plans are an important part of the process to ensure national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered to meet local needs effectively. These Statutory Service Plans, which are required to be reviewed and updated annually, will
  - focus on local priorities and the needs of our local community
  - provide an essential link with financial planning
  - set objectives for the future, and identify major issues that cross service boundaries;
  - and provide a means of managing performance and making performance comparisons
- 5.3 Local authorities are required to include in their Statutory Service Plans
  - Information about the services they provide
  - the means by which they will provide those services
  - the means by which they will set/monitor performance targets and standards
  - a review of performance against proposed targets
- 5.4 The Regulatory Landscape continues to evolve with new guidance being issued from national Regulators bodies such as the Health & Safety Executive and Better Regulation Office with the aim to focus regulations and enforcement where they are most needed, in line with the 'Red Tape Challenge'; we have taken this risk based approach at Slough for several years. There are further changes in relation to the Consumer Landscape with the creation of a National Trading Standards Board which may have implications for the delivery of trading standards services, particularly for regional and national investigations.
- 5.5 In addition the creation of Public Health England and the transfer of the public health responsibility the Council provide opportunities for the work detailed in the SSPs in relation to reducing health inequalities and improving public health outcomes, to be linked even more closely to that of other Council teams and our partners.



- 5.6 The Primary Authority scheme was introduced by the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 and enables a new type of partnership to be formed between business and local authorities. The aim being to streamline and simplify the national regulatory compliance demands on local businesses in relation to trading standards, food and health & safety matters. The scheme has been phenomenally successful in Slough in the last year and has secured 32 successful agreements with national and international businesses based in the town such as; Reckitt Benkiser, Mars, Telefonica, Citroen, Fiat and Burger King.
- 5.7 The Teams have lost resources during the last two years and our work will continue to focus very specifically upon areas of high risk whilst aiming to reduce the regulatory burden on compliant business: continuing to make the best use of the resources we have available and ensuring positive outcomes and value for money.
- 5.8 We will seek to strengthen existing partnerships and develop others to ensure effective delivery across service areas; using an evidenced based approach to help deliver services that meet the specific needs of Slough based upon the evidence available and as identified in the Slough Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

## **6 Conclusion**

The proposed Statutory Service Plans illustrate our commitment to continuous improvement and accountability, whilst responding flexibly to ongoing changes in both the regulatory and consumer landscapes. They also show how the local authority has successfully adopted a balance of techniques and approaches to support local businesses, drive up compliance, enhance consumer protection and promote, with our partners, safety and wellbeing in the workplace and our community

## **7 Recommendation from the Cabinet**

The Cabinet considered the Statutory Service Plans at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and recommended that they be approved.

## **8 Appendices**

- A Food Safety & Standards, Service Delivery Plan 2013/14
- B Health & Safety, Service Delivery Plan 2013/14
- C Trading Standards, Service Delivery Plan 2013/14

## **9 Background Papers**

- '1' Food Standards Agency Framework Document
- '2' National Local Authority Code, Health & Safety at Work.
- '3' The Health & Safety of Great Britain\ Be part of the Solution: HSE
- '4' Common Sense – Common Safety, The Young Report
- '5' Primary Authority, Local Better Regulation Office
- '6' Priority Regulatory Outcomes, Local Better Regulation Office

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# Food Safety and Standards

## Service Delivery Plan 2013/14



## The Consumer Protection & Business Compliance Group

The Consumer Protection & Business Compliance is an outward facing service group made up from the:

- **Trading Standards,**
- **Food & Safety and**
- **Licensing Teams**

Our aim is to achieve a safe, healthy and fair trading town for our residents, businesses and visitors. The wide ranging work of the group is risk based and fundamental in creating a level playing field in which responsible businesses can flourish and our communities remain protected from rogues.

### Here are some facts about Slough Borough Council's Food Safety & Standards Service:

- We are responsible assessing compliance with food safety and food standards legislation at all food businesses within Slough. This role is shared between the Food & Safety Team and the Trading Standards Team. The teams are **also** responsible for
  - health and safety enforcement,
  - infectious disease control,
  - consumer protection and
  - animal health.
  - Imported food and products control
  - Primary Authority Partnerships with businesses.
- We provide a responsive service that aims to achieve a balance between enforcement and advice; taking a minimum tolerance approach on issues of serious concern in line with our enforcement policy whilst supporting compliant businesses
- We work closely with businesses and key stakeholders like the Food Standards Agency, Public Health England and other teams within the Council such as Public Health, Neighbourhood Enforcement, Licensing, Sure Start and Schools Support
- We play a major role in increasing awareness of the importance of nutrition, the reduction of obesity, particularly in Slough's children, and the links to increased risks to health of diabetes and coronary heart disease
- We have the equivalent of 4 officers dealing with food hygiene and 1 dealing with food standards issues.



The purpose of this plan is to inform you about how we are achieving our aims and of work we are doing, in conjunction with our partners and agencies, to enhance public health and well being. We will do this by:

- Completing Risk Based Inspections, focusing on the highest risk and poor performers
- Using a range of interventions to support business in Slough whilst protecting customers to increase the % of Broadly Compliant food businesses
- Promoting high performing businesses through the **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme** and also identifying those businesses which seek an economic advantage from non-compliance and also put Slough residents and visitors at risk
- Promotion of food businesses that offer a healthier choice with our **Catering For Health (CFH) award** and increasing awareness nutrition as part of a healthy lifestyle
- Food quality and composition sampling
- Investigation of food complaints
- Acting as '**Primary Authority**' for large businesses and manufacturers in Slough, which involves formal liaison with other local authorities, giving advice and support to the business in the Primary Authority partnership.
- Investigation of food poisoning outbreaks and infectious diseases; taking action to prevent infection and spread
- The inspection of Imported Food arriving in Slough via Heathrow and the verification of organic food arriving via Heathrow
- The training of food handlers to a level 2 qualification in Food Safety in Catering and a wide range of promotional activities
- Training Food Handlers to the Level 2 award in Healthier Food & Special Diets

This plan will be reviewed annually and we would welcome your views, comments and suggestions on how it could be improved. Please forward your views to Ginny de Haan, Head of Consumer Protection & Business Compliance, St Martins Place, 51, Bath Road, Slough. SL1 3UF, Tel: 01753 875255 or e-mail: [ginny.dehaan@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ginny.dehaan@slough.gov.uk)

# Proud to be Slough



## Our Vision

The focus of work within the Food Safety service is to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its **statutory obligations** under the relevant legislation and that this is geared towards Slough's specific community and business needs, based on local intelligence, our work with partners, the Slough Wellbeing Strategy (SWS) and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) incorporating wherever possible the key themes of

- economy and skills
- health and wellbeing
- housing
- regeneration and environment
- safer communities

Our work also supports the two cross-cutting themes of the Slough Wellbeing Strategy; civic responsibility and promoting the image of the town.

One aim is to protect and enhance public health and wellbeing whilst supporting local businesses. We will achieve this through the attached Action Plan; this should be read in conjunction with our Enforcement Policy which aims to ensure a graduated approach to enforcement based on risk.



The Enforcement Policy reaffirms our commitment to carry out our duties in an open, fair and consistent manner. We recognise that most people want to comply with the law; therefore, we want to support and enable them to meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense. Assessment of risk and the likelihood of reoccurrence are major factors in our enforcement decisions. Firm action, however will be taken, including prosecution, where appropriate.

The service plan sets out the actions we are taking to enhance and improve health, safety and wellbeing in Slough

## How did we perform?

Our service plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and provides the opportunity to record our achievements and identify those key issues that still need to be addressed.

## Primary Authority Scheme

We have changed the way in which advice is provided to businesses with the establishment of Primary Authority Partnerships; this has brought many advantages to businesses in Slough.



Primary Authority Partnerships comprises a legally binding contract between the Authority and a business to provide ongoing specialist advice on specific areas of regulation applicable to that business, such as health & safety, food safety, fair trading, product labelling and product safety.

Our Officers are able to provide companies trading across council boundaries robust and reliable advice, through the creation of these legal partnerships. The scheme also provides a safety net to ensure that local authorities are consistent in the way they regulate businesses.

Since the introduction of Primary Authority partnerships in Slough in April 2011 we have already secured the 32 successful PA partnership agreements with the following

companies – 1 &1 Internet, Acer, Azko-Nobel [ICI, Black & Decker, Burger King, Citroen, Fiat, Food Partners, Garden Centre Group, Grosvenor Consumer Products, Group SEB, Herbalife, Horlicks, Jumbo Ltd, LG, Mars, Mars Drinks, Mitchell Group usa, Parking Control Management [PCM], Ragus Sugars, Reckitt-Benckiser, Rollover.com, SuperDrug, Telefonica Uk Ltd [02], Autodata, GRAB Distribution, Perry Bishop & Chambers Ltd, Innovation bites and Bluebird Sports Drinks Ltd. This service is uniquely provided by in house Environmental Health & Trading Standards officers. Our portfolio of PA partners is set to continue to growing.



Cost recovery is an essential element of the contracts and applicable to Primary Authority businesses with an hourly charge for any work undertaken. Although the scheme is relatively new to Slough Borough Council, almost £78,500 costs were recovered during 2012/13, **an increase of 40%** from £56,000 in 2011/12. Projected income for 2013/14 is £120k. This cost recovery enables the Council to support businesses in Slough and increase the availability of specialist officers who are funded from PA cost recovery at not extra cost to the Council. Last year 728 interactions with all our PA companies were successfully completed; a high proportion of these were satisfied consumer complainants.

As a Primary Authority we have already had communication with many other Councils to ensure that inspection and enforcement action reflects the advice we have already given, and is proportionate. We continue to work with the businesses to produce national inspection plans, and give guidelines to other councils to avoid unnecessary checks and tests.

The number of businesses joining in Primary Authority Partnerships with the Council continues to grow and this will have a profound impact upon how we deliver the service requiring a flexible approach to our management of resources.

More information on Primary Authority Partnerships can be found on the website <http://www.bis.gov.uk/brdo/primary-authority>

Businesses that would like to join the Scheme can either contact 01753 875255 or e mail [primary.authority@slough.gov.uk](mailto:primary.authority@slough.gov.uk)

## High Risk Food Premises Inspections and Interventions

There are 932 registered food premises within the borough, ranging from large manufacturing premises to small corner shops. We aimed to focus our resources on high risk hygiene inspections and last year completed 90% of all A risk rated premises (1 inspection not completed until April 2013), 53% of all B risk rated premises, and 37% of C rated premises due for inspection. We also undertook 5% of due inspections to our lower risk D rated premises, and 5% of due inspections to our lowest risk E rated premises. In addition we undertook 60% of inspections to unrated premises.

We specifically focussed our resources on those businesses that were not compliant and had persistently shown poor standards, and to those who pose a higher risk due to the nature of the food they handle. This approach helped to maintain the level of '**broadly compliant**' food businesses in Slough at **82%**. We also had significant input into the planning of our service response to the 2012 Olympics, organised responsive teams, and carried out a number of checks before and throughout the event, dealing with problems as they arose.

The table below shows the risk profile of Slough food businesses as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 with 'A' rated premises assessed as posing the highest risk. In all there are a total of **932 food businesses** currently registered with the Authority.



During 2013/14 we plan to complete inspections and other interventions at all the A, B and non-compliant C rated premises in Slough. We will also focus our attention specifically upon premises that are have poor standards and are not 'broadly compliant', or are unrated. We aim to increase the number of broadly compliant businesses in the town.

Risk Rating	Frequency of intervention	Number of food premises
Premise Rating - A	6 months	11
Premise Rating - B	12 months	50
Premise Rating - C	18 months	388
Premise Rating - D	24 months	189
Premise Rating - E	Alternative Intervention	217
Premise Rating - Unrated	Awaiting initial inspection.	60
Outside programme	N/A	17
<b>TOTAL FOOD PREMISES</b>		<b>932</b>

## Food Standards

Trading Standards carried out 100% of their high risk routine Food Standards Inspections in 2012/2013, in addition to other food standards enforcement visits. A total of 93 Food Standards visits were carried out last year.

### Further work in Food Standards include:-

- Assistance to local businesses; including labelling advice to new food businesses,
- Primary Authority work with more established companies in the borough (e.g. Mars (UK) Ltd, Horlicks, Jumbo Ltd, Food Partners, Ragus Sugar, Burger King, etc.)
- Food sampling projects, in various different areas, in conjunction with the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) group, including projects on :-
  - 18 Imported Food – on the correct labelling & composition of food imported from outside the EU.
  - 10 Smoked Food samples – for excess polyphosphates
  - 8 BBQ samples – for freshness of meat in sauces
  - 7 DNA samples on behalf of the FSA, in response to the horsemeat scandal
- Assisting our 'in-house' Nutritional Advisor to compile further data on Primary and Secondary school children's lunchbox foods.

- In total 43 samples were procured during 2012 -2013 on composition, allergens, freshness and DNA.

A separate Food Standards Plan has been produced for Trading Standards for 2013/14. Targets for 2013/14 include:

- Complete 100% high risk food inspections
- Complete 50% medium risk food inspections
- Complete 100% Food Standards Agency funded imported food samples
- Complete regional food sampling programmes that are relevant to Slough.

## Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

### FOOD HYGIENE RATING

In January 2013 we migrated from the Slough Safe Food Award to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which is run in partnership with the Food Standards Agency and now covers almost all Local Authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The scheme helps consumers to choose where to eat out or buy their food by giving them information about the hygiene standards in food businesses. The scheme also encourages businesses to improve standards.

There are 6 levels of rating- zero to five. A rating of three under the new scheme is roughly equivalent to a One Star Slough Safe Food Award. Assessments for a Food Hygiene Rating are carried out during routine food hygiene inspections when inspecting Officers look at:

- How hygienically food is handled- including preparation, storage and temperature control.
- The condition of the structure of the building- including cleanliness, layout, facilities and maintenance.
- How the business manages and records what it does to make the food that it sells safe.

At the end of 2012/13 the number of food business with published ratings in Slough was:-

Rating	Number of businesses
0	4
1	52
2	21
3	181
4	108
5	182
Total	548

All food hygiene inspection results are published at <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/authority-search/slough>

At the end of the year we celebrated the success of some of our consistently well performing businesses by participating in the Catering and Community Business Awards. Nominations were made for 10 businesses across two categories.

### **Catering for Health Award**

The Catering for Health Award is run in partnership with the Bracknell Forest and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It is a voluntary enhancement of the hygiene rating scheme.



The Award recognises the inclusion of healthy menu choices and healthier catering practices to increase awareness of healthy eating across the Slough community. Specific assessment forms have been created to ensure the needs of different clients are met e.g. workplaces, schools, nurseries. 46 premises currently hold the award. These include many of Slough's schools; UCB Celltech Honda; Citroen and Wexham Hospital, O2 and Applegarth Care Home. This has influenced the diet of more than 50,000 people each week.

### **Mission Healthy Eating**

The Mission Healthy Eating project is run jointly by the Public Health and Food & safety Teams. It is designed to help children and parents make healthy lunchtime choices. Over two terms, pupils learn about the food groups needed in a healthy meal and are taught to recognise which foods are high in fat and/or sugar. The scheme is supported by the Slough Schools Meals Survey which provides an important insight into what children eat which can then be linked levels of obesity.



## **Cookery School & Healthy Eating Surgeries**

The food & safety team's nutritionist supports the Children's Centre Development Worker to deliver a cookery school to targeted families in the Borough. Parents are taught basic nutrition and practical cookery skills that can be used in the home whilst their children are looked after in the Children's Centre crèche facilities. All participants are referred from agencies such as the Family Nurse Partnership, Family Links and Home Start.

One-to-one surgeries are now also available to parents of children under 5. After booking an appointment through the Children's Centres, families have access to advice covering fussy eating, weaning, portion sizes, mealtime routines and free school meals.

## **Food Alerts and Incidents**

All Food alerts and incidents are dealt with in line with the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Code of Practice and protocols.

During 2012/13 we were notified by the FSA of 45 Food Alerts for Information and product withdrawals five of which required direct action to with businesses in Slough. Examples include the withdrawal of two batches of meat products from Poland; salmonella in imported peanut products and clostridium botulinum in Italian Olive products.

## **Food Complaints & Enquires**

We dealt with 356 complaints and enquiries from or about food businesses in Slough during 2012/13. This is a reduction of 15% complaints or enquires from last year. In particular we responded to;

- **10** complaints of a foreign body in food
- **41** Primary Authority referrals
- **115** complaints of poor standards in food premises
- **13** complaints of food poisoning and suspected illness
- **29** enquires regarding food hygiene training
- **8** referrals for Temporary Events licences
- **15** complaints of contaminated or mouldy food
- **76** requests for food safety advice
- **37** imported food notifications which required investigation
- **4** requests for Export Certificates

We follow a procedure in relation to complaints and aim to keep the customer informed of our progress and outcome. The reasons for investigating food complaints include;

- Providing a service to the public;
- Resolving problems that may pose a risk to public health;
- Providing information to the food industry to raise their standards;

- Comply with our duty to enforce the Food Safety Act 1990;
- Prevent similar complaints from happening again.

The higher levels of complaints which have been more or less sustained from last year indicate that demand for the service is remaining high. Although it is difficult to predict trends it is possible that demand continues due to the economic climate and a reflection of the reduced resources available to food businesses to invest in good hygiene standards, and the desire for people to seek to set up small food businesses – this is likely to continue through the coming year. In addition the team have improved data recording procedures, which captures evidence of the work of the team.

## **Imported Food Control**

We check and either authorise or reject all consignments of imported food notified to us as entering the borough from outside the EU. We also check, and either authorise or reject all consignments of organic produce entering the Borough via a formal certification system in conjunction with DEFRA. In addition, we also check any imported food found inland, within food premises, such as corner shops and supermarkets, to ensure it has been imported correctly and does not pose a health risk.

**This year we have checked and dealt with 72 consignments of imported food**, some consignments containing many different food items, each individual item must be checked for composition and restrictions. Advice is given to the importer or agent on how to correctly import the consignment, of any controls that may exist and if it has been imported illegally and subject to detention and destruction. This has resulted in visits to physically check the consignment at the custom bonded warehouse.

We have taken 16 imported food samples, of which 2 were unsatisfactory.

In addition, we have dealt with and issued Organic certificates for **23 Consignments of organic produce** entering the UK from outside the EU. This shows a 685 decrease on notifications from last year.

Some Unusual and illegal food items we have dealt with this year include;

- illegally imported meat found in a butchers shop,
- illegally imported animal feed,
- Raspberry seed powder
- Seaweed
- Arabic sweets
- Nutritional Supplements



## Food Poisoning and Infectious Disease Investigations

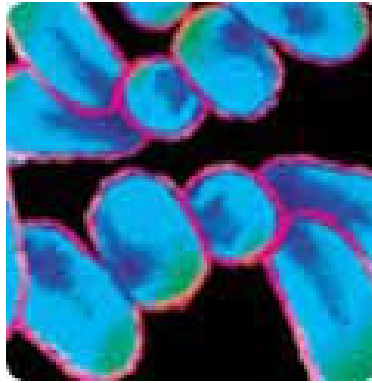
Last year, the Food and Safety Team were notified of 216 infectious diseases and food poisoning related illnesses. This figure shows a 9% decrease in reported infectious diseases from the previous year. This decrease may be due to improved food hygiene standards in homes and businesses in the borough, or a reduction in the reporting of diseases.

Many of the infectious diseases reported to us required in-depth investigations and completion of a food history. We co-ordinate investigations with Thames Valley Public Health England, the sampling laboratory or hospital, the infected person, their GP and often visit and inspect the alleged food premises.



The most common food poisoning reported in Slough is **Campylobacter** which made up 64% of the reported illnesses; this corresponds with national trends, as campylobacter is the most common type of food poisoning in the UK.

Some food poisoning related illnesses affect more than one person; in these cases the possibility of an outbreak is considered. The food and safety team received notification of two confirmed infectious disease outbreaks in 2012/13, both of which were associated with Norovirus. Norovirus (winter vomiting bug) is the most common cause of an outbreak and will spread rapidly in environments such as schools, nurseries, residential homes and conference centres.



For further information on food poisoning and infectious diseases see our website <http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/food-poisoning.aspx>.

## Training and Promotions

We operate an accredited food hygiene training course on a monthly basis which is open to all members of the public. This is an important service, and ensures all food handlers can attend essential and required food hygiene training, resulting in better educated and trained personnel, preparing safer food for consumers. In addition registered officers from the Team also provide food hygiene training for individual businesses, often on weekends.



This Year Food Hygiene courses continue to be a success. The team has provided **11** courses. Approximately **141** candidates have been trained, with an average **94%** pass rate. This will contribute towards an improvement of the food safety standard within Slough, due to better trained and educated food handlers. This will ultimately contribute to a reduction in food poisoning cases, within Slough and to people passing through the borough using its facilities.

On an ad-hoc basis we also operate an accredited nutrition training course which is primarily open to caterers although any member of the public can attend. This course is an important step in improving the knowledge amongst caterers about their responsibility for public health. This year 4 courses have been run for candidates from partner agencies such as schools, Children Centres, UCB Celltech, Respond Respite Care, Oak House Care Home, Crossroads Care and Supported Living.

We produced a **newsletter** for food businesses in preparation for our response to the Olympics which was sent out in July 2012 and aim to distribute food safety information to businesses in a similar manner twice this year. We also issue press releases to highlight food issues of importance to local businesses and residents and support the national **Food Safety and Awareness Week**.

## Sampling

The team took 152 samples last year (which was a huge increase over the previous year's total of 68) and participated in both national and regional sampling surveys including: Olympic Preparation & Response Sampling, Pate Study, Cooked Meat Pie Study and delicatessen sampling project.



The largest of these studies was by far the Olympic Preparation & Response sampling, which focussed primarily on a major food supplier with whom we have a Primary Authority Partnership, which was supplying ready-to-eat food products to the Games venues. This work attracted funding from the Food Standards Agency to cover our costs and involved a total of 30 food samples, 14 water samples and 30 environmental swabs taken from the production sites at Colnbrook, Wembley and Southall and catering outlets.

As a summary of results:

- 21 out of 30 swabs (70%),
- 8 out of 14 water samples (57%)
- 18 out of 20 finished products from production sites (90%)
- 8 out of 10 finished products from catering outlets (80%)

were found to be of satisfactory microbiological quality, providing verification of the good food safety systems in place. The team made provision to provide a reactive food sampling service in case of any food safety incidents arising during the Games, but fortunately this was not necessary.

The Pate study was a national project that looked at the microbiological quality of in-house and large-scale produced offal-based pate, following a few incidences of food poisoning connected to consumption of chicken liver



parfait, where the livers had not been fully cooked. All samples collected in Slough were from large-scale producers and found on sale on continental style delicatessen counters. The results showed 6 out of 8 pate products to be of satisfactory microbiological quality, with the remaining 2 samples categorised as “borderline”. Elevated levels of bacteria within these 2 borderline samples were indicative of poor handling practices at the delicatessens.



Likewise the Cooked Meat Pie study was a national project initiated by some concerns over the levels of contamination of particular pathogenic bacteria (namely *Listeria* spp. and *Bacillus cereus*) in some ready to eat pies associated with outbreaks of food poisoning. All samples collected from Slough retail shops had been produced outside of the Borough and were found to be of satisfactory microbiological quality.



The regional delicatessen sampling project was run in conjunction with the Pate study, as both studies involved visiting similar premises. In addition to food samples, a range of environmental swabs were taken from clean hand or food contact surfaces to determine levels of hygiene. In Slough, 42% of the environmental swab samples taken were found to have “undesirable” bacteria present, whilst 1 sample from the handle of a food slicer tested positive for a pathogenic bacteria known as *Staphylococcus aureus* which in certain circumstances can cause illness. Food samples followed a similar pattern, with 3 out of 8 samples (34%) deemed to be “borderline” and 2 out of 8 samples (25%) “unsatisfactory” due to elevated levels of bacteria. Follow up visits made to all premises with poor sampling results highlighted several areas of poor practice which were then addressed with the Food Business

Operators to secure improvements and reduce food safety risks to consumers.

The team were fortunate to be loaned an Ultrasnap ATP meter during the latter months of the year, which was trialled as an alternative to traditional methods of sampling. This relatively new technology provides an instant assessment of the cleanliness of food preparation surfaces, as the dirt captured on a surface swab produces a measurable light reaction when mixed with an enzyme. Government funding has meant that we will receive our own ATP meter soon, which we intend to make full use of in the coming year. One potential use is as a training tool to demonstrate to food handlers how effective cleaning regimes produce microbiologically cleaner surfaces, which is reflected in the reduced ATP reading obtained.

## **Enforcement Action**

We use a comprehensive set of measures to protect residents of Slough, people who work here and visitors and to promote sensible risk management. We actively work with businesses and other stakeholders to achieve our shared goals. Any enforcement action by us will be graduated, proportionate and in accordance with the council's enforcement policy.

The following enforcement action was taken by the Food team in 2012/13

**Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices – 2**

**Hygiene Improvement notices – 42**

**Written warnings/Letters sent – 263**

**Prosecution -0**

**Simple Caution- 1**

**Seizure and Destruction of Food- 0**

**Detention of Food- 1**

## **THE OLYMPICS 2012**

During 2012 our service prepared for the Olympics in a significant co-ordination approach with other Council teams to ensure that businesses were aware of their responsibilities and that residents and visitors to the borough had confidence in their Olympic experience in Slough.

These advance preparations were essential as Slough was a major transport hub and adjacent to the rowing events at Dorney for both the Olympics and Para Olympics as well as the earlier torch relay passing through the town. We were anticipating an increase in demand on our businesses such as hotels, shops, restaurants, public houses and taxis and we took action to ensure that businesses continued to trade legally, that no short cuts or health risks were taken.

To assist and support businesses we undertook additional pre event inspections to ensure they were safe. We also provided information on safe food preparation particularly in respect of food prepared in advance when businesses were expecting a sudden influx of customers.

This increase in business was potentially seen as an opportunity for any less reputable businesses to take advantage over legitimate traders; special duty officers were available throughout the torch relay and games period to respond to any concerns or complaints.

The results demonstrated our efforts were a great success as there was no increase in food safety, food poisoning or illegal street trading complaints during the Olympic period.



### **Variation from service plan**

Departures from this service will be exceptional, capable of justification and be fully considered by the Head of Consumer Protection and Business Compliance, Ginny de Haan, before varying action is taken. Reasons for any departure will be fully documented.

**The action plan for 2013/14, which outlines our planned work for the year in Appendix B.**

## Areas for development

We are always striving to move the service forward. In order to achieve this, we set targets to identify areas for development during the coming year;

- Updating the Council website with improved links
- Looking at ways to increase our engagement with businesses,
- Reviewing and updating the information we have on the CIVICA data base about local food businesses
- Reviewing and updating our general procedures

## Striving for excellence

### Service Standards

Providing excellent customer services is one of our key priorities. In order to achieve this we will always:

- Be polite, friendly and offer a helpful service
- Take the time to listen and explain things
- Provide accurate information and advice, in a clear and straightforward way
- Deal with enquiries immediately, but if this is not possible, tell you who we have passed your enquiry to and their contact details
- Keep you informed of progress and the outcome of our investigations
- Treat you fairly and with respect



### Customer Pledge

We aim to provide every customer with a quality service and will seek feedback from you to help further improve the quality of the services we provide. A manager will contact you personally if you are unhappy with the service received.

In addition, we have introduced the following standards against which we will monitor the responsiveness of our service, namely:

Service Standard	Target / Response Times
Respond to customer complaints and enquiries	Within 5 working days
Provide a full response	Within 10 working days



## Customer Feedback

Last year **93%** of our customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied with our Food service. The team is committed to working with local businesses and the local community to further improve levels of satisfaction and continually strives to provide a fair, consistent and quality service. We aim to enhance the quality of life of residents within the borough. All feedback received is used to inform and improve our service and we hope to improve on our customer satisfaction levels in the year ahead.

Our quality assurance procedures assess the work of our officers to ensure that it meets the high standard expected by the service.

## Resourcing

The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff allocated to food safety and standards work is **5.00 FTE** and the cost of the service during 2013/14 will be £225,000

A breakdown of the resources committed to Food Safety and Standards work is contained in Appendix A

During 2012/13 the team experienced resourcing pressure arising from the need to undertake detailed investigations; including a work related death incident and a number of other serious accident investigations. This pressure was compounded by an extended unplanned officer absence.

Members of the Team represent the Authority in a number of regional bodies with the aim of sharing good practice and achieving value for money including the Berkshire Food Liaison Group, The Regional Sampling Group and the Berkshire Infectious Disease group as well as participating in Imported Food Liaison Meetings co-ordinated by the Single Liaison Authority for Heathrow.



## **Staff Development**

On going development of the work force is paramount to ensure a comprehensive service is provided to the customer, whilst maintaining continuous improvement and providing value for money.

The Food Standards Agency requires that the Council maintains the competency of its officers and also that we have officers with sufficient skills to maintain the breadth of competency needed for Slough specifically. The towns close location to Heathrow airport places additional training requirements upon the team in relation to complex Imported Food legislation.

This year staff have attended, among other things, Imported Food training; Investigation Skills & Evidence Gathering training; swabbing and sampling using a ATP meter; a weeks course in HACCP evaluation; three day dairy products approval training; and microorganisms training, including specific E.Coli control training. Training and development is planned as part of the appraisal process and is tailored so that the Authority retains the specialist knowledge required in order to provide a Food Service which is appropriate to the needs of Slough residents and businesses.

**APPENDIX A Resource Requirements for Food Service Delivery 2013/14**

Service Provision	Expected output	FTE required	Resource
Primary Food Safety Inspections including Safe Food Award	140 high risk inspections	1.45	EHO/TSO
Primary Food Standards Inspections	13 High Risk 57 Medium Risk	0.50	EHO/TSO
Verification and monitoring visits	Approx 200	1.00	EHO/TSO
Support for businesses information training		0.20	EHO/TSO
Imported Food Control		0.50	EHO/TSO
Complaints	180	0.55	EHO/TSO
Sampling	100	0.10	EHO/TSO
Primary Authority Food Related Work	Difficult to estimate demand	1.00 (self funding)	EHO
Enforcement Action	May vary	0.30	EHO/TSO
Training		0.20	EHO/TSO
Catering for Health and other food awareness work		0.20	Nutritional Advisor
QA and updating of procedures		0.10	Manager
Day to day management of service delivery		0.80	Manager
Administration and maintenance of data		0.50	Support Officer

EHO = Environmental Health Officer

TSO = Trading Standards officer

## FOOD SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2013/14 - DRAFT

<p><b>Directorate:</b> CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES</p>	<p><b>Service Manager:</b> Levine Whitham</p>
<p><b>Division:</b> Enforcement &amp; Regulatory Services Consumer Protection &amp; Business Compliance <b>Team: FOOD</b></p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> £225,000.00 <b>Number of staff employed:</b> 4 FTE Dealing with Food Safety and Hygiene 1 FTE Dealing with Food Standards</p>
<p><b>Service Objectives:</b> <u>Protecting food, encouraging healthy eating and supporting Slough food businesses</u></p> <p>Provide a value for money food safety service within the Food &amp; Safety and Trading Standards Teams with excellent customer focus and well motivated competent staff to deliver our statutory obligations and the specific needs and priorities of Slough</p> <p>The timely delivery of specific work plans, evidence based initiatives and joint working with partners both within and beyond the Council to improving the quality of life in Slough and protect customers whilst supporting business growth and enterprise</p> <p><u>Health and Wellbeing</u> – Adding years to life and life to years 'Intervening early to tackle serious issues such as obesity and heart disease and promoting healthier lifestyles.'</p> <p><u>Economy and Skills</u> – Prosperity for all '... training that meets the needs of local employers and the local community'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Slough identifies the need to encourage health eating and improve levels of hygiene through the Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme, Catering for Health Awards and related projects with partners</li> </ul>	



Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
<b>Primary Authority (PA) and Compliance Support</b>  <b>Regulatory Services Wide Scheme</b>	<b>Economy and Skills</b>  <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	Continue PA business growth in line with projected target  Response times in line with Customer Charter and Pledge  Feedback from PA businesses  Hours of advice provided  Amount of 'formal' advice issued.  Number of businesses in Portfolio  Improved standards within partners business, with less enforcement action taken by Enforcement authorities,  <b>Launch a suite of support options for all types of businesses in Slough, including SMEs to include</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Primary Authority</b></li> <li>• <b>Chargeable Advice</b></li> <li>• <b>Buy with Confidence</b></li> <li>• <b>Food Hygiene Rating Scheme</b></li> <li>• <b>Catering for Health</b></li> </ul>	Designated officers to work closely with Primary Authority businesses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop partnership working relations with PS client businesses</li> <li>• provide specific advice in relation to management systems &amp; procedures and controls adopted by the company nationally</li> <li>• issue 'formal PA advice' where procedures and controls are deemed suitable and compliant</li> <li>• handle referrals from other local authorities and central government bodies on behalf of that business</li> <li>• publication of Inspection plans</li> <li>• Issue of advice and guidance to other Enforcement Authorities on the companies activities</li> <li>• maintain an accurate record of any advice and guidance</li> <li>• hold meetings with partner businesses on a regular timetable of mutual agreement.</li> </ul> Document actions, decisions and time spent with the business on FLARE	Keith Eaglestone (PAM)  Ginny de Haan  Trading Standards Manager  Levine Whitham  Mick Sims  All Officers	Ongoing  Monthly Reports on hours and income generation  Quarterly Review  Yearly overview of contract

Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
Inspection of food premises in Slough	Local Indicator on % of 'Broadly Compliant' Food Businesses  Health & Wellbeing  Economy and Skills	100% of high risk businesses to be inspected according to risk rating. To be monitored monthly  Complaints and service requests dealt with in line with Customer Service Charter and Pledge  Number of approvals issued within time limits  Increase in % of broadly compliant premises.  Increase in premises achieving 2, 3, 4 and 5 stars in the Food Hygiene Rating System.  Focused interventions and sector specific projects on high risk premises or where local intelligence suggest necessary	<p>Inspections based on risk; - 100% inspection of A, B and all other non complaint food businesses - Identified poor performing food businesses targeted with appropriate interventions</p> <p>Secure improvements where there are evident concerns, taking enforcement action where compliance is poor</p> <p>Alternative interventions to low risk premises, including newsletter, SAQ's, targeted advice sessions and other relevant advice ,</p> <p>Enhance advice for businesses on SBC web site Value: - <i>promoting food safety; protecting consumers in Slough and beyond from the dangers of food poisoning</i> - <i>Assessing Rat activity and waste issues at each food premises visit to support NET</i> - <i>Assessing compliance with regarding to smoke free.</i> - <i>Assessing health &amp; safety controls</i></p>	Food & Safety Team Leader  All Food Safety Officers  TS/NET/ Licensing acting as 'eyes and ears'  Support material from the FSA	March 2014  Monthly and Quarterly review.

			<i>and taking action where necessary</i>			
<b>Service Activity</b>	<b>Priority Theme</b>	<b>Targets and anticipated Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	
<b>Level 2 Food Hygiene Training Programme</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	<p>Number of food handlers trained in Food Hygiene</p> <p>Satisfaction from course evaluation sheet returns</p> <p>Internal audit of course procedures</p> <p>Improve food safety knowledge amongst food handlers, in turn improving food safety standards within businesses</p>	<p>To provide a minimum of 12 courses throughout the year.</p> <p>Maintain procedures required for accredited Chartered Institute of Environmental health (CIEH) training centre</p> <p><i>Added Value:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self funding training reducing delivery costs to SBC</li> <li>- Positive impact on BC %</li> <li>- Enforcement officer contact with businesses</li> </ul>	<p>Levine Whitham</p> <p>Support material from CIEH</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>Quarterly review</p>	

<b>Level 2 Nutrition Training programme</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	<p>Number of candidates trained Healthier food &amp; Special Diets</p> <p>Satisfaction from course evaluation sheet returns</p> <p>Internal audit of course procedures</p> <p>Improved food nutritional knowledge in businesses, in turn providing healthier menu options and nutritional food.</p>	<p>Provide a minimum of 4 courses throughout the year.</p> <p>Mountain procedures required for accredited CIEH training centre</p> <p><i>Added Value:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self funding training, reducing delivery costs to SBC</li> <li>- Positive impact on obesity rates</li> </ul>	<p>Joanne Ricketts</p> <p>Support material from CIEH</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>Quarterly Review</p>
<b>Service Activity</b>	<b>Priority Theme</b>	<b>Targets and anticipated Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>Food Hygiene Rating Scheme</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	<p>Measurable improvement on risk rating.</p> <p>Feedback from businesses.</p> <p>Increase in premises achieving 2, 3, 4 and 5 stars in the FHRs.</p> <p>Feedback from Businesses % Customer satisfaction</p> <p>Improved customer awareness of the Scheme, and better informed choices when eating out.</p>	<p>Continue to implement FHRS in Slough food businesses</p> <p><i>Added Value</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work to support % increase in Broadly Compliant businesses and target businesses seeking a financial gain from non-compliance</li> <li>- Support compliant businesses and target businesses seeking a financial gain from non-compliance</li> <li>- Peer pressure to improve ratings and threat of adverse publicity will compliment the Council's work</li> </ul>	<p>Ann Stewart</p> <p>All Officers to support</p>	<p>Quarterly review</p>

Catering for Healthy and other Healthy eating initiatives	Health & Wellbeing	<p>Number of CFH awards issued</p> <p>Facilitation of projects, including joint working with Public health, Trading Standards, and possibility of CIEH 'Take Away's' Toolkit, provision of data to evidence potential bids for future funding</p> <p>Support for the Councils performance in relation to Department of Health Public Health Indicator Outcomes</p>	<p>To continue to promote the Catering for Health award scheme in partnership with the SBC Public Health Team – linking with other work on obesity in Slough and it's health impacts ( CHD, Diabetes) Officers to promote the award at 100% of interventions</p> <p>Extension into the community with linked projects focusing on childhood obesity to include an annual school meals survey.</p> <p>Review the feasibility of other schemes to ensure the most effective delivery of service for Slough.</p>	<p>Jo Ricketts</p> <p>All Officers to support</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>Quarterly review</p>
Service Activity	Priority Theme	<b>Targets and anticipated Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Reactive Investigations, Food Complaints and service requests	Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	<p>Work in line with Enforcement policy, prosecutions template and internal procedures. Outcome from QA- 90% in line with procedures</p> <p>100% of request responded to within 5 days.</p> <p><b>Balanced score card:</b> number of enforcement actions</p>	<p>Take a minimum tolerance approach to serious incidents, whilst managing customer expectations in line with Customer Charter.</p> <p>Full range of enforcement options used, including Simple Cautions as appropriate in line with the enforcement policy</p>	All officers	<p>On going</p> <p>Assess during 1:1 meetings and Case Reviews</p>

<b>Private Water Supplies and Private Distribution Systems (for Water Services)</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<p>Complete Risk Assessments for Private Water Suppliers and ensure safe water supplies</p> <p>Review PWS Sampling Programmes in line with statutory guidance.</p> <p>DWI return completed.</p> <p>Identify Private Distribution Systems and verify with Thames Water Authority.</p> <p>Risk Assess Private Distribution Systems and set up water sampling programme in line with statutory guidance.</p>	<p>Complete Risk Assessments and implement Action Plans for Private Water Suppliers</p> <p>Assessment of Private Water Supplies information and collation for return to the Drinking Water Inspectorate</p> <p>Confirm locations of Private Distribution Systems, verify, Risk Assess, implement Action Plans and set up sampling programme</p>	Bill Campbell	March 2014 Monthly review
<b>Service Activity</b>	<b>Priority Theme</b>	<b>Targets and anticipated Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>Imported Food Controls &amp; Organic Imports</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	<p>Number of notifications of imported food processed, including onward transmission</p> <p>Enforcement action taken</p>	<p>Checking of consignments of food coming into Slough to remote transit sheds in the borough</p> <p>Verification of organic imported food</p> <p>Control of onward Transmission referrals and notifications of Personal Imports</p> <p>Investigations into illegally imported</p>	Levine Whitham All Officers to support	March 2014 Quarterly review

				Products of Animal Origin (POAO) and other restricted foods.  <i>Added value: Slough community, the rest of the UK and other EU countries are protected against illegal and hazardous imports from third countries</i>		
<b>Sampling</b>	Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	<p>Ensure safe and food and correct contents</p> <p>Number of samples taken and follow up of poor results.</p> <p>Number of joint initiatives with Food Standards Officers</p> <p>Imported food sampling where intelligence suggests necessary</p>	<p>Undertake sampling as part of a suite of interventions to improve food hygiene and food standards and focus on high risk and local needs.</p> <p>Participation in National and county wide sampling programmes</p> <p>Seek additional funds from external organisations e.g. Food Standards agency</p>	<p>Julie Snelling</p> <p>All Officers to support</p>	March 2014 Quarterly review	
<b>Service Activity</b>	<b>Priority Theme</b>	<b>Targets and anticipated Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	
<b>Infectious Disease Notifications &amp; Control</b>	Health & Wellbeing	Number of investigations investigated; responses in line with Service Pledge	Investigation of Infectious Notifications including suspected food poisoning outbreaks in line with Health protection Agency protocols	Ann Stewart All Officers to support	March 2014 Quarterly review	

<b>Promotion of Food Hygiene issues and involvement in joint projects with other partners</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	<p>2 newsletters per year</p> <p>Number of press releases issued</p> <p>Information on website kept up to date</p> <p>Other initiatives undertaken, including sector specific initiatives, joint projects and visits with licensing and TS</p>	<p>Increase awareness of food hygiene issues via local press, the Council's website and the publication of Newsletters</p> <p>Work with the Town centre manager to support local shops</p> <p><i>Added Value: utilise other teams to delivery information to improve awareness and compliance of food safety and standards issues.</i></p>	<p>Ginny de Haan</p> <p>Ann Stewart</p> <p>All Officers to support</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>Quarterly review</p>
<b>Internal Procedures including Officer competency and QA</b>		<p>Review of all internal procedures annually</p> <p>Monthly QA of all service areas</p> <p>Completion of Regulator Development Needs Assessments</p>	<p>Review and implementation of procedures to ensure compliance with FSA</p> <p>Competency and Framework requirements, to monitor performance and support officers in a consistent approach.</p>	<p>Levine Whitham</p> <p>All Officers to support</p>	<p>September 2013</p>



## Service Delivery Plan 2013/2014



Health, Safety and Wellbeing in Slough



## **The Consumer Protection & Business Compliance Group**

Consumer Protection & Business Compliance is an outward facing service group made up from the:

- **Trading Standards,**
- **Food & Safety and**
- **Licensing Teams**

Our aim is to achieve a safe, healthy and fair trading town for our residents, businesses and visitors. The wide ranging work of the group is risk based and fundamental in creating a level playing field in which responsible businesses can flourish and our communities remain protected from rogues.

## **Health & Safety Service**

Here are some interesting facts that you may not know about Slough Borough Council's Health and Safety Service.

We are responsible for enforcing health and safety in approximately 1,120 business premises including offices, warehouses, residential care homes, leisure centres, shops, pubs and restaurants.

Employees and members of the public made 100 complaints about health and safety last year in relation to, for example, slip or trip hazards, faulty lifting equipment, workplace temperatures and electrical safety.

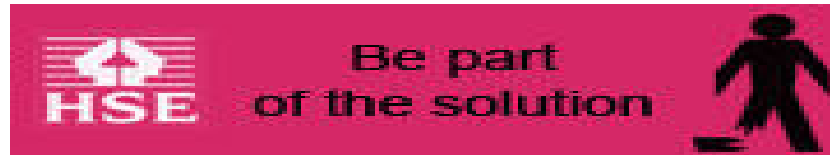


Slough Borough Council plays a major role in protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and members of the public in Slough.

We achieve this by targeted projects, inspections, seminars and media campaigns to help reduce accidents and ill health in the work place and to protect others from risks.

We have adopted a 'sensible risk management approach' in line with

**'The Health & Safety of Great Britain\\ Be part of the solution'** the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) strategy.



The HSE and local authorities, as co-regulators for health and safety legislation have a vital role to play in ensuring that the regulatory system:

- is focused on better health and safety outcomes and not purely technical breaches of the law;
- makes it as straightforward as possible for business, and in particular, small businesses, to deliver a healthy and safe working environment;
- is enforced in a manner which is proportionate to risk;
- avoids placing unnecessary burdens on businesses which manage health and safety effectively; and
- maintains a strong deterrent against those who fail to meet their health safety obligations and put their employees at material risk thereby also deriving an unfair competitive advantage.

The health & safety service is delivered via the Food & Safety Team. The team actively supports and works with businesses through various projects such as, Primary Authority, Estates Excellence; asbestos 'duty to manage' and safety in butchers' shops – all helping businesses to assess risks and put in place practical controls, which comply with the detailed regulations and Codes of Practice in these areas.

We work to help safeguard migrant and other vulnerable workers linking in with the Private Sector Housing Team.

By working with the Police and other agencies we also help to reduce incidents of violence and robbery in retail and licensed premises.

The purpose of this plan is to let you know how we are going to achieve the various measures that we will be taking, in conjunction with our partners and other agencies, to enhance public health, safety and wellbeing.

We will do this by:

- Providing advice and information to Slough businesses and residents
- Inspecting businesses on the basis of risk so reducing the burden on compliant businesses whilst targeting those that seek to gain an advantage from non- compliance
- Investigating complaints and listening and responding to your concerns

- Investigating accidents, giving priority to those involving major injury or death in the workplace
- Developing safety and health promotion initiatives
- Consulting our customers on the quality of our service
- Working in partnership with others to improve our outcomes for Slough. For example - The Health & Safety Executive, Slough Business Community Partnership, Thames Valley H&S Group, UK Border Agency, Thames Valley Police, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and other council teams.

We are committed to helping change the health and safety culture in Britain and retain common sense in the approach we take to ensuring the protection of employees and the public.

### **Good Health and Safety, Good For Everyone.**

We will work in partnership with the other enforcing authorities and stakeholders to reduce the inspection burden on business alongside focussing on better outcomes.

We will continue to refine our intervention strategies for business by further improving the targeting of relevant and effective interventions and preserving inspection for higher risk premises. This should lead to a reduced number of proactive inspections and will free up capacity for more effective outcome focussed interventions.

Greater emphasis will still be placed on reactive work, dealing with complaints, accidents and incidents in accordance with Government directive to target those businesses that are poor performers and not meeting the requirements under health and safety legislation.

This plan is reviewed annually and we welcome your views, comments and suggestions on how it can be improved.

Please forward your views to Ginny de Haan, Head Consumer Protection and Business Compliance, St Martins Place, 51, Bath Road, Slough. SL1 3UF  
Tel: 01753 875255 or e-mail:

[ginny.dehaan@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ginny.dehaan@slough.gov.uk)

To find out more about our service and initiatives that we are planning this year please read on or visit our website at :

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/health-and-safety/>

# Proud to be Slough



## Our Vision

The focus of work within the Health & Safety service is to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its statutory obligations under the relevant legislation and that this is geared towards Sloughs specific community and business needs, based on local intelligence, our work with partners, the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) incorporating wherever possible the key themes of

- economy and skills
- health and wellbeing
- housing
- regeneration and environment
- safer communities

Our work also supports the two cross-cutting themes of the SCS; civic responsibility and promoting the image of the town.

One aim is to protect and enhance public health and wellbeing whilst supporting local businesses. We will achieve this through the attached Action Plan; this should be read in conjunction with our Enforcement Policy which aims to ensure a graduated approach to enforcement based on risk.



The Enforcement Policy reaffirms our commitment to carry out our duties in an open, fair and consistent manner. We recognise that most people want to comply with the law; therefore, we want to support and enable them to meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense. Assessment of risk and the likelihood of reoccurrence are major factors in our enforcement decisions. Firm action, however will be taken, including prosecution, where appropriate.

The service plan sets out the actions we are taking to enhance and improve health, safety and wellbeing in Slough

## How did we perform?

Our service plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and provides the opportunity to record our achievements and identify those key issues that still need to be addressed.

### **The health & safety service can be divided into key activities and projects namely:**

- Primary Authority Advice
- Inspections of high risk businesses
- Promotion of health, safety and wellbeing awareness including Smoke Free advice and enforcement; Asbestos – Duty to Manage.
- Estates Excellence – promoting leadership in the business community
- Work Safe Slough – support with work related violence and aggression
- Butcher Safety – safeguarding employees using dangerous machinery
- Accident investigations
- Legionella Controls - assessments, registration and inspection of cooling towers. Advising on the safe maintenance of showers, spa baths and other potential sources of harmful Legionella bacteria in commercial premises
- Listening to and responding to complaints from the public, employees and businesses
- Neighbourhood working on local safety concerns
- Protection of vulnerable and migrant workers

## **During 2011/12 our key achievements included**

### **Primary Authority Scheme**

We have changed the way in which advice is provided to businesses with the establishment of Primary Authority Partnerships; this has brought many advantages to businesses in Slough.



Primary Authority Partnerships comprises a legally binding contract between the Authority and a business to provide ongoing specialist advice on specific areas of regulation applicable to that business, such as health & safety, food safety, fair trading, product labelling and product safety. Our Officers are able to provide companies trading across council boundaries robust and reliable advice, through the creation of these

legal partnerships. The scheme also provides a safety net to ensure that local authorities are consistent in the way they regulate businesses.

Since the introduction of Primary Authority partnerships in Slough in April 2011 we have already secured 32 successful PA partnership agreements with the following companies – 1 & 1 Internet, Acer, Azko-Nobel (ICI), Black & Decker, Burger King, Citroen, Fiat, Food Partners, Garden Centre Group, Grosvenor Consumer Products, Group SEB, Herbalife, Horlicks, Jumbo Ltd, LG, Mars, Mars Drinks, Mitchell Group usa, Parking Control Management [PCM], Ragus Sugars, Reckitt-Benckiser, Rollover.com, SuperDrug, Telefonica Uk Ltd [02], Autodata, GRAB Distribution, Perry Bishop & Chambers Ltd, Innovation bites and Bluebird Sports Drinks Ltd. This service is uniquely provided by in house Environmental Health & Trading Standards officers. Our portfolio of PA partners is set to continue to grow.



Cost recovery is an essential element of the contracts and applicable to Primary Authority businesses with an hourly charge for any work undertaken. Although the scheme is relatively new to Slough Borough Council, almost £78,500 costs were recovered during 2012/13, **an increase of 40%** from £56,000 in 2011/12. Projected income for 2013/14 is £120k. This cost recovery enables the Council to support businesses in Slough and increase the availability of specialist officers who are funded from PA cost recovery at no extra cost to the Council. Last year 728 interactions with all our PA companies were successfully completed; a high proportion of these were satisfied consumer complainants.

As a Primary Authority we have already had communication with many other Councils to ensure that inspection and enforcement action reflects the advice we have already given, and is proportionate. We continue to work with the businesses to produce national inspection plans, and give guidelines to other councils to avoid unnecessary checks and tests.

The number of businesses joining in Primary Authority Partnerships with the Council continues to grow and this will have a profound impact upon how we deliver the service requiring a flexible approach to our management of resources.

More information on Primary Authority Partnerships can be found on the website <http://www.bis.gov.uk/brdo/primary-authority>

Businesses that would like to join the Scheme can either contact 01753 875255 or e mail [primary.authority@slough.gov.uk](mailto:primary.authority@slough.gov.uk)



## Accident Investigations

The team received **210** accident notifications, a 15% increase from the previous year. Of these accidents;

- **56%** were related to slips and trips
- **9%** were related to manual handling



During 2011/12, we have noticed a reduction in the number of physical assaults on employees and other incidents of workplace violence in the retail, late night takeaway, taxi business and leisure gaming sectors.



We have devoted resources and worked in partnership with Thames Valley Police and businesses to assess the risk of workplace violence in individual workplaces, increased staff awareness and trained them on proactive preventative measures.

We can also report a significant reduction in incidents involving workplace transport that in previous years have arisen from the misuse of fork lift trucks, movement of delivery vehicles and unsafe practices performed whilst loading and unloading at retail and warehouse premises within the borough.



Workplace transport risks and control measures to safeguard persons, both employees and public, remain a high priority, however and will continue to be assessed during every workplace inspection.

The need for businesses to report accidents, to examine why the accident has happened and deal with potential risks continues to be a high priority and is included in our advice and support.



## Complaints about health and safety in Slough

We responded to 100 complaints and enquiries about health & safety issues which included;

- Defective passenger lifts and other lifting equipment, including fork lift trucks.
- Requests for advice about asbestos risks, removal and disposal.
- Low temperatures in work environments during the winter months
- High temperatures and uncomfortable workplace environments during warmer months
- Welfare at work, including stress related concerns, special provision for expectant mothers and provision for young persons at work and on work experience.
- Unsafe practices in the cosmetic beauty industry.
- Various unsafe work practices in different sectors, including childcare activities, children's' activity centres. and sports and leisure clubs
- Controls required for water cooled air conditioning systems and other water systems in relation to Legionella
- Concerns about electrical and gas safety, including proper testing regimes.

## Health & Safety Inspections

We target our resources on an assessment of risk to ensure that **100%** of high risk premises are inspected and our projects such as Estates Excellence, Work Safe Slough and Butcher Safety are commissioned in response to local evidence of risk.

Heightened awareness, nationally, led to increased emphasis on gas and electrical safety issues in the catering sectors.

## Cooling Tower Registration

We have re- registered **21** premises with a total of **33** cooling towers. This is a significant reduction from 2008 when **63** cooling towers were registered - a result of several water based cooling systems being decommissioned due, in part, to the high cost of maintenance and water treatment involved and also as a result of the continuing development of quieter, more energy efficient, dry ventilation systems.



Registration of wet cooling towers and evaporative condensers, with the Local Authority, is a legal requirement.

An important part of the registration and monitoring process is the assessment of stringent controls to prevent multiplication and possible infection with Legionella together with scrutiny of the businesses' own sampling procedures and results. On-site inspections are also carried out for those systems where the Council is the enforcing authority for health and safety.

## Working with partners

We recognise that working with partners can increase our capacity to deliver health & safety solutions for businesses in Slough. During 2012/13 we worked to develop the following important projects.

### ■ Slough Working Well

We continue to work with the Slough Business Community Partnership the PCT, HSE, Slough Community Leisure and many others to promote Slough Working Well project which was launched in 2010.



A programme of events takes place regularly to provide advice and give guidance to businesses and employees about workplace health and wellbeing.

### ■ Construction Safety

Jointly with the HSE and SBC's Building Control Team, we monitor development and construction activities within the borough and react immediately to complaints or concerns about dangerous structures, demolitions, unsafe work practices and work with asbestos so as to safeguard both the public and construction workers.



In partnership with HSE, Flexible Warrants allow Slough Borough Council Environmental Health Officers to work in premises where the HSE are the enforcement authority for health & safety and for HSE inspectors to also operate in local authority enforced premises in Slough.

Of particular note last year was the attendance by Inspectors from the Food & Safety Team to monitor and stop unsafe work activity involving asbestos, dangerous scaffolding and other hazardous activities at construction sites in the Borough.

## **Enforcement Action**

We have adopted a comprehensive set of measures to protect residents of Slough, people who work here and visitors and promote sensible risk management. We actively work with businesses and other stakeholders to achieve our shared goals.



Any enforcement action by us will be graduated, proportionate and in accordance with the council's enforcement policy, which is currently under review.

Enforcement action was taken by the Health & Safety team in 2012/13 in the form of 3 Improvement Notices being served on business owners relating to –

- dangerous electrical systems in two premises
- insufficient risk assessment in a care home

Immediately dangerous situations reinforce the necessity for safeguards to be in place to prevent dangerous occurrences and reduce risk of injury. They also reinforce the importance of verification checks by both employers and enforcing authorities. By maintaining a competent trained inspectorate Slough Borough Council fulfils its obligations under the Health & Safety at Work, etc., Act 1974

## **THE OLYMPICS 2012**

During 2012 our service prepared for the Olympics in a significant co-ordination approach with other Council teams to ensure that businesses were aware of their responsibilities and that residents and visitors to the borough had confidence in their Olympic experience in Slough.

These advance preparations were essential as Slough was a major transport hub and adjacent to the rowing events at Dorney for both the Olympics and Para Olympics as well as the earlier torch relay passing through the town. We were anticipating an increase in demand on our businesses such as hotels, shops, restaurants, public houses and taxis and we took action to ensure that businesses continued to trade legally, that no short cuts or health risks were taken.

To assist and support businesses we undertook additional pre event inspections to ensure they were safe. We also provided information on safe food preparation particularly in respect of food prepared in advance when businesses were expecting a sudden influx of customers.

This increase in business was potentially seen as an opportunity for any less reputable businesses to take advantage over legitimate traders; special duty officers were available throughout the torch relay and games period to respond to any concerns or complaints.

The results demonstrated our efforts were a great success as there was no increase in health & safety complaints during the Olympic period.



### **Variation from service plan**

Departures from this service plan will be exceptional, capable of justification and be fully considered by the Head of Consumer Protection and Business Compliance, Ginny de Haan, before varying action is taken. Reasons for any departure will be fully documented.

### **Areas for development**

We are always striving to move the service forward. In order to achieve this, we set targets to identify areas for development during the coming year. These include, continue to improve the information about health & safety on the Council's website to support businesses in Slough with compliance and awareness of sensible risk management.

## Service Standards

Providing excellent customer services is one of our key priorities. In order to achieve this we will always:

- Be polite, friendly and offer a helpful service
- Take the time to listen and explain things
- Provide accurate information and advice, in a clear and straightforward way
- Deal with enquiries immediately, but if this is not possible, tell you who we have passed your enquiry to and their contact details
- Keep you informed of progress and the outcome of our investigations
- Treat you fairly and with respect



## Customer Pledge

We aim to provide every customer with a quality service and will seek feedback from you to help further improve the quality of the services we provide. A manager will contact you personally if you are unhappy with the service received.

In addition, we have introduced the following standards against which we will monitor the responsiveness of our service, namely:

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Target / Response Times</b>
Respond to customer complaints and enquiries	Within 5 working days
Provide a full response	Within 10 working days

## Customer Feedback

Last year **93%** of our customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied. The team is committed to working with local businesses and the local community to further improve levels of satisfaction and continually strives to provide a fair, consistent and quality service. We aim to enhance the quality of life of residents within the borough. All feedback received is used to inform and improve our service and we hope to improve on our customer satisfaction levels in the year ahead.

Our quality assurance procedures assess the work of our officers to ensure that it meets the high standards set for the service.



## Resourcing

The Food & Safety team employs **5 FTE** Full Time Equivalent. The FTE available for health and safety work is **1.5 FTE**.

During 2012/13 the team experienced considerable resourcing pressure arising from the need to undertake detailed investigations; including a work related death incident and a number of other serious accident investigations.

## Staff Development

On going personal development of the work force is paramount to ensure a comprehensive service is provided to the customer, whilst maintaining continuous improvement and providing value for money.

## Benchmarking

The Head of Food, Safety and Businesses Support has been trained as a 'Peer Challenger' and has carried out peer challenges in two other unitary authorities. This gives a useful insight and comparison for the team.



The work in relation to compliance to the Section 18 Standard also provides an 'excellence standard' for benchmarking the service.



**The health & safety action plan for 2013/14, which outlines our planned work for the year is detailed in Appendix A.**

# Appendix A - Health & Safety Action Plan 2013/14

<b>Directorate:</b> CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES		<b>Service Manager:</b> Levine Whitham, Food & Safety Manager
<b>Division:</b> Enforcement & Regulatory Services Consumer Protection & Business Compliance	<b>Budget:</b> £101,00.00	
	<b>Number of staff employed:</b> 1.5 FTE	
<p><b>Service Objectives:</b></p> <p>Provide a value for money health &amp; safety service within the Food &amp; Safety Team with excellent customer focus and well motivated competent staff.</p> <p>The timely delivery of specific statutory work plans, evidence based initiatives focused upon local priorities; joint working with partners both within and beyond the Council to improving the quality of life for Slough residents, visitors and those that work in Slough.</p> <p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p><u>'Improve local people's health and quality of life.'</u> Ensuring serious work related risks, such as legionella and asbestos are controlled, and taking action in our role as enforcing authority for health &amp; safety issues where there are evident concerns</p> <p><b>Economy and Skills</b></p> <p><u>'Maintain growth and attract business in the town'</u> A quality business is a safe business - providing support for local employers to manage risks sensibly.</p> <p><b>Regeneration &amp; Environment</b></p> <p><u>'Encourage private sector investment'</u> provide reliable and quality regulatory advice for businesses to reduce red tape and regulatory burden for both small and large businesses based in the town</p>		

ACTION PLAN FOR 2013/14						
Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date	
Primary Authority  Regulatory Services Wide Scheme	Economy and Skills  Health & Wellbeing	Refer to separate Action Plan for Primary Authority  Continue PA business growth in line with projected target  Response times in line with Customer Charter and Pledge  Feedback from PA businesses  Hours of advice provided  Amount of 'formal' advice issued ?  Number of businesses in Portfolio  Improved standards within partners business, with less enforcement action taken by Enforcement authorities,	Refer to separate Action Plan for Primary Authority Designated officers to work closely with Primary Authority businesses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>develop partnership working relations with PS client businesses</li><li>provide specific advice in relation to management systems &amp; procedures and controls adopted by the company nationally</li><li>issue 'formal PA advice' where procedures and controls are deemed suitable and compliant</li><li>handle referrals from other local authorities and central government bodies on behalf of that business</li><li>publication of Inspection plans</li><li>Issue of advice and guidance to other Enforcement Authorities on the companies activities</li><li>maintain an accurate record of any advice and guidance</li><li>hold meetings with partner businesses on a regular timetable of mutual agreement.</li></ul> Document actions, decisions and time spent with the business on FLARE	Keith Eaglestone (PAM)  Ginny de Haan  Trading Standards Manager  Levine Whitham  Mick Sims  All Officers	Ongoing  Monthly Reports on hours and income generation  Quarterly Review  Yearly overview of contract	



Service Activity	Priorities	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
High Risk Inspections  Other Inspections at HSE direction.	Balanced Score Card  Health & Wellbeing  Economy and Skills	Number of inspections to be completed within due date -100%    HSE-specific inspection targets -TBA	<p>'A' rated premises</p> <p>Unrated premises to reviewed and risk assessed focussing on sector-specific premises <u>Allocation of inspections due on a quarterly basis</u></p> <p>Delivery in line with LAC 67-2 rev 3 – Guidance to Local Authorities on Targeting Interventions</p> <p>Awaiting <b>New National Code for Local Authority Enforcement</b> and will review Key Actions to include HSE-Specific Inspection Targets and Local intelligence-led Inspections, including local priorities</p>	<p>Bill Campbell</p> <p>Tahir Baig (FLARE)</p> <p>All officers to support</p> <p>Levine Whitham/ Bill Campbell and officers to support</p> <p>TBA</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>Monthly review</p>
Food Premises	Balanced Score Card  Health & Wellbeing  Economy & Skills	Number of Food Premises Inspections and Visits to include Health and Safety – 100%	<p>Consider Health and Safety during all visits.</p> <p>Imminent concerns; gas safety, electrical safety, pressure vessels, equipment guarding, slips and trips.</p> <p>Review officer inspection pro-formas, Flare in-putting and guidance.</p> <p>Arrange for full Health and Safety Inspection for poor performers/ major concerns.</p> <p>Liaison with Fire Officer where appropriate.</p>	<p>Ann Stewart/ Bill Campbell</p> <p>All Officers</p> <p>Bill Campbell/ Ann Stewart</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>Quarterly Review</p>

Service Activity	Priorities	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion date
<b>On-going investigations and prosecutions</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> <b>Economy and Skills</b>	Work in line with Enforcement policy, prosecutions template and internal procedures Adhere to timescales for prosecution file submission	Allocation of resources to adequately respond to serious incidents to comply with statutory enforcement obligations	All officers	On going Assessment during 1:1 meetings and Case Reviews
<b>Incidents</b> Accident or complaint investigations; service request response	<b>Balanced Score Card</b> <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> <b>Economy and Skills</b>	% Response within Customer Charter and Pledge timescales	Assessment and response to accident notifications, complaints and service requests relating to work place health, safety and wellbeing; including referrals from HSE  Imminent concerns; falls from height, slips and trips workplace transport etc.  Priority to work related death, serious injury, lift/lifting equipment reports  Promotion of sensible risk management	All officers	On going

Service Activity	Priorities	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion date
Legionella Controls. Registration of Cooling Towers	Regeneration & Environment Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	Number of cooling towers registered – 100%	Update of the register of cooling towers in Slough and monitor the controls in place to minimise risk of Legionella infection.	Bill Campbell	Ongoing Monthly review
		Number of risk assessments verified - 100%	Inspect individual premises at change in management, water treatment company; significant change in risk assessment/water treatment; alteration, replacement or shut down of plant.	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
		HSE National Project of Legionella Control	Undertake requirements of HSE's National Legionella Project to include surveys and inspections of premises. Project Brief to be produced by HSE during Quarter 1 of 2013/14.	All officers to support	TBA
Promotion of Health & Safety	Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	Quarterly up-dates completed to website	Review Slough BC web site for information and advice on H&S and direct to HSE website where possible. Review HUB training.	Bill Campbell	March 2014
		2 newsletters per year	Increase awareness of health & safety issues via local press, the Council's website and the publication of Newsletters	All officers to support	Quarterly review
		Number of press releases	Regular press releases for new Guidance, Legislative change  Produce H&S information pack for new business start-ups. Liaise with FSB, SBCP, etc.	Ensure accurate data recording on FLARE as interventions.	

Service Activity	Priorities	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
<b>Asbestos</b> – Duty to manage	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>	Number of ASB5 (Licensed Works) assessed 100%	Assessment of controls in place for minimizing risks from exposure of asbestos fibres. Inspect for safe working and legal compliance. Link to National and local promotional work	Bill Campbell	March 2014 and ongoing
		Number of Non-Licensed works assessed 100%	Receipt of notifications and inspect as necessary.	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
		Respond to enquiries about asbestos	Give accurate, easy to understand, advice.	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
		Update information on Council website	Joint work with Cleansing, Environmental and Housing Teams	Bill Campbell	
<b>Care Homes</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	Sector specific project targets based on number of interventions and improvements achieved.	HSE Toolkit adapted to Slough needs. Liaison with Martin Lower and others in CWB	Levine Whitham All officers to support	TBC

Service Activity	Priorities	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
<u>Slough Specific</u>					
Slough Safety Advisory Group	Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills Regeneration & Environment	Attend SAG meetings. Take necessary follow-up action	Attend meetings and advise on H&S standards and requirements. Inspect and enforce for H&S where necessary	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
Slough Working Well		Link to SWW work plan; supporting partnership with SBCP, PCT,NHS, etc. Meets HSE intervention criterion.	Attend meetings and help facilitate work detailed in work plan	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
Thames Valley H&S Group		Support partnership with Private Sector businesses. Meetings attended. Meets HSE intervention criterion.	Attend meetings and advise on enforcement issues, changing H&S standards, legislative change, etc.	Bill Campbell	Monthly

<p>Identification, with local partners and other SBC teams, of key risks that impact specifically upon Slough</p>		<p>Joint outcomes achieved</p> <p>Projects scoped to meet these evidenced needs</p>	<p>Maintain links with local partners and other SBC Teams to gain an awareness of changing/ emerging work/risk activities in Slough.</p> <p>Participate in Crime Reduction and Environment (CRED) events</p>	All officers to support	Ongoing
<p>Berkshire H&amp;S Liaison Group</p>		<p>Regional H&amp;S Strategy Group. Jointly with Berkshire LAs and HSE</p>	<p>Attend meetings and agree regional strategies. Keep up to date in developments in H&amp;S delivery and changes in statutory requirements</p>	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
<p>London and South East Boroughs' Asbestos Group</p>		<p>Regional Asbestos Consultation and Strategy Group. Jointly with Boroughs, HSE and invited interest groups</p>	<p>Attend meetings and consult on asbestos issues and standards.</p> <p>Agree consistencies of approach on asbestos issues</p> <p>Consult on legislative and guidance changes</p>	Bill Campbell	Ongoing
<p>Internal Procedures for H&amp;S including Officer Competency and QA</p>		<p>Review all internal procedures</p> <p>Implement QA</p>	<p>Review procedures at time of legislative or guidance/standards change.</p> <p>Ensure compliance with S18 Standard (<b>soon to be National Code requirements</b>) including competencies of Inspectors by RDNA and GRIP.</p>	<p>Bill Campbell</p> <p>All officers to support</p>	Ongoing

**APPENDIX C**

# SLOUGH TRADING STANDARDS TEAM



## Service Delivery Plan 2013/2014

## **The Consumer Protection & Business Compliance Group**

Consumer Protection & Business Compliance is an outward facing service group made up from the:

- **Trading Standards,**
- **Food & Safety and**
- **Licensing Teams**

Our aim is to achieve a safe, healthy and fair trading town for our residents, businesses and visitors. The wide ranging work of the group is risk based and fundamental in creating a level playing field in which responsible businesses can flourish and our communities remain protected from rogues.

### **Trading Standards**

Slough Borough Council's Trading Standards Service has responsibility for the vast majority of consumer protection issues that arise in Slough.

As part of our duties we provide the following to the Slough community:-

- Advice and guidance to consumers and businesses based within the borough, in conjunction with Citizens Advice Consumer Service.
- Complaints handling – the department dealt with 1340 complaints from April 2012-March 2013. An increase of 12.3% on the previous year.
- Working closely with our partner departments (e.g. Food & Safety Team, Environmental Health, Licensing Team, Community Safety Team, Drugs and Alcohol Team, etc.).
- Playing a major role in your health, safety and economic well being.

This Service Delivery Plan is provided as a means of keeping you informed of our plans and how we intend to achieve them, with the continued cooperation of our internal and external partners and stakeholders.

The work we have carried out and continue to carry out is achieved with the use of the following:-

- Prompt response to intelligence/complaints; triggering detailed investigations into consumer protection offences.
- Targeted project work.
- Participation in regional & national liaison groups.
- Risk based inspection programmes.
- Training and advice provided to both consumers and traders.
- Working with other organisations with similar priorities.
- Proportionate enforcement – with prosecution of offenders as a last resort (in line with our Enforcement Policy).



This plan is reviewed annually and we welcome your views, comments and suggestions on how it could be improved.

Please forward your views to :-

**Ginny de Haan, Head of Consumer Protection & Business Compliance**

Tel. : 01753 875255 or e-mail : [ginny.dehaan@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ginny.dehaan@slough.gov.uk)

Or

**Sarah Langley, Interim Trading Standards Manager**

Tel.: 01753 875255 or e-mail : [sarah.langley@slough.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.langley@slough.gov.uk)

Or

**Angela Satterly, Compliance Team Leader (Trading Standards)**

Tel.: 01753 875255 or email: [angela.satterly@slough.gov.uk](mailto:angela.satterly@slough.gov.uk)

Address :

**Slough Trading Standards, St Martin's Place,  
51 Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3UF.**

Or visit our website at : <http://www.slough.gov.uk/tradingstandards>

The following pages provide more information on our achievements last year and our plans for the year ahead.



## Our Vision

The focus of work within the Trading Standards service is to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its **statutory obligations** under the relevant legislation and that this is geared towards Sloughs specific community and business needs, based on local intelligence, our work with partners, the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) incorporating wherever possible the key themes of

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Since the introduction of Primary Authority partnerships in Slough in April 2011 we have already secured the 32 successful PA partnership agreements with the following

companies – 1 & 1 Internet, Acer, Azko-Nobel (ICI), Black & Decker, Burger King, Citroen, Fiat, Food Partners, Garden Centre Group, Grosvenor Consumer Products, Group SEB, Herbalife, Horlicks, Jumbo Ltd, LG, Mars, Mars Drinks, Mitchell Group usa, Parking Control Management [PCM], Ragus Sugars, Reckitt-Benckiser, Rollover.com, SuperDrug, Telefonica Uk Ltd [02], Autodata, GRAB Distribution, Perry Bishop & Chambers Ltd, Innovation bites and Bluebird Sports Drinks Ltd. This service is uniquely provided by in house Environmental Health & Trading Standards officers. Our portfolio of PA partners is set to continue growing.



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The number of businesses joining in Primary Authority Partnerships with the Council continues to grow and this will have a profound impact upon how we deliver the service requiring a flexible approach to our management of resources.

More information on Primary Authority Partnerships can be found on the website <http://www.bis.gov.uk/brdo/primary-authority>

Businesses that would like to join the Scheme can either contact 01753 875255 or e mail [primary.authority@slough.gov.uk](mailto:primary.authority@slough.gov.uk)

## Age restricted sales

*"Among 35 European countries, the UK has the third-highest proportion of 15 year olds who report having been drunk 10 times or more in the past year."*  
(Drinkaware statistics 2012)

- Under age sales enforcement, protects children from harmful items and substances and is a vital feed into the 'Health & Wellbeing' and 'Safer Communities' priorities of the SCS.



- **Awareness Plays in Schools** – Three performances were delivered of "Last Orders" (alcohol awareness play and workshop) and "Skin Deep" (knife crime awareness play and workshop), both provided by Solomon Theatre Group in 2012/2013 to 380 young people (13-15 year olds). We are exploring possible sources of funding so we can deliver more educational training to young people in 2013/14.



- **FREE Proof of Age Cards** are provided to 16yr olds at all of Slough's 11 schools – 1187 x cards were processed in 2012/13. This work will be continued in 2013/14.
- **Trader Information Packs** were distributed to local businesses; providing information on the law on age restricted products, along with advice on due diligence and further information/documents to assist staff training on under age sales matters.
- **Licensing Reviews** have been used for all traders failing a test purchase – this can result in conditions on licence or even a complete revocation
- **Testing purchasing** is essential and establishes whether local businesses are complying with the law and not selling restricted goods to children.

Figures for 2012/13

- **Tobacco** – attempted purchases = 27 - sales = 1
- **Alcohol** – attempted purchases = 26 - sales = 1
- **Fireworks** – attempted purchases = 14 - sales = 0



## **Total Sales = 2 from 67 attempted purchases.**

Criminal proceedings into the above matters are still ongoing.

In 2013/14 Trading Standards will continue to provide trader information packs and advice to local businesses and conduct a programme of age related test purchasing to ensure businesses are compliant and underage young people are protected from alcohol, cigarettes and the dangers of fireworks.

## **Tobacco control work**

Slough Trading standards continue to have representative attendance on the National Tobacco Focus Group meetings, to share best practice with colleagues from around the UK.



In addition to this, Slough Trading Standards have re-launched the East Berkshire Tobacco Alliance.

The Alliance is a partnership with our new colleagues in Public Health, working with additional stakeholders in Solutions 4 Health, Smoke Free Slough team, Neighbourhood Enforcement, Childrens and Young Persons team, the Berkshire Fire Service, HMRC, along with the Public Health/Trading Standards departments of other local authorities.

The aim of the Alliance is to contribute to a reduction in smoking prevalence across the region and assist in reducing smoking related illness in Berkshire as a whole. The East Berkshire Alliance is also exploring closer working arrangements with the West Berkshire Alliance; to encourage a Berkshire Wide approach to Tobacco Enforcement, Cessation & Smoke Free promotion.

## **Illegal money lending and credit**

Slough Borough Council work with the TSSE illegal money lending team (put together to investigate suspect loan sharks in the region) as part of the Borough's 'Safer Communities' & 'Health & Wellbeing' priorities.

- Loan Sharks have a considerable negative impact on the economic
- Wellbeing of communities and individuals who are affected
- Illegal money lenders flourish in austere times and it is imperative that mechanisms are in place to deal with issues as soon as they arise.
- Solutions can include the setting up of credit unions; to give consumers an alternative source of credit.
- Short term loan agreements can offer varying APR (Annual Percentage Rate) rates - further research is planned, by Slough Trading Standards, to find out what options are open to consumers looking to get credit for low amounts over a limited period.

The department has also carried out credit licence checks (27 in total over the year) on behalf of the Office of Fair Trading, in order to establish that businesses applying for credit licences are suitable to hold one. During 2012-2013 a total of 48 credit checks were completed; an increase of 78% on 2011/12. Trading

Standards will continue to conduct credit license checks as requested by OFT in 20-13/14.

## Food Standards

Trading Standards carried out 100% of their high risk routine Food Standards Inspections in 2012/2013, in addition to other food standards enforcement visits.

- A total of 93 x Food Standards visits were carried out last year.

### Further work in Food Standards include:-

- Assistance to local businesses; including labelling advice to new food businesses,
- Primary Authority work with more established companies in the borough (e.g. Mars (UK) Ltd, Horlicks, Jumbo Ltd, Food Partners, Ragus Sugar, Burger King, etc.)
- Food sampling projects, in various different areas, in conjunction with the TSSE group, including projects on :-
  - 18 Imported Food – on the correct labelling & composition of food imported from outside the EU.
  - 10 P.A.H Smoked Food samples – for excess polyphosphates
  - 8 TVN BBQ samples – for freshness of meat in sauces
  - 7 DNA samples on behalf of the FSA, in response to the horsemeat scandal
- Assisting our 'in-house' Nutritional Advisor to compile further data on Primary and Secondary school children's lunchbox foods.
- In total 43 samples were procured during 2012 -2013 on composition, allergens, freshness and DNA.

A separate Food Standards Plan has been produced for Trading Standards for 2013/14. Targets for 2013/14 include:

- Complete 100% high risk food inspections
- Complete 50% medium risk food inspections
- Complete 100% Food Standards Agency funded imported food samples
- Complete regional food sampling programmes as required

## Rogue Traders and Doorstep Sales

The Trading Standards doorstep sales response team are constantly on hand to assist residents with any issues that they have with rogue traders that carry out work and then charge extortionate amounts for their services.



- Residents can be quoted one price and then the cost increases as the job progresses.
- Rogue traders tend to target elderly or vulnerable people, who may be easier to manipulate or intimidate.
- Some cases have reported victims being driven to banks/building societies to draw out large sums of cash to pay these traders.



- Trading Standards usually hear of the problem after it has happened and after the trader has left; usually leaving little trace of their whereabouts.
- In 2012/13 Trading Standards were able to stop a rogue trader ripping off a consumer as it was happening; saving the resident £3000.00.
- The team work closely with Social Services Safeguarding Team; providing advice and guidance to vulnerable adults. Five cases were handled during 2012 -2013 that were referred to the safeguarding team.
- A **“Rogue Trader Day”** was carried out in April 2012, with the assistance of Thames Valley Police and the Slough Borough Council Community Wardens.
- Visits were made to premises where building work was being carried out; to establish that these traders were providing proper paperwork and good quality work.
- Further presentations to elderly and vulnerable groups were made this year to the **“Older Peoples Forum”**, the **“Carers Rights Day”** and the **“Age Concern AGM”**. In total 6 presentations were given to these groups during 2012 – 2013.

Effectively dealing with rogue traders and preventing doorstep crime remains a priority for 2013/14, and Trading Standards will continue to provide a rapid response team and share intelligence with neighboring authorities and Thames Valley Police to protect vulnerable consumers from becoming victims of doorstep crime.

## Education

Education is vital for consumers, in order for them to make informed choices when purchasing and to prevent them being ripped off.

During 2012/13, Slough Trading Standards, provided the following training:-

- **Nutritional labelling workshops** – Food awareness teaching sessions to schools in the Borough (Foxborough School, Common Road, Langley); raising awareness of how to read food labels and find out how much fat and sugar is present in certain foods.



- Most of the workshops were provided for Year 6 children and involved joint working with School Nutrition Network Team.

- **Trader Packs and Newsletters** are also provided to local businesses, to give advice on compliance with the law. During 2012/2013 twelve trader packs were delivered to businesses in the Borough.

In 2013/14 Trading Standards will be providing a range of educational services to both businesses and consumers, relating to the nutritional composition of food and healthy eating.

## Publicity

With the varied remit of enforcement that Trading Standards cover, it is essential that this is publicised to inform people of the work we do.



- Press releases are published to advise of results that we have achieved or to provide warnings to the public of issues that have arisen.
- Examples include advice on :-
  - Bogus callers / Doorstep sellers,
  - Raising awareness on Loan Sharks
  - Advice on the purchase and safe use of fireworks
- Naming and shaming of counterfeiters
- ....along with results on recent legal cases.
- A total of 12 press releases were issued in 2012/13.
- The department also give regular interviews to local radio stations
- Officers in the team have also appeared live eight times over the year on the “Anne Diamond Show” on BBC Radio Berkshire; providing advice on areas such as counterfeiting, cold calling, the Olympics and mobile phone contracts.

## Product Safety

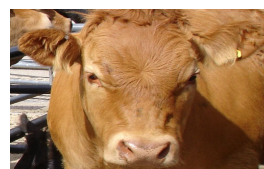
Trading Standards enforce safety legislation on a variety of different products; e.g. toys, cosmetics, electrical and gas appliances, nightwear clothing, etc. where there are specific UK or EU regulations.



- Highlights from 2012/1213 include:
- Safety checks at **Enhanced Remote Transport Sheds** (ERTS) have been carried out part of a regional TSSE Safety Project.
- The ERTS are customs bonded warehouses where imported goods are stored prior to their dispatch to the rest of the UK or Europe.
- There are 37 x ‘ERTS’ in the Slough Borough that deal with safety related products.
- Safety product recalls have also been carried out as part of our work with local **Primary Authority** companies.

## Animal Health

Trading Standards carry out inspections for Animal Health, Animal Welfare, and Animal by products, including:-



- **Inspections on livestock** & other animals (e.g. sheep, goats, chickens, pigs, horses, cattle, etc.), to provide welfare enforcement and advice.
- **Inspections of the Langley Horse Fair** – monitoring welfare issues and educating on legal requirements.
- **Animal By-Products** (e.g. butchers waste, retail raw meat waste, animal carcasses, etc.) - to ensure that certain raw meat waste is disposed of correctly and doesn't go to landfill sites.



- We work with our colleagues in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest (for livestock inspections) and with the City of London Animal Health team (in relation to inspections of the local Horse Fair in Langley).
- Animal diseases are always a threat. The **Slough Notifiable Animal Disease Contingency Plan** is updated constantly and regular liaison with our Emergency Planning section is paramount.

## Counterfeit Goods

Counterfeit goods can be dangerous, as well as resulting in the economic detriment of the purchaser. The honest trader will also suffer as they will not be able to compete on price. Much of the money from counterfeit & illicit smuggled trade can go to fund people trafficking, prostitution and other organised crime activities. Counterfeit alcohol may contain harmful substances, be over strength and may not be made with any quality control.

Seizures made in Slough in 2012/13 include:

- 132 bottles of Counterfeit **wine & spirits**
- 250 items of illegal / counterfeit **tobacco products**.
- 39 items of counterfeit clothing



Criminal investigations into these matters are ongoing.

We were, however, pleasantly surprised by the lack of counterfeit activity before and during the Olympic and Paralympic games. Trading Standards officers were on call and Community Wardens assisted by acting as our eyes and ears on the ground.

## Control of Explosives and Poisons

### Fireworks

- 28 explosives registrations were issued for local traders in 2012/13.
- All premises were inspected under the **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974**, to establish safe storage and sale of explosives/fireworks.
- 1 retailer was also licensed to sell fireworks throughout the year.
- The majority of traders were compliant,
- Some contraventions have warranted further investigation.
- Under age test purchasing for fireworks was carried out once again in early November 2012. No sales were made.



## Poisons



- Poisons Licence visits have been carried out to assess products that are restricted under the Poisons Act 1972.
- There are 25 businesses which are authorised to store and sell poisons within the borough.
- Several visits have flagged up areas where traders are stocking products such as caustic soda, kettle descalers, weed killer (classified as a poisons under the Act) without holding the necessary authorisation.

## Weights and Measures

- As well as looking at the products that are sold, Trading Standards Officers also check the accuracy of the equipment and measures that are used to sell them.
- Checks are carried out at petrol pumps, spirit measures, supermarket scales, vehicle weighbridges and other equipment which is deemed to be the 'final determination of the quantity' of products being sold.
- Slough's team of Inspectors of Weights & Measures provide advice to local businesses packing by weight or volume, to make sure that their systems are robust and durable; ensuring that consumers can have confidence in the purchases that they make.
- This year, inspectors deal with a number of complaints relating to weights and measures matters, ranging from inaccurate weighbridges, petrol pumps, cash for gold premises, short weights on food products, etc.
- The department also provide weights and measures advice and assistance to our Primary Authority companies in the borough.

## Buy with Confidence/ Support with Confidence

Our approved trader scheme has been operating since 2006, registering business fields as diverse as estate agents, landscape gardeners to financial advisors.

- BWC is an initiative run by Trading Standards South East and Trading Standards South West (SWERCOTS) and is fast becoming a national scheme.
- Over 5000 registered businesses across 53 authorities nationally and many more being approved.
- In Slough, registration for businesses costs £25.00 at present but is under review for the coming year.
- Anybody who wishes to sign up for Buy With Confidence should contact us on 01753 875255 or [buywithconfidence@slough.gov.uk](mailto:buywithconfidence@slough.gov.uk)
- If you are looking to find an approved trader, further details can be found at [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)



Slough's Buy With Confidence team are currently in discussion with the council's Social Services Department, with the aim of implementing a similar scheme for social care services, called Support With Confidence. We are hoping that this comes to fruition in the coming year.

## Road Traffic Checks

Trading Standards carry out checks (with Thames Valley Police) on the weight of commercial vehicles; from small transits vans to large articulated lorries.

Overloaded road vehicles can contribute to:

- Excessive noise,
- Increased air pollution,
- Road damage
- Vehicle accidents.
- Steering and braking problems

An overloaded vehicle could potentially endanger other road users and constitutes as 'dangerous driving'. However, for the first time in many years, no overloads have been found.



## Targeted Project Work

Further to the aforementioned Food Standards & Rogue Trader project work, Slough Trading Standards carried out the following project work :-

- **KITE (Kettles, Irons, Toasters & Electric Blankets) Testing –**
- In 2012/13 Trading Standards and Electrical Safety experts carried out testing of local residents' electrical equipment to ensure that it was safe to use at a local retirement home.
- 32 electrical appliances were tested, including kettles, toasters, irons, vacuum cleaners and electric blankets.
- Out of these tests 7 items failed safety testing and were deemed to be unsafe to use. One item was considered a fire hazard due to a faulty fuse.
- Slough Trading Standards are planning to carry out another KITE testing day at a different venue, later this year and will be working in partnership with The Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service to deliver this service.
- **Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's)** – a pilot project will be carried out in 2013/14 to establish the compliance of Landlords, Estate Agents, Letting Agents with EPC legislation, i.e. ensuring that properties that are rented/marketed in the Borough are compiling with the requirements of the legislation.

## THE OLYMPICS 2012



During 2012 our service prepared for the Olympics in a significant co-ordination approach with other service departments to ensure that businesses were aware of their responsibilities and that residents and visitors to the borough had confidence in their Olympic experience in Slough.

These advance preparations were essential as Slough was a major transport gateway and adjacent to the rowing events at Dorney for both the Olympics and Para Olympics as well as the earlier torch relay passing through the borough. We were anticipating an increase in demand on our businesses such as hotels, shops, restaurants, public houses and taxis. We wished to ensure that businesses continued to trade legally, that no short cuts or safety risks were taken. We were particularly concerned that counterfeit Olympic merchandise would be available, which deprives the games organisers (LOCOG) of funding to run the games. Officers received training from LOCOG to identify counterfeit products.

This increase in business was potentially seen as an opportunity for any less reputable businesses to take advantage over legitimate traders. As part of our preparations special duty officers were available throughout the torch relay and games period to respond to any concerns or complaints raised. We were also able to linked in to a national Trading Standards intelligence reporting system.

Advice letters were sent out to traders particularly drawing their attention not to promote non authorised Olympic material and to avoid counterfeit products.

Officers attended the torch relay and with police removed an unauthorised flag seller, liaised with our licensing colleagues over two unauthorised ice cream sellers and required two Chalvey traders to removed unauthorised Olympic promotional material.

During the Olympic period we received no related complaints regarding goods or services and we believe our preparations were a total success.



## Complaints and Enquiries

From the 1st April 2012, the national consumer advice service has been transferred over to Citizen's Advice, with their new service Citizen's Advice Consumer Service (CitA).

- Complaints and enquiries for 2012-13, received via Consumer Direct were 4601; a slight increase (from last years 4116) of 485 or 11.8%.
- Complaints requiring action increased from 1193 to 1340; an increase of 12.3%.
- We have also received a total of 392 service requests for companies for whom we act as Primary Authority (PA).
- This is an increase on the 168 total from last year of 133%.



## Enforcement Action

Trading Standards have a comprehensive set of measures in place to protect consumers and promote business in the area.

- Any enforcement action taken will be graduated and proportionate; in line with Slough Borough Council's Enforcement Policy.
- A full copy of the policy can be found on our website:- <http://www.slough.gov.uk>
- A summary of our enforcement work for the year can be found in Appendix A.



## Striving for Excellence

### Service Standards

Providing excellent customer service is one of our key priorities. In order to achieve this we will always:

- Be polite, friendly and offer a helpful service.
- Take time to listen and explain things.
- Provide accurate information and advice in a clear straightforward way.
- Deal with enquiries immediately, but if this is not possible, explain why.
- Provide you with any other contact details that you may need.
- Keep you informed of the progress and outcome of any investigations.
- Treat you fairly and with respect.



## Customer Pledge

- We aim to provide every customer with a quality service and will seek feedback from you to help further improve the quality of the services we provide.
- The Trading Standards Manager, will contact you personally if you are unhappy with the service received.
- In addition, we have introduced the following standards against which we will monitor the responsiveness of our service, namely :

## Customer feedback

- Our quality assurance procedures assess the work of our officers to ensure that the service meets the high standards that is expected.
- Our commitment to working with local businesses and the local community enables us to improve levels of satisfaction
- In addition to supporting economic growth and continually striving to provide a fair, consistent and quality service.
- We aim to enhance the quality of life of residents within the borough, making Slough a safe environment to live, where service users can access advice and making healthy informed choices.



- Last year (2012/13) customer satisfaction levels were consistent with the previous year's results, at 90%.
- For the financial year 2012-13, a business satisfaction survey was also conducted for the first time from quarter two onwards. The Service received an excellent 100% business satisfaction feedback.
- All feedback received is used to enhance and improve our service and to prioritise our resources in the most effective way.

## Resourcing

Slough Trading Standards employ 9 staff; 5 of which are part time staff (effectively 6.5 FTE's). The overall cost of the service for 2013/14 will be £ 376,000.

## Looking to the Future and the Challenges Ahead

The current economic climate is continuing to create challenges in the Slough community and many traders are struggling to make ends meet. The department is committed to assisting business find solutions to their legal compliance in the most cost effective way possible. However, those that turn to criminal activity to make money will face strict enforcement action.

Trading Standards are looking at new ways of working with internal and external partners. The **Energy Performance Certificate Pilot Project** is a prime example of this. The team will be working closely with partners in Planning, Council Tax, Housing Standards, along with the CLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) national bodies, to ensure that local landlords and property sellers are compliant with the **Energy Performance in Buildings (Enforcement and Certificates) (England and Wales) Regulations 2012**. This legislation enables new tenants and property purchasers to have information on how much money it will cost to for utilities at their new property, before they conclude their contractual agreement.

It is clear that food sampling plays an important part in consumer safety, especially in the light of the horse meat scandal. Protecting consumers within Slough with regard to the composition and allergens present in food has never been more important than now, preventing food fraud is paramount. Reducing salt, fat and sugar in food by advising our food businesses helps towards controlling obesity in Slough.

**The trading standards service plan for 2013/14, which outlines our planned work for the year is detailed in Appendix B**

## **Variation from the service plan**

Departures from this service will be exceptional, capable of justification and be fully considered by the Trading Standards Manager before varying action is taken. Reasons for any departure will be fully documented in the action plan.

## APPENDIX A – PROSECUTION RESULTS 2012/13

Offence	Defendant Number	Fine	Costs	Additional Penalty
Unhallmarked gold	(1)	£ 1000.00	£ 1431.66	
Counterfeit wine	(1)	£ 450.00	£ 1300.00	
	(2)	£ 450.00	£ 1300.00	
Counterfeit wine	(1)	£ 625.00	£ 1400.00	
Under age sale of alcohol	(1)	£ 115.00	£ 350.00	
	(2)	£ 35.00	£ 150.00	
Under age sale of tobacco and alcohol	(1)	£ 300.00	£ 150.00	
	(2)	£ 900.00	£ 1005.74	
Sale of fireworks outside of allowed retail period	(1)	£ 1000.00	£ 850.00	
Counterfeit DVDs	(1)	N/A	N/A	6 months custodial sentence
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£ 4875.00</b>	<b>£ 7937.40</b>	

### Simple Cautions accepted for the following:-

- 2 x under age sale of tobacco and alcohol
- 2 x under age sale of tobacco only
- 2 x counterfeit champagne
- 4 x counterfeit vehicle diagnostic software

**Total Simple cautions = 10**

### Written warnings issued for:-

- 2 x for traces of chicken meat found in lamb mince
- 1 x for out of date food
- 1 x for possession of unhallmarked gold
- 1 x for misleading omission of pricing by skip hire company
- 1 x lack of fire extinguisher on fireworks inspection

**Total No. of Written Warnings = 6**



## Appendix B - Trading Standards Action Plan 2013/14

<b>Directorate:</b> CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	<b>Service Manager:</b> Sarah Langley – Interim manager
<b>Division:</b> Enforcement & Regulatory Services Consumer Protection & Business Compliance	<b>Budget:</b> £376,000
	<b>Number of staff employed: 6.5 FTE plus Primary Authority resource funded by cost recovery</b>
<b>Service Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a value for money trading standards service with excellent customer focus and well motivated competent staff.</li><li>• The timely delivery of specific statutory work plans, evidence based initiatives focused upon local priorities; joint working with partners both within and beyond the Council to improving the quality of life for Slough residents, consumers and visitors.</li></ul>	
<b>Safer Communities</b> <u>'Reduce crime and fear of it' Delivery a programme of underage sales, working with partners to achieve the licensing objectives and reduce anti-social behaviour, Investigate scams and rogue traders.</u>	
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> <u>'Improve local people's health and quality of life.'</u> Reducing counterfeit and dangerous goods available within the town and their importation. Protecting consumers from food fraud; promoting the awareness of food labelling requirements and taking action in our role as enforcing authority for trading standards issues where there are evident concerns	
<b>Economy and Skills</b> <u>'Maintain growth and attract business in the town'</u> Providing support for local employers to trade fairly and tackling those that seek to gain an advantage by not complying with consumer law requirements.	

ACTION PLAN FOR 2013/14						
Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date	
Primary Authority  Regulatory Services Wide Scheme	Economy and Skills  Health & Wellbeing	<b>Refer to separate Action Plan for Primary Authority</b>  Continue PA business growth in line with projected target  Response times in line with Customer Charter and Pledge  Feedback from PA businesses  Hours of advice provided  Amount of 'formal' advice issued ?  Number of businesses in Portfolio  Improved standards within partners business, with less enforcement action taken by Enforcement authorities,	<b>Refer to separate Action Plan for Primary Authority</b> Designated officers to work closely with Primary Authority businesses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• develop partnership working relations with PS client businesses</li><li>• provide specific advice in relation to management systems &amp; procedures and controls adopted by the company nationally</li><li>• issue 'formal PA advice' where procedures and controls are deemed suitable and compliant</li><li>• handle referrals from other local authorities and central government bodies on behalf of that business</li><li>• publication of Inspection plans</li><li>• Issue of advice and guidance to other Enforcement Authorities on the companies activities</li><li>• maintain an accurate record of any advice and guidance</li><li>• hold meetings with partner businesses on a regular timetable of mutual agreement.</li></ul> Document actions, decisions and time spent with the business on FLARE	Keith Eaglestone (PAM)  Ginny de Haan  Trading Standards Manager  Levine Whitham  Mick Sims  All Officers	Ongoing  Monthly Reports on hours and income generation  Quarterly Review  Yearly overview of contract	

## TRADING STANDARDS ACTION PLAN FOR 2013/14

Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
Underage Sales		To reduce the number of sales of age restricted products in the borough. Supporting community safety priorities	Test purchasing of age restricted products (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, etc.). 2 x exercises on alcohol/tobacco + 1 x fireworks per year (dependant on level of intelligence received).	Fakhra Zaman (+ other officers)	March 2014  With quarterly monitoring of individual project work.
	Safer Communities	To educate local traders, in respect of under age sales legislation.	Review and refresh training seminars and trader packs jointly with the Licensing team	Fakhra Zaman	
	Health & Wellbeing	To continue to provide FREE proof of age cards to 16 year old at local schools in the borough.(funded by Safer Slough Partnership)	Issue of Proof of age cards in support of Safer Slough Partnership activities	Lina Johnson	
	Economy and Skills	To work with local schools to encourage uptake of alcohol awareness plays for young people.  To share intelligence and best practice with external agencies and other partners.	Liaison with local schools to assist them in staging awareness plays in schools (e.g. "Last Orders", "Skin Deep", etc.)  Develop other interventions with partners to provide efficiencies in delivery of corporate priorities	Lina Johnson	
			Collaborative working with TSSE regional focus groups and sharing data to build regional and national statistics.	Fakhra Zaman	

Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
Counterfeit and illicit trade	Safer Communities Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	To increase awareness of traders and consumers of the dangers of counterfeit and illicit products in the market, reducing the amount of counterfeit products available in Slough  Number of actions and nature of products seized/ street value	Assess local information and prioritise as appropriate investigation and seizure of counterfeit and illicit products being sold in the borough at retail outlets, markets or online (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, DVDs, clothing and other branded items). Brand protection assistance and advice to PA companies. Working collaboratively with partners (e.g. Trade Mark holders, Police, HMRC, etc.) to redevelop other cost effective interventions	Peter Adshead + Fakhra Zaman / Lina Johnson (Training)  All officers.	March 2014  With quarterly monitoring of specific project work.
Tobacco Control / Tobacco Alliance work	Health & Wellbeing	Reduction in smoking prevalence and related health conditions Collaborative working locally and regionally between all agencies involved in smoking related work. Creation of a Berkshire Smoke Free Alliance	Collaborative working and agreement across Berkshire Trading Standards and the Public Health Teams.  Joint interventions to promote tobacco awareness and close working with the Smoking Cessation provider Build upon links with Licensing and Food & Safety Teams to deliver joint initiatives on Smoke Free and tobacco sales	Dean Cooke (All Officers to support)  Mick Sims Levine Whitham	March 2014  With quarterly review on specific project work.
Consumer Credit work	Safer Communities Health & Wellbeing Economy & Skills	To provide consumer credit audits, for licence renewals; as requested by the OFT.  To increase awareness of the dangers of Loan Sharks and encourage intelligence regarding local problems.	Build upon success of work with the Birmingham Loan Shark Team, extending Bite Back and with enforcement outcomes provided by Birmingham TS. Carry out credit licence audits to ensure that the trader is a fit and proper person to conduct this type of business. Working with internal and external partners (e.g. TV Police, Social Services, Benefits and the voluntary sector to raise awareness of safe and secure financing	Angela Satterly  Jaspal Singh  Angela Satterly	March 2014  With quarterly review on specific issues.

Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
<b>Animal Health - Contingency Plans and Inspect horse/livestock dealers to bring into compliance.</b>	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Safer Communities</b>	To ensure that all relevant Contingency plans & procedures are up to date.  To inspect Langley Horse Fair and advise traders to bring them into compliance.  To inspect local livestock dealers at medium risk premises.	Maintain all Animal Disease Contingency plans as directed by DEFRA, in partnership with Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest Trading Standards.  To carry out a monitoring programme at the Langley Horse Fair, to ensure compliance.  Inspection of local animal keepers and quarterly monitoring to ensure that all AMLS and AMES data inputting are completed within set targets.	Dean Cooke  Dean Cooke and City of London AH officers.  Dean Cooke & Shared AH Officer	<b>Annual review December 2013 March 2014</b>
<b>Intelligence led test purchasing, inspections and projects to protect consumers from potentially dangerous product/substances</b>	<b>Safer communities Economy &amp; Skills Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	To ensure that products which may pose a risk to consumers are prevented from entering the market place.  Visiting 100% the number of ERTS distribution centres in Slough.	Ongoing participation in the national "Ports project" and taking samples of suspicious products.  Relevant enforcement action taken if necessary.	Russell Clarke  Russell Clarke	<b>March 2014 with Quarterly Monitoring</b>
<b>To work with the 19 other trading standards authorities in the South East and local communities for a safe and fair trading environment to maximise local accountability.</b>	<b>Safer Communities Health &amp; Wellbeing Economy and Skills</b>	Improved enhanced consumer protection and training opportunities by partnership working through the various TSSE specialist groups.  Completion of regional projects relevant to Slough	Support TSSE Focus Groups and regional training etc  Benefit from TSSE joint bids (where appropriate).	Ginny de Haan & TS Manager  All officers to support	<b>March 2014</b>

Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
On-going investigations and prosecutions	Safer Communities Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	Work in line with Enforcement policy, CPS Guide for Crown Prosecutors and the Regulators Compliance Code. Adhere to time scales for prosecution file submission	Allocation of resources to adequately respond to serious incidents to comply with statutory enforcement obligations	All officers	On going Assess during 1:1 meetings and case reviews
Internal Procedures including Officer competency and QA	Economy & Skills	Review of all internal procedures annually Fully implemented QA	Review and implementation of procedures to ensure compliance with FSA Competency and framework requirements, to monitor performance and support officers in a consistent approach.	TS Manager	March 2014
To enable consumers to make informed healthy lifestyle choices of food by enforcement of food standards legislation	Health & Wellbeing	To ensure that :- - 100% of high risk - 50% of medium risk -: of food businesses are inspected and rated. Involvement in targeted sampling projects for compliance with a wide range of food legislation (e.g. compositional standards, compliant labelling, nutritional information, additives, allergens, etc.), with further follow up enforcement as required.	Undertake inspection programmes to focus on risk and local needs.  Participation in national/regional sampling programmes including: - Legally compliant nutrition and health claims. - Composition of curries/ Chinese meats/ kebabs.  To work collaboratively with TSSE to undertake the Food Standards Agency imported food sampling based on local priorities	TS Manager Angela Satterly + other officers where necessary	March 2014 Quarterly review



Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
To continue to working collaboratively with other agencies in seeking out and apprehending rogue traders		To protect elderly/vulnerable residents from doorstep crime.	Rapid Response Team for reactive Doorstep interventions.	TS Manager Angela Satterly	
Interventions to tackle rogue traders, unfair, illegal and unsafe trading practices.	<b>Safer Communities</b>	25% increase in the number of 'Buy With Confidence' businesses	Promotion of the Buy With Confidence Scheme and establish joint delivery arrangements to achieve efficiencies with Surrey Trading Standards	Fakhra Zaman	
Further development of recommended trader scheme.	<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	To organise educational presentations to vulnerable adult groups on the dangers of doorstep crime.	Continue to promote service provision in this area	Angela Satterly Jaspal Singh	<b>March 2014</b>
Protection for the Elderly and Vulnerable		Provide publicity to raise awareness of developing consumer issues (including scams).	BBC Radio Berkshire Interviews	Fakhra Zaman	<b>With Quarterly monitoring</b>
Improving awareness of consumer protection scams/risks.	<b>Economy and Skills</b>	To support relative initiatives with other enforcement agencies, TSSE & NTSB.	Press releases	All officers	
		To deliver a strong enforcement message to potential suspects with robust enforcement action.	National Rogue Trader Day working with partners.	Jaspal Singh	
		To raise public awareness of doorstep crime and provide reassurance thereby reducing the fear of crime.	Facilitate the necessary resources to support this service activity.	TS Manager	
			Develop intelligence in respect of known suspects and to identify intelligence gaps	All officers	



Service Activity	Priority	Targets and anticipated Outcomes	Key Actions	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
Road Traffic checks	Health & Wellbeing Economy and Skills	A reduction in the number of overloaded vehicles.	Working in partnership with Thames Valley Police based upon local evidence to reduce the number of over weight vehicles	Peter Adshead Fakhra Zaman (	March 2014

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council

**DATE:** 23rd July 2013

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services  
Community Governance Review Group

**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875011

**WARD(S):** All

**PART 1**  
**FOR DECISION**

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS**  
**WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF SLOUGH**

**1. Purpose of Report**

At its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013 the Council agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review within the Borough. The Terms of Reference of the Review were agreed and a Member Review Panel established to consider the review and make recommendations to the Council. This report considers the responses to the first stage of the public consultation carried out as part of Review having regard to the law and the guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission.

**2. Recommendations**

The Council is requested to consider the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Group and determine whether to Resolve:

- (a) That feedback be given to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council as set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.11 of the report for their consideration and that the Council reserves the right to test public opinion at/after the parish council elections if it is not satisfied that the Parish Council is engaging more widely with local people.
- (b) That in the light of the response to the first stage of the consultation a further consultation be undertaken, in accordance with the guidance on Community Governance Reviews, with the electors and other interested parties to gauge views on the future of Britwell and Wexham Court Parishes and their Councils.
- (c) That electors and other interested parties be consulted on proposed changes to the area of Britwell Parish and its Council and its electoral arrangements as set out in paragraph 7.20 – 7.27 and map attached at Appendix 2.
- (d) That Langley Neighbourhood Forum be informed that the case for a new parish council has not been made and that the Forum be advised to consider

returning to this matter at some future date and in the meantime to raise its concerns directly with ward councillors.

If the Council agrees resolution (a) to (c) above, that the Council Resolve:

- (a) The nature of the second stage consultation to be undertaken and that the costs be met from the Contingency Fund.
- (b) That the Returning Officer be authorised to determine all matters in relation to undertaking the consultation following consultation with the Chair of the Review Group and Commissioner for Performance and Accountability and other members of the Review Group if time permits.
- (c) That the Community Governance Review timetable be amended to extend the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage consultation period to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

### 3. **Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities - Cross-Cutting themes**

**Civic responsibility** - Effective governance arrangements are central to a successful modernised and transformational council and the Community Governance Review is an essential part of those arrangements.

### 4. **Other Implications**

#### (a) Financial

There will be a financial cost in conducting the next stage of the Community Governance Review particularly in respect of the consultation process. Costs to date for the Review have been accommodated within existing budgets.

Estimated costs for the Stage 2 consultation process are dependant on the nature of the consultation undertaken and options are set out at Paragraph 8.4. It is anticipated that the consultation will comprise:

- A formal advisory poll/or other survey and
- A letter explaining the stage 2 consultation delivered to all residents in both parishes, interested groups and parties seeking comments and
- A letter to the two existing Parish Councils and attendance at meetings if requested and
- Public notice of the consultation in local newspapers, council offices and the website.

Depending on the nature of the consultation, costs would range from £16,500 to £45,000. There is no specific budget provision for these additional costs and they would need to be agreed to be funded from the contingency fund.

#### Risk Management

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal Risk of legal challenge to	Seek legal advice at all stages of the Review	Proposals must bring about improved community

decisions		engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services
Property	N/A	N/A
Human Rights	None at this stage	
Health and Safety	N/A	
Employment Issues	None at this stage	
Equalities Issues	EIA prepared	
Community Support	Ensure consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties so that community support for the way forward is effectively sought	Community engagement improved as a result of the recommendations of the review
Communications	Consultation is appropriate and engages all interested parties	Residents given the opportunity to influence how their local area is governed
Community Safety	N/A	N/A

<p>Financial</p> <p>See above – No financial provision exists for this review and costs to date have been absorbed within existing budget provision. Budget to carry out extensive consultation needs to be identified. There will be additional costs associated with on-going legal advice and any subsequent challenge to recommendations could involve additional legal costs</p>	<p>Ensure Statutory Guidance on Reviews is followed and recommendations are evidence based.</p>	
<p>Timetable for delivery</p>	<p>The Review must be completed within one year of commencement. The Review timetable is attached to the report. Final recommendations to be reported to November Council meeting.</p>	
<p>Project capacity</p>	<p>Review Manager currently supporting the Review. Additional resource in electoral services required to administer advisory poll.</p>	

Reputation	Ensure Statutory Guidance on Reviews is followed and recommendations are evidence based	
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(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The conduct of a CGR is governed by Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act"). Slough Borough Council as a principal council must comply with both Part 4, Chapter 3 (Sections 79 to 102) of the Act and the Terms of Reference adopted by the Council for the purpose of carrying out the review. Section 100 of the Act states that a principal council must have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews. This Guidance is prescriptive. It sets out tests that have to be met

With regard to the dissolution of a Parish Council, the principal council needs to:

1. Consider local opinion including both the local electors and parish councillors;
2. Provide clear and sustained evidence of local support for abolition;
3. Demonstrate local support for abolition over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. at least eight years). This support should be sufficiently informed. This gives a properly constituted parish council a significant opportunity to exercise its functions to enable local people to judge the parish council's ability to contribute to the local quality of life;
4. Consider what arrangements will be in place to engage with communities once the parish council is abolished such as alternative forums run by the local community or residents associations.

New or revised parish electoral arrangements come into force at ordinary parish elections so they usually have to wait until the next scheduled parish elections (2015). They can come into force sooner only if the terms of office of sitting parish councillors are cut so that earlier parish elections may be held for terms of office which depend on whether the parish is to return to its normal year of election. If revised parish electoral arrangements are to be implemented in the third year of sitting councillors' term of office, provision can be made to cut short the term of office of existing councillors to three years. Elections could then take place with all councillors serving a five year term of office enabling the parish to return to its normal year of election.

The changes arising from the Slough (Electoral Changes) Order 2012 (SI 2012/2769), where the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) made changes to the parish of Britwell, affect the Governance Review change timetable. If the Council wishes to proceed with changes to the parish, the Council will need to submit an application to the LGBCE for consent to the changes to the Parish as part of the LGBCE review process. If consent is granted, the LGBCE will issue a further statutory instrument

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed at the start of the Community Governance Review.

**5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 At its meeting held on 29th January 2013 the Council agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review within the Borough area including the parishes and their electoral arrangements, and also other forms of governance in the un-parished areas. It also approved terms of reference for the review and a timetable, and appointed a Review Group comprising the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal, two further Labour Group Members and a Member of the opposition to consider the review and make recommendations to the Council.
- 5.2 The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services, and to ensure that electors across the whole Borough are treated equitably and fairly.

**6. Background**

- 6.1 There are currently three parish councils within the borough. The electoral arrangements in the parish of Britwell have been affected by the recent borough ward boundary review, by the division of the parish into two wards – Britwell East and West to be effective from the Parish Council elections in 2015. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) advised as part of its final recommendations that it did not have the power to recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of their review but that the Borough Council did have the power to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements by undertaking a Community Governance Review. This issue is addressed further in paragraph 7.20 of the report.
- 6.2 The Council must as part of the review consult with local people and take into account any representations made in connection with the review. The review must ensure that the proposed community governance reflects the interests and identities of the community. It must also make certain that the arrangements are effective and convenient for the electors of that community. The Review Group has now completed the evidence gathering first stage of the Review.
- 6.3 As agreed by the Council the review is focused primarily on the parished areas of the Borough but may also consider other forms of community representation which local people may have set up in the Borough and which help make a distinct contribution to the community such as residents' associations, community forums, neighbourhood working groups, tenant management organisations etc.
- 6.4 As Members will know, there are active residents and community groups in various parts of the Borough and it is clearly important that the review should also take these into account, especially if specific proposals are put forward by local people during the consultation stages of the review.

- 6.5 The review may consider the creation, abolition, merging or altering of parish councils and any subsequent electoral arrangements. New parishes may be created as a result of the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, or sense of identity. All parishes must fall within the existing borough boundary. The timetable for the Review is set out at Appendix 1.

## **7. Results of Public Consultation**

- 7.1 The Review was approved by the Council at its meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and launched on 1<sup>st</sup> February with a new Council webpage, public notices posted at St Martin's Place, libraries and community centres and notification by letter and email to local community and leisure organisations, housing associations, business organisations, the police, the health authority and local schools. The Parish Councils were also notified together with the National Association of Local Councils, Berkshire Association of Local Councils, the Slough District Association of Local Councils and the Slough Council for Voluntary Service.
- 7.2 Parish council chairmen were invited to make submissions to the review and meetings were held with them in March/April followed by drop-in sessions arranged in each of the parish areas.
- 7.3 At its meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 the Council agreed to extend the deadline of the initial consultation period to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013 following representations from one of the parish councils asking for a meeting with the Review Group and meetings were subsequently held with newly elected Chairmen of Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Councils and also with Thames Valley Police.
- 7.4 Submissions have been made to the Review Group by the parish councils and 22 letters, reports and emails have been received in response to the review, one of which relates to the review as a whole, 16 relate to Colnbrook with Poyle, three to Britwell, one to Wexham Court and one to the Langley area. In addition, 200 responses have been received to surveys carried out by the Slough Labour Party in the Britwell and Wexham Court parish areas, 170 of which relate to Britwell and 30 to Wexham Court. 19 responses have also been received to a survey carried out by local residents in the Colnbrook with Poyle parish area. These responses are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **(a) Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council**

- 7.5 In March 2013 the Review Group met Councillor Peter Hood, the Chairman of the Parish Council together with Councillor Ray Angell, (Vice-Chair) who made a submission as part of their response to the public consultation. The submission and the notes of the meeting will be published on the Council's website together with the other views, comments and submissions received.
- 7.6 The majority of the 16 submissions received are positive and supportive of the Parish Council including letters received from the police and schools, the Colnbrook Residents Association and Colnbrook Community Partnership and several local residents all of whom speak of constructive working relationships and valued local services eg. making the village a safer place; obtaining a new bus route; providing hanging baskets in the summer, and the Christmas lights; match funding for community schemes; sports and children's play facilities in local parks; achieving



Green Flag status for Colnbrook recreation ground and Pippins Park; end of term awards at the two schools and financial support for new gym and playground equipment and a local park project, and their active support for school fairs and village fetes.

- 7.7 Other examples which have been given include the Parish Council's sustained work in building a cohesive community that residents can take pride in, and the time and commitment which parish councillors devote to helping make the parish a better place in which to live and work; their initiative in holding regular surgeries in the village where local residents can meet councillors to discuss problems; and the 'Parish Chat' which brings together the various groups and services operating within the parish including the police, the borough council and schools.
- 7.8 The Parish Council's decision to part fund two PCSOs is another example. These additional resources have enabled the Thames Valley Police to carry out a far higher number of speed/High Street operations than would otherwise have been possible and also to spend more time tackling anti-social behaviour and conducting crime reduction operations in the parish area. In the last four years there has been a reduction in the reported number of incidents of anti-social behaviour: 315 in 2009, 256 in 2010, 230 in 2011 and 157 in 2012. There may be many possible reasons for this welcome trend and the police are understandably cautious about attributing the statistics to any particular factors. Nevertheless they have said that they are pleased with the decrease in anti-social behaviour. The Parish Council also work with the police and partners in promoting crime prevention and pride in the local environment eg. the 'Love Where You Live' campaign and seeking to protect the conservation area from inappropriate development and the threat of heavy lorry traffic.
- 7.9 However, a few local residents have been critical, some speaking of a reluctance as they see it on the part of the Parish Council to engage openly and to be open and accessible in terms of the information they provide on their website and notice boards and through the minutes of their meetings. Others connected with the Colnbrook Community Association (CCA) acknowledge that the Parish Council does a lot of good work locally but feel that it is remote at times and appears to operate as a 'closed group' which addresses local issues without engaging openly with local residents. The Parish Council appears to them to be more accustomed to, and comfortable with, telling local people what they are doing rather than asking them what they want from their parish councillors. According to this view, if it is to be truly representative of local residents, the Parish Council needs to be more open and inclusive. It needs to reach out more and be more receptive to new ideas and more responsive to local views. In reaching a view on its recommendations the Review Group took into account that the Parish Council had been established relatively recently in 1995 at the request of the local community.
- 7.10 The results of a survey carried out by local residents showed that a majority of the 19 respondents were very dissatisfied with the way in which the Parish Council represents them, scoring it 1 on a scale of 1 to 10. Most of this small number of respondents felt that their views were ignored, would like to see the Parish Council abolished, and would prefer to be represented by the CRA or CCA. It is proposed that this feedback be drawn to the Parish Council's attention and that they be invited to address the issues which have given rise to these comments.

## **Review Group Recommendations – Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council**

- 7.11 **(1) That feedback be given to Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council as set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.11 of the report for their consideration.**

**(2) That the Council reserves the right to test public opinion at/after the parish council elections in 2015 if it is not satisfied that the Parish Council is engaging more widely with local people.**

(b) Britwell Parish Council

- 7.12 In March 2013 the Review Group met Councillor Pat Shine, the Chairman of the Parish Council together with Councillor Alan Tilbury as part of the process of gathering evidence for the review. During that meeting Councillor Shine made a submission to the Review Group in which he suggested that the Parish Council was not delivering services in the way that it should be, nor did it provide value for money, and that the parish precept was too high, particularly bearing in mind that the Parish Council had healthy reserves. In his view too much of the precept had been used to subsidise the bar in recent years: the accounts showed that the bar subsidy amounted to about £23,000 in 2010/11 and £18,000 in 2011/12. The community centre should be self-financing, leaving the precept to fund new services.
- 7.13 Councillor Shine went on to say that in his view the Parish Council was not doing a very good job. He concluded by suggesting that as so much of the parish precept was used to subsidise the community centre and bar, and given the limited nature of Parish Council services available that the whole community could enjoy, parish residents would be better off if the Parish Council were abolished, leaving the Borough Council to run the hall, bar and grounds etc.
- 7.14 Following this meeting the Council received a petition signed by ten parish councillors and the clerk claiming that the Chairman's submission failed to adequately represent the organisation, work and community achievements of the Parish Council, and seeking a meeting with the Review Group so that they could provide a formal response to the review which more accurately reflected the remaining parish councillors' collective view. Following the election of a new Chairman at the Parish Council's AGM in May 2013 a further meeting took place with the Review Group, with the Parish Council represented by Councillor Ollie Isernia and three other parish councillors who outlined their future plans and ideas. The submissions made by the previous and present Chairmen and the notes of both meetings will be published on the Council's website together with the other views, comments and submissions received.
- 7.15 Only two of the written submissions received in response to the review relate to Britwell Parish Council, apart from the petition from the parish councillors and clerk. However, 170 responses have been received to the survey of Britwell residents carried out by the Slough Labour Party, the majority of which appear to be dissatisfied with the Parish Council judging by respondents' answers to the questions posed in the survey and their written comments. It should however be borne in mind that the response represents only 4 % of the electorate.

- 7.16 At their meeting with the Review Group held on 23rd May 2013 the parish councillors made a case for a new, improved approach to the services that the Parish Council provide and to the way in which they intend to work with the local community in the future. In their presentation to the Review Group they drew attention to the good progress that had been made in the last 12 months in putting the bar in profit, compared with the substantial loss that was shown in the accounts for 2011/12. They also outlined future plans and new ideas and their intention to allocate part of the bar profits to funding local organisations. They claimed that it was also their intention to reduce the parish precept at some point in the future.
- 7.17 However the Review Group are not convinced that the Parish Council will make any significant improvements in the way they work or succeed in bringing the community together, bearing in mind that with one exception the parish councillors have been in post for a number of years. It seems that local residents do not accept that the parish precept represents good value for money at £66 per annum for a Band D property. The Review Group also have concerns about the Parish Council's ability to operate effectively and transparently and, whilst some of its services are valued by local people, the Group believe that these and other services could be provided more efficiently and effectively for local residents by other means, and at lower cost.

#### **Review Group Recommendation – Britwell Parish Council**

- 7.18 **The Review Group believes that there is a case for abolition of the parish and dissolution of the Parish Council and is recommending as part of this review that local electors and other interested parties are formally consulted on this option as well as on a recommended change to the parish boundary in the interim period. The Group noted that the statutory guidance required evidence of local support for abolition over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors and that the consultation would therefore be a mechanism to formally gauge views on the future of Britwell Parish Council.**
- 7.19 **It is also intended that the Council should test public opinion again in a further four year's time.**

The Review Group have considered what arrangements might be put in place to engage with communities in the area if the parish were to be abolished. Members noted that the new Britwell Centre will provide a venue for recreational and social activities as well as learning and the local library. Parties and events could be supported by a temporary bar. A local Neighbourhood Action Group was established as part of the estate regeneration and residents have played a big part in supporting regeneration through the Britwell Neighbourhood Board which could be developed to provide a strong local representative forum focused on improving the area to meet local people's needs. The existing parish council building could continue to be used, linked with its outdoor recreation space, as a centre for local young people and sport.

### Britwell Parish Boundary

- 7.20 In last year's review of the borough ward boundaries the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) agreed revised electoral arrangements for Britwell parish to take account of the statutory requirement that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single borough ward. The LGBCE agreed that Britwell Parish Council should return 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Britwell West (returning one member) and Britwell East (returning 12 members). This warding is effective from the parish elections in 2015.
- 7.21 Members will be aware that the Council is currently undertaking a review of polling districts. Each parish must be contained within a polling district(s) and polling districts cannot include parished and non parished areas in the same polling district. The LGBCE decision to create Britwell West (now in Haymill and Lynch Hill ward) does not therefore create a long-term solution and the Review Group agreed that some adjustments would need to be made to the parish boundary in the light of changes made to borough ward boundaries. As part of the review the Council wishes to ensure that the Review leads to parishes that are based on areas which reflect community identity and interest and which are viable as an administrative unit. The Group initially recommended removing the part of the existing parish that would fall into the new Haymill and Lynch Hill ward (Britwell West Parish Ward) and realigning the parish with the Britwell and Northborough local government western boundary. This would remove the ambiguous single member parish ward and the member representing it would result in the number of parish councillors being reduced by one to twelve with effect from 2015.
- 7.22 However having considered the evidence presented the Review Group also wish to recommend that the Parish boundary be altered along the Long Readings and Long Furlong Road to use these major roads as boundaries for the parish and remove existing anomalies to take effect from 2014. The Parish area would be determined by the borough boundary to the north, the new Britwell and Northborough ward boundary to the west, Long Furlong Drive to the south and Wentworth Avenue to the east. It would comprise 859 properties and have an electorate of 1,653 drawn tightly around the community hall and related recreation areas and facilities run by the Parish Council and used by local residents. See attached map at Appendix 2.
- 7.23 This will have implications for council size. If the parish area and electorate are to be reduced in size, as proposed, there is also a case for a corresponding reduction in the number of parish councillors. Legislation establishes five councillors as the minimum number for a parish council but does not make any link between the number of electors and the size of a council. The National Association of Local Councils believes that seven should be minimum size and has published some guidance which the Group has taken into account.

Having considered the representations made to it the Review Group believes that given the evidence of division within the existing Parish Council and lack of achievement and direction a smaller Parish Council would be able to operate in a more strategic and focussed way and bring about improved community engagement and more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

- 7.24 There is no requirement in law for the number of councillors to be proportionate to electorate size, although the criteria in the statutory guidance are clearly relevant to this issue together with a number of practical considerations. Having taken these into account, the Group is satisfied that a smaller Parish Council would be able to conduct parish business efficiently and effectively for residents living in the reduced parish area, and be able to cope with the workload. They also consider that a reduction in council size would be sustainable in the medium to long term.
- 7.25 The LGBCE revised electoral arrangements for Britwell Parish will come into effect on 2015. The Council therefore needs to address any proposals to alter the term of office for Parish Councillors in its consultation document. Once the Council's consultation process has concluded, it will need to apply for the LGBCE's consent to any proposed changes to the parish. If the LGBCE consents to the changes, a statutory instrument will need to be issued to give effect to any agreed changes
- 7.26 The Group have therefore concluded that the Council should consult on a reduction in the number of parish councillors to seven as part of the changes proposed to the parish boundaries on the grounds that changes to council size, population and boundaries would bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

#### **Review Group Recommendations – Britwell Parish Council Boundary and Electoral Arrangements.**

- 7.27 **That electors and other interested parties be consulted on the following recommendations:**
- (1) that the Council recommends changes to the Britwell parish boundaries as shown on map attached at Appendix 2 and a corresponding reduction in the size of the Parish Council to seven councilors.**
- (2) that the term of office of the existing Parish Councillors be reduced by one year from 2015 to 2014 in order to bring these changes into effect from May 2014 and that newly elected councillors serve a five year term of office initially and then revert to the traditional four year term.**

#### Wexham Court Parish Council

- 7.28 In April 2013 the Review Group met Councillor Carl Egan, the Chairman of the Parish Council together with the clerk as part of the process of gathering evidence for the review. Subsequently, the Parish Council elected Councillor Sandra Malik as their new Chairman at the Parish Council's AGM in May 2013 and the Review Group have since met her following their earlier meeting with the previous Chairman in April. The notes of the meetings with the previous and present Chairmen will be published on the Council's website together with the other views, comments and submissions received.
- 7.29 Only one of the written submissions received in response to the review relates to Wexham Court Parish Council. However 30 responses have been received to the survey of Wexham Court residents carried out by the Slough Labour Party, the majority of which appear to be dissatisfied with the Parish Council judging by

respondents' answers to the questions posed in the survey and their written comments. It should however be borne in mind that the response represents less than 1 % of the electorate.

- 7.30 The Review Group seriously doubts that the Parish Council is working in the best interests of local residents or, based on comments made by parish councillors, that its governance arrangements are sound. The Group's attention has been drawn to a number of concerns, one being relationships between parish councillors and staff, and others relating to the management of staff, financial management, procurement arrangements, and its lettings policies. In one way or another, these matters are all fundamental to the good management of a parish council, its reputation and efficiency. Wexham Court Parish Council is urged to review and resolve these matters, and if necessary to seek professional advice on employment matters. It also appears to the Review Group that there is little public awareness of what the Parish Council does and an impression that it serves only a small part of the parish area.

#### **Review Group Recommendation – Wexham Court Parish Council**

- 7.31 **The Review Group seriously doubts that the Parish Council is working in the best interests of local residents or, based on comments made by parish councillors, that its governance arrangements are sound. It has therefore concluded that there is a case for abolition of the parish and dissolution of the Parish Council and is recommending as part of this review that local residents and other interested parties are formally consulted on this option. The Group have noted that the statutory guidance requires evidence of local support for abolition over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors and that the consultation would therefore be a mechanism to formally gauge views on the future of Wexham Court Parish Council.**

**The Review Group recommends that the Parish Council addresses the governance issues that have been identified and seeks professional advice on employment matters**

- 7.32 **It is also intended that the Council should test public opinion again in a further four year's time.**
- 7.33 The Review Group have considered what arrangements might be put in place to engage with communities in the area if the parish were to be abolished. Members noted that the parish facilities could equally well be run by the borough council. The parish hall could be developed to provide a community hub operating on the same principles as the one in Chalvey, opening up to the wider local community and encouraging its use for community functions.

#### **(c) Langley**

- 7.34 Representations have been received on behalf of Langley Neighbourhood Forum calling for a new parish council to represent the areas of Langley comprising Kedermister, St Mary's Langley and Foxborough on the grounds that this would give local people a more effective voice in overall planning particularly as it relates to Langley.

- 7.35 Although the Review Group welcomed this proposal they were disappointed not to have received more evidence that the Forum had tested public support for a new parish council by engaging local people on questions such as what services a new parish council might provide, the level of parish precept that would be needed to fund a new parish council of this size, and whether there was support for the boundaries encompassing such a large area. The boundary issue was particularly important as a parish council comprising three wards would be much larger than average and this could pose problems for governance in terms of the size of the council and how it would represent and communicate with its electorate. These are some of the tests that the Group would expect the Forum to meet in putting forward a proposal for consideration, together with evidence of public support.
- 7.36 It is clear from the replies received from the Neighbourhood Forum that it has not progressed its thinking sufficiently to enable a proposal to be put forward for consideration as part of this review. Nor does it appear to have wide enough support for a new parish council. It is also clear that the Forum has a number of concerns about planning and specific planning matters that it should be encouraged to discuss with the Borough Council. Some of the detailed points of concern could be raised with ward councillors or perhaps resolved in discussion with planning officers.

#### **Review Group Recommendation – Langley Neighbourhood Forum**

- 7.37 **That Langley Neighbourhood Forum be informed that the case for a new parish council has not been made and that the Forum should be advised to consider returning to this matter at some future date and in the meantime to raise its concerns directly with ward councillors.**

### **8. Draft Proposals**

- 8.1 Section 100 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides for guidance to be issued regarding community governance reviews and for local authorities to have regard to that guidance. The key paragraphs relating to abolition of parishes and the dissolution of parish councils, are set out in full as follows:
- 117.** While the Government expects to see a trend in the creation, rather than the abolition, of parishes, there are circumstances where the principal council may conclude that the provision of effective and convenient local government and/or the reflection of community identity and interests may be best met, for example, by the abolition of a number of small parishes and the creation of a larger parish covering the same area. If, following a review, a principal council believes that this would provide the most appropriate community governance arrangements, then it will wish to make this recommendation; the same procedures apply to any recommendation to abolish a parish and/or parish council as to other recommendations (see paragraph 90 -97). Regulations provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of a parish council to the new successor parish council, or where none is proposed to the principal council itself.
- 118.** Section 88 of the 2007 Act provides for a community governance review to recommend the alteration of the area of, or the abolition of, an existing parish

as a result of a review. The area of abolished parishes does not have to be redistributed to other parishes, an area can become unparished. However, it is the Government's view that it would be undesirable to see existing parishes abolished with the area becoming unparished with no community governance arrangements in place.

- 119.** The abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified. Any decision a principal council may make on whether to abolish a parish should not be taken lightly. Under the previous parish review legislation, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Secretary of State considered very carefully recommendations made by principal councils for the abolition of any parish (without replacement) given that to abolish parish areas removes a tier of local government. Between 1997 and 2008, the Government rarely received proposals to abolish parish councils, it received only four cases seeking abolition and of these only one was approved for abolition by the Secretary of State.
- 120.** Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where abolition may be the most appropriate way forward. Under the 2007 Act provisions, the principal council would need to consider local opinion, including that of parish councillors and local electors. It would need to find evidence that the abolition of a parish council was justified, and that there was clear and sustained local support for such action. A factor taken into account by the Government in deciding abolition cases, was that local support for abolition needed to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. 8 years), and that such support was sufficiently informed. This means a properly constituted parish council should have had an opportunity to exercise its functions so that local people can judge its ability to contribute to local quality of life.
- 121.** Where a community governance review is considering abolishing a parish council we would expect the review to consider what arrangements will be in place to engage with the communities in those areas once the parish is abolished. These arrangements might be an alternative forum run by or for the local community, or perhaps a residents' association. It is doubtful however, that abolition of a parish and its council could ever be justified as the most appropriate action in response to a particular contentious issue in the area or decision of the parish council.
- 122.** In future, principal councils will wish to consider the sort of principles identified above in arriving at their decisions on whether or not to abolish a parish council. In doing so, they will be aware that decisions about community governance arrangements, including decisions for the abolition of a parish council, may attract a challenge by way of judicial review.

NOTE: In reaching a decision on the two parish councils the Review Group and the Council will need to be satisfied on the following points in each case:

- (a) Whether there is clear evidence of local support for the abolition of the parish and the dissolution of the parish council;



- (b) Whether such support has been maintained over a sufficient length of time (i.e. that the case for abolition has not been generated in the short term by an unpopular decision of the council, or a particular year's parish precept etc);
- (c) Whether the support is sufficiently informed (i.e. that a properly constituted parish council has had an opportunity to exercise parish functions and that local people therefore have had an opportunity to assess whether the parish council can contribute positively to local quality of life); and
- (d) Whether it can be demonstrated that suitable alternative arrangements are in place for engaging the local community.

8.2 The legislation provides that recommendations can be made for the continued existence of a parish, the alteration of a parish, the alteration of the area of a parish, or the abolition of a parish.

8.3 One way of testing local support for or against the abolition of the Britwell and Wexham Court Parish Councils would be to consult local government electors for each of the two parish areas by way of a poll and, in order to meet statutory requirements, also to consult the two Parish Councils and other persons or bodies which appear to the Council to have an interest in the review.

8.4 This could be organised as a conventional poll with local electors having the option to vote at a polling station or apply for a postal vote in the usual way, if they are registered for a postal vote. The poll could be carried out on an all-postal basis or alternatively the Council could commission an independent door step survey comprising a statistically sound sample of the population. The outcome of the poll or survey cannot however be binding on the Council as it is required by law to consult widely and consider representations from parish councils and other persons or bodies which appear to have an interest in the review. The poll/survey would therefore be advisory. The pros and cons associated with the different types of polls/survey are set out below.

Type of Poll/ Survey	Pros	Cons	Costs (estimate)	Other Council's
Conventional Poll	Electors understand the process Existing postal voters receive a postal vote	Turnout may be low	£11,500	Portsmouth City Council commissioned a conventional poll in July 2009 for operational and cost reasons.
All postal poll	All electors receive voting slip Turnout may be greater than with a conventional poll Mechanism used by others as part of CGR	More costly than a conventional poll	£25,000	Portsmouth City Council subsequently undertook an all postal poll in 2010
Door step survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guaranteed response from statistically sound sample of population</li> <li>Meet market</li> </ul>	Costly Difficult to deliver the consultation and results quickly	Cost will be affected by the time in which the survey must be carried out and	

	research professional standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent in asking the question and analysing</li> </ul>		the report presented – a shorter time period would mean the researchers would need to put more field staff in increasing their costs. Costs based on Chalvey Halt exercise and advice from Policy is £40,000 This can only be an estimate at this stage as it will depend on specification and timing.	
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- 8.5 The Council's recommendations, whatever form they take, must bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in the more effective and convenient delivery of local services. Without appearing to predetermine the outcome of a poll the Council must be seen to have considered how it proposes to support local communities if either or both of the parish councils were to be abolished and how it would arrange the delivery of existing and new services either directly or through other local agencies or voluntary groups. The Council's plans in this regard would reassure local residents that those services that they enjoy locally would continue in some form and indeed that other services would be provided and that their needs would be met in what might otherwise appear to be an uncertain future.

## 9 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Timetable for Community Governance Review

Appendix 2 Map of proposed alteration to area of Britwell Parish Council

## 10 **Background Papers**

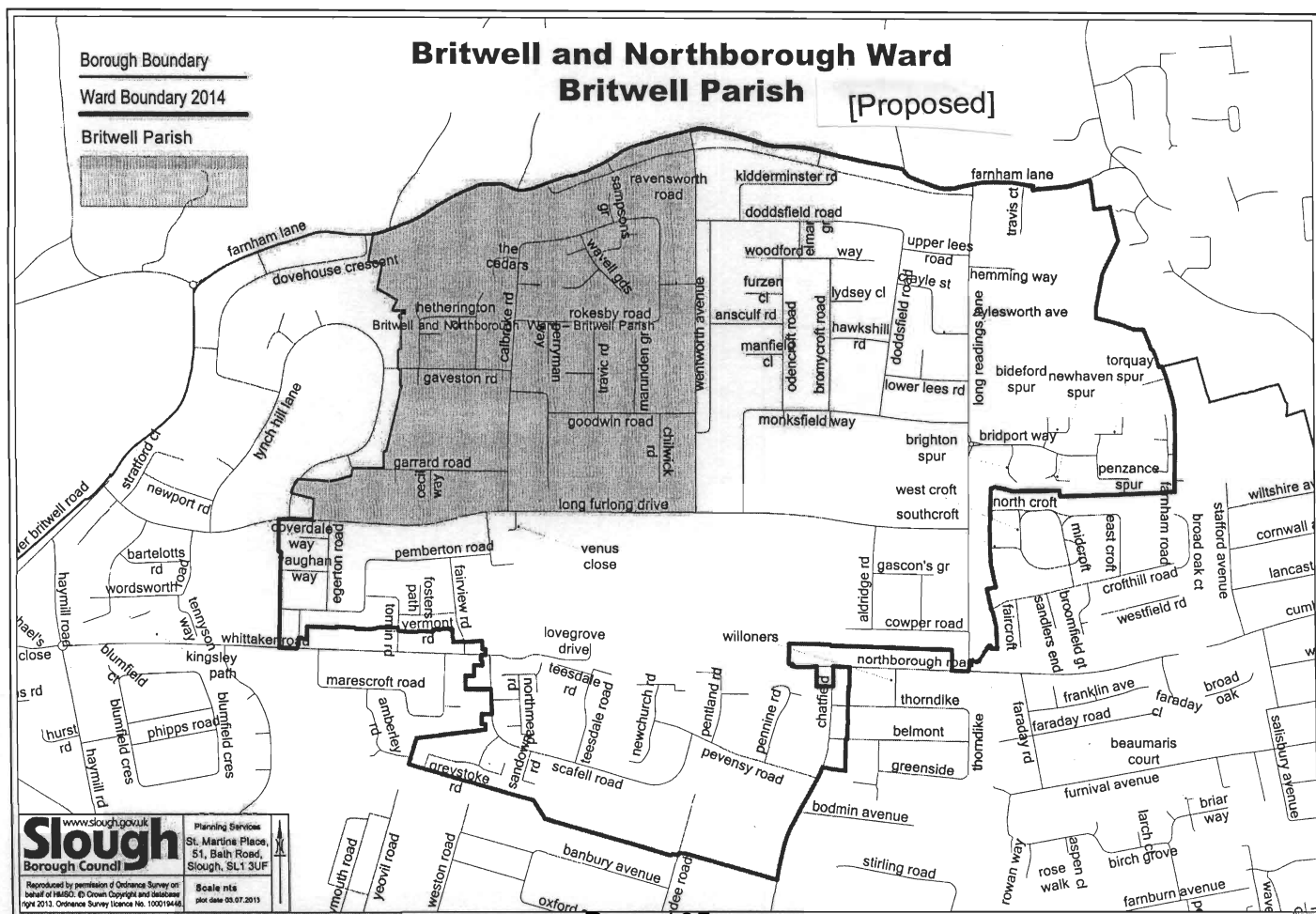
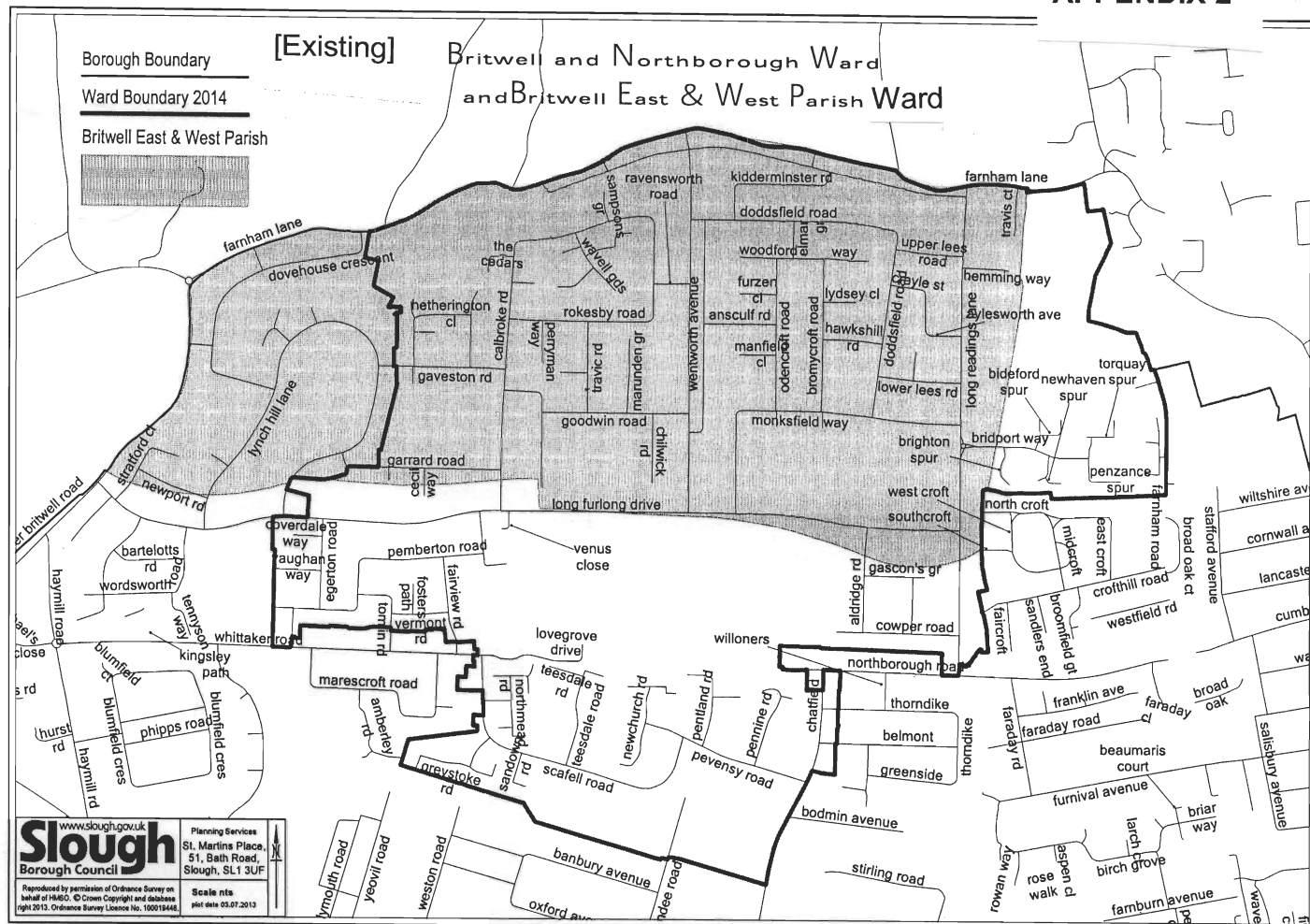
Consultation responses.

## APPENDIX 1

### Community Governance Review 2013 - Programme and Timeline

Stage	Action	Timeline	Outline of Action
1	Report to full Council	29 January 2013	Council approves principle of review and its terms of reference.
2	Publish terms of reference	1 February 2013	Council publishes terms of reference and notifies stakeholders of the commencement of the review.
3	Invite initial submissions	1 February/ 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Initial submissions invited Consultation/Representations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with Parish Councils</li> <li>• Consultations with Parish and Borough Councillors</li> <li>• Local groups and interested parties to be consulted</li> </ul> Information pack to be sent as requested. Representations/proposals to be sent to Slough Borough Council.
4	Consider submissions.	31 <sup>st</sup> May - 30 June 2013	Consider submissions and prepare draft recommendations for report to Council (23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2013.)
5	Publish draft recommendations	29 July/7 October 2013	Publish draft recommendations for further consultation.
6	Make final recommendations	7 October/15 November 2013	Consider further submissions and prepare final recommendations for report to Council (26 <sup>th</sup> November 2013).
7	Publish final recommendations	December 2013	Publish final recommendations and make Order.

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