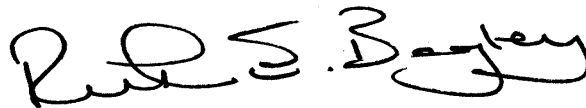


Date of issue: 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL</b> (Councillors Minhas (Chair), Buchanan, Carter, Dar, Munawar, Plenty, Sohal, Strutton and A S Wright)  <u>Non-Voting Co-Opted Members</u>  Sandra Malik (Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents) and Darren Morris (Customer Senate)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	MONDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 2011 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD, SLOUGH
<b>SCRUTINY OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	GUY FIEGEHEN  01753 875657

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



**RUTH BAGLEY**  
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I



Apologies for absence.

1. Declarations of Interest

*(Members are reminded of their duty to declare personal and personal prejudicial interests in matters coming before this meeting as set out in the local code of conduct).*

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 24th October, 2011 1 - 4

3. Member Questions

*(An opportunity for panel members to ask questions of the relevant Director / Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated.)*

**SCRUTINY ISSUES**

4. Synchronisation of Traffic Signals on the A4 (Between Three Tuns Crossroads and Huntercombe Roundabout) – Gillian Ralphs, Assistant Director, Transport and Planning 5 - 10

*(10 minutes presentation- 20 minutes questions)*

5. Regulation of Distribution of Free Printed Matter - Michael Sims, Licensing Manager 11 - 40 All;

*(10 minutes presentation- 20 minutes questions)*

6. Housing Futures - Provision of Housing Services Update Report - Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing Services 41 - 48

*(10 minutes presentation- 10 minutes questions)*

7. Housing Service Customer Senate - Review of Estate Services - Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing Services 49 - 98

*(10 minutes presentation- 10 minutes questions)*

**AGENDA**  
**ITEM**

**REPORT TITLE**

**PAGE**

**WARD**

8. Consideration of reports marked to be noted/for information

*(The panel will consider any reports marked to be noted/for information and determine whether future scrutiny is considered necessary – maximum of 5 minutes allocated.)*

9. Forward Work Programme 99 - 100
10. Members Attendance Record 101 - 102
11. Date of Next Meeting- 16th January, 2012

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Scrutiny Officer shown above for further details.

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**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Monday, 24th October, 2011.**

**Present:-** Councillors Minhas (Chair), Buchanan, Dar, Plenty, Sohal, Strutton and A S Wright (Vice-Chair)

**Apologies:-** Councillor Carter and Munawar  
Darren Morris (Customer Senate)

**Non Voting Co-Opted Members present:** Sandy Malik, Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents

**10. Declarations of Interest**

None were received.

**11. Minutes of the last meeting held on 15th September 2011**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011 were approved as a correct record.

**12. Member Questions**

Four questions had been submitted by members. Andrew Stevens, Assistant Director Culture and Skills provided responses confirming that eight user groups were accessing facilities at Rochfords Gardens, seven groups that had been successfully relocated (with discussions ongoing with the eighth group). Negotiations were also ongoing regarding assisting one group with managing hardship as a result of higher charges levied elsewhere.

**13. Prostitution - Current Challenges and Future Actions**

The Chair welcomed Louise Asby, Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Manager who presented an updated paper on the challenges posed by prostitution and the work being carried out by the Community safety partnership to address this. The Chair also welcomed Chief Inspector Jim Reeves, Deputy Borough Commander.

The item generated a number of member questions. Officers were asked what work would be carried out to ensure that if successfully tackled in Chalvey, the problem would not be displaced into another areas of the town. Questions were also asked on the use of ASB orders, why prostitution was such an endemic issue in Slough, whether a dedicated service could be established to improve reporting levels and the importance of tackling kerb crawlers.

The officer confirmed that due attention would be paid in ensuring that the problem is eradicated rather than displaced. The last time it had been a problem in Baylis and Stoke – the police successfully removed the problem and the issue in Chalvey today was not a continuation of the earlier Baylis problem. Responding to the issue of using Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 24.10.11

orders, the officer stated that this was still a policy that was being actively considered. The issue today was however a changed legislative landscape which meant it harder (although not impossible) to use and impose ASB. To improve the changes of deploying ASBOs successfully there was now closer cooperation with Ealing and the use of 'loitering' as a means of removing girls from the street. The preferred option would be to both remove and deport where necessary to stop the problem from emerging elsewhere. Chief Inspector Reeves confirmed that the characteristics of Slough given its proximity to the airport, good transport links, cheaper housing etc all meant that Slough was a popular destination. However further research on what attracts both prostitutes and kerb crawlers to Slough needed to be carried out. Responding to the proposed suggestion of having a dedicated line – it was argued that this may cause more confusion given the numbers already available.

Members thanked Officers for the updated and comprehensive update and requested that an update on the issue and in particular progress made in implementing the new Police Strategy to tackle Prostitution be provided for the March meeting.

### **Resolved:-**

That a further report be brought back to the Panel in March 2012

## **14. Community Centres Future Provision**

The Chair welcomed Andrew Stevens, Assistant Director Culture and Skills, and John Rice, Assistant Director Environment and Regeneration, who presented a paper on the future provision of community centres in Slough.

A number of questions were raised. These included questions on the choice of locations for the four community hubs, further clarity about the future of particular centres including Horsemoor Green Langley and Haymill, the broad timeframe within which decisions will be resolved and the future of Orchard Youth Club.

Officers confirmed that the choice of the four locations had been a political decision and not one that was unilaterally made by Officers. The rationale remained sound however and followed both the need to satisfy existing need and meet wider regeneration goals. Further clarity was provided regarding the future of both Horsemoor Green and Haymill. In terms of the former, Officers confirmed that discussions were ongoing for the facility to be maintained but not in the ownership of the Council. If intended plans came into fruition, there would be a distinct possibility that the venue would be retained for the use of the community. In terms of Haymill, this had a number of unresolved questions. All the options were being considered at the moment. However a key issue to resolve was the future of the LABV programme. Decisions should be resolved within eighteen months. Regarding the future of Orchard Youth Club, officers confirmed that this site had been designated as a category D – one that was surplus to requirements. Some negotiations were ongoing with

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 24.10.11

the Stoke Poges Lane Mosque regarding the sale of part of the site for the use of car park facilities. The remainder of the site was still subject to a final decision. Part of the complex was recently given over as a 12 month lease to a local community group however the future intention was still one of eventual disposal.

Comments were invited from Members in attendance. The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal confirmed that the choice of the four hubs had been driven by concerns about both deprivation but also fortuitously the need to link such developments to the broader regeneration targets. The long-term intention was however to get as many of these facilities in the town as practically and financially possible – but this would need to come over a longer timeframe.

### **Resolved:-**

That a map of all sixty community venues be provided to panel members.

## **15. Winter Preparations**

The Chair welcomed Alex Deans, Head of Highways, and Dean Trussler, Emergency Planning Officer, who provided a verbal presentation on the council's plans to manage the occurrence of severe weather.

A number of questions were raised and suggestions for further improvement of the plan. Whilst the plans in general seemed to be sufficient, members strongly suggested added work be carried out to ensure that the needs and safety of elderly residents be considered further including the potential of gritting pathways in front of key service areas like GPs or local shops. Members queried as to why all roads in Slough, including side roads, could not be gritted. The Officers confirmed that whilst this would be ideal, there were severe constraints in terms of staff and money available to carry this out.

Members thanked the officers for the presentation and requested that a map of salt bins and their location across the borough be made available.

### **Resolved:-**

That an A3 sized map of the location of salt bins be sent to all panel members.

## **16. Housing Benefit - Following up on Audit Commission Inspection 2010**

The Chair welcomed Charlie McKenna, Head of Benefits, and Judith Davids, Assistant Director, Customer and ICT Services, who presented a paper on the work the council had done to address the recommendations made in the last Audit Commission Inspection into Housing Benefits in 2010.

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 24.10.11

A number of questions were raised including the area of least progress made, how the issue of HMOs was not being abused, the general waiting times and the work ongoing to reduce waiting times and the nature of the benefits hub.

The Officer stated that amongst all the positive work that had been carried out, an area where progress had not been as hoped was encouraging take-up amongst particularly hard to reach groups such as Somali and smaller groupings of Eastern European communities. And this was despite a concerted effort being made with letters, other communiqué and personal visits being arranged. The issue of HMOs had been identified as a key concern. In fact surveying the demographics of Slough, a key group that was of concern were single men, between the age group of 20-45. For this group, and allowing for resources, the policy was to have a site visit to the address to confirm address details. The Assistant Director confirmed that waiting times remained an issue and this was despite the progress that had been made in reducing waiting times from 21 to 12 minutes. Further work was being planned including better managing the allocation of work, using specialist hubs and utilising technology better to improve the overall customer experience.

Members requested further details on the effect of the fast track desk offer advice to customers on proposed waiting times.

### **Resolved:-**

That the Assistant Director for Customer and ICT Services provides information as to whether the fast track desk offer advice to customers on proposed waiting times.

### **17. Consideration of reports marked to be noted/for information**

Members considered an information paper on the Flood Risk Assessment. The Chair advised panel members to consider the report outside of the meeting and direct any queries or comments back to the Scrutiny Officer.

### **18. Forward Work Programme**

Members asked for the following papers to be included in forthcoming agendas

- A paper on Traffic Light Synchronisation (5<sup>th</sup> December 2011)
- An update paper on Prostitution (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2012)

### **19. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 5th December 2011.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.45 pm)



**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Joe Carter, Head of Transport  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875653

**WARD(S):** Haymill, Farnham, Cippenham Green, Chalvey and Cippenham Meadows

**FOR INFORMATION**

**SYNCHRONISATION OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS ON THE A4 (BETWEEN THREE TUNS CROSSROADS AND HUNTERCOMBE ROUNDABOUT)**

1 **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to describe the first year of operation of the traffic signal SCOOT regions operating along the western section of the A4, between Three Tuns crossroads and Huntercombe roundabout. There have been a number of positive results, as well as some challenges. A range of improvements have been implemented since this time last year, either as permanent or experimental changes. A number of further improvements are identified in this report. These are subject to the normal constraints of budget availability and priority.

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

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3 **Community Strategy Priorities**

The community strategy priorities are:

**Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**

Improving the general traffic flow on the A4 will contribute to inclusion by improving journey times for buses, which will improve access facilities for groups such as the disabled.

**Adding years to Life and Life to years**

General improvement to local facilities, facilitated by reduced journey times will provide additional leisure time and less stress associated with travelling.

**Being Safe, Feeling Safe**

Reduced congestion reduces driver frustration and can result in more patient and cautious driver behaviour.

**A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**

Reduced carbon footprint facilitated by reduced journey times and reduced congestion. Reducing the number of stops can lead directly to more efficient engine operation and reduced emissions.

## **Prosperity for All**

A reduction in journey time allows an increase in leisure time. Journey time has a notional financial value used in traffic modelling analysis. Reduced journey times on the A4 can be shown to contribute to a substantial financial saving to the community.

### **4 Other implications**

#### **(a) Financial**

There are no new financial implications arising out of this report. All costs relating to this project can be met from existing budgets in the immediate term.

#### **(b) Risk Management.**

There are tactical and operational risks associated with every modification to the SCOOT regions. The main strategic risk is the continued availability of resources and budget to be able to maintain and operate the SCOOT regions to an acceptable level of performance, and to continue to review and improve sites within the regions.

#### **(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

No Human Rights Act implications.

The experimental road closures described below have been implemented using Traffic Regulation Orders made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

#### **(d) Equalities Impact Assessment**

The ongoing work to improve the A4 corridor has no impact upon any group more so than any other. The journey time reduction will benefit all groups equally.

### **5 Supporting Information**

#### **Positive results of SCOOT operation**

In Autumn 2010 the council completed the installation and commissioning of SCOOT (**S**plit **C**ycle **O**ffset **O**ptimisation **T**echnique) on the western section of the A4 Bath Road, between Three Tuns crossroads and Huntercombe roundabout. There are three SCOOT regions on the A4 Bath Road altogether:

- St Andrew's Way to Pitts Road pedestrian crossing – including 10 junctions and two pedestrian crossings;
- Pitts Road pedestrian crossing to Windmill Way pedestrian crossing – including two junctions and two pedestrian crossings;
- Windmill Way pedestrian crossing to Ledgers Road – including two junctions and one pedestrian crossing.

The westernmost SCOOT region is the largest. It was set up to provide eastbound linking between 7:00 am and 12:00noon, and westbound linking between 12:00noon and 11:00pm. Some Members may recall this as the "Green Wave" that operated on the A4 some years ago. Between 11:00pm and 7:00am the junctions are not linked, and operate a Vehicle Actuated (VA) mode.

Following the implementation of the westernmost SCOOT region a number of positive results have been observed:

- Journey times on the A4 itself have improved significantly.
- Previously there was no linking evident and drivers were typically stopped at multiple junctions when travelling along the corridor. SCOOT has reduced the

number of stops by providing sequential linking of green lights. The best operation of the system can be observed in very light traffic conditions, where it is now possible to travel the full length of the region without being stopped at all, whilst travelling at 30mph or 40mph as the speed limits dictate. In medium traffic conditions drivers can reasonably expect to be stopped once or twice. In heavy traffic conditions this may increase.

Officers have received numerous anecdotal reports from drivers using the A4 Bath Road, reporting that the performance of the corridor has improved.

The importance of the central SCOOT region – between Pitts Road pedestrian crossing and Windmill Way pedestrian crossing – was illustrated on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011, when SCOOT failed at 8:30am. This SCOOT region includes Three Tuns crossroads. Officers restored SCOOT operation at 9:50am. In less than two hours the queue on the northbound approach had extended all the way to the M4, and then onto the M4 for approximately 2 miles in both directions. Officers immediately took steps to identify the fault and to work with Siemens (our traffic signals maintenance contractor) to reduce the risk of a similar failure. We have also reviewed and revalidated the fall-back mode of operation at Three Tuns crossroads, to reduce the impact of any future failure.

### **Challenges identified in the first year of operation of the SCOOT regions**

The performance of the SCOOT region depends on the number of interruptions to the traffic flow, and the volume of traffic. The system relies on vehicles forming platoons, and moving through the network smoothly in well defined platoons from one end to the other. Any interruptions to a platoon of vehicles will cause the sequential linking to be disrupted. For example vehicles stopping to set down or pick up passengers. For example vehicles emerging from or entering premises adjacent to the road. For example a driver who reacts slowly as the lights change to green. Even in ideal conditions a platoon will naturally spread as it travels along the corridor. As the volume of traffic increases, the road ahead of a platoon is more likely to be full of traffic waiting at the next junction downstream. Therefore in very heavy traffic conditions, sequential linking is not possible.

There are 10 junctions altogether in the westernmost SCOOT region. To achieve sequential linking the overall cycle time of the region is dictated by the size of the largest junctions – at Dover Road and Elmshott Lane. Therefore drivers waiting at the smaller junctions – for example Leigh Road, or Ipswich Road – perceive that they are waiting unnecessarily, as the opposing traffic they can see at their junction has cleared some time before their movement is released. What is happening is that these drivers are waiting for the sequential progression, which is dictated by traffic at the larger junctions. In this situation the system is operating correctly, but not always as drivers would expect.

The prioritisation of the A4 corridor has resulted in longer delays for drivers waiting to access the A4 from its side roads. This is an inevitable consequence of establishing sequential linking along the A4. It would, in theory, be possible to re-allocate time back to the side roads, but this could only be done at the expense of the A4. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even with the increased delays in the side roads, the reduced journey time on the A4 has resulted in a reduction in overall journey time.

The operation of SCOOT depends critically on the performance of detectors installed in the carriageway surface. There are approximately 100 detectors in the

westernmost SCOOT region – a combination of traditional inductive loops and also wireless magnetometers. It is these detectors that monitor traffic flow and enable SCOOT to respond in real time to prevailing traffic conditions. We have had a number of technical problems with the detectors over the last year, which have constrained the operation of the region. For example:

- In St Andrew's Way the detectors were faulty for some time, and officers had to fix the time allocated to St Andrew's Way between set limits. This means that SCOOT was not able to respond to traffic queuing in St Andrew's Way as it normally would. At the time of writing the detector issues have been resolved, and officers are planning to remove the timing constraints from St Andrew's Way in the next couple of weeks – this may help to alleviate the queuing on this road.
- We had a similar problem with the detection in Station Road, Burnham, which resulted in the queue extending all the way to the railway bridge at times during the morning rush hour. This queuing diminished when the detection was fixed.
- The council was supplied with a faulty batch of magnetometers, which affected performance across the westernmost region. These were replaced free of charge by the council's supplier.

During the year we have been changing the way we communicate with our traffic signal controllers, which in the SCOOT regions are controlled from a server in the council's offices. Previously each controller was connected to the server with a fixed telephone line. These are very expensive to rent and becoming obsolete so they are not well supported by telecommunications providers. Fixed lines are highly vulnerable to damage by utility companies. We are rolling out 3G wireless communication links to 50 sites across the borough, including the SCOOT regions. 3G communication is wireless, and so is not vulnerable to damage by utility companies. It is also between 5 and 6 times cheaper. However being wireless it is vulnerable to variable performance of the council's 3G provider's mobile telephony network. This depends on the locations of transmitters, and the number of devices connected to those transmitters at any one time. In practice this means there is a slightly greater risk that SCOOT will not be fully operational at any given time. Officers are investigating the impact of this, and working with our 3G provider to investigate performance concerns. The switchover from the fixed telephone line to the 3G link was very smooth at some sites, but others were disconnected from SCOOT for an extended period. Drivers may well have experienced a reduction in performance for those periods. For example at the time of writing the Ledgers Road junction has not been coordinated with the Montem Lane junction for a number of weeks, resulting in congestion in the network around these two junctions. This latter problem should be resolved sometime in December, when a new broadband connection to the Montem Lane junction is due to be installed.

### **Improvements within the SCOOT regions since December 2010**

Officers have kept the western A4 corridor under continual review during the last year, and have implemented a number of improvements – some permanent and some on an experimental basis:

- At the junction with Walpole Road, the sequencing has been changed to remove a conflict between westbound right-turning traffic (into Walpole Road) and the eastbound ahead movement.
- At Station Road, Burnham, after this road was resurfaced the two-lane approach to the junction was extended. Officers have designed further signs and road markings to encourage drivers to make better use of the two lane approach, and to use both lanes to turn right onto the A4 – this is the heaviest movement. These modifications will help reduce the queue length on this approach.

- At Dover Road, the entrance to the service road has been closed on an experimental basis. Previously vehicles entering and leaving the service road interrupted the traffic flow on the approach to the A4, and also the traffic leaving the A4 to travel up Dover Road. This change has smoothed the operation of this arm of the junction, and stopped the use of the service road as a rat-run.
- At Wellcroft Road we have closed the gap in the central reserve on an experimental basis and switched off the traffic signals at this junction. This has significantly improved the traffic flow at this junction. To facilitate removal of the traffic signals, we have extended the 30mph limit to just west of Galvin Road, and restricted access to Wellcroft Road to a left-in-left-out basis only.
- At Glentworth Road we have closed the access between the service road and the A4 on an experimental basis. This has prevented right-turn manoeuvres from the service road on to the A4, which previously disrupted traffic in both directions on the western arm of Three Tuns crossroads. This experiment has had mixed results – we have observed drivers driving over the footway to access the service road, and also drivers turning right unlawfully from Cranbourne Road. Officers will review the results of this experiment and may well try an alternative solution.
- At Three Tuns crossroads we have:
  - Modified the westbound approach adjacent to Quadrivium Point to assist left turn capacity – this has been made possible by the reduction of speed limit to 30mph – which in turn reduces the visibility requirements for the access into Quadrivium Point;
  - Designed new signs and road markings on the northbound approach to encourage the use of lane 2 by right-turning traffic – this will be implemented in the next few weeks, and will make better use of the approach capacity;
  - Started the design for a change to the layout on the eastbound approach, which would make use of the bus layby for additional lane capacity on the approach – this would enable us to extend the dedicated right-turn lane. This change is likely to be implemented in early 2012 if budgets allow.

### **Further possible improvements within the SCOOT regions**

A number of further improvements have been identified by officers, but have not been developed to date. Some of these are being promoted by local developers in the context of their respective ambitions and planning conditions. Those promoted by the council are subject to the normal constraints of budget availability and priority:

- At St Andrew's Way officers are investigating possible options to reduce the queue length and also resolve safety concerns associated with the service road.
- At Walpole Road officers have investigated whether it would be feasible to provide a dedicated westbound right turn facility – unfortunately this is not feasible. However officers have observed the number of right-turners is very low, so it may be possible to ban the right turn at this junction and divert drivers around Huntercombe Roundabout.
- At the Bath Road Retail Park adjacent to Burnham Lane the land owner is proposing to widen the exit from the retail park to 3 lanes, to reduce congestion within their car park. This improvement is expected to provide a modest benefit to the A4, as the overall junction capacity will be increased. These works are expected to commence early in 2012.
- At Dover Road SEGRO is developing plans to improve pedestrian crossing over Dover Road and to widen the approach to the A4.
- At Cippenham Lane there is currently a very large KEEP CLEAR marking that constrains the approach capacity unnecessarily. This marking could be halved in size to make this approach more efficient. It would also be possible to extend the

2-3 lane approach but only at the expense of closing the service road entrance and removing a parking layby.

- At Ipswich Road, Leigh Road and Galvin Road SEGRO are developing plans to support their long term master plan, which could result in substantial modifications to these junctions.
- At Twinches Lane officers are reviewing the service road access with a view to improving junction efficiency and resolving safety concerns.
- At Three Tuns crossroads there are further possibilities for increasing the approach capacity on both the northbound and southbound approaches, which will be investigated as resources and priority allow. These changes would mean re-aligning the central reservation on the approaches.
- At Stoke Poges Lane it would be beneficial to encourage drivers to use both lanes to turn right, similar to Station Road, Burnham. Some drivers are doing this already contrary to the existing road markings.

### **Heart of Slough**

The Heart of Slough scheme will provide a new SCOOT region in the town centre, with potential for future links to Ledgers Road, Herschel Street and Tescos as resources and budgets allow.

At the time of writing the old Brunel Roundabout has been decommissioned, and traffic is now using the new crossroads. However Members should be aware that the scheme is only part complete, and so the full benefits of the new system cannot possibly be realised. For example the system is operating with virtually no detection – it cannot monitor traffic and has therefore been programmed with a fixed timetabled sequence. This sequence cannot adapt to change traffic conditions, and therefore will feel awkward to drivers at times when the fixed sequence does not suit the prevailing traffic conditions. Furthermore the new signals cannot coordinate with the old signals that are still in place at Windsor Road (pedestrian crossing) and Brunel Way. In addition parts of the area are still active construction sites, which means the full design capacity is not available on all approaches – a good example of this is High Street West and Windsor Road, where two lanes have been designed, but only one lane is currently available. This means that we have been able to improve some movements, but at times some arms are experiencing delays.

The scheme is expected to be completed early in 2012, at which point officers will be able to configure the traffic signals to optimise their performance, and realise the full benefits of the scheme.

## **6 Conclusion**

The deployment of SCOOT on the western A4 corridor has resulted in a significant positive benefit for drivers using this route. There have been some technical challenges in the first year of operation, which we are working to overcome. Officers will continue to keep this corridor under continual review, and bring forwards further improvements as an when resources and budgets allow.

## **7 Background Papers**

*Traffic light synchronisation on the A4 (between the Tuns and Huntercombe Spur) report to Neighbourhood & Renewal Scrutiny Panel on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010*

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel      **DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Michael Sims – Licensing Manager  
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 477387  
Patrick Kelleher – Assistant Director Public Protection

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**

**FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

**REGULATION OF DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED MATTER**

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Scrutiny Panel to consider the Licensing Committee referral of a report regarding Distribution of free printed matter and to investigate a number of issues put forward by the Committee.

2. **Recommendation**

That Members consider the issues put forward, the responses to these issues and for comments to be reported back to the Licensing Committee to make a final decision on the recommendations in the original report.

3. **Community Strategy Priorities–**

- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**
- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

It is proposed that a nominal charge of £25 shall be applied to each application for a consent. This charge is to cover the costs of accepting and processing each application.

Each consent will cover a period of 8 hours, after which, the applicant will need to reapply. Each application can be made for one designated area only. Additional permissions for other designated areas shall also be charged at £25.00. (Please refer to additional comments regarding fee setting at Point 5.9.5)

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
From section 2 above	The approval of the proposals to regulate distribution of free printed matter would reduce the amount of waste printed material currently left in the areas around Slough.	All persons or organisation wanting to distribute free printed matter will need to apply for a consent and will be responsible for removing any left over litter once the activity has ceased. Any persons distributing free printed matter without a consent will be doing so illegally.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Section 1 and Schedule 1 Part 1 and 11 of The Human Rights Act 1998 apply:

Article 1 – Every person is entitled to a peaceful enjoyment of his or her possessions including the possession of a licence and shall not be deprived of the possession except in the public interest.

Article 6 – That in the determination of civil rights and obligations everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal by law.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been completed and the conclusions are that there are no adverse or negative impacts of opportunity for any equality group or for any reason.

**5. Supporting Information**

**5.1** On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011 a report was put before the Licensing Committee requesting approval for a formal consultation to take place on proposals to implement the regulations regarding the control of the Distribution of free printed matter in designated areas. The original report of 5<sup>th</sup> October is attached at **APPENDIX 1.**

**5.2** The committee decided and resolved that they had insufficient information to make an informed decision at the time and agreed to refer the matter to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel to investigate a number of issues further:-

- *How were the areas referred to in the report identified as having a problem of litter by the distribution of leaflets - how information/evidence put together.*
- *Benefits of introducing the policy.*
- *Impact on small businesses.*
- *How would the policy be enforced and what would the penalties be for non-compliance – i.e. likelihood of individuals being prosecuted.*
- *Legal implications of introducing a policy specific to certain areas of the Borough – discriminating against businesses in specific areas?*



- *If introduced, what the fee should be set as and what time period this would cover.*

5.3 In response to the above questions the following information is now provided.

5.4 *How were the areas referred to in the report identified as having a problem of litter by the distribution of leaflets - how information/evidence put together*

5.4.1 It has been evident for some considerable time that the depositing of free printed matter initially mainly in the High Street and Town Centre area has been a problem and that there are no controls in place to combat this.

5.4.2 Initially areas were visited and inspected which identified the four areas as outlined in the report.

5.4.3 Officers then liaised with of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET) who are responsible for enforcement of litter and waste problems. NET agreed that the areas identified did in fact have a current problem. Mr Ian Blake, South Team - Team Leader of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team who has previous experience of dealing with such matters in other local authority areas, was fully supportive of the proposals and forwarded a formal response contained at **APPENDIX 2.**

5.4.4 On 1<sup>st</sup> September and the 13<sup>th</sup> September an email was sent to all Ward Members for the four identified areas as part of an initial informal consultation, advising of the proposals and asking the following question "Although you as Ward Members will be formally consulted in due course, at this time I would ask for your views on whether you are of the opinion that there is such a problem in your Ward area, if the areas on the maps are sufficient to be designated and if you would be in support of the implementation of these controls". There were no formal responses back to these two emails.

5.4.5 In light of this the four areas identified remained in the report.

5.4.6 If these proposals are approved it would be subject of a full 3 month consultation with local businesses and residents, Ward Members, the Police and all relevant Council Service areas for their views and as to whether there is sufficient evidence of an existing problem for an Order to be made.

5.5 *The benefits of introducing the policy.*

5.5.1 There are several benefits of introducing the policy.

5.5.2 By the making of an Order this will ensure the control of the depositing of such material by members of the public and those persons distributing the free printed matter who will sometimes just abandoned the leaflets in the street. The overriding factor is that the designated areas are no longer defaced with free printed matter being deposited and to ensure that they are a clean and safe environment.

5.5.3 Section 1 sub-section (6) (a) of Schedule 3A also stipulates that the provisions also governs the distribution of free printed matter by 'placing it or affixing it to vehicles'. This is a particular problem area where members of the public remove the free printed matter and discard it in the street. The introduction would therefore restrict this type of activity unless consent has been applied for.

- 5.5.4 It will ensure, as outlined by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team, that these areas are maintained to a high standard and that they remain a clean and safe environment. In addition controls will be in place to ensure that those persons distributing the matter are responsible for removal of any litter and that those persons that have not applied for consent will be operating illegally and subject of enforcement action.
- 5.5.5 Furthermore the introduction would ensure that any free printed matter which is deemed to be racist, sexist, offensive, encouraging criminal behaviour or promotes the irresponsible use of alcohol e.g. happy hour advertisements or money-off offers would be not be permitted and would be in breach of the proposed 'Consent Terms and Conditions'.
- 5.6 *Impact on small businesses***
- 5.6.1 It is not considered that there would be any impact or adverse impact on small businesses.
- 5.6.2 By limiting the number of persons or organisations distributing free printed matter in a particular area at anyone time, this would enable local businesses to promote their business in a clearer manner and members of the public would be to able to digest the information provided more readily, rather than be persistently inconvenienced by a number of distributors in the area at the same time. It is believed that this would enhance local business sales and profits.
- 5.6.3 It is also paramount that priority for the issue of Consents should be given to **local business and organisations** to be able to enhance and promote their services.
- 5.7 *How would the policy be enforced and what would the penalties be for non-compliance – i.e. likelihood of individuals being prosecuted.***
- 5.7.1 If the proposals are implemented, it is proposed that the Committee would designate **All** officers of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team including Community Wardens and officers of the Licensing Team as Authorised Officers under the Act to carry out enforcement.
- 5.7.2 In addition Section 6 of Schedule 3A provides Authorised Officers with powers of seizure where an offence is being committed and Section 7 details the penalty for committing an offence.
- 5.7.3 The penalty for unauthorised distribution of free printed matter will be by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice for an amount specified by the authority, or in accordance with Schedule 3A where there is no amount specified, it will be £75.00 and provisions may be made for a lesser amount to be paid if done so within a specified period.
- 5.7.4 Both sections in full are contained in **APPENDIX 3**.
- 5.7.5 There is already provision on the current Fixed Penalty Notices used for litter offences, to also be used for "Unauthorised Distribution of Free Literature" offences, albeit the provision for these offences are not yet in force. These Fixed Penalty Notices are for a maximum fine of £75.00 to be paid within 14 days of issue or £50.00 to be paid within 10 days of issue.

**5.8** *Legal implications of introducing a policy specific to certain areas of the Borough – discriminating against businesses in specific areas?*

5.8.1 The Act at Section 2 subsection (3) clearly states that “A Principle Litter Authority” i.e. Slough Borough Council may only designate land where it is satisfied that the land is being defaced by the discarding of free printed matter which has been distributed there”.

5.8.2 In essence this means that there has to be an existing problem in the identified area for an order to be made. If there is not an existing problem then an order cannot be made. In addition the ‘land’ designated can only be relevant land for which the authority is responsible.

5.8.3 Blanket Orders, for instance an order to cover the whole of the authority area cannot and should not be made. There has to be an exiting problem in any identified area to be designated.

5.8.4 It is not considered that the introduction of this policy would discriminate against businesses either local or otherwise. It would if anything give local businesses the opportunity to promote their business, and restricting larger national organisations from operating in the area if applications are made early. This would not in way discriminate against any other national organisation as applications could be made for any day at any location subject of an order, where other applications have not been made.

**5.9** *If introduced, what the fee should be set as and what time period this would cover.*

5.9.1 **FEES** – Schedule 3A states as follows:-

**Fees**

*4(1) A principle litter authority may require the payment of a fee before giving consent under paragraph 3 above.*

*(2) The amount of a fee under this paragraph is to be such as the authority may determine, but may not be more than, when taken together with all other fees charged by the authority under this paragraph, is reasonable to cover the costs of operating and enforcing this Schedule.*

5.9.2. As outlined in the original report a nominal fee of £25.00p was proposed to cover the cost of accepting and processing each application. It would also cover the cost of enforcing either compliance or non-compliance.

5.9.3 The fee was based on the cost of officer time and that of fees charged for similar applications / consents i.e.

Daily Street Trading Consents £25.00 and £30.00 respectively  
Transfer of a Premises Licence £23.00  
Application for an Interim Authority £23.00  
Application to vary a DPS £23.00  
Application for removal of a DPS £23.00  
Application for a personal Licence £37.00

- 5.9.4 Members have the discretion to approve the proposed fee or to set an alternative fee however it must be reasonable to ensure cost recovery.
- 5.9.5 Having reviewed the fee setting in a number of other local authorities, fees range from £25 or £30 up to £200 or more for Consents and that those fees are for each person involved in the distribution, making the prospect of promoting local businesses unviable due to the cost involved.
- 5.9.6 The Licensing Team are of the opinion that the fees as outlined above are somewhat disproportionate and the proposed fees are only for the application for the Consent and not for each individual involved in the distribution. The regulations are clear in that the fee can only be reasonable to cover the costs of operating and enforcing this Schedule.
- 5.9.7 **CONSENT LIMITATIONS** – Schedule 3A states as follows:

**Consent and Conditions**

*3 (1) A principle litter authority may on the application of any person consent to that person or any other person (identified specifically or by description) distributing free printed matter on any land designated by the authority under this Schedule.*

*(2) Consent under this paragraph may be given without limitation or may be limited-*

*(a) by reference to the material to be distributed;*

*(b) by reference to a particular period, or particular times or dates;*

*(c) by reference to any part of the designated land;*

*(d) to a particular distribution.*

- 5.9.8 Again as detailed in the original report and the 'Consent Terms and Conditions', the proposal is that each consent will cover one day only, will cover a period of no more than 8 hours with proposed hours being 07.00am to 3.00pm and shall take place for no more than three hours during this period, either continuously or intermittently.
- 5.9.9 In addition each application can be made for one designated area only. Additional permissions for other designations shall also be charged at the proposed fee.
- 5.9.10 These limitations have been proposed to ensure that any distributions are controlled and regulated, that members of the public are not inconvenienced for prolonged periods of time in one area and that those conducting the distributions are not in any particular area for again prolonged periods of times which can sometimes be in adverse weather conditions.
- 5.9.11 Again members have discretion on this matter, however these proposals are deemed to be reasonable and proportionate for all concerned.
- 5.10** It is also necessary to re-iterate the fact that free printed matter distributed on or behalf of a Charity or where the distribution is for political purposes or for the purpose of a religion or belief, are exempt under the Act.

## **5.11 What is free printed matter.**

### **5.11.1 Examples of free printed matter include (this is not an exhaustive list)**

- Leaflets of any description (other than those exempt under the regulations)
- Printed balloons
- Printed stickers
- Printed carrier bags
- Printed wristbands
- Printed T shirts/ clothing
- Printed baseball caps / paper hats cardboard hats or similar

Examples of some activities that would be covered are given below.

- A promoter owner for a nightclub, public house, restaurant etc giving out flyers to passing members of the public promoting an event at a venue
- The owner of a shop giving out leaflets to passing members of the public promoting sale of goods at their premises
- An estate agent who leaves a box of property newspapers on the street at the entrance to their premises
- A pile of flyers left on top of a piece of street furniture or a window ledge for passing members of the public to pick up
- A promotional stand set up in the street promoting an activity from which free leaflets are available
- A promoter placing leaflets under the windscreen wipers of parked cars in a car park or in the street

## **6. Comments of Other Committees**

The original report was put before the Licensing Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and the resolution is as detailed at **Point 5.2** above

## **7. Conclusion**

That Members consider the issues and comments put forward by the Licensing Committee, the responses to these issues as contained in this report and for the comments of the Scrutiny Panel to be reported back to the Licensing Committee in order to make a final decision on the recommendations as detailed in the original report.

## **8. Appendices Attached**

- '1' - Report to the Licensing Committee of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011
- '2' - Written response from Mr Ian Blake Team Leader (NET)
- '3' - Copy of Schedule 3A – Environmental protection Act 1990

## **9. Background Papers**

- '1' - Section 94B and Schedule 3A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

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## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Licensing Committee      **DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Michael Sims – Licensing Manager  
**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 477387  
Patrick Kelleher – Assistant Director Public Protection

**WARD(S):** ALL

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

#### **REGULATION OF DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED MATTER**

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Licensing Committee to consider approval in principle for the introduction of controls and regulations regarding the distribution of free printed matter in designated areas of the borough under section 94B and Schedule 3A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the advertisement of the details of the controls proposed as required by the Act and for formal consultation to be conducted. The designated areas would cover Slough Town Centre, Farnham Road, Chalvey and Langley.

2. **Recommendation**

The Committee to approve the proposals to regulate the distribution of free printed matter, for the advertisement to be published and to authorise a formal consultation to be conducted.

3. **Community Strategy Priorities–**

- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**
- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

It is proposed that a nominal charge of £25 shall be applied to each application for a consent. This charge is to cover the costs of accepting and processing each application.

Each consent will cover a period of 8 hours, after which, the applicant will need to reapply. Each application can be made for one designated area only.

Additional permissions for other designated areas shall also be charged at £25.00.

(b) **Risk Management**

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
From section 2 above	The approval of the proposals to regulate distribution of free printed matter would reduce the amount of waste printed material currently left in the areas around Slough.	All persons or organisation wanting to distribute free printed matter will need to apply for a consent and will be responsible for removing any left over litter once the activity has ceased. Any persons distributing free printed matter without a consent will be doing so illegally.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Section 1 and Schedule 1 Part 1 and 11 of The Human Rights Act 1998 apply:

Article 1 – Every person is entitled to a peaceful enjoyment of his or her possessions including the possession of a licence and shall not be deprived of the possession except in the public interest.

Article 6 – That in the determination of civil rights and obligations everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal by law.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been completed and the conclusions are that there are no adverse or negative impacts of opportunity for any equality group or for any reason.

**5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 94B and Schedule 3A authorises the 'Principle Litter Authority' i.e. Slough Borough Council to introduce controls and regulations regarding the distribution of free printed matter in designated areas.
- 5.2 The distribution of free printed literature can create blight on our public spaces. Often, the leaflets and other printed materials that are handed out are dropped by recipients as litter. This mostly occurs within a short distance of the point of distribution. These flyers are not always collected by the distributor, thus creating an increased level of litter.
- 5.3 Current littering legislation enables the Authorised Officers to serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on those who drop litter; however the Council currently does not have powers to control distribution activities.
- 5.4 Powers under section 94B read in conjunction with Schedule 3A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 enables the Council as a 'Principal Litter Authority' to designate certain streets and/or areas of land within Slough Borough Council where the distribution of free printed literature is prohibited without prior



consent and under set conditions. These areas, in essence, must only be land which the Council is responsible for.

5.5 It is proposed that the areas of land as detailed and as outlined **Appendices A to D** of the report are to be designated.

- Slough Town Centre
- Farnham Road
- Chalvey
- Langley

5.6 The draft proposed 'Consent Terms and Conditions' are attached at **Appendix E**.

5.7 In order to implement this legislation, a 3 stage process needs to be followed which involves:

1. Advertising and Consultation of the Council's intention to amend the manner in which free literature may be distributed in areas specified in the notice;
2. Consideration of any responses received during the consultation or as a result of the advertisement;
3. Notifying and advertising the final decision with regard to the proposals.

5.8 Items 2 and 3 above will be the subject of a further report to the Licensing Committee which will outline the outcome of the consultation with an opportunity for the Committee to make a final decision with regard to the proposals and to make a recommendation for formal resolution by Full Council.

## **6. Consultation on the proposal**

6.1 Initial comments in support of the proposals have been received from officers of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team for measures to control the distribution of free printed matter to be adopted.

6.2 All views from the consultation will be carefully considered as part of the wider consultation process which will be reported back to the Licensing Committee for a final decision. In addition to the required wider public consultation, officers will consult with the following:

- Thames Valley Police
- Ward Members (in all areas where controls are proposed)
- Relevant Council Service areas, including Transport, Highways, Waste Management and the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team.

Consultation documents will also be available via the Councils web pages.

6.3 The Committee are also advised that if adopted, the Council is entitled to charge a reasonable fee for the distribution of free literature. This fee may take into account consultation and administration costs for the scheme.

6.4 Free printed matter distributed on or behalf of a Charity or where the distribution is for political purposes or for the purpose of a religion or belief, are exempt under the Act.

7. **Comments of Other Committees**

None

8. **Conclusion**

The Committee to approve the proposals to regulate the distribution of free printed matter, for the advertisement to be published and to authorise a formal consultation to be conducted.

8. **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' - Map of designated area for Slough town centre
- 'B' - Map of designated area for Farnham Road
- 'C' - Map of designated area for Chalvey
- 'D' - Map of designated area for Langley.
- 'E' - Draft 'Consent Terms and Conditions'

9. **Background Papers**

- '1' - Section 94B and Schedule 3A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

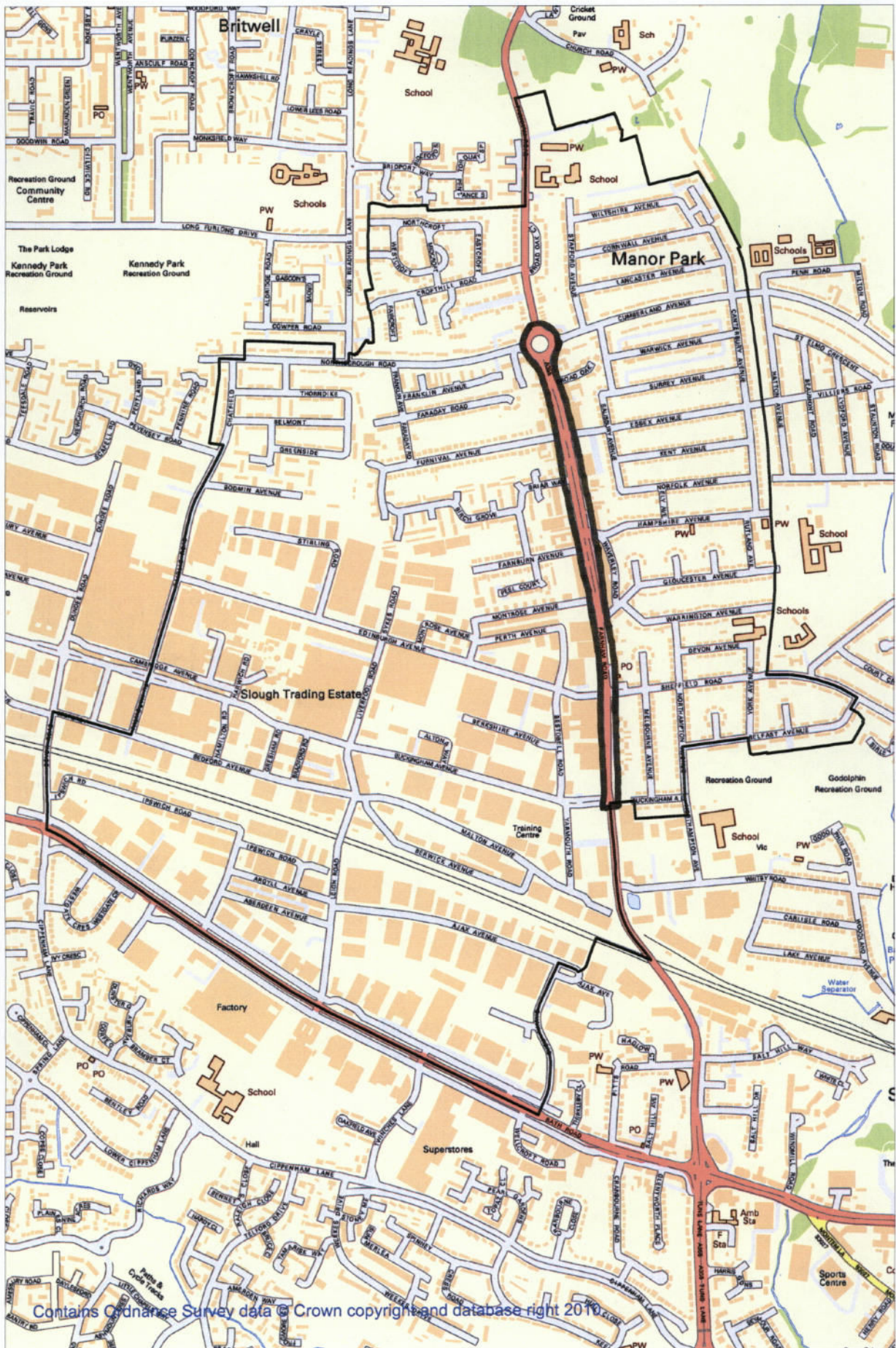
# APPENDIX A.

## Central Ward



# APPENDIX B.

## Farnham Ward



# APPENDIX C.

## Chalvey Ward



# APPENDIX D.

## Langley St. Marys Ward



# **DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED MATTER CONSENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**Distribution of Printed Matter Regulations**

Proposed to be effective from xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**Made by Slough Borough Council**

Pursuant to Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 94B  
Schedule 3A

**The Consents and Conditions came into force on xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.**

## 1. DEFINITIONS

In the Consents and Conditions, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- 1.1 **“Act”** means Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 94B Schedule 3A
- 1.2 **“Authorised Officer”** means an officer of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team or Licensing Team duly authorised as required by the Act.
- 1.3 **“Charity”** has the meaning of the Charities Act 1993, where the printed matter relates to or is intended for the benefit of the charity.
- 1.4 **“Consent”** means permission granted by the Council to distribute free literature in a designated area.
- 1.5 **“Distribution”** means to give it out, or offer or make it available to, members of the public and includes placing it on or affixing it to vehicles, but does not include putting it inside a building or letterbox.
- 1.6 **“Designated Land”** means (a) relevant land of the authority; (b) all or part of any relevant highway for which the authority is responsible; or (c) both (see attached plans showing designated land).
- 1.7 **“Fee”** means the cost of obtaining consent from the Council.
- 1.8 **“Free”** means if distributed without charge to the persons to whom it is distributed.
- 1.9 **“Highway”** means a route or area which all persons can use to pass and repass along as often and whenever they wish without let or hindrance and without charge; this includes carriageway, footway and any part of that area where the public have access and which may be in public or private ownership.
- 1.10 **“Literature”** includes advertising, promotional or other such printed matter or materials.
- 1.11 **“Litter”** has the meaning of material discarded as a result of the distribution of free literature.
- 1.12 **“Principal Litter Authority”** means ‘Slough Borough Council’.
- 1.13 **“Regulations”** refers to the contents of this document.
- 1.14 **“The Council”** means ‘Slough Borough Council’.

## CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL CONSENTS DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED MATTER

- 2.1 Distributors wishing to hand out free literature within restricted areas shall be restricted to two distributors per event to minimise the impact on the local environment and the defacement of the designated areas.
- 2.2 Distributing companies shall only delegate two distributors to distribute their literature in a designated area, on the approved date and between the approved times.
- 2.3 Consent cannot be granted if:
  - i) The applicant is unsuitable by reason of misconduct
  - ii) The applicant has within the last five years been convicted of any offence under Paragraph 1 of the Schedule 3A – distributing any free printed matter where no consent has been granted
  - iii) Consent has already been given to distribute literature in the area and at the time applied for;



- iv) There is a risk of danger or unreasonable inconvenience to users of highways
- 2.4 Distributions shall only take place between the hours of 07:00 hours and 15:00 hours and shall take place for no more than three hours during this period, either continuously or intermittently.
- 2.5 No consent will be given for the distribution of the following types of literature:
- \* Racist, sexist or offensive material or literature encouraging criminal behaviour.
  - \* Literature that promotes the irresponsible use of alcohol (e.g. 'happy hour advertisements', 'money-off' offers').
  - \* The Council need not give consent where it is considered that the proposed distribution of free literature is likely to lead to the defacement of the designated area.
- 2.6 All staff engaged in the distribution of free literature shall be in possession of a current consent that has been issued by the Council whilst undertaking or supporting distribution activities.
- 2.7 All staff engaged in the distribution of free literature shall produce, on demand of an Authorised Officer, their consent to distribute within the area they are operating.
- 2.8 No free literature shall be left at any place on the Highway to facilitate the general public to take the literature at their discretion unless by prior agreement by the Council.
- 2.9 All literature shall bear the name and address of the consent holder who is responsible for the distributing the literature unless an agreement has been reached prior to distribution with the Council as part of the application process.
- 2.10 All staff distributing free literature should clear the area (within 25 meters of the allotted point) at the end of the distribution period of all dropped literature and remove the literature for correct disposal. Every effort should be made to recycle all dropped literature.
- 2.11 All staff distributing free literature should remove, at any time, any literature from the Public Highway on demand of an Authorised Officer where it is safe to do so.
- 2.12 Consent may be revoked if any of the above conditions are contravened.
- 2.13 Distributors/consent holders should ensure that staff employed in the distribution of free literature have not received a fixed penalty notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 88 (littering) or Environmental Protection Act 1990 Schedule 3A (unauthorised distribution of free literature). The consent holder may face cancellation of their consent if they do not comply with this requirement.
- 2.14 Consent shall not be given to an applicant that has been subject to prosecution under Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 88 (littering) or Environmental Protection Act 1990 Schedule 3A.
- 2.15 Applications for consent **must not be made** less than fourteen days prior to the proposed date that distribution is to take place.
- 2.16 Any distributions carried out whilst an application is being processed shall be treated as having no consent to distribute within the area.
- 2.17 Consent will only be granted to one distributor in each designated area on each day.

## **Informatives**

- \* Applications may be delayed beyond fourteen days should information not be supplied as required on the application form or where the fee is not submitted.
- \* It is expected that all literature promoting alcohol shall display a responsible drinking strap line
- \* It is expected that all literature promoting gambling does not contravene the Councils Gambling Policy

## **Appendix 2**

### **Regulation of Free Leaflet Distribution in Slough**

The areas listed below are well known for their shops and commercial businesses in Slough –

Town Centre including Wellington Street, Windsor Road, Albert Street – Mere Road, Yew Tree Road.

Langley – High Street from Alderbury Road to Parlant and including Harrow Market.

Chalvey – all of Montem Lane, Ledgers Raod, Chalvey Road West into Church Street, Tuns Lane, High Street, along Chalvey Road East to Ragstone Road, down to Windsor Road, then back into Chalvey Road East.

Farnham Road – From Whitby Road to Cumberland Avenue.

As such these areas attract large numbers of people who are accessing and using these businesses. It is important for the council to maintain these areas to a high standard to ensure that the people who visit these businesses are in a clean and safe environment. It is also important that Slough maintains its status as a clean and safe place for people to visit and frequent. Maximising footfall and ensuring a pleasant shopping experience is essential in ensuring people who use the retail businesses of Slough and that those who visit form elsewhere come back again.

As part of this process it is essential that activities that potentially could have a negative impact on the street scene are regulated and controlled.

Over the last three years there has been an increase in Slough where businesses have used their own staff or contractors to promote their businesses by the use of leaflets or flyers. These flyers are then handed to members of the public as they pass by or left in strategic areas. Often these flyers are then quickly disregarded by the recipient in a variety of ways that does not always involve the use of a bin. Other methods of distribution have been used and these include strategically leaving flyers on public benches, in shop door ways and at entry points to shopping centres. However this has led to flyers being blown about by the wind or individuals kicking or throwing the flyers around and so littering the streets.

Often contracted flyer distributors are given a certain number of flyers to distribute during the day and once this is done they can leave. This has led to a number of distributors giving people up to six of the same flyers at the same time or dumping flyers in areas where they will be hidden, other than waste bins. In both situations this has again led to flyers littering the streets.

By regulating the distribution of free literature Slough Borough Council will know which business or contracted company is responsible for distributing leaflets for a business and in what area they are operating. It will also give the council the opportunity to ensure that businesses are made responsible to ensure that any waste created by these leaflets is cleared up from the streets by them and disposed of properly at their expense. As opposed to the current situation where the councils street cleansing contractor is cleaning up waste leaflets at the tax payers expense.

In addition I can confirm that the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET) is in full support of regulating the distribution of free literature throughout the areas listed above in the borough. The NET believes that in achieving regulation there will be a clear and positive visible reduction in the amount of free literature based litter in these areas.

Regards,

- [Skip to main content](#)
- [Skip to navigation](#)



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## Environmental Protection Act 1990

- [Previous: Schedule](#)
- [Next: Schedule](#)

### [F1]SCHEDULE 3A Free distribution of printed matter on designated land

Annotations:

Annotations are used to give authority for changes and other effects on the legislation you are viewing and to convey editorial information. They appear at the foot of the relevant provision or under the associated heading. Annotations are categorised by annotation type, such as F-notes for textual amendments and I-notes for commencement information (a full list can be found in the Editorial Practice Guide). Each annotation is identified by a sequential reference number. For F-notes, M-notes and X-notes, the number also appears in bold superscript at the relevant location in the text. All annotations contain links to the affecting legislation.

Amendments (Textual)

F1Sch. 3A inserted (E.W.) (6.4.2006 for E. and 15.3.2007 for W.) by Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (c. 16), **ss. 23(2)**, 108; S.I. 2006/795, **art. 2(3)**, Sch. 2; S.I. 2006/2797, **art. 4(j)**

#### ***Offence of unauthorised distribution***

1(1)A person commits an offence if he distributes any free printed matter without the consent of a principal litter authority on any land which is designated by the authority under this Schedule, where the person knows that the land is so designated.

(2)A person commits an offence if he causes another person to distribute any free printed matter without the consent of a principal litter authority on any land designated by the authority under this Schedule.

(3)A person is not guilty of an offence under sub-paragraph (2) if he took reasonable steps to ensure that the distribution did not occur on any land designated under this Schedule.

(4)Nothing in this paragraph applies to the distribution of printed matter—

(a)by or on behalf of a charity within the meaning of the Charities Act 1993, where the printed matter relates to or is intended for the benefit of the charity;

(b)where the distribution is for political purposes or for the purposes of a religion or belief.

(5)A person guilty of an offence under this paragraph is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.

(6)For the purposes of this Schedule—

(a)to “distribute” printed matter means to give it out to, or offer or make it available to, members of the public and includes placing it on or affixing it to vehicles, but does not include putting it inside a building or letter-box;

(b)printed matter is “free” if it is distributed without charge to the persons to whom it is distributed.

(7)For the purposes of this Schedule a person does not distribute printed matter if the distribution takes place inside a public service vehicle (within the meaning of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981).

### ***Designation***

2(1)A principal litter authority may by order in accordance with this paragraph designate land in its area for the purposes of this Schedule.

(2)The land designated must consist of—

(a)relevant land of the authority;

(b)all or part of any relevant highway for which the authority is responsible; or

(c)both.

(3)A principal litter authority may only designate land where it is satisfied that the land is being defaced by the discarding of free printed matter which has been distributed there.

(4)Where a principal litter authority proposes to make an order under sub-paragraph (1) above in respect of any land, it must—

(a)publish a notice of its proposal in at least one newspaper circulating in an area which includes the land;  
and

(b)post such a notice on the land.

(5)A notice under sub-paragraph (4) above must specify—

(a)the land proposed to be designated;

(b)the date on which it is proposed that the order is to come into force (which may not be earlier than the end of a period of 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice is given);

(c)the fact that objections may be made to the proposal, how they may be made and the period within which they may be made (being a period of at least 14 days beginning with the day on which the notice is given).

(6)Where after giving notice under sub-paragraph (4) above and taking into account any objections duly made pursuant to sub-paragraph (5)(c) above an authority decides to make an order under sub-paragraph (1) above in respect of any or all of the land in respect of which the notice was given, the authority must—

(a)publish a notice of its decision in at least one newspaper circulating in an area which includes the land; and

(b)post such a notice on the land.

(7)A notice under sub-paragraph (6) above must specify the date on which the order is to come into force, being a date not earlier than—

(a)the end of the period of 14 days beginning with the day on which the notice is given; and

(b)the date referred to in sub-paragraph (5)(b) above.

(8)A principal litter authority may at any time revoke an order under sub-paragraph (1) above in respect of any land to which the order relates.

(9)A principal litter authority must—

(a)publish a notice of any revocation under sub-paragraph (8) above in at least one newspaper circulating in an area which includes the land in question; and

(b)post such a notice on the land.

(10)Sub-paragraph (1) above does not apply to an English county council for an area for which there is a district council.

### **Consent and conditions**

3(1)A principal litter authority may on the application of any person consent to that person or any other person (identified specifically or by description) distributing free printed matter on any land designated by the authority under this Schedule.

(2)Consent under this paragraph may be given without limitation or may be limited—

(a)by reference to the material to be distributed;

(b)by reference to a particular period, or particular times or dates;

(c)by reference to any part of the designated land;

(d)to a particular distribution.

(3)A principal litter authority need not give consent under this paragraph to any applicant where it considers that the proposed distribution would in all the circumstances be likely to lead to defacement of the designated land.

(4)Consent need not be given to any applicant if within the period of five years ending on the date of his application—

(a)he has been convicted of an offence under paragraph 1 above; or

(b)he has paid a fixed penalty under paragraph 7 below.

(5)Consent may be given under this paragraph subject to such conditions as the authority consider necessary or desirable for—

(a)protecting the designated land from defacement; or

(b)the effective operation and enforcement of this Schedule.

(6)The conditions which may be imposed by a principal litter authority under this paragraph include conditions requiring any person distributing printed matter pursuant to consent given under this paragraph to produce on demand written evidence of the consent to an authorised officer of the authority.

(7)Consent given by a principal litter authority under this paragraph may at any time be revoked (entirely or to any extent) by notice to the person to whom it was given, where—

(a)he has failed to comply with any condition subject to which it was given; or



(b)he is convicted of an offence under paragraph 1 above or pays a fixed penalty under paragraph 7 below.

(8)Any condition imposed under this paragraph in relation to any consent may be varied or revoked by notice given to the person to whom the consent was given.

### ***Fees***

4(1)A principal litter authority may require the payment of a fee before giving consent under paragraph 3 above.

(2)The amount of a fee under this paragraph is to be such as the authority may determine, but may not be more than, when taken together with all other fees charged by the authority under this paragraph, is reasonable to cover the costs of operating and enforcing this Schedule.

### ***Appeals***

5(1)Any person aggrieved by a decision of a principal litter authority under paragraph 3 above—

(a)to refuse consent,

(b)to impose any limitation or condition subject to which consent is given,

(c)to revoke consent (or to revoke it to any extent),

may appeal against the decision to a magistrates' court.

(2)A magistrates' court may on an appeal under this paragraph—

(a)uphold any refusal of consent or require the authority to grant consent (without limitation or condition or subject to any limitation or condition);

(b)require the authority to revoke or vary any condition;

(c)uphold or quash revocation of consent (or uphold or quash revocation to any extent).

### ***Seizure of material***

6(1)Where it appears to an authorised officer of a principal litter authority that a person distributing any printed matter is committing an offence under paragraph 1 above, he may seize all or any of it.

(2) Any person claiming to own any printed matter seized under this paragraph may apply to a magistrates' court for an order that the printed matter be released to him.

(3) On an application under sub-paragraph (2) above, if the magistrates' court considers that the applicant does own the printed matter, the court shall order the principal litter authority to release it to him, except to the extent that the court considers that the authority needs to retain it for the purposes of proceedings relating to an offence under paragraph 1 above.

(4) Any printed matter seized under this paragraph (and not released under sub-paragraph (3) above) must be returned to the person from whom it is seized—

(a) at the conclusion of proceedings for the offence (unless the court orders otherwise);

(b) at the end of the period in which proceedings for the offence may be instituted, if no such proceedings have been instituted in that period (or have been instituted but discontinued).

(5) Where it is not possible to return any printed matter under sub-paragraph (4) above because the name and address of the person from whom it was seized are not known, a principal litter authority may dispose of or destroy it.

### ***Fixed penalty notices***

7(1) This paragraph applies where on any occasion it appears to an authorised officer of a principal litter authority that a person has committed an offence under paragraph 1 above on any land designated by the authority under this Schedule.

(2) The authorised officer may give that person a notice offering him the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence by payment of a fixed penalty to the principal litter authority.

(3) Subsections (2) to (5) of section 88 above apply in relation to notices given under this paragraph as they apply to notices under that section.

(4) The amount of the fixed penalty payable to a principal litter authority under this paragraph—

(a) is the amount specified by the authority in relation to its area; or

(b) if no amount is so specified, is £75.

(5) The principal litter authority to which a fixed penalty is payable under this paragraph may make provision for treating it as having been paid if a lesser amount is paid before the end of a period specified by the authority.

(6) In any proceedings a certificate which—

- (a) purports to be signed on behalf of the chief finance officer of a principal litter authority, and
  - (b) states that payment of a fixed penalty was or was not received by a date specified in the certificate,
- is evidence of the facts stated.

(7) If an authorised officer of a principal litter authority proposes to give a person a notice under this paragraph, the officer may require the person to give him his name and address.

(8) A person commits an offence if—

- (a) he fails to give his name and address when required to do so under sub-paragraph (7) above; or
- (b) he gives a false or inaccurate name or address in response to a requirement under that sub-paragraph.

(9) A person guilty of an offence under sub-paragraph (8) above is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(10) In this paragraph, “chief finance officer”, in relation to a principal litter authority, means the person having responsibility for the financial affairs of that authority.

### ***Supplementary***

8 In this Schedule “authorised officer”, in relation to a principal litter authority, means—

(a) an employee of the authority who is authorised in writing by the authority for the purpose of giving notices under paragraph 7 above;

(b) any person who, in pursuance of arrangements made with the authority, has the function of giving such notices and is authorised in writing by the authority to perform that function; and

(c) any employee of such a person who is authorised in writing by the authority for the purpose of giving such notices.]

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel      **DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing  
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875527

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**

**HOUSING FUTURES - PROVISION OF HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE REPORT**

**1. Purpose of Report**

After almost nine months of service delivery in the new structure and 18 months after the service was brought back in house this report updates Members of the progress in developing the housing service and advises on plans for further integration with strategic housing.

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

The Panel is requested to note this update report and the progress made in designing and delivering a quality service to residents.

**3. Community Strategy Priorities**

The provision of good quality, inclusive and efficient housing services are fundamental to delivering the Council's community strategy priorities and as such, ongoing, meaningful consultation with staff, tenants and stakeholders is essential in the design of structures and services that will deliver services to meet identified need. Although the Housing Futures project has been formally closed down, the service remains under constant review to ensure that it delivers against the aspirations of service users and the council as service providers.

**4. Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial consequences inherent within this report and in accordance with the Council's medium term financial strategy all budgets and expenditure are kept under review to ensure services are efficiently delivered and that resources, both financial and operational are deployed where they are needed.

## (b) Risk Management

The Housing Futures project board which oversaw the return to in-house provision of housing services was disbanded in March 2011 and since that date all outstanding or newly arising issues have been managed as part of the normal day to day management arrangements with the normal considerations given to risk management.

## (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no human rights or other legal implications arising from this update report.

## 5. Supporting Information

### Background

- 5.1 April 4<sup>th</sup> this year marked the formal launch of the new Housing Services structure, the culmination of 14 month's work prompted by the Council's decision to end the management agreement with People 1<sup>st</sup> (Slough) Ltd. and return to in-house service provision. Nine months on the service is thriving and tenants are beginning to recognise the changes which have brought them greater responsiveness and greater accountability. This report highlights just a few of the initiatives which have now been deployed to continue the drive to quality service delivery.

### Update

- 5.2 **Accommodation** – The corporate review of office accommodation, recommended that the new Housing Service be located at The Centre, Farnham Road. Relocation began for the majority of staff in January when the services delivered from Airways Housing and St Martin's Place were transferred and co-located. In June they were joined by the Private Sector Housing Team and then the Housing Allocations team formally occupying Landmark Place. The co-location of all housing related services will be complete on the 25<sup>th</sup> November when the remaining Housing Needs staff leave Landmark place to join colleagues at The Centre.
- 5.3 Co-location is vitally important for the efficient and effective delivery of services during a time of reducing budgets and funding but it also provides a demonstrably better service for residents who can now expect multi-faceted problems to be resolved simply through colleagues interactions across the open plan office. Repairs, transfers, rent arrears, anti-social behaviour can now all be dealt with through one point of contact, something which was never achievable despite everyone's best efforts throughout the life of the ALMO.
- 5.4 **Customer Access** – The first point of contact for face to face dealings remains at My Council and following the corporate review of that service, six Customer Service Officers were selected to create the Housing 'hub' the first point of contact for all customer enquiries. The 'hub' is seen as an integral part of the

- services own customer service team based at The Centre and plans are at an advanced stage to arrange regular job swaps, joint training and shadowing so that colleagues are all aware of all aspects of the service. In September a joint Housing/My Council team building event was staged to welcome the CSO's from the hub to the service and to engender a team spirit and ethos to problem solving.
- 5.5 Telecoms protocols have been developed such that any overflow of housing calls received at My Council are automatically re-routed through to the Centre to maximize the chances of customers receiving immediate specialist advice rather than leaving a voicemail message or even abandoning the call. While the Housing Needs service was based at Landmark Place they provided a separate face to face and call handling service however once they are at the Centre the initial contacts will be increasingly integrated within the customer service hub, leaving professional officers to deal with the more detailed or complex cases.
- 5.6 While first time face to face contact with the Council will continue to be concentrated on My Council at Landmark Place, there is of course an ongoing need to meet customers and other professionals in pre arranged appointments. By expanding the accommodation holding within the Centre the service is now able to provide a well furnished, professional looking reception facility which is located with that of the Registrars Service. This was provided in direct response to the concerns expressed by customers and the management of the Centre which highlighted the difficulty of discussion personal issues in the open foyer environment.
- 5.7 **Consultation** - When tenants and leaseholders were originally consulted about the future delivery of housing services over 2,000 responded to the questionnaires and many took the opportunity to highlight service areas which they perceived as needing to be improved. These views were broadly supported by a number of workshops and drop in sessions held last Autumn which highlighted the key concerns to be,
- Anti Social Behaviour
  - Cleanliness and upkeep of estates
  - Access to staff – don't know who to contact/ they don't return our calls
  - Communication with leaseholders – they feel under valued and don't get good information about what they are paying for
  - Mix of tenants in supported housing – de-designation is causing problems.
- 5.8 In response to each of these points, additional front line staff resources were introduced taking the number of Neighbourhood Housing Officers from six to twelve as well as a dedicated ASB officer being recruited and seconded to the Council's Community Safety Team to ensure a joined up approach to tackling ASB issues. Two new posts were created within Leasehold Services to

address the specific issues associated with that sector and this will allow greater transparency in how services are costed and deal with concerns that some services are not actually being delivered either in the way that leaseholders want them or in certain cases, at all. The creation of smaller patches (650 homes) for the Neighbourhood Housing Officers together with their generic responsibility for anything that occurs on that patch means that tenants immediately see an improved response rate with officers being 'solution oriented' rather than in the past what appeared to be a culture of passing the buck to someone else. Tenants and leaseholders only need to remember one name and one face to receive a service from Housing rather than the confusing mire that existed previously when different officers dealt with rent accounts, lettings, repairs, ASB, supported housing and arrears.

5.9 **Recruitment** – Once the internal recruitment process was completed a number of posts remained unfilled and covered by agency staff. Since April each of the following posts has been recruited to with the full complement of staff being in post by the beginning of September. Interest in the posts was extremely high with, for example, 32 applications for the five housing officer posts. The Assessment Centre and shortlisting process was challenging for all applicants however this investment insured that only the very best candidates were invited for final interview and that any subsequent appointments would strengthen the service and take it beyond its current position. It is also worth mentioning that the selection process resulted in two of the five housing officers being appointed with no previous experience of front line housing management, such was the quality of their customer focus and drive to improve service delivery.

5.10 The full list of posts recruited to is,

3 x Area Housing Managers  
Housing intervention Manager  
Leasehold Services Manager  
5 x Neighbourhood Housing Officers  
Tenancy Sustainment Officer  
Local Estate Standards Officer

5.11 **Newsletter** – Over the Summer all tenants and leaseholders were contacted as the service reviewed its primary consultation medium, Housing News, the monthly magazine. Almost 1,000 responses (13%) were received with a broad agreement that the magazine should in future be published bi-monthly to increase its content and variety of topics featured. More importantly, the responses showed that there was a high degree of interest in the journal and that is clearly represents a useful and viable means of communicating and consulting with our tenants.



5.12 The full results are shown below;

How often should the magazine be published?

Bi-monthly	Monthly	Don't mind	No response
532 (55.65%)	140 (14.64%)	253 (26.46%)	31 (3.24%)

What do you think of the magazine?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No response
382 (39.9%)	355 (37.1%)	162 (16.93%)	26 (2.72%)	8 (0.84%)	24 (2.51%)

5.13 **Tenancy sustainment** - The Tenancy Sustainment Officer role is designed to help vulnerable tenants maintain and sustain their tenancy and is crucial in assisting these tenants to live independently. The service, offered to any tenant with an identified support need currently works on a combination of early intervention, with the TSO involved in all introductory tenancy sign-ups and a referral mechanism. This enables the TSO to make early assessments on support needs leading to a tailored support plan that can include a wide range of assistance including; setting up utilities, welfare benefits advice, debt management, sourcing furniture and accessing social funds and charities for financial assistance.

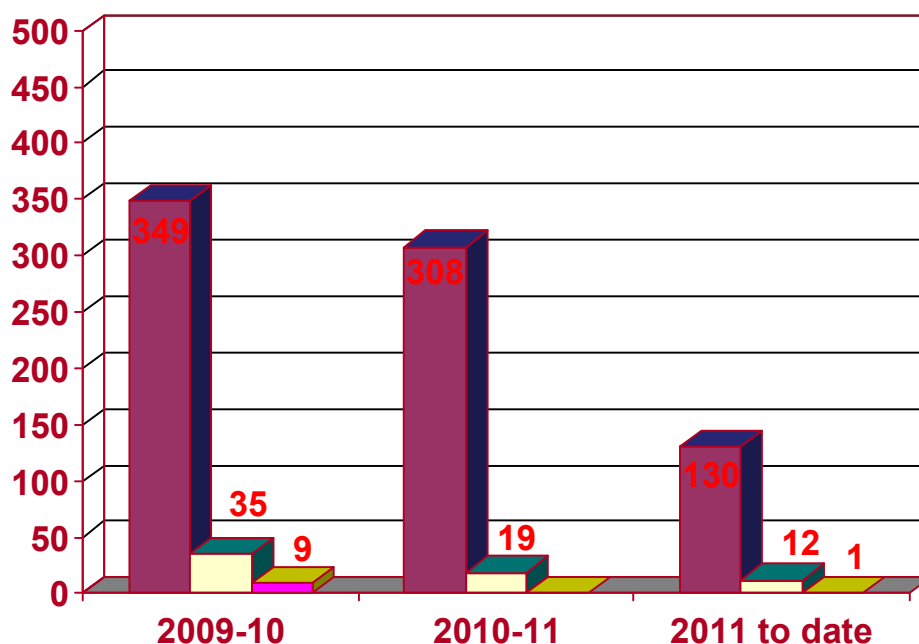
5.14 Piloted in mid-June, the TSO is currently supporting 38 cases with varying degrees of support needs. With the ability to also sign-post and to work closely with and engage the services of other agencies e.g. Social Services, Community Mental Health, Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureau, the service is instrumental in helping people manage their own tenancy and in some cases can be the difference in a tenant facing legal action for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.

5.15 **Anti-social behaviour** – The generic operation of housing management supported by the specialist advice from the escalated ASB officer has undoubtedly improved the partnership working with the Community Safety Team and the Police. The number of reported ASB cases has dropped dramatically since April partly because the term ASB is now only reserved for serious incidents rather than the more basic ‘barking dogs and neighbour disputes but also because the visible presence of NHO’s on the estates means that issues are addressed and dealt with before relations break down and tempers rise. At a recent meeting the Safer Slough Partnership executive recognized that in terms of dealing with ASB Housing provided a much improved service.

5.16 To boost this, 11<sup>th</sup> November saw the new ASB module on the integrated housing management computer package go live. This will enable officers to effectively monitor and profile ASB complaints, hotspots and manage performance to a degree not previously possible.

5.17 **Leaseholder Services-** Leaseholder Forums have been established across the borough as an open communication platform and feedback to date reflects the improved service with dedicated resources ensuring that any service charge queries/disputes are dealt with on a formal basis and that leaseholders emails are responded to from the generic email address, providing all information where requested. The service to leaseholders has also been enhanced by now offering gas servicing and home contents insurance similar to that offered to tenants.

5.18 **Formal Complaints** – One measure of how the service is performing is the level of formal complaints raised by tenants and leaseholders during the year. The following table shows the level of stage 1, 2 and 3 complaints over the last two full years and to date since April 2011.



5.19 Based upon the figures to date, the full year equivalent figure for stage 1 complaints is projected to be around 220, something like a 25% reduction on the previous year. A note of caution is that this is only raw data and further investigation will need to be undertaken to analyse whether this is a true trend or whether there is some other explanation, however at face value this is a positive indication that the service is improving.

5.20 **Tenant Services Authority (TSA)** – Prior to the new structure going ‘live’ the TSA had initially expressed concern regarding the development of local offers

to tenants in accordance with the legislative timetable. However once the local standards were adopted and the Customer Senate launched, they have relaxed their scrutiny of the service and are satisfied that due progress has been made.

- 5.21 **Customer Senate** The shadow Senate continues to be trained and mentored by peers from Thames Valley Housing Association and has continued to meet regularly throughout the Summer. The first formal meeting of the Senate has been arranged for November 2011 from which time the Senate will be operating under its own jurisdiction.
- 5.22 The Senate is already developing a work plan of service reviews and scrutiny for the forthcoming year and its first project was to review the current operation of the Estate Services (Caretaking team). Representatives of the Senate have shadowed staff in their duties and discussed their operation and liaison with Neighbourhood Housing Officers. Most importantly they have undertaken mystery shopping and customer consultation exercises to understand the current satisfaction levels and perceptions of the service. Their final report into Estate Services is due to be presented to the Senate at their launch meeting in November. The report will then be considered by the senior management team and an response delivered to both the Senate and this Scrutiny Panel.
- 5.23 **Estate Services (Caretaking)** – In advance of the Senate review, the operation of the estate services team has been adjusted such that the single team has been split and now reports to each of the three area housing managers. ESO's are paired with specific Neighbourhood Housing Officers so that work, service requests and customer responses can be handled in a coordinated way. This has had the effect of bringing the ESO's into the team rather than being a standalone, satellite service with a corresponding upturn in performance and accountability and improved customer perception. Their attendance at the relaunched estate inspections insures that defects are remedied without delay.
- 5.24 **Resident Engagement** - To understand how the service transformation is being received and working in practice, the tenant's annual consultation event was held on Wednesday 16th November at The Centre. Over 100 tenant's and leaseholders were present to participate in a series of structured debates on how the service is performing and what improvements are sought to make things even better. Analysis of the feedback and contributions is still ongoing and a verbal update will be provided for the meeting.
- 5.25 **Environmental improvements** – Finally the process through which environmental and estate improvements are selected and prioritised has been formalised between housing management and property services. An annual budget of £400,000 has been built into the business plan for future years and this figure will be reviewed as the need arises. This year's schemes have been consulted upon and tendered and will be implemented between now and March 2012. Having now programmed three years of improvements the back log of schemes has mostly been cleared and while there is currently a schemes on the reserve list which will be prioritised for funding next year, it is anticipated

that all outstanding proposals will be accommodated within the next year's programme.

### Looking to the future

- 5.26 **Planning for the Future** – the council is once again offering all staff the opportunity to review their future employment options and the service is currently preparing to consider a number of requests for voluntary redundancy and early retirement from existing staff members. Given the level of recent recruitment and the drive to improve the new housing service, it is not anticipated that many, if any requests will be received from staff within housing management.
- 5.27 There is a greater likelihood of applications being received from staff within strategic housing and in preparation a staff consultation document has been released proposing a new structure with reduced management tiers and enhances front line staffing to reflect the growing demands from households with housing need. The proposal continues to integrate the two aspects of the housing service into one and creates new team leads which mirror the three area teams within housing management. This is intended to provide consistent links across the teams and enhance the principles of neighbourhood management where diverse issues can be rapidly resolved through the coordinated actions of fellow professionals. Once these proposals are finalised and implemented in April 2012, the service will have achieved the 25% general fund savings required to contribute to the council's medium term financial strategy together with a comparable amount of saving to the HRA.
- 5.28 **Performance management** – This year has been one of transition for the housing service and as such much of the effort has gone into rebasing the service and ensuring that the services we provide, the fundamentals are right. As we move forward into the next year we will begin the formal service planning exercises to drive further improvements and efficiencies. The council has now employed a dedicated business information analyst on behalf of the housing service and jointly, performance management of the service will be strengthened by agreeing key indicators, following the trends over time and benchmarking the services against other similar authorities.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 This report demonstrates that much has been done to improve the housing service since its launch in April this year. By year end additional customer feedback and performance indicators will be available and these will reinforce the perception that Slough is moving towards the goal of delivering a housing management service that it and the tenants can be proud of.

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhood and  
Community Services  
Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing  
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**WARD(S):** All

**HOUSING SERVICE CUSTOMER SENATE – REVIEW OF ESTATE SERVICES**

**1 Purpose of Report**

This report advises members of the recent review of Estate Services which was undertaken by the Housing Service 'Customer Senate'. The report contains full information about how the review was conducted and a number of recommendations for consideration and action.

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

The Panel is requested to note the report and to consider the recommendations for implementation.

**3 Supporting Information**

See attached report

# Estate Services Review Slough Customer Senate (SCS) Nov 2011

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**Authors: Vivianne Royal & Darren Morris**

**Contributors: Slough Customer Senate (SCS) Members**

**Date of Submission: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011.**

## Background

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Slough Customer Senate (SCS) was formed in early June to scrutinise Slough Borough Councils (SBC) housing service performance and delivery of services to its Tenants & Leaseholders.

The Senate, after an initial training period was asked to undertake its first service review to introduce us to the concept of scrutiny. This review was given to us at our July meeting to look closely at the Estate Services formerly known as Caretaking. SBC wanted this review undertaken off the back of resident dissatisfaction and ~~else~~ in line with its on-going restructure of the housing service.

## 1. The Review

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1.1 It took the SCS a couple of meetings to get to grips with the direction of the review because of competing factors such as the Chartered Institute of Housing training and assignments; a new committee trying to get to know each other and the fact that the SCS felt not ready to undertake such a task at that time. Never the less with the determination of the SCS members to make things work the SCS members ploughed on regardless.

1.2 The SCS decides to use similar methodology used by the Audit- Commission to build up a picture of the service as well as other methods such as benchmarking visits to help us with the review.

Methods used:

- 1-1 surveys with customers
- Telephone surveys
- Internet surveys
- Staff Shadowing
- Site walkabouts
- Desk top review of Job Descriptions (JD's), Complaints, Financial information and how the service relates to the local standards framework.

1.3 SCS members found front line staff very accepting of the review proffering ideas and being generally helpful. However we found that when the SCS requested information Senior Management were slow in responding. i.e. Financial information twice supplied by Ken Hopkins didn't have sufficient detailed breakdown of agency costs.

1.4 **Surveys-** the SCS compiled a short survey for telephone, 1-1 and internet use. The survey was set up so that the responses fitted in the SCS's traffic light system for the local standards. The surveys total responses gave an almost 33% split across each traffic light area meaning that almost 66% of respondents fit in red to amber categories which is a concern.

1.5 **Staff Shadowing-** a member of the Senate shadowed several of the Estate Service Officers (ESO) over a period of time as well as conducting informal chats with Neighbourhood Officers and Managers.

1.5.1 The SCS member found that the ESO's were hard working with moral generally seeming good.

1.5.2 After benchmarking visits, by SCS members, to other landlords it is evident that there seems to be a lack of investment in the correct chemicals and equipment for ESO's to work in an efficient manner.

1.5.3 When asked how they would improve the service and their working environment the ESO's suggested that they had proper NVQ training so that they can use specialised equipment and use steps as well as specialist chemicals; give all flatted communal areas a deep clean once a year; give them a detailed standard to work to at the moment they have a tick list which they felt in adequate.

1.5.4 The ESO's also felt the need for a better way to be managed as communication from the area managers was not good. They have suggested an ESO foreman or manager to manage their schedules and co-ordinate their daily activities.

1.5.5 The ESO's also suggested that they had a specialist team to deal with items they are not allowed to touch at present such as light bulbs, entry door timers, small shrub removal, specialist cleaning etc and help with bulk removal.

1.5.6 The SCS Member talked to Housing Officers & Managers and found that there is a lag gap of getting repairs and work actioned by both of SBC's partnering contractors, Interserve & Enterprise. This is hampering the ESO's having a positive effect on service delivery. The Housing Officers will communicate the repair yet won't receive a job number or completion date from contractors and it seems there is no dedicated contact at Interserve or Enterprise to deal with Estate Services Requests.

1.6 **Site Walk-abouts.** Several Senate members undertook site Walk-Abouts either in pairs or with ESO's to get a visual check on the condition of internal communal areas and how they are cleaned, serviced and managed.

1.6.1 The Senate members found that the condition of the communal areas varied and on the whole felt that they were in a below average condition. Again this was confirmed after visiting other landlords providing Estate Services to very similar stock.

They found that:

- Notice Boards were not fit for purpose and too small.
- Door locks and entry systems had not been repaired leaving the blocks open to ASB issues.
- Walls were in poor decorative order and therefore harder to clean.
- Flooring in general was poor with patching repairs not done in the same colour as the current floor. No thought to "making good" after repairs. Flooring in general was worn and needed replacing in a majority of the blocks.
- There was no site lock up for ESO's at each block as promised
- No cleaning schedule in each block so residents had no expectation of their service or standards.
- Problems with residents personalising communal areas
- Some Residents cleaned their own blocks so residents unable to see the benefit from the ESO's
- General rubbish left outside flats
- Tenants not taking pride in where they live
- Tenancy issues not being enforced by housing management e.g. communal areas being blocked, fire hazards, dog fouling. Housing management thought to be "weak" in this area.
- Sub-letting issues from leaseholders causing problems, as SBC have little control of the Leaseholders tenants.
- No Scheduling for ground maintenance are kept in blocks
- No allocation of external communal areas for leaseholders or enforcement of standards within those who have defined gardens.

1.7 **Desk top review** - This was done by 2 Senate members, looking at Financial JD's, Local Standards framework, complaints, any previous survey results and user involvement.

1.7.1 The Senate member looking at financial information given showed concern over the level of detail submitted and asked for any other financial information held on the service apart from that which was supplied by Ken Hopkins we have had no other financial information which means we cannot scrutinise the service down to the last penny to see where we could make recommendations for change. However from the headline information given we have concerns over:

- £10K parking charges at the Centre
- Agency costs against taking on permanent staff...is this VFM?
- No HRA capital expenditure costs on communal areas for the last 12 months.

1.7.2 The survey previously undertaken by people 1<sup>st</sup> to test satisfaction in this area is statistically wrong and therefore invalid, as it gives a percentage satisfaction against the whole stock profile and not the profile of the residents who get Estate Services. This should have been picked up by people 1<sup>st</sup> Board and also SBC's Client Side Officer. It is not surprising that this information is wrong, as we have asked for a full profile of the numbers using the service and apart from the 680 leaseholders; SBC Housing Service is unable to supply this information at this time. This is of real concern



to the senate because we question how Leaseholders can get accurate service charge bills associated to their block/group, if SBC does not know who is getting the service.

1.8 **Complaints-** having looked at the complaints taken from the “resolve” system it seems that they seem to be “general service failure complaints” that should have been resolved at stage one in the process. The information supplied in “Resolve” did not show at which stage each complaint was resolved and what the resolution was. The standard of letters sent in reply to complaints seemed very uncaring using phrases like “I would like to point out” & “we must remind you”. It can also be noted that a lot of the officers responding take the word of another officer over that of the customer. The customer is always right, unless you can prove without doubt otherwise, and just because it says it on a diary sheet doesn’t mean it happened. There needs to be more onsite investigation of complaints by Housing Management rather than relying on systems in the office before responding to complaints.

1.8.1 At the recent Tenant Leaseholder conference Neil Aves stated complaints had fallen since the service had returned in house. This may not be something to boast about, as typically in social housing, where you get low levels of complaints you get low levels of Resident expectations of what an excellent services should look like. SBC should be encouraging more complaints.

1.9 **Job Descriptions and person specification** The SCS found this area very basic with no requirement to have an understanding or previous experience of COSHH regulations or RIDDOR which are key safety elements of this post. This is not only a risk to staff but tenants. We also found:

- There is no link to the Local standards in the JD's.
- There are no customer service requirements in the JD's linking to the person specification
- There are no references to meeting service targets, sharing vision, helping achieve or providing suggestions for good value for money outcomes.
- No references to keeping abreast with new developments in Estate Services on a local, regional or national level.

We feel that the post is undervalued and that it shows within the JD & Person Specification.

1.9.1 **Local standards framework for Estate Services-** The perception of officers is that the service is amber going green in most areas. However there is no evidence to back this up and the statements on the framework document are just that , statements. There needs extensive tenant and leasehold testing of satisfaction in each area to substantiate the housing managements statements and justification of their traffic light. We also find that each standard is too broad to give a true picture of how, of how the ESO service is running individual duties within the standards

should have its own traffic light; from mopping the floor to repairs in communal arrears.

1.9.2 Not all the Notice boards have been put up in the block. Those that have been put up are not fit for purpose and are very small. There isn't enough room for relevant information. The SCS are not happy that the management are delaying such a simple improvement off the back of our report.

1.9.3 **Benchmarking visits** – Senate members made two visits to other landlords. One to Hillingdon Housing Services, like Slough, a recently returned service from an ALMO and SBC's partner in sharing the legal costs in returning both services. The other landlord visited was Radian Housing Association at Longford Park – Formerly Common Road, taken out of SBC council control under a TMO some 12 years ago and an award winner nationally for the services it gives to its tenants. See appendix 5 for full details of the visits and information given by the landlords concerned.

1.9.4 Both landlords were impressive in their own way and the cost of the services charged out to tenants & Leaseholders were higher than those at SBC which is why the service is not excellent at Slough as it is cut very close to the bone in certain areas. Hillingdon who had the closest stock profile had invested a significant amount of capital in the past to bring communal areas up to a equalised standard thereby making the cleaning more efficient, effective and noticeable to their tenants. Radian gave lots of control to their tenants in scrutinising the service at a local level and setting the standards. The visits highlighted the lack in capital investment in the communal areas and the need to bring SBC's stock up to an equalised standard.

## 2. Service Strengths

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2.0 **Estate Service as a whole-** During its review the Senate has found the following positive aspects of the service;

- ESO's are in general
  - Polite
  - Clean, Tidy & Presentable
  - They care about the service they provide
  - Committed but frustrated
  - Have good moral
  - Work hard in a pressurised environment
  - Willing to take on additional duties after appropriate training and given the correct resources and equipment.

## 3. Service Weaknesses

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3.0 **Estate Services as a whole-** During its review that Senate had found the following weaknesses in the service or contributing factors.

- Partnering contractors not actioning repair requests from Housing Officers or generating repair timescales. There is no contractor side contact for Estate Service repair resolution. This is creating frustration with the ESO's making an impact to the standards.

- Housing Management is weak, not taking positive action against tenancy management issues quickly. A zero tolerance approach is needed.
- Area managers are not communicating effectively with ESO's and this is creating problems with workload management. There also seems to be a lack of co-ordination of the ESO team as a service.
- The local standards are very basic and do not represent the vision for an excellent service standard.
- Communication with Estate Service users does not happen, and a catch all approach by the housing service in "streets ahead" is not good enough.
- There is a lack of resident Involvement in this service area.
- Internal communal fabrications and decoration are substandard in many of the blocks and needs capital investment for ESO's to be effective in their role.

## 4. Recommendations

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**4.0 The senate recommends-** The Senate resolves that the following recommendations are taken into account when the housing service progresses development of this review through Scrutiny & Cabinet. However we are insistent that any changes to the service; recommendations that the Senate make; ~~or anything else~~ that effects the delivery of Estates Services to the customers is put through a rigorous transparent and meaningful engagement process with the direct service users, so they can influence the quality, cost and level of service they receive and the consequences of services being out-sourced, kept in house or given to existing contractors.

The Senate recommends that:

- all the individual block communal areas are put through a condition survey similar to that needed for the development of the Slough Decent Homes standard.
- A Slough standard for communal areas, similar to the decent homes standard is developed from the condition survey with service users.
- A caretaking manager/foreman is appointed to manage the daily schedules, workloads, training, 1-1's, sickness absence and holidays.
- In every housing area that 1 or 2 of the Housing Officers are dedicated to nothing but looking after blocks of flats, the tenancy issues that arise in them, enforcement needed and progressing/chasing communal repairs in conjunction with the Caretaking Manager/Foreman. We see this as a specialist Housing Officer role.
- A dedicated point of contact is created with partnering contractors to progress outstanding repairs or grounds maintenance issues.
- All repairs raised between officers and Interserve are given repair timescales in line with those tenants would receive if they were reporting the communal repair.
- A specialist multi-tasking team of ESO's is created and trained to deal with specialist cleaning needs, help with bulk removals, certain minor adjustments and repairs and act as a relief during absences and holidays.
- ESO's are all offered NVQ training (appendix 8) to feel valued, to add value to their role and help with retention issues.
- The housing service uses a more synergistic approach to using the best quality tools, equipment and chemicals to provide an excellent service.
- A borough wide Estate Services user group is started without delay to develop a set of excellent service standards and monitor them.

- A resident block rep scheme with incentives is created to monitor groups of blocks to ensure service standards are kept and monitored from a resident's perspective.
- Look at increasing the service charge costs in line with local landlords over a 3 year period to enable an excellent service, but the SFHRA subsidising the increase by 50% in the first year and 25% the following year and 12.5% in the last to soften the blow to tenants and leaseholders in these hard financial times.

## Summary

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The Senate would like to thank the ESO's and officers concerned for their contributions to this report. At the end of the day they are all hard working people working in sometimes very difficult situations which cause a lot of pressure and for this we thank them.

The Senate believes that before SBC Housing Service thinks about putting the Estates Service out to tender it should first bring the service, the communal fabric and decorative state of the block up to an acceptable standard. We think this is the best way forward as an out-sourced contractor will quote for the stock to brought up to a standard which is cost prohibitive, they will also use the stocks condition as an excuse for not supplying a service to specification. SBC could end up with a blank cheque to sign.

We are not comfortable with the senate making the decision on this service this is why we are insistent on full engagement with the residents receiving Estate Services. It should be up to them to decide the direction, cost and quality of the service they receive. It may be seen divisive if just 7 people take the decision on such an important service provided to nearly a third of the housing services client base. Wider consultation must be sought before managers or members make any further decisions.

There are lessons to be learnt from this review and the Senate will be in close communication with the Senior Management Team & Kevin Young as to how we can learn from them to make all further reviews beneficial on all sides.

Proposed\_\_\_\_\_

Seconded\_\_\_\_\_

Signed\_\_\_\_\_ The Chairperson- for and behalf the SCS

This report was approved on\_\_\_\_\_ & Submitted to SBC\_\_\_\_\_

### **Background:**

- The Community Participation Team arranged for members of the SENATE to visit Longwood Park in as part of the ESO Review exercise.
- As part of the regeneration scheme Longwood Park is now run by a non-profit organisation Parkside Housing part of Radian Housing Group.(appendix 1)
- Christopher Hartigan, Sue Peat & Vivianne Royal with Michael Polius & Jatty Randhawa, from the CPT, met with Tenants of Longwood Park.

### **The ESO Service**

- Tendered on a three year contract to RER who provide gardening, grounds maintenance and cleaning services across the estate.
- As part of the specification with RER a minimum frequency and standards was agreed for all of the main activities.
- The Resident Service and Performance Panel will use this specification and standards document to help them monitor the work being carried out by RER to ensure that Longwood Park residents are receiving value for money.

### **What we found**

- A well organised 'Community Led Group' who take pride in their environment.
- Although Longwood Park is part of the Radian Group they have developed their own way of working. As their performance is of a high standard and cost effective Radian allows the 'Community Led Group' to control all aspects of the running the complex.
- The Caretaking is monitored by the Residents following the Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Specification. The duties and frequency is clearly set out so all involved parties are aware of what needs to be done and when: Gardening and Ground Maintenance; Cleaning and Caretaking – Communal Areas in High Rise and Low Rise Flats, Office Resource Centre and IT Centre.
- The Specification is set and kept to a high standard.
- Unscheduled checks are carried to ensure a high standard is achieved.

### **General**

- They have a comprehensive newsletter covering all subjects: activities, helpful tips, quizzes, contact numbers, what and what not to do to avoid ASB by making the residents accountable, HOW ARE WE DOING? Table, recipes and surveys.

- Handyman employed by Radian is attached to Longwood Park 3 days a week to carry out day-to-day repairs within homes, communal areas and around the estate. Yearly checks are carried out within flats to find and repair unreported problems. This keeps the properties within the good standards expected. Having a Handyman is a cost effective exercise.
- There is very little ASB but with the aid of Tenants and (appendix 2) the Security Person all resources are used to find the culprits.

### **Summary**

- Longwood Park has moved from having a poor reputation across Slough to a community where people enjoy living and where people want to come and live.

### **Service Charge**

- Didn't have a breakdown but a service charge of £11.23 per week for a 2 bedroom flat in the high rise was quoted. This includes Caretaking, Security and Ground Maintenance.

**Appendix 1** - Longwood Park is a resident-led housing association set up to provide excellent housing services and oversee the redevelopment and regeneration of the Common Road flats in Langley. The 4 tower blocks, in poor repair, have been replaced by 2 fully refurbished blocks looking as different on the inside as they do on the outside. In place of the other 2 blocks there is a whole new development of houses and low rise flats consisting of 341 properties.

The day to day running of the estate and housing services is led and monitored by a Community Board made up solely of residents. Residents have an estate office, resource centre for residents, new play and landscaped areas and a purpose built IT centre offering training and access to the internet for residents and other local organisations.

**Appendix 2** – Security patrols the Estate and High Rise flats between 1700-0100 on a spontaneous schedule and will report all ASB to the local police.



**RER**

# **Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Specification**

In February 2011 Longwood Park signed a new three year contract with RER for them to provide gardening, grounds maintenance and cleaning services across the estate.

As part of the specification a minimum frequency was agreed for all of the main activities undertaken by RER.

Your Service and Performance Panel will use this specification to help them monitor the work being carried out by RER and ensure that Longwood Park residents are receiving value for money.

# Gardening and Grounds Maintenance

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Minimum Frequency</b>
All communal grassed areas will be cut	Fortnightly April - September Monthly October - March
All communal grassed areas will be edged	Annually
All flower beds will be dressed with woodchips or similar materials and maintained throughout the year	Annually
All communal hedges will be cut	Twice per year
All communal pathways and patio areas will be swept and weeded	Fortnightly April – September
All roads and car parks will be weeded	Quarterly
All roads and car parks will receive weed treatment	Annually
All roads and car parks will be swept	As required



# Cleaning and Caretaking

## High Rise Flats – Communal Areas

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Minimum Frequency</b>
All communal floor surfaces will be stripped and re-sealed	Annually
All communal floor surfaces will be re-buffed	Quarterly
Ground floor lobby areas will be cleaned	Daily
All other lift areas will be cleaned	Weekly
Corridors outside of flats will be cleaned	Monthly
All walls will be washed	2 times yearly
Lift cars will be cleaned	Daily
Lift doors & door closure tracts will be cleaned	Weekly
To keep chute rooms clean and tidy	Daily

To keep rubbish chutes clear & ground floor bins in place	Daily
To keep stairwells clean and tidy	Fortnightly
To keep internal glazing in communal areas clean	Fortnightly
To keep internal lighting to communal areas clean	Fortnightly

# Cleaning and Caretaking

## Low Rise Flats – Communal Areas

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Minimum Frequency</b>
All communal floor surfaces will be stripped and re-sealed	Annually
All communal floor surfaces will be re-buffed	Quarterly
All communal areas will be cleaned	Weekly
All walls will be washed	Two times per year
Internal glazing in communal areas will be kept clean	Fortnightly
Internal lighting to communal areas will be kept clean	Fortnightly

# Cleaning and Caretaking

Office, Resource Centre and IT Centre

Activity	Minimum Frequency
To keep Resource Centre & IT Centre clean and tidy	Weekly
To keep toilets clean, tidy and equipped	3 times per week
To empty and clean all rubbish bins	3 times per week

If you would like to help monitor the services being provided by RER or have any comments about the standard and frequency of the cleaning then please contact the Longwood Park Housing office on 01753 590995 / [ask@longwoodpark.org.uk](mailto:ask@longwoodpark.org.uk) and ask them to put you in touch with a member of your Service and Performance Panel.

{ 01753 592337 }  
 { 07792 500837 }  
 } Garrett

To help us make sure we are giving the same level of service to all residents we would be grateful if you could also complete this section of the form. This is **optional** and will only be used for monitoring purposes.

**Sex:** Male  Female

**Age:** 18-25  26-35  36-45   
46-55  56-65  Over 65

**Do you consider yourself to have a long-term illness, disability or infirmity?**

Yes  No

**Ethnicity:**

<input type="checkbox"/> White – British	<input type="checkbox"/> White – Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> White – Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed – White & Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed – White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed – White & Black African
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British – Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British – African
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British – Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____	

Please return completed form to Longwood Park Estate Office, Ground Floor, Byron House, Common Road, Langley SL3 8TN. You can either hand it in during surgery times, drop it through our letterbox or post it to us.



Longwood Park

**Job Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Repairs Satisfaction Survey

To help us improve the repairs service you receive we would be grateful if you could complete this short survey form and drop it into the estate office on the ground floor of Byron House.

As a thank you for anyone that returns one of these surveys we will put all the completed forms in a hat and every 3 months we will draw out one lucky winner who will receive **£25 of shopping vouchers**.

1. When you reported the repair to Radian Services was your telephone call handled politely and efficiently?

Yes  No

If 'No' please give details below so we can improve the service:

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2. Were you offered an appointment at a time that suited you?

Yes  No

3. Did the contractor turn up on time?

Yes  No

4. Was the repair completed on the first visit?

Yes  No

5. If 'No' were you told why it couldn't be done and when they would come back to complete it?

Yes  No

6. Were the people who carried out the repair professional, polite and helpful?

Yes  No

7. Did they leave your home clean and tidy after carrying out the repair?

Yes  No

8. Are you happy with the quality of the work?

Yes  No

If 'No' please give details below so we can improve the service:

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9. Overall have you any other suggestions as to how we can improve our repairs service?

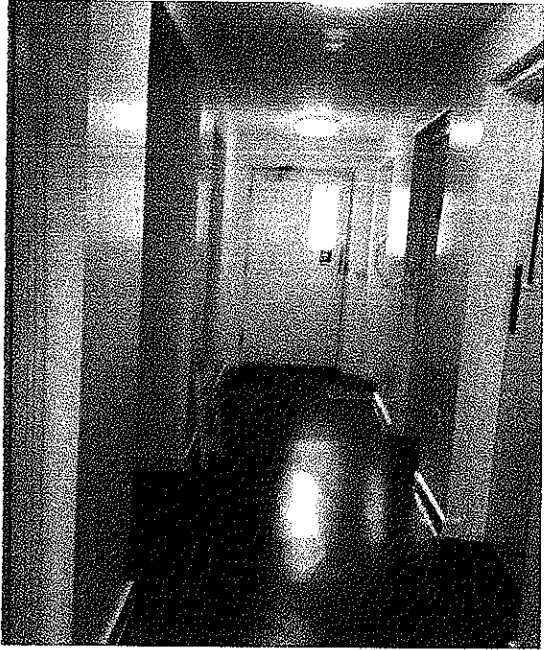
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If you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print, audio or Braille, or you'd like it in another language please let us know by calling **01753 590995** or dropping in to the Longwood Park Office.

Floor surface standards from Longwood Park High Rise flats - Langley



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### **Background:**

- The Community Participation Team arranged for members of the SENATE to visit London Borough of Hillingdon Housing Services as part of the ESO Review exercise.
- Sue Peat and Vivianne Royal with Kevin Young, from the CPT, met with John Gill – Estate Services Manager.

### **The ESO Service**

- Hillingdon has just over 13,000 properties of which 5802 receive a caretaking service. The caretaking service is provided by a dedicated central team made up of 38 Caretaking staff, are managed by 3 Supervisors; the team also has a Service Administrator, all of which is managed by the Estate Service Manager.
- Each property/estate is assessed for Caretaking duties broken down into 7 bands including light touch and sheltered housing.

### **What we found**

- Hillingdon commissioned a computer programme that allows them too expertly and accurately break-down man-hour costs per band ensuring service charges are correctly calculated. (appendix 1) The software is unique Hillingdon and no other landlord service has this available to them. Hillingdon have had a lot of interest from other landlords in the software but have made no provisions to invest further in terms of marketing it and 'selling' it to other housing providers.
- The data from ESO's time sheets are fed into the computer programme. The information is then converted into an accurate breakdown of costs to Tenant and Leaseholders for their service charges.
- All ESO's work to a Grading Guide document – showing Caretaking visual standards. Pictures show grading from A-D grouped into various caretaking areas. (appendix 2)
- Maximum effort will be made to get lower grades upgraded to a Standard A.
- Always in-search of new cleaning products and equipment to aid the Caretaker in their duties.

### **General**

- Although ESO's work closely with Housing Officers they are managed centrally to ensure a co-ordinated approach by the Estate Services Department.
- Hillingdon and SBC have very similar stock and residency grouping.
- The ESO's, although battling against old building materials, manage the caretaking of the properties exceptionally well.

- ESO's are held in high regard although there is a stigma of being called a Caretaker.
- Managers encourage testing of new products new to the market.
- Managers always looking for cost effective ways of providing the service an example of this being the bulk waste disposal. In Hillingdon they have partnered a local waste disposal company who are leading the way in recycling. The cost per tonne of waste has significantly reduced compared to other waste disposal methods and more importantly more waste is recycled proving better for the environment and landfill sites.
- Since the housing service has returned to the council, Managers battle with out-of-date practices.
- Managers' battle to get new suppliers onto the Council's preferred customer lists regardless of efficiency and cost of product.
- ESO's are given training – health and safety, cleaning good practice, product knowledge, as well as a professional NVQ qualification in caretaking service.

### **Summary**

- The properties seen were kept to a fairly high standard given the restraints of the age of the unit.
- ESO's are the first port-of-call between Resident and Landlord.
- The ESO, we met, took pride in his job.

### **Service Charge**

- See appendix 1.
- The 3000 Leaseholders are charged differently to tenants but with the computer programme they are charged accurately and fairly.

#### **Appendix 1 –**

Caretaking Charge bands – October 2010

**Band A** - £10 per week    **Band B** - £6.50 per week    **Band C** – £4.50 per week    **Band D** - £3.50 per week  
**Band E** - £2.50 per week    **Band F (Light Touch)** - £1.50 per week    **Band S (Supported Housing)** - £5 per week

#### **Appendix 2 –**

Various floor/wall surfaces, lifts, play areas, car park areas and bays, walkways and paths, grassed and open space area, refuse chutes and hoppers, refuse bin rooms, bin areas, bulk refuse/lumber,

# timesheet

## week starting Monday 10 October 2011

team: Hayes West caretaker: John Pearce round: Hayes West

		activity	planned		actual		plan	location	charge band
			hours	mins	hours	mins			
<b>Monday</b>	1	Caretaking	0	30			763	Cedar House 1-12	A
	2	Caretaking	0	30			763	Beech House 1-12	A
	3	Caretaking	0	30			763	Yeading House 1-18	A
	4	Caretaking	1	30			80	Mimosa House 1-45	A
	5	Caretaking	1	30			85	Larch House 101-118	A
	6	Caretaking	0	30			1138	Melrose Close 6-13	A
	7	Sheltered External	1	00			7000 Harefield	Barden Court	A
	8	Sheltered External	1	00			7000 Harefield	Rylestone	A
	9	Travelling Time	0	30			5000	off plan	A
	10								
	11								
	12								
	13								
<b>Tuesday</b>	1	Caretaking	0	15			1138	Melrose Close 6-13	A
	2	Caretaking	0	45			1414	Burns Close 1-20	A
	3	Caretaking	1	45			433	Juniper Way 5-8	A
	4	Garage Areas	0	30			4000	Voltaire Way	A
	5	Sheltered External	1	00			7000 Ruislip/Northwood	St. Katherines Farm Court	A
	6	Sheltered External	2	30			7000 Ruislip/Northwood	Missouri Court	A
	7								
	8								
	9								
	10								
<b>Wednesday</b>	1	Caretaking	1	30			1515	Midhurst Gardens 46a-52c	A
	2	Caretaking	1	30			658	Leybourne Road 71-93	A
	3	Caretaking	1	30			5000	Mayfield Close	A
	4	Sheltered External	1	00			7000 Ruislip/Northwood	James Court	A
	5	Sheltered External	1	00			7000 Ruislip/Northwood	Acott Court	A
	6								
	7								
	8								
	9								
<b>Thursday</b>	1	Caretaking	0	20			262	Gower House 1-14	A
	2	Caretaking	0	40			928	Marriner Court 1-12	A
	3	Caretaking	1	00			253	Sycamore Avenue 5-15	A
	4	Caretaking	0	30			202	Park Parade 1-14	A
	5	Caretaking	0	30			2333	Parkside 1-18	A

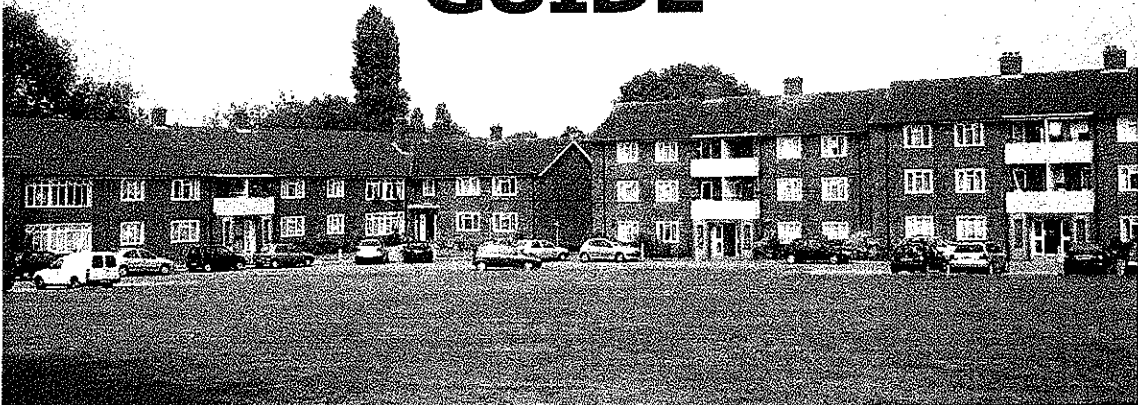
	6	Caretaking	0	20		1260	Park Farm Court 1-14	A
	7	Caretaking	0	15		262	Botwell Lane 219-225	A
	8	Sheltered External	1	30		7000 Ruislip/Northwood	Wallis House	A
	9	Sheltered External	1	30		7000 Ruislip/Northwood	The Buntings	A
	10	Caretaking	0	10		262	Sycamore Avenue 18-24	A
	11							
	12							
	13							
	14							
<b>Friday</b>	1	Caretaking	0	15		940	Barra Hall Road 55-57	A
	2	Caretaking	0	30		7000 Hayes	Kelf Grove	A
	3	Caretaking	0	15		80	Mimosa House 1-45	A
	4	Caretaking	0	15		85	Larch House 101-118	A
	5	Caretaking	0	30		383	Lych Gate Walk 39-49	A
	6	Caretaking	1	00		2282	Albion Road 44-102	A
	7	Sheltered External	2	00		7000 Uxbridge	Darryl Charles Court	A
	8							
	9							
	10							
	11							
<b>Saturday</b>	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
<b>Sunday</b>	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							



**DRAFT**

# **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AREAS**

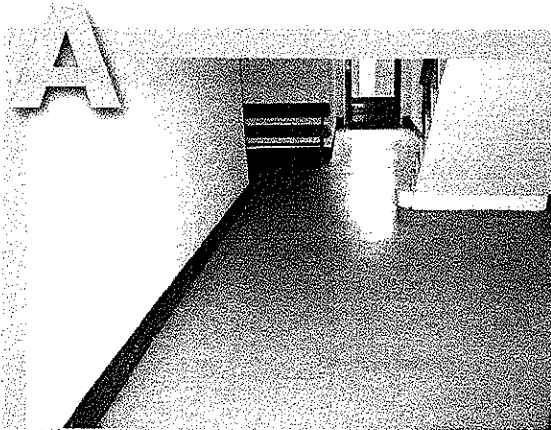
## **YOUR GRADING GUIDE**



**HOW CLEAN IS YOUR ESTATE ?**  
**Caretaking visual standards**

# Internal floors - vinyl surfaces

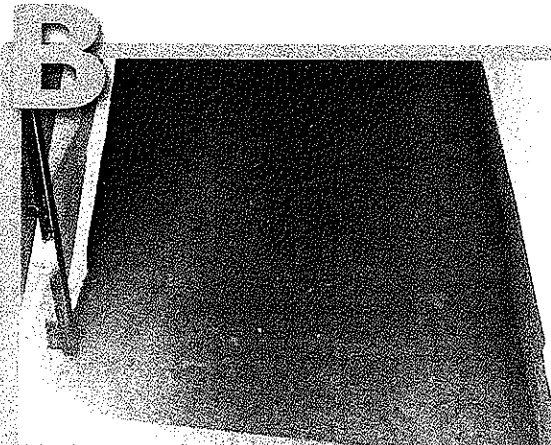
All areas to be free from litter, chewing gum, removable stains, dust and dirt, spillages, bodily fluids, domestic refuse sacks, items of discarded furniture. Areas include all stairs, main entrances and corridors with carpets. Lumber should be removed or if necessary made safe, reported and its collection arranged. No health and safety hazards should be present e.g. needles, glass, and faeces



Area is swept and free of litter, refuse.

Area looks clean and there are no visible removable marks, stains.

Area looks well maintained and looks like cleaning is taking place regularly

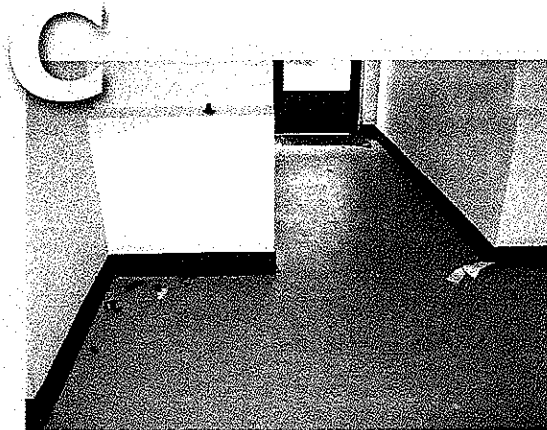


Area may not be completely free of litter or refuse but is generally clear

Very few removable marks and stains visible

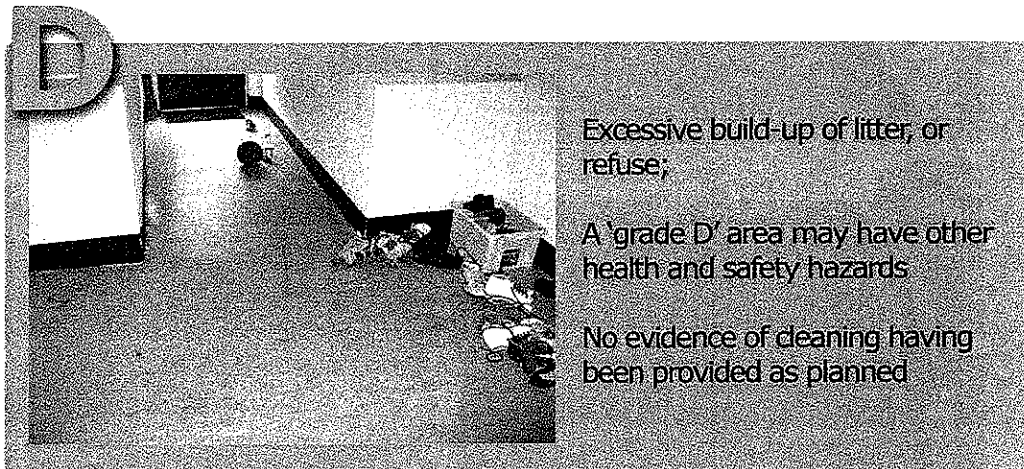
Area requires little attention to return it to an A standard

## Internal floors - vinyl surfaces



Area has not been swept resulting in noticeable build-ups of litter or refuse

Many visible removable marks and stains



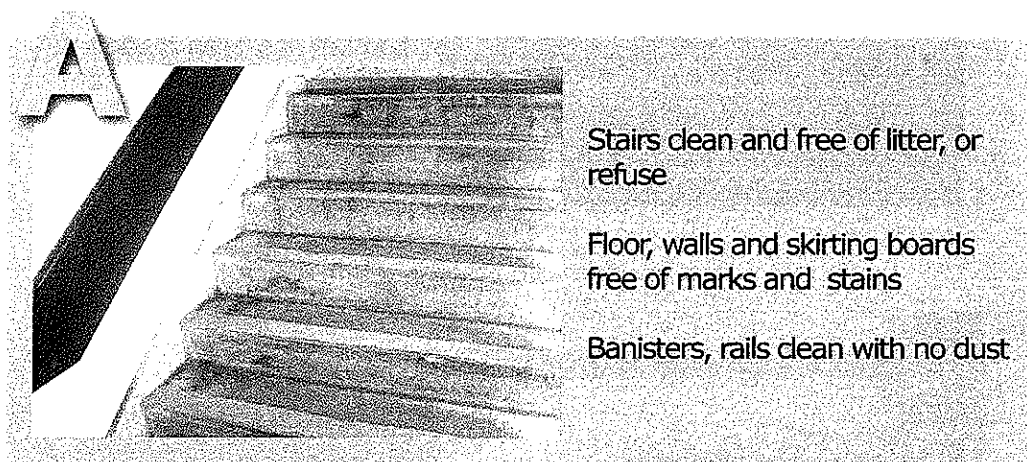
Excessive build-up of litter, or refuse;

A 'grade D' area may have other health and safety hazards

No evidence of cleaning having been provided as planned

## Internal staircases, landings and entrances (non-vinyl)

All areas to be free from litter, chewing gum, removable stains, detritus, dust and dirt, oil or other slippery material, hazardous material, bodily fluid and domestic refuse sacks. Surrounding walls and banisters should be washed. Rails, banisters and ledges should be brushed and cleaned. Windows should be clean and smear free. Bulk refuse (lumber) should be removed or if necessary made safe and collection arranged.



Stairs clean and free of litter, or refuse

Floor, walls and skirting boards free of marks and stains

Banisters, rails clean with no dust



Minimal litter, refuse build-up on stairs.

Floor, walls and skirting generally clean, few marks and stains present

Minimal dirt or dust on rails and banisters

No lumber.

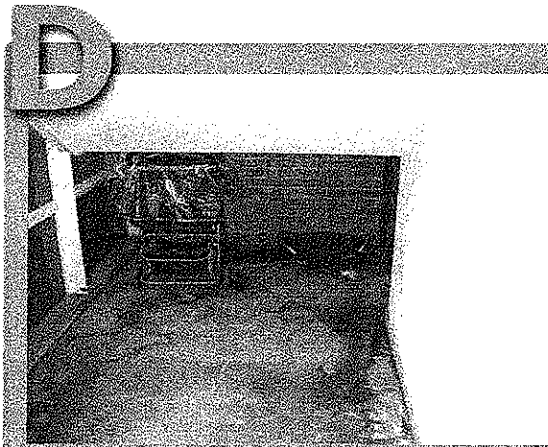


## Internal staircases, landings and entrances (non-vinyl)



Noticeable build-up of litter etc and/or marks and stains on floors and walls

Lumber has been made safe with collection arranged if necessary



Excessive build-up of litter, under stairs, stains and/or marks on walls and floor; and/or

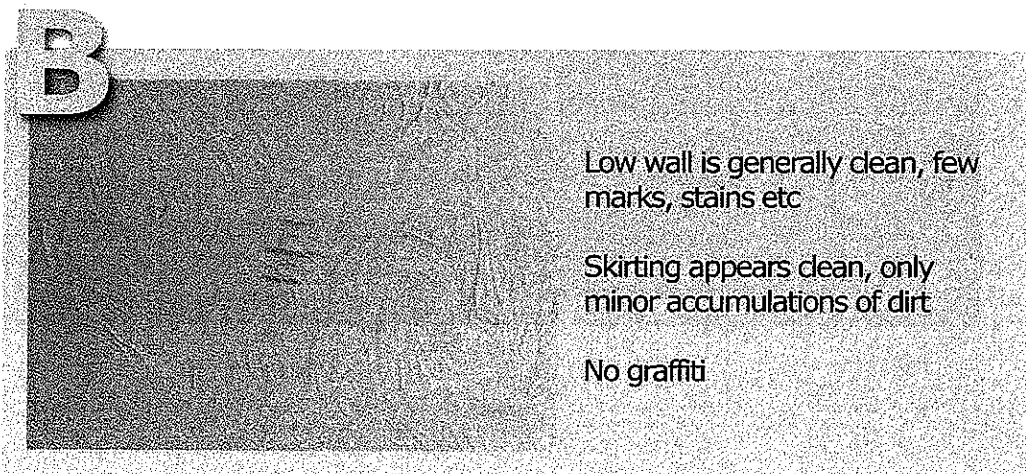
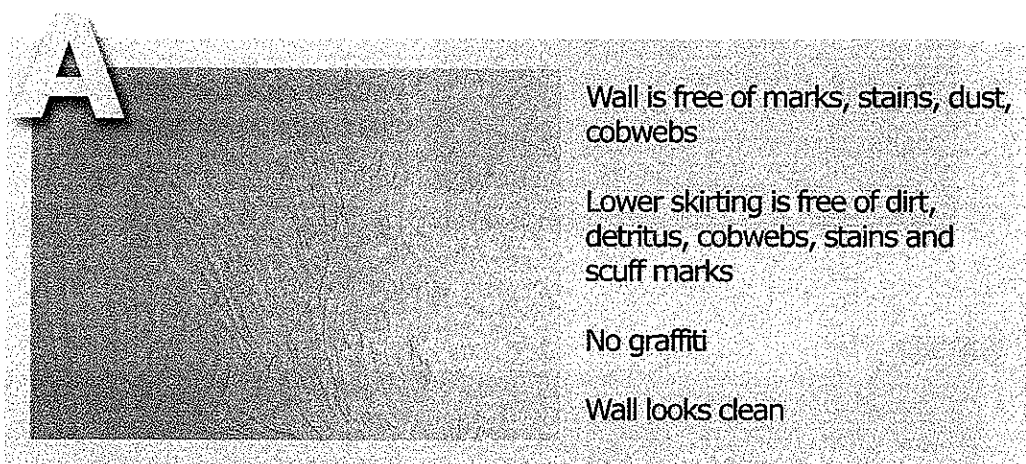
Lumber present that has not been made safe and reported

No evidence of cleaning having been provided as planned

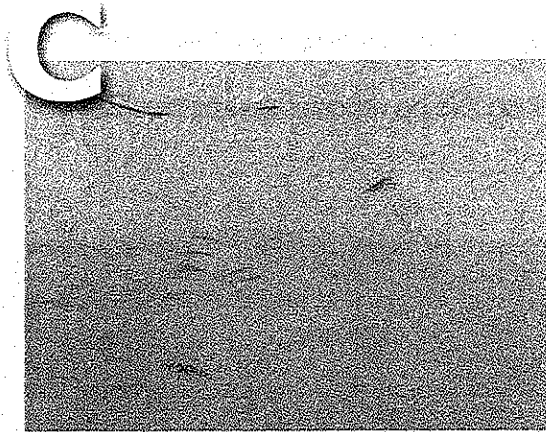
# Internal walls and painted surfaces

Areas include all painted surfaces, walls, doors, doorframes and window ledges. These areas should be kept clear from litter, chewing gum, removable stains/graffiti, cobwebs, dust and dirt, oil or other slippery material.

Graffiti, vandalism and repairs work should be reported as appropriate.

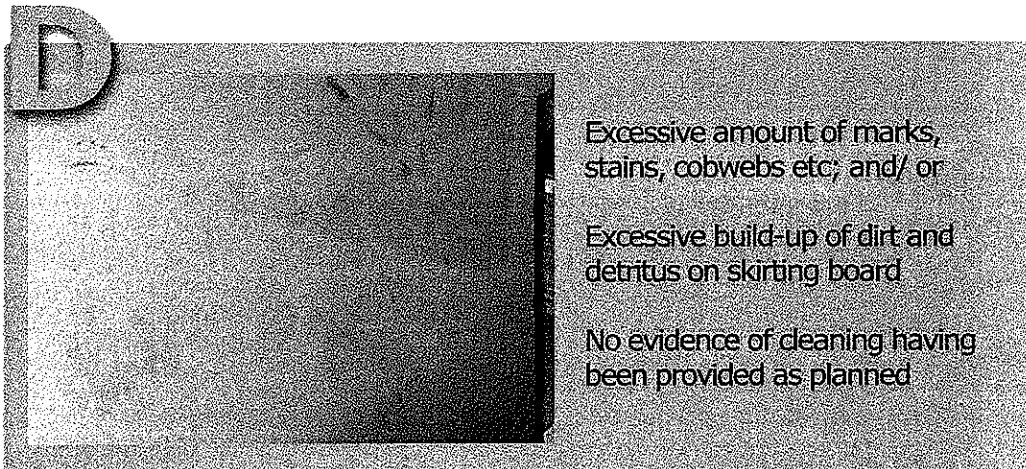


## Internal walls and painted surfaces



Scuff marks, stains, dust or cobwebs noticeable on low wall; and/or

visible build-up of dirt and detritus on skirting board



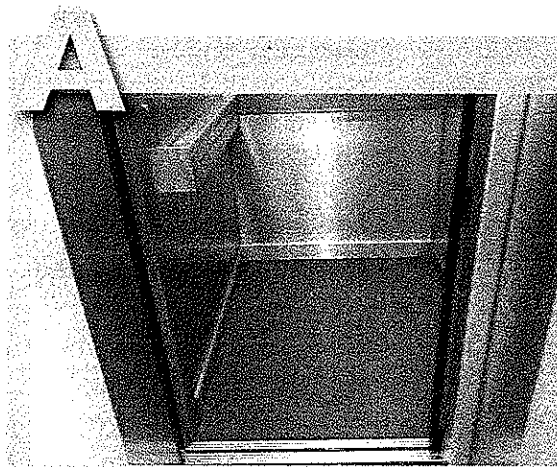
Excessive amount of marks, stains, cobwebs etc; and/ or

Excessive build-up of dirt and detritus on skirting board

No evidence of cleaning having been provided as planned

# Lifts

All lifts (internal) must be free from litter, urine and other bodily fluids, other spillages, dust, cobwebs, domestic refuse sacks and graffiti. Walls, external and internal doors, doorframes and door panels should be cleaned to remove marks, stains, detritus and graffiti. Caretakers are also expected to test alarm bells and report out of order or defective lifts directly to Hillingdon Homes Repairs Service.



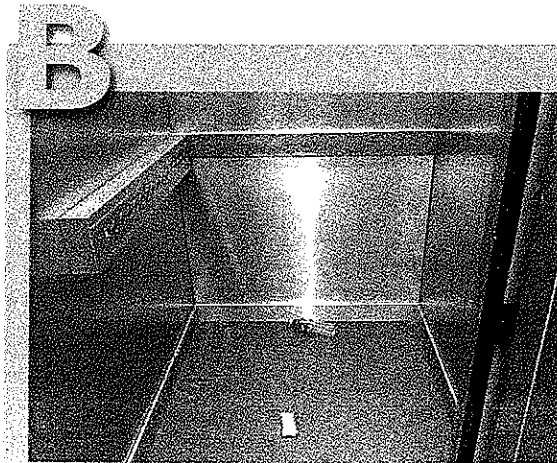
Floor is clear of litter, detritus, marks and stains

There is no build-up of litter or detritus in the corners

Walls and doors clean and free of removable marks, stains, detritus and graffiti

Alarm bells working

Defective lifts reported



There may be litter or detritus present, but in minimal quantities

The corners are clear and the floor appears clean

Wall and doors predominantly clear and clean

Alarm bells working, defective lifts reported

# Lifts

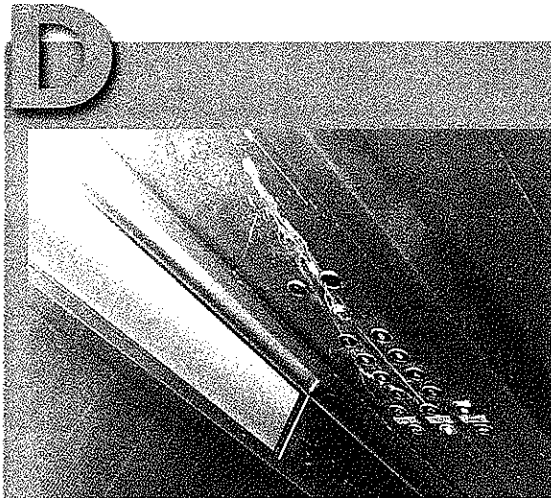


Build-ups of litter and detritus are noticeable; and/or urine and other bodily fluids

Dirt and detritus in corners or on lower walls; and/or

some removable stains highly visible on walls

Alarm bells working, defective lifts reported



Excessive build-up of litter and detritus on floor; and/or

many removable marks and stains highly visible on walls and doors; and/or

health and safety hazards present in lift; and/or alarm bells not working or defective lift not reported

# Play areas

All play areas must be completely free of broken glass, needles or other hazardous items. Play areas should also be kept clear of litter and other detritus, leaves, domestic refuse sacks and bulk items of furniture. We acknowledge that keeping leaves off the ground may not always be achievable due to seasonal weather conditions. Playground equipment should be cordoned off if broken or found to be unsafe and must be reported to Hillingdon Homes Repairs Service.



Area is clear of litter, detritus and bulk items

Play equipment is in good working order

No hazardous items

No leaves

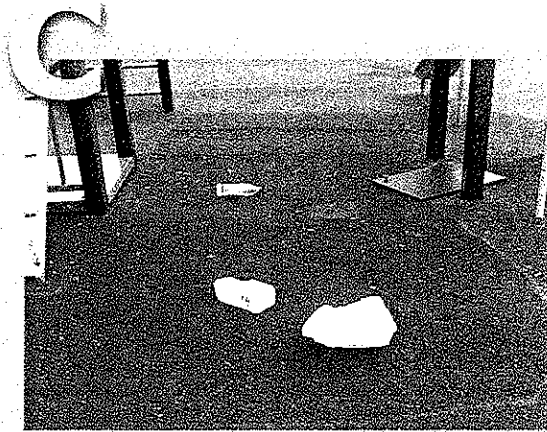


Area is mainly free of litter, detritus, leaves

No hazardous items and play equipment is in good working order

Area requires little work to return it to an A standard

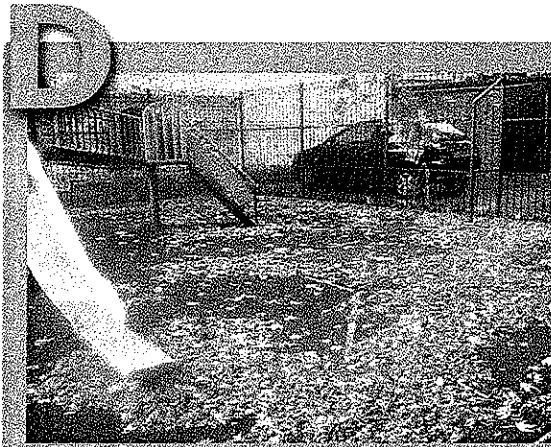
# Play areas



Noticeable quantities of litter, detritus

Hazardous items visible

Play equipment in good working order or has been cordoned off, made safe and reported



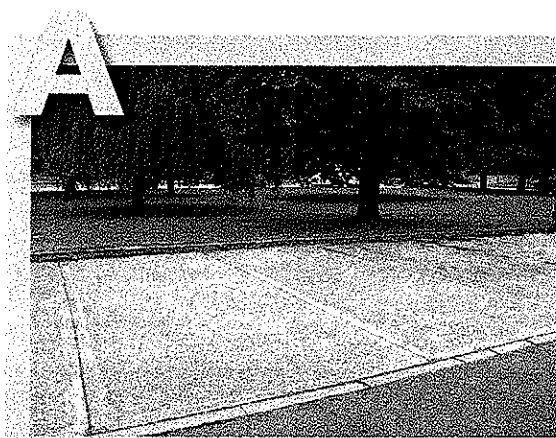
Excessive build-up of litter, detritus, leaves, and/or

hazardous items e.g. broken glass or needles; and/or

defective play equipment that has not been dealt with appropriately

# Car park areas and bays

All car parking areas and bays must be free from litter and other detritus, domestic refuse sacks, bulk items of furniture, leaves, oil and other mechanical fluids; any other hazards, abandoned or untaxed vehicles.



Area is swept and free of litter and detritus, any abandoned or illegally parked vehicles have been reported to the relevant supervisor

Any bulk items have been reported with collection arranged

No hazardous materials



Area is predominantly clear of litter and detritus; and

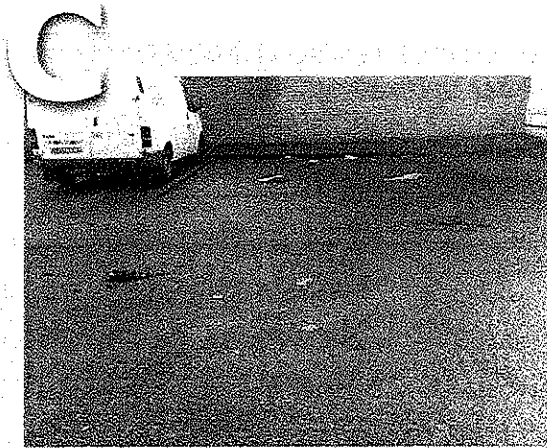
any abandoned or illegally parked vehicles have been reported to the relevant caretaker supervisor

Any bulk items have been reported with collection arranged

No hazardous materials



## Car park areas and bays



Area has noticeable build-up of litter and detritus; and

any abandoned or illegally parked vehicles have been reported to the relevant caretaker supervisor

Any bulk items have been reported with collection arranged

No hazardous materials



Area has excessive build-up of litter and detritus, and/ or one or more abandoned or illegally parked vehicles that have not been reported to the relevant caretaker supervisor

Hazardous materials present

# Walkways and paths

All walkways/paths and gullies must be free from litter and other detritus, leaves, domestic refuse sacks, bulk items of furniture, any other hazardous items.



Area is clear of litter, detritus and leaves

Bulk items not present or have been made safe with collection arranged

No hazardous items

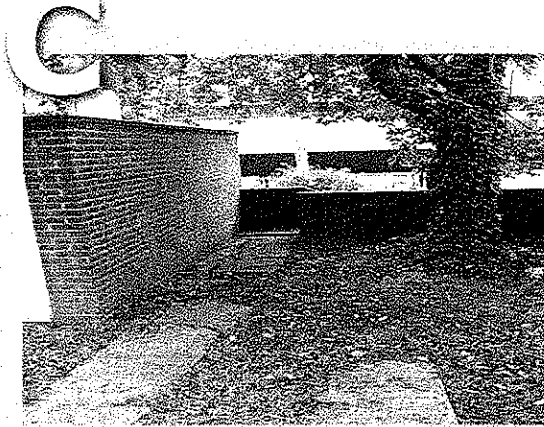


Predominantly free of litter and detritus

Would require little work to return area to A standard

Bulk items not present or have been made safe with collection arranged

# Walkways and paths



Litter, detritus and leaves are noticeable, including some accumulations

Not clear that cleaning has taken place as regularly as planned

No hazardous items



Excessive build-up of litter; and/or

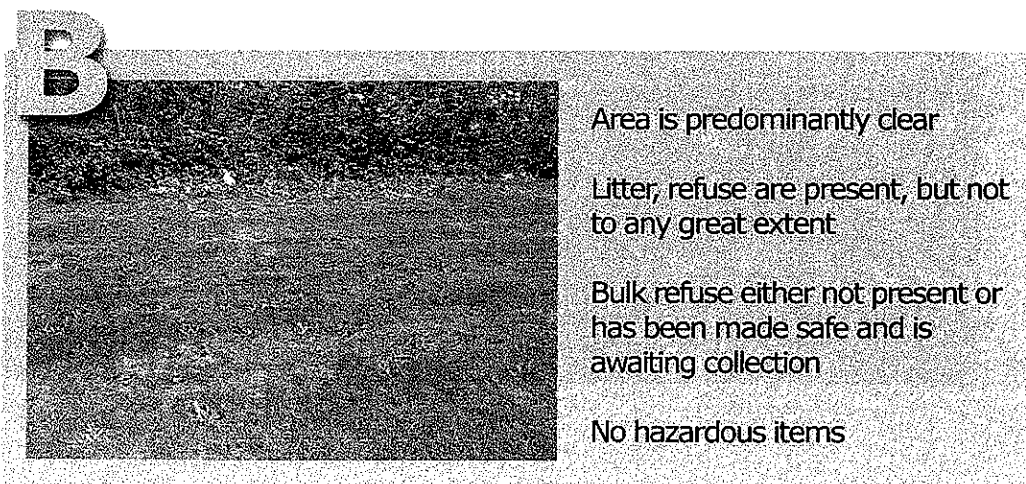
bulk refuse present that has not been removed, or made safe and reported; and/or

hazardous materials

No evidence that cleaning has taken place as regularly as planned

# Grassed and open space areas

All grassed and open space areas should be kept free of litter and refuse. Any bulk refuse left in these areas should be removed, or if necessary made safe and arrangements made for collection. There should be no hazardous items present, e.g. broken glass or needles.



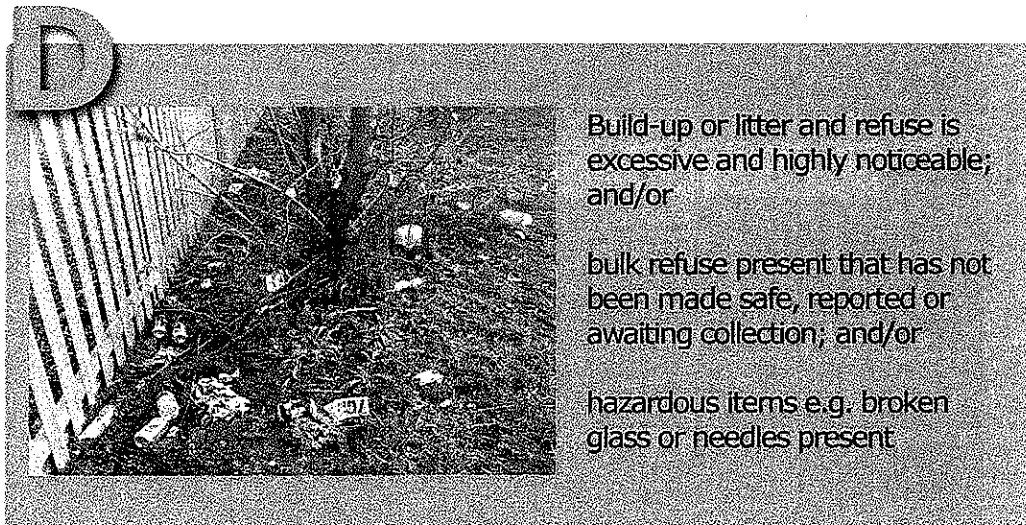
## Grassed and open space areas



Build-up of litter and refuse is noticeable, but would not be considered excessive

Bulk refuse either not present or has been made safe and is awaiting collection

No hazardous items



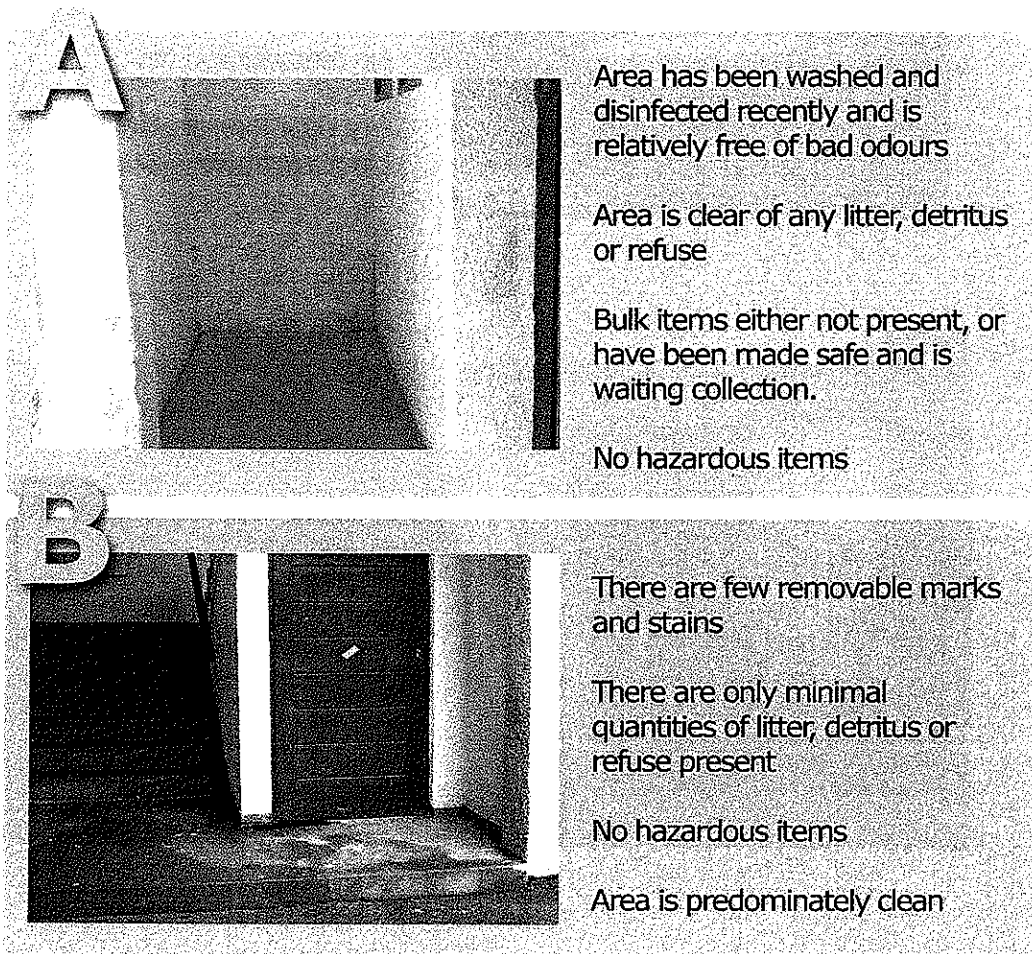
Build-up of litter and refuse is excessive and highly noticeable; and/or

bulk refuse present that has not been made safe, reported or awaiting collection; and/or

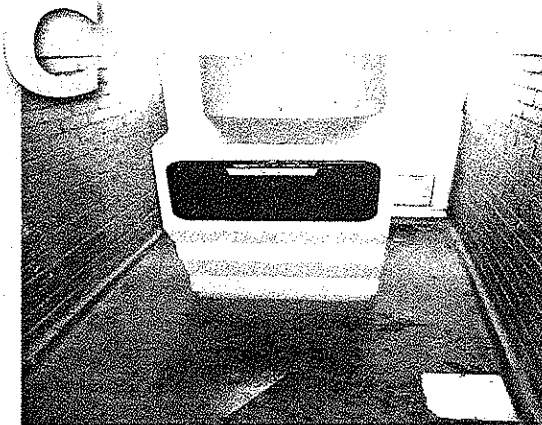
hazardous items e.g. broken glass or needles present

# Refuse chutes and hoppers

The external parts of the hopper should be cleaned and disinfected. The surrounding wall and floor area should be cleaned, swept and washed. Chutes should be checked for blockages and cleared, or reported where necessary. Bulk items should not be left in chute rooms. In the event that bulk items are left in chute rooms, caretakers should remove/make safe and arrange for collection.



## Refuse chutes and hoppers



Noticeable quantities of litter, detritus and refuse

Stains on chute hopper or floor

No hazardous items

Not clear that cleaning is taking place as regularly as planned



Excessive quantities of litter, detritus or refuse; and/or

multiple stains on chute hopper or floor and/or

bulk item/s stored inappropriately or hazardous items; and/or

area appears very unclean, there may be offensive odours

# Refuse bin rooms

All refuse bins must be stored safely and securely. All areas must be free from refuse being stored in front of bins, bulk items of furniture and graffiti. To avoid smells and attracting vermin, checks should be made on a daily basis for blockages and attempts made to unblock where necessary. An approved disinfectant should be used during wash down.



Bin chamber/s clear of blockages

Floor is completely clear of litter and refuse

Floor and wall are clean with no removable stains or marks

Chamber is washed

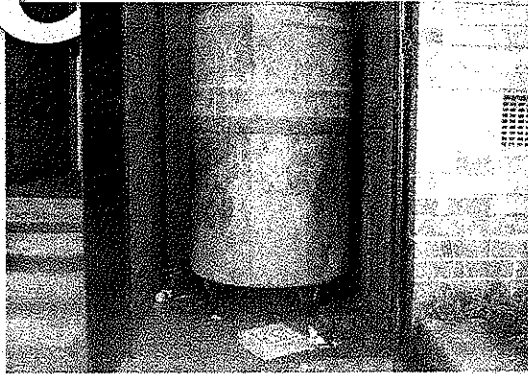


Floor area has only minimal litter, refuse and removable marks and stains

Chamber is washed



# Refuse bin rooms



The bin chamber may be blocked without appropriate action taken to unblock

Litter, refuse, removable stains and marks visible

Bin chamber may not be cleaned and washed



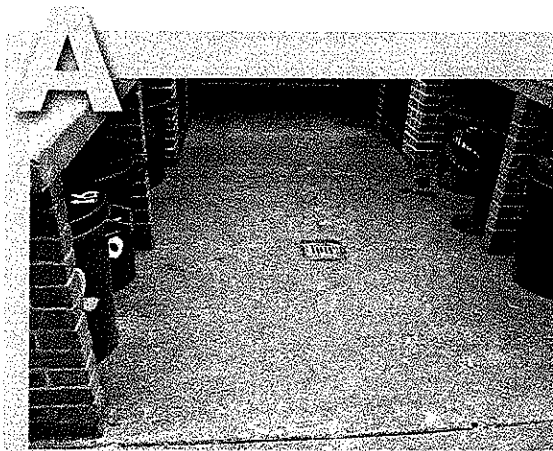
The bin chamber may be blocked without appropriate action taken to unblock

Excessive amount of litter and/or refuse and/or removable stains and marks

Bin chamber not clean or washed and/or offensive odour

# Bin areas

Bin area should be free from litter and refuse, impacted or ingrained dirt and grime. Free from grease, sticky patches, removable stains dry and free from spillages and no build up of rubbish. Bin areas and surrounds should be washed, spot cleaned and disinfected to maintain appearance, cleanliness and hygiene.



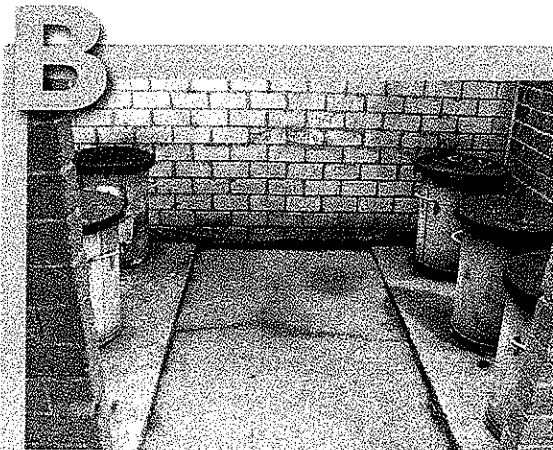
Area free from litter, and refuse

Area free from grease, sticky patches, removable stains

No refuse build up

Floor clean with no removable stains or marks

Chamber is washed



There are few removable marks and stains

There are only minimal quantities of litter, detritus or refuse present

No hazardous items

Area is predominately clean

# Bin areas



Noticeable quantities of litter, detritus and refuse

No hazardous items

Not clear that cleaning is taking place as regularly as planned



Bins not being used

Excessive amount of litter and/or refuse and/or removable stains and marks

Bin area not clean or washed and/or offensive odour

Hazardous items present

# Bulk refuse/lumber



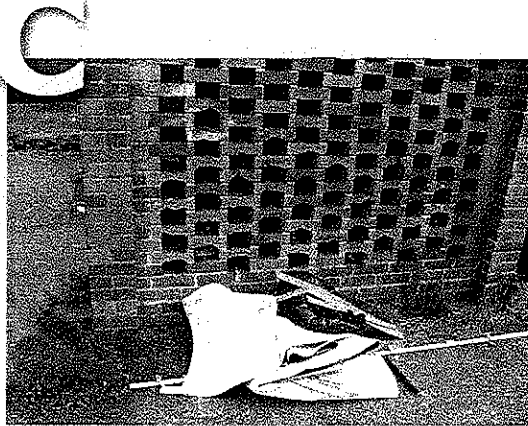
The area is either completely free of lumber, or

any lumber that is present is stored appropriately and securely in a designated lumber point and has been reported by the caretaker. In the photo the lumber is left at a designated point and has been stacked safely and securely



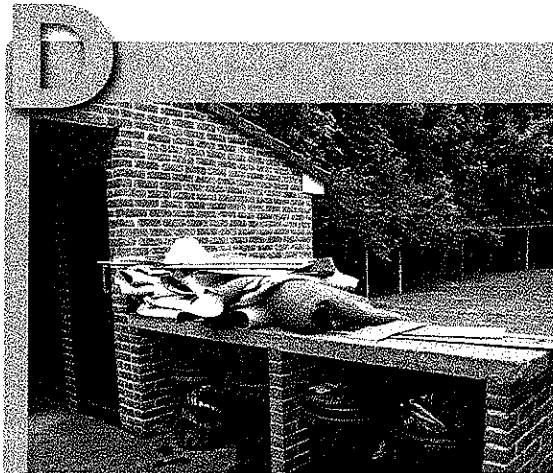
There may be small, single items of lumber present in a non-designated area but it is not obstructing a walkway or exit and been left securely

## Bulk refuse/lumber



There may be items of lumber in non-designated areas, but they do not represent a health and safety hazard

Lumber has been left in the corner, but in a manner that is not unsafe or unsecured



Lumber left in a way that is unsecured or inappropriate; or

excessive quantities of lumber left at an undesignated area; or

lumber blocking exits or walkways; or

lumber has been left at a designated point, but it is not left safely or securely

# **USEFUL NUMBERS**

**CARETAKING SERVICES**

**0800 0730826**

**RUBBISH COLLECTIONS & RECYCLING**

**01895 556000**

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GENERAL ENQUIRIES**

**01895 250190**

**GROUND MAINTENANCE, PARKS & TREES**

**01895 556000**

**ROADS & PAVEMENTS MAINTENANCE**

**01895 556000**

**ABANDONED VEHICLES, STREET LIGHTING & CLEANING**

**01895 556000**

**OLDER PERSONS SERVICE**

**01895 250718**

**REPAIRS SERVICE**

**01895 556600**

**OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS SERVICES**

**01895 250111**

**ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM**

**0800 6940240**

**GAS EMERGENCY (TRANSCO)**

**0800 111999**

**WATER (THREE VALLEYS)**

**0845 7823333**

**HOW CLEAN IS YOUR ESTATE ?**

**Caretaking visual standards**



**NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL  
AGENDA PLAN 2011-2012**

<b>Draft Report Deadline</b>	<b>Final Report Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Dispatch</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> May 2011</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> June 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empty Homes: Housing Solutions – A Strategy for Slough (Manju Dhar)</li> <li>• The Proposal to implement additional Houses in multiple occupation licensing for Chalvey ward (Manju Dhar)</li> <li>• Ten Pin and Tennis Progress update (A. Stevens)</li> <li>• Food Standards Agency Audit report on the SBC Food Controls Service (G. DeHaan)</li> </ul>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> June 2011</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> August 2011</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> September 2011</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> September 2011</b>	<p>Police Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police and Social Responsibility Bill</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Working in Slough</li> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour</li> </ul>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> September 2011</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> October 2011</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2011</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> October 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Benefit Reforms – Impact on Slough</li> <li>• Community Centres – Future Provision</li> <li>• Update Paper on Prostitution</li> <li>• Winter Preparations</li> <li>• Flood Risk Assessment</li> </ul>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2011</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> November 2011</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> November 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Services: Transition from the ALMO – one year on</li> <li>• Distribution of Free Material</li> <li>• Traffic Light Synchronisation</li> </ul>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> December 2011</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> December 2011</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> January 2012</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> January 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community &amp; Wellbeing Restructure - to be confirmed</li> <li>• Library Services – Update Report</li> <li>• Community Engagement Strategy - to be confirmed</li> <li>• ‘Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England’ - to be confirmed</li> </ul>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> January 2012</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup> February 2012</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> February 2012</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> February 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olympics Preparation</li> <li>• Tennis and Ten Pin Bowling Update</li> <li>• Slough Borough Council Cultural Strategy</li> <li>• Update Report on Prostitution</li> </ul>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2012</b>

Items are subject to review by the committee

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**NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD**  
**2011/2012**

COUNCILLOR	16/06	15/09	24/10	05/12	16/01	01/03
<b>Minhas (Chair)</b>	P	P	P			
<b>Buchanan</b>	Ab	Ab	P			
<b>Carter</b>	Ap	Ap	Ap			
<b>Dar</b>	P	P	P			
<b>Munawar</b>	P	P	Ap			
<b>Sohal</b>	P	P	P			
<b>Plenty</b>	P	P	P			
<b>Strutton</b>	P	P	P			
<b>A S Wright</b>	P	Ap	P			
<b>NON-VOTING CO- OPTED MEMBERS</b>						
<b>Sandy Malik</b>	P	P	P			
<b>Darren Morris</b>	Ab	Ap	Ap			

P = Present for whole meeting      P\* = Present for part of meeting  
 Ap = Apologies given                Ab = Absent, no apologies given

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