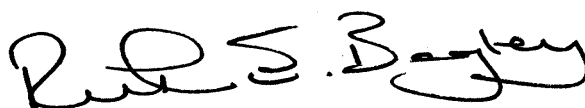


Date of issue: Wednesday, 27 August 2014

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL</b> (Councillors Plenty (Chair), Coad, N Holledge, Malik, Mansoor, Shah, Sidhu, Sohal and Wright)  <u>Non-Voting Co-Opted Members</u>  Vivianne Royal (Slough Customer Senate)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2014 AT 7.00 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	MEETING ROOM 3, CHALVEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE GREEN, CHALVEY, SLOUGH, SL1 2SP
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	DAVE GORDON  01753 875411

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

AGENDA  
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD



1. Apologies for absence

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

2. Declarations of Interest

*All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that Interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 3 paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 3.28 of the Code.*

*Members are asked to confirm that they do not have a declarable interest.*

*All Members making a declaration will be required to complete a Declaration of Interest at Meetings form detailing the nature of their interest.*

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 July 2014 1 - 4

**SCRUTINY ISSUES**

4. 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.*

5. Neighbourhood Policing 5 - 22
6. Waste Collections 23 - 34
7. Water Metering 35 - 42
8. Sheds With Beds 43 - 50

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

9. Forward Work Programme 51 - 54
10. Attendance record 55 - 56



11. Date of Next Meeting - 29 October 2014

**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. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

The Council allows the filming, recording and photographing at its meetings that are open to the public. Anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

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**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 3rd July, 2014.**

**Present:-** Councillors Coad, N Holledge, Malik, Mansoor, Plenty, Shah, Sohal and Wright

**Non-voting Co-opted Member:** Vivianne Royal

**Member:**

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Sidhu

**PART 1**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**2. Election of Chair**

The nomination of Councillor Plenty was moved and seconded. There being no other nominations it was:-

**Resolved -** That Councillor Plenty be appointed Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2014 – 15.

**3. Election of Vice Chair**

The nomination of Councillor Wright was moved and seconded. There being no other nominations it was:-

**Resolved -** That Councillor Wright be appointed Vice Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2014 – 15.

**4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 2 April 2014**

**Resolved –** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 April 2014 be approved as a correct record.

**5. Co-option to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel**

**Resolved –** that Vivianne Royal be appointed as a co-opted member of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel also noted that the Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents (referred to in section 5.3 of the report) was now obsolete.

## 6. Member Questions

Written answers to members' questions were circulated to the members. Members made the following requests for future answers:

- Answers need to be sent to members at least one day prior to the meeting.
- Contact details for the officers responding to questions were required.
- Questions should relate to the work of officers who would attend the next meeting, so that any further questions could be asked directly to them.

## 7. Voids Contract Performance

Roger Parkin (Director, Customer and Community Services), Julie Pickering (Assistant Director, Commissioning and Procurement) and Paul Blizzard (Interserve) presented the item. Interserve gave a presentation on the work they provide nationally and locally, whilst the report presented to the group as part of the agenda papers investigated the issue of managing vacated properties. This matter ('voids') had been raised by the Panel in January 2014 as an area of particular concern.

The Panel raised the following matters in discussion:

- The Director, Customer and Community Services had recently taken on responsibility for the Interserve contract. Previously this had been held by Housing Regeneration and Resources. The Assistant Director, Commissioning and Procurement had responsibility for challenging any aspects of Interserve provision which required further inspection.
- As part of this, the Assistant Director was investigating best practice at a number of authorities. These were drawn from a range of geographical areas and administrative arrangements (e.g. single tier authorities, County Councils, Town / Parish Councils). Members would be involved in any dialogue arising from the findings, with value for money from contracts and service provision to be a particular focus.
- A campaign to reduce the length of time for which properties were vacated ('Project 20') had been launched in 2014.

(At this point in the meeting, Cllr Sohal left).

- SBC had taken a decision to review contract management of the Interserve contract in September 2013. Pricing was to be a central part of this work, with the Assistant Director to work with Interserve on improving value for money, quality and performance. The contract was historic and included cumulative profit share as part of its arrangements; given this, previous losses still had an impact.
- The threshold for voids work also included an arrangement whereby, as soon as it was exceeded, SBC was liable for the full amount. Interserve are aware of SBC's concerns on this and are reviewing

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 03.07.14

ways of mitigating and reducing the councils liability (e.g. earlier voids inspection processes).

- Baseline data would be monitored and shared with the Panel on an ongoing basis.
- The policy on allocations on the councils properties is currently under review. Trevor Costello (Service Charge Manager) is responsible for this matter.
- Performance returns had been received by Interserve on 6 January 2014. These had used for benchmarking, using the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) performance networks which has been established for several years.. Cleaning had been found to be a high performing area, but with a high associated cost. The second benchmarking exercise would start on 1 August 2014, with the information to be shared with the Panel.
- A significant proportion of the work undertaken by Interserve is covered under a fixed fee (rather than payment per task) basis. As a result, duplication should be avoided. Interserve's preference is to repair jobs given the nature of the contract service but could also offer replacements for fixtures and fittings should this be deemed appropriate.
- The next contract (due in April 2016) could feature some significant differences to the current arrangement. Tenants would be involved in the process, and the SBC Procurement Team and Contract Managers may also receive training and support to help them improve their skills in contract management. The input of members would also be sought throughout.
- The awarding of the new contract would feature scoring on customer satisfaction levels as part of the process.
- The Customer and Community Services Team had built the Scrutiny Panel into their Programme Delivery Structure for the new contract.

### **Resolved:**

- 1) That a further update is provided to the panel after the next Voids workshop which is scheduled for mid September 2014.
- 2) That the results of the second benchmarking exercise be shared with the Panel.

## **8. Forward Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer informed the meeting that the item on neighbourhood policing was being planned with Thames Valley Police.

**Resolved** – that an item on garages be added to agenda for 29 October 2014. The Scrutiny Officer would work with members on the specific focus of this item.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting - 4 September 2014**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 4 September 2014.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.32 pm and closed at 7.56 pm)



**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods, Community & Customer Services  
Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Ginny de Haan, Head of Consumer Protection & Business Compliance  
John Griffiths, Head of Neighbourhood Services

**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 877912

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**

**INFORMATION**

**The Council's role in supporting local Neighbourhood Action Groups**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide an update on the relationship between the Council's operational teams, the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP), Slough Police and local Neighbourhood Action Groups and to:

- help inform the Council's response to the Thames Valley Police (TVP) Review of Neighbourhood Policing and
- a local review of Neighbourhood Action Groups

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

- The Panel is requested to note the report as background information to support the Council's contribution to the TVP review of neighbourhood policing and a local review of Neighbourhood Action Groups in Slough.

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

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Neighbourhood Action Groups have considerable potential to impact positively upon the '**Safer Slough**', '**Housing**' and '**Regeneration & Environment**' priorities of the Joint wellbeing Strategy

Cross-Cutting themes:

Neighbourhood Action Groups strongly support **Civic responsibility**, the part that residents can play in delivering Safer Communities and in improving Slough for the benefit of everyone.

#### 4. **Other Implications**

##### (a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the information report.

##### (b) Risk Management

There are no risks associated with this information paper

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

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with this information paper

#### 5. **Supporting Information**

##### 5.1

Neighbourhood Action Groups are described as 'multi-agency problem solving groups consisting of partner agencies, key stakeholders but most importantly members of the local community brought together to plan and action the main concerns identified by the local community'. They have the potential to be a valuable community asset in helping to support and improve communities in Slough

##### 5.2

The council's Neighbourhood Services teams, the Community Safety team and other council teams work closely together to focus on ensuring consultative engagement as key stakeholders in the Slough Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs). The council teams provide operational cooperation and support in respect to environmental crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and respond to secure improvements by design initiatives, for example gating projects.

##### 5.3

Collectively, the Slough Police Neighbourhood teams, Council teams and other agencies help provide the NAGs with expertise, knowledge and resources to meet individual NAG objectives. From the council side the principal support to NAGs comes from 3 community project officers, part of Neighbourhood Services, who respectively focus upon the East, North and South areas of Slough, which originally mirrored the Slough Police Neighbourhood operational areas prior to changes in ward boundaries.

##### 5.4

The Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) was created in 2000 with the objective to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in Slough; it is a partnership spanning the council, Slough Police and other agencies including the voluntary sector. The SSP annually produces a strategic assessment which identifies trends in crime and disorder in Slough and sets local priorities for the coming year, which also take into consideration the Thames Valley Police priorities. The SSP data is available on a ward basis and can help inform local action managed via Sector Tasking meetings which are hosted by Slough Police with Council officers attending. Should further resources be required for an area this is agreed at the fortnightly Local Police Area (LPA) Tasking meetings which are attended by partner agencies including representatives from the Council's Neighbourhood Services, Community Safety and CCTV teams.

## 5.5

The current situation with Slough NAGs shows that whilst some work very well, effectively focusing local activity around key community priorities, in other areas NAGs are working less well, experiencing a variety of difficulties surrounding membership and ongoing commitment. Also some NAGs have evolved to become part of Community Forums. The effective NAGs in Slough are the ones which consistently involve community members in activities.

- The NAGs still running in the East are Langley St Mary's, Foxborough and Colnbrook. However, Wexham, Central and Kederminster NAGs and the Poyle BAG (Business Action Group) have all stopped running due to poor attendance and momentum.
- In the North, there are currently two operating NAGs - Britwell & Haymill, The NAGs for Stoke & Baylis & Farnham were disbanded some years ago, owing to poor attendance. However, there is also Slough North Action Project (SNAP) which amalgamates Farnham + Stoke & Baylis Wards into one entity.
- In the South NAGs have become part of existing residents groups, West Cippenham Tenant and Residents Association and the Chalvey Community Forum. The Upton NAG disbanded in 2010 due to poor attendance. In addition the town centre businesses are represented by Slough Town Against Crime BAG (Business Action Group)

## 5.6

Members will be aware that in 2010 that the Council embarked on a 'Neighbourhood Working Strategy' where the East, South and North areas were each assigned a pilot area. In the North, for example, the assigned pilot area was Manor Park, which straddled both Baylis & Stoke as well as Farnham. Attendance levels were very good and it was agreed that the then Manor Park Community Forum should take over the role of the NAG in that area. Some good community outcomes were achieved from the pilot including, resurfacing of a car-park, installation of new play equipment and an installation of an infra-red CCTV. However, numbers and attendance dwindled over time with the committee having to be reappointed. The group was subsequently re-branded to become SNAP.

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

None

## 7. **Conclusion**

Whilst the council actively supports NAGs in Slough there is varied success in that community engagement is inconsistent across the borough. The current TVP review of Neighbourhood Policing presents an opportunity to comment on the concept of NAGs in terms of crime and disorder issues and also review the local operation of NAGs and similar groups.

## 8. **Background Papers**

'1' - Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan 2014/15

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### Foreword

Recorded crime levels have fallen considerably over the last five years but we have also seen changes to the patterns of crime. The delivery plan demonstrates our commitment to tackle these new emerging crime trends, with actions targeting cyber crime and fraud. We remain determined to deliver policing which best serves all our communities, including the vulnerable and isolated. There has been a significant shift in demand for policing. More calls to the police relate to concerns for safety and welfare and we are working with partners to address this. We have made significant progress in identifying harm and risk and we are building the organisational capacity and capability to tackle it.

1 It is essential that all those working in the police act ethically, and are seen to do so, in order for the public to trust and support the police. Seeing police activity as legitimate encourages the public to comply with the law and co-operate with the police. This is why we will continue to develop an ethics based culture and will seek to embed the Code of Ethics within our working practices.

Policing in the Thames Valley, as in all areas, is being delivered against a backdrop of austerity and the requirement to make significant savings looks set to continue. The number of staff we employ will not keep pace with the growth in population and it is likely that staff numbers will continue to fall. In order to maintain levels of service we are looking at ways to create capacity by reducing demand through emphasis on crime prevention, the use of technology and self service. Staff will need to be better skilled, empowered to respond as professionals and freed from unnecessary organisational complexity.

## Our aims and values

---

### OUR AIM

Working in partnership to  
make our community safer

### OUR VALUES

**To foster the trust and confidence of  
our community, we will:**

- Treat everyone fairly and with respect
- Act with courage and integrity
- Take pride in delivering a high quality service and keeping our promises
- Engage, listen, and respond
- Learn from experience and always seek to improve.

### Delivery Plan Measures

- Reduce the level of total violence against the person compared to 2013/14
- Increase the percentage of domestic abuse related violence with injury prosecution files submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service assessed as trial ready
- Maintain the outcome rate for violence against the person with injury at the level achieved in March 2014
- Reduce the level of domestic burglary compared to 2013/14
- Maintain the outcome rate for domestic burglary at the level achieved in 2013/14
- Maintain the outcome rate for rape at the same levels achieved in 2013/14
- Increase the percentage of rape prosecution files submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service assessed as trial ready
- Obtain 168 cash detention orders
- Increase the hours of active duty worked by Special Constables



### Diagnostic Indicators

- Monitor the outcome rate for domestic abuse-related violence against the person with injury; maintain at a higher level than non domestic abuse-related violence against the person with injury
- Monitor the repeat victimisation rate domestic abuse related violent crime
- Monitor the percentage of violence with injury (excluding domestic abuse) prosecution files submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service assessed as trial ready
- Monitor the levels of:
  - Rural crime
  - Metal theft
  - Theft from vehicle
- Monitor the outcome rate for non-rape sexual offences
- Monitor victim satisfaction levels
- Call handling performance to be monitored against the national call handling standards
- Monitor BME staff representation levels.

4

### Key to Abbreviations

<b>DCC</b>	Deputy Chief Constable
<b>ACC C</b>	Assistant Chief Constable Crime
<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>	Assistant Chief Constable Neighbourhood Policing and Partnerships
<b>ACC RC&amp;CT</b>	Assistant Chief Constable Regional Crime and Counter Terrorism
<b>ACC OPS</b>	Assistant Chief Constable Operations
<b>DoI</b>	Director of Information
<b>DoF</b>	Director of Finance
<b>DoP</b>	Director of People

# 1 Cut crimes that are of most concern to the community

*The main purpose of the police is to cut crime by working with partners on crime prevention and reduction and by effective investigation and enforcement. We will focus on reducing and solving crimes that are of most concern across Thames Valley, particularly violence and domestic burglary and will support the victims of these crimes.*

	Action	Allocation
1.1	Reduce violence and levels of domestic burglary.	<b>DCC</b>
1.2	Improve the outcome rate for violence with injury, for domestic burglary and for rape.	<b>DCC</b>
1.3	Continue to promote safety in the night time economy through education and partnership working.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
1.4	Implement changes prescribed in The Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
1.5	Support business communities in preventing and tackling crimes that affect them.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
1.6	Tackle youth violence and gang related criminality.	<b>ACC C</b>
1.7	Increase the use of analytical technology in order to prevent and detect crime and continue to explore the possibilities of prediction.	<b>ACC C</b>
1.8	Working with regional and national agencies to develop and improve the Forces response to Cyber crime.	<b>ACC C</b>

## 2 Increase the visible presence of the police

*We are committed to increasing the availability and visibility of the police. To achieve this we will tailor patrol strategies according to analysis of where crime occurs and where uniformed presence will have greatest impact. We will maintain the level of Special Constables and continue to increase their contribution to policing in the Thames Valley. We will work with partners to support those experiencing mental health crisis.*

	Action	Allocation
2.1	Maximise the contribution that Special Constables make to policing whilst maintaining their numbers and minimising their loss from policing.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
2.2	Maximise patrol and uniformed deployment in the most efficient and operationally productive way.	<b>ACC OPS</b>
2.3	Increase the effectiveness of stop and search whilst minimising its negative impact.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
2.4	Work with partners to improve outcomes for people experiencing mental health crisis.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
2.5	Pilot the Mental Health Street Triage in Oxford.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
2.6	Review the approach to Neighbourhood Policing in light of best practise Nationally and emerging evidence from the College of Policing.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>

### 3 Protect our communities from the most serious harm

*We will work closely with our partners to protect the public from harm. We will identify and safeguard the most vulnerable people and communities and will tackle the criminals who prey on them. We will identify victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and bring offenders to justice. We will work with other police forces and national agencies to tackle serious organised crime.*

	Action	Allocation
3.1	Improve the protection of vulnerable people by working with our partners to implement Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs across force areas.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.2	Tackle those who prey on the most vulnerable or isolated individuals and communities.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.3	Continue to identify those at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation by supporting and safeguarding the vulnerable, bringing to justice the perpetrators and by actively investigating missing children reports.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.4	Ensure the new organisational structure for tackling serious crime works effectively.	<b>ACC RC&amp;CT</b>
3.5	Deliver the relevant parts of the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (SOCS).	<b>ACC RC&amp;CT</b>
3.6	Target criminals by maximising our use of the Proceeds of Crime Act and asset recovery opportunities. Obtain 168 Cash Detention Orders in 2014/15.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.7	Target Organised Rural Crime.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.8	Develop strategies to encourage engagement and help reluctant victims through the criminal justice process.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
3.9	Expand and develop wider sources of data to include information held by both the public and commercial sectors.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.10	Raise awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM) among staff and officers and encourage referrals of FGM by partners.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.11	To improve the action fraud process and support vulnerable victims of fraud.	<b>ACC C</b>
3.12	Work with other agencies and develop intelligence to target those individuals and Organised Crime Groups engaged in human trafficking and slavery.	<b>ACC C</b>

## 4 Improve communication and use of technology to build community confidence and cut crime

*We will continue to improve the way we communicate with the public and will publish more information about our services and outcomes. We will streamline the way that the public contact the police making best use of technology.*

	Action	Allocation
4.1	Use technology to enable easy access to Thames Valley Police services and productive two-way communication.	<b>DoI</b>
4.2	Ensure that our external communications effectively convey to the public what we do and the outcomes of our actions in conjunction with the OPCC.	<b>DoI</b>
4.3	Use technology to effectively target crime prevention advice to those at risk to ensure relevance and effectiveness.	<b>DoI</b>
4.4	Streamline service requests appropriately and efficiently for the public and Thames Valley Police.	<b>DCC</b>
4.5	Further develop our use of Social Media for both community engagement and intelligence purposes.	<b>DoI</b>
4.6	Embed the records management system and expand its use to support operational policing.	<b>ACC C</b>

## 5 Increase the professionalism and capability of our people

*We will continue to reduce bureaucracy and improve our processes. We will provide high quality support and training to our staff so that they have the professional expertise and the freedom and responsibility to deliver the best possible service to the public. We will improve our service through our use of evidence based practice and knowledge management.*

	Action	Allocation
5.1	Continue to promote a culture based on integrity and ethical behaviour and implement the Code of Ethics.	<b>DoP</b>
5.2	Continue to work with and support the College of Policing.	<b>DoP</b>
5.3	Continue to enhance our capability and productivity.	<b>DoP</b>
5.4	Strengthen our approach to evidence based management and policing.	<b>DoP</b>
5.5	Increase the representation of people from diverse backgrounds in our workforce to more closely reflect the population of the Thames Valley.	<b>DoP</b>
5.6	Continue to promote and enhance our reputation as an employer of choice.	<b>DoP</b>
5.7	Introduce the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing entry requirement for student officers.	<b>DoP</b>
5.8	Simplify our policies and processes.	<b>DCC</b>
5.9	Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of criminal justice through improving the skills of our staff and exploiting technology.	<b>ACC NP&amp;P</b>
5.10	Develop the Knowledge Management Strategy to support professional and effective operational service delivery.	<b>DoI</b>

## 6 Reduce costs and protect the front line

*We will continue to work hard to improve the efficiency of our business. We will make further savings through our productivity strategy and our collaboration programmes. As in previous years the focus will be on reducing non-pay costs.*

	Action	Allocation
6.1	Deliver the cost reductions identified in the productivity strategy 2014/15-2015/16.	<b>DCC</b>
6.2	Continue to develop the productivity strategy for 2015-16- 2016-17 and beyond.	<b>DCC</b>
6.3	Identify new opportunities to deliver services through collaboration or partnership.	<b>DCC</b>
6.4	Reduce non-pay costs by £6.8m in 2014/15 to achieve a total reduction of £20.0m over the four year CSR period ending 2014/15.	<b>DoF</b>
6.5	Rationalise our estate and optimise the use of space.	<b>DCC</b>
6.6	Reduce our carbon footprint.	<b>DCC</b>
6.7	Improve efficiency by enabling more agile working.	<b>DCC</b>

## Equality Objectives

*In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 public bodies are required to publish four-year Equality Objectives. These Objectives are incorporated within the Thames Valley Police Single Equality Scheme Delivery Plan.*

### Equality Objective 1

To increase BME representation of officers and staff throughout the Force to more closely reflect the ethnic breakdown of the population of the Thames Valley.

### Equality Objective 2

To develop the understanding of disability by all TVP officers and staff; to recognise the skills and abilities that those with disability have rather than focus on their disability.

### Equality Objective 3

To maintain a focus on the appropriate and effective use of Stop & Search, to ensure its use is understood & communicated to the communities of Thames Valley.

### Equality Objective 4

To establish effective initiatives to prevent and respond to incidents of disability-related harassment.



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Tel: 01865 846645

Email: [tpv3@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:tpv3@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** NCS Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**CONTACT OFFICER:** **Nicholas Hannon,**  
**Environmental Strategy & Governance Manager**

**For all enquiries:** (01753) 875 275

**WARD(S):** All

**PORTFOLIO:** Commissioner for environment and open spaces  
Cllr Satpal Parmar

**PART I**  
**NON - KEY DECISION**

**WASTE COLLECTION: PUBLIC EXPERIENCE**

**1 Purpose of Report**

To inform the Neighbourhood and Community Services (NCS) Scrutiny Panel of the public experience of waste and recycling collection in Slough. This report will demonstrate current performance, targets and improvements for the future both to the service and to the customer experience. It will also demonstrate the proposals for the new proposed waste strategy scorecard.

**2 Recommendation/Proposed Action**

NCS Scrutiny Panel is requested to provide comment to the Cabinet regarding:

- A. The performance of the Waste Collection Service (delivered through the Environmental Services Contract by Amey);
- B. The development of a target based environment to improvements to the customer service.

**3 The Sustainable Community Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan**

**3a. Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities**

Slough Borough Council has stated through the Sustainable Community Strategy in the Environment and Regeneration section that it will pursue steps to:

- move up the waste hierarchy and increase the amount of waste recycled;
- reduce the overall amount of waste produced; and
- reduce dependency on landfill for final waste disposal.

Furthermore it also states that the Council will:

- encourage home composting;
- continue to provide a dedicated scheme to collect green garden waste.

The primary environmental commitment and statement made by the Council through the Slough Sustainable Community Strategy is that the Council has set itself the target of recycling 60% of its waste by 2028. This is a core driver behind the Waste Strategy in development and defines the strategic horizon period.

3b. **Sustainable Community Strategy: Cross-Cutting themes**

Residents play an important part in the sustainable management of the Borough's waste and the Council relies on residents to sort their recycling and residual waste for collection, and to dispose of their waste considerately, especially larger items. Furthermore residents waste disposal habits have implications for the Council's budget, and influences the amount of waste sent to landfill, recycled or composted. Therefore, all residents have a civic responsibility to contribute to a cleaner, greener Slough, demonstrating the cross-cutting theme of **Civic responsibility**.

Successful waste management processes will ensure the town is kept tidy and clean, while unsuccessful processes may have inadvertent consequences such as a rise in fly tipping or littering, which damages the image of the town. This relates to the theme of **Improving the image of the town**.

3c. **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

There are no references within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for waste management and recycling.

3d. **Corporate Plan 2014/15**

The Slough Borough Council Corporate Plan states that one of the key supporting plans and strategies is the forthcoming Waste Strategy.

**Improve the customer experience**

Service users expect efficient and reliable bin collection, which the service will strive to improve.

**Deliver high quality services and facilities to meet local needs**

In designing waste management provision, local circumstances will be taken into account, to deliver the most appropriate service for users. The service will aim to be of a consistently high quality.

**Develop new ways of working**

The service will make the most of new technology and best practice to increase efficiency, improve levels of service and deliver improved environmental, economic and social outcomes where these changes are cost effective or in tandem with contract review or renewal.

**Deliver local and national change and improvement**

The Council has set itself ambitious targets for the management of waste, and will constantly review services to ensure they meet changing needs, resources and opportunities.

**Achieve value for money**

Through efficiencies and harnessing new technology and ways of working, the strategy will generate savings while consistently delivering a high level of service.

#### 4 **Other Implications**

##### (a) Financial

None.

##### (b) Risk Management

None.

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

There are no Human Rights Act Implications.

##### (d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an EIA.

#### 5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 As a Unitary Council Slough Borough Council is responsible for collection, management and disposal of all municipal waste generated within the borough. The Waste Collection function for Slough Borough Council is delivered by Amey under the Environmental Services contract which runs until November 2017. The contract covers Waste Collection, Waste Management, Waste Disposal, Highways, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance;
- 5.2 The average customer experience of waste collection in Slough is generally perceived to be exceptionally well delivered, maintained and seamless over holiday transition periods.
- 5.3 Amey currently collect around 250,000 bins a month from around Slough generating over 55,000 tonnes of waste. Wheeled bins for residual waste and recycling are currently collected weekly all year round and green waste wheeled bins are collected fortnightly from March – November.
- 5.4 At the first stage waste collection issues and complaints are dealt with by Amey for residents who have a request for information, wish to raise a query or would like to complain about a lack of service. To enable this provision Amey have a dedicated provision of a Freephone 0800 number which goes through to three call centre staff. There is a dedicated email address and a drop in centre at Chalvey Household Waste Recycling Centre. Where residents are unsatisfied with the level of customer service provided by Amey then their cases are referred to Slough Borough Council officers; either Nicholas Hannon (waste collection / waste management / recycling issues / Household Waste Recycling Centre) or Ian Coventry (waste collection contractor issues / crew issues / poor service from Amey). Complaints and requests for information received directly to the Council, member casework and FOIs are all dealt with by Nicholas Hannon and Ian Coventry as the key contacts for the service.
- 5.5 Issues that are particularly pertinent are recurring missed bins, neighbours using a resident's bin, residents placing bulky waste in bin stores and contaminated bins. In 2013/14 there were 38 complaints made regarding the Amey contract compared to 45 in 2012/13. In 2013/14 there 7 complaints made regarding the refuse service, 2

made regarding the recycling service and 15 made regarding the Amey / Slough Enterprise.

- 5.6 Missed collections are the major issues encountered by Amey and complaints made to Slough Borough Council. Contractor performance is exemplary in terms of numbers of 'missed bins'. In their APSE Benchmarking group Slough Borough Council ranks 1<sup>st</sup> out of 22 Councils for missed collections per 100,000 collections. Slough Borough Council misses 7 bins per 100,000 collections. The average of the group is 46. This equates to a missed bin being encountered by a resident 0.007% of the time. Issues regarding missed bins often occur where bins are not collected due to vehicle access. Where these bins are missed then Amey have 24 hours to collect the bins and rectify the missed collection. Bins collected within this 24 hour rectification period are not registered as 'missed'.
- 5.7 Since the introduction of the Contamination Policy over 440 letters have been sent to residents to improve the quality of recycling placed in the red bins. Waste collection operatives take note of addresses which have placed out the incorrect materials in their red bins. Residents who live in 'flats above shops' are progressively being placed on special purple sacks to be able to isolate where waste is being dumped in black bags by commercial traders and businesses.
- 5.8 As part of contract savings programme Slough Borough Council will approve that Amey enable a change in the terms and agreements with their waste collections operatives. This will mean that collections can start earlier ensuring that there is a reduction in congestion of the key arterial roads in Slough and these areas are avoided: A4 Bath Road (and junctions with side roads), Tuns Lane, Copthorne Roundabout / Church Street / Cippenham Lane, Ledgers Road & Montem Lane also get affected when there are incidents on other parts of the network, Farnham Road (and junctions etc), Stoke Poges Lane, Wellington street / Heart of Slough / Stoke Road, Sussex Place / London Road, Sainsbury's roundabout / Uxbridge Road and approaches to the Harrow Market roundabout in Langley.
- 5.9 The contract management team will be working with Amey for a greater weekly update on outstanding issues in bin stores, blocked roads and issues with bins returned to property for proactive response.
- 5.10 A new scorecard which is being developed as part of the Waste Strategy will provide a greater degree of scrutiny, governance, transparency and information to members, NCS Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet. A draft example of this is in Appendix 1.

## **6 Conclusion**

NCS Scrutiny Panel is requested to provide comment to the Cabinet regarding:

- A. Improvements proposed for the Waste Collection service in Slough considering all facts and information presented in this paper and by Amey;
- B. The development of the proposed Political Waste Strategy Scorecard 2015/16.

## **7 Background Papers**

Appendix 1 - Proposed Political Waste Strategy Scorecard 2015/16

Appendix 2 – Presentation from Amey 'Slough Waste Collection - Making a good service better'.

## Appendix 1 - Proposed Political Waste Strategy Scorecard 2015/16

**Table 1.1: Proposed Political Waste Strategy Scorecard 2015/16**

Performance Indicator - Political & Corporate Scorecard (annual)	Date Updated	Baseline (2014-2015)	2015-16 target	Long term target	Source:
Missed domestic residual waste bins	31/03/2015	391	360	<0.00001%	Amey Contract Management
Missed domestic recycling bins	31/03/2015	334	310	<0.00001%	Amey Contract Management
The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	31/03/2015	30%	33%	60% by 2028	WasteDataFlow
Percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill	31/03/2015	6.50%	5%	0.5% by 2020	WasteDataFlow
Reduction in amount of household residual waste generated within Slough	31/03/2015	49,887.79	49,388.91	-1% year on year	WasteDataFlow (a)
Household Waste Collection (kilograms per head)	31/03/2015	351.72 kg/head	348.20 kg/head	-1% year on year	WasteDataFlow (a)
Number of material streams collected through red bin service	31/03/2015	4	5	6	Waste Management
Number of Bring Sites in borough	31/03/2015	14	15	20 by 2020	Waste Management

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# Slough Waste Collection

**Making a good service better**



## Wheeled bin collections



**600**

tonnes refuse/wk

**7**

refuse complaints/wk

**12,000**

green waste collections/wk

**6**

recycling  
complaints/wk

**170**

tonnes recycling/wk

**52,000**

refuse collections/wk

**52,000**

recycle collections/wk

**85**

tonnes green waste/wk

**2**

green waste  
complaints/wk

# Practical issues that we have to overcome



- Parked cars prevent vehicle access to certain roads
  - Schools, offices, train stations, town centre
- Pavement parking blocks access to wheeled bins
  - Half on/half off
  - Parking bays in front of bin stores
  - Rows of parked cars with no gaps to pull bins through
- Container stores (Bin sheds)
  - Communal bins so lack of accountability/contamination
  - Fly tipping particularly with transient populations
  - Rough sleepers and anti-social behaviour
- Containers presented at the front of properties where there is no vehicle access
  - Drag containers along paths, over greens and grass verges
- Road rage – frustrated drivers, speeding cars

# Future services



- We MUST prevent waste from being created
  - Education, communication, accountability
- We MUST divert more waste for recycling
  - Increase participation in kerbside recycling collection
    - Education, communication, accountability
  - Improve quality by reducing contamination
    - Education, communication, accountability
    - Vigilance and enforcement
  - Increase the range of materials targeted
    - Food waste, tetra-pak etc
  - Make it harder for people to dispose of waste
    - Create a positive pressure on people to choose to recycle

Thank you

[richard.west@amey.co.uk](mailto:richard.west@amey.co.uk)



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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Trevor Costello – Service Charge Co-ordinator

**CONTACT NUMBER:** (01753) 875448

**WARD(S)** All

**PORTFOLIOS** Cllr James Swindlehurst

**WATER METERING IN SBC PROPERTIES****1 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To advise the Panel of the council's activities in relation to water meters in tenant properties.

**2 Recommendations proposed/action**

- 2.1 The Panel is requested to note the contents of the report.

**3 Corporate Priorities**

- 3.1 This report contributes towards the delivery of the 2013/14 Service Plan for Neighbourhood Services, which includes the following objectives:

Objective 2: *'Seek opportunities and implement initiatives to optimise revenue through new income streams, partnership working and achieve natural efficiencies through streamlining the delivery of services.'*

Objective 4: *'Implement creative management to improve quality of service to create and maintain attractive neighbourhoods that customers are proud to live in.'*

And connects to the following Corporate priorities:

**Corporate Plan**

- Improve the customer experience
- Deliver high quality services that meet local needs
- Develop new ways of working
- Achieve value for money

**Sustainable Communities Strategy**

- Economy and Skills
- Housing
- Regeneration and the Environment

4.1 (a) Financial

The present billing and water collection arrangement provides with a significant commission payment each year.

Increasing the number of properties with water meters and therefore direct accounts with Thames Water will reduce this income of between approximately £18 and £45 per property per year.

(b) Risk Management

There are no practical risks to the council in this area.

In relation to the issue raised, the following initial risks have been considered:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal	There is no contractual relationship to this arrangement and therefore it can be revised/terminated at any time. The council is not required to ensure a minimum number of properties are included in the agreement.	Removing water charges from residents' accounts reduces the potential for legal action/possession proceedings relating to the non-payment of rent, of which water is a component element and is typically the amount not paid if someone is in receipt of full housing benefit and cannot afford to pay the charge.
Property	Installing meters in branched supplies will require clarification of maintenance responsibilities as typically the council is responsible for pipework from point of entry of the utility supply to a dwelling/building.	Residents who have metered water supplies will have a direct relationship with Thames Water and will therefore have an understanding how to deal with them. Currently, most tenants have no direct relationship with the water provider.
Human Rights	None	None
Health & Safety	None	None.
Employment issues	None.	None.
Equalities issues	Reducing pressures on household finances to enable them to maintain their regular financial commitments.	Allowing tenants to request water meters and reduce bills could create additional disposable income. Promotion of schemes and initiatives that alleviate financial hardship is linked directly to debt/financial management and counselling and managing the impact of the welfare reform programme.
Community Support	None	None
Communications	Promotion of water metering and any associated reduction tariffs must meet OFWAT guidelines and the council	



	must not be seen to be encouraging anti-competitive behaviour.	
Community Safety	None	Expansion of caretaker roles and responsibilities could increase the speed of response and resolution of estate-based issues and concerns, including fly-tipping, graffiti removal and other safety hazards.
Financial	Improving service charge calculation will reduce the impact on HRA budgets.	Increasing service charge revenue and costs recovery will free up income to spend on other services to residents.
Timetable for delivery	Arrangement already in place.	
Project capacity	None	None.
Other	None	None

(c) Human Rights and other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act or other legal implications in connection with this report.

(e) Equalities Impact Assessment

This is an existing initiative/arrangement and therefore no changes are being proposed that would require a new EIA.

(f) Workforce

There are no workforce implications.

## 5 **Arrangement with Thames Water.**

- 5.1 Council tenants in Slough pay for their water usage through a weekly charge that is levied as part of their weekly rent. The vast majority of council dwelling tenants therefore do not have a direct billing relationship with Thames Water.
- 5.2 This weekly charge for each property is derived from a master bill received from Thames Water setting out the charges due for each property covered by the arrangement.
- 5.3 All bills are calculated using the historic rateable value formula. This uses a pence per £ of the rateable value of the property plus an additional element allowed by OFWAT for maintenance and development of the water service infrastructure.
- 5.4 The council has a longstanding arrangement whereby water charges for the majority of HRA properties are billed directly to SBC by Thames Water. SBC pays the bill in two instalments and is then responsible for collecting the appropriate charges from its tenants.
- 5.5 The weekly charge made to tenants' rent accounts is the final amount billed by Thames Water after any reductions for Single Occupier or Assessed Household Charge situations.

- 5.6 The cumulative total due to Thames Water is then reduced by two factors. These are:
- A flat rate 3% reduction to allow for void properties throughout the year as this would result in no charges being levied and consequently no charges collected.
  - A flat rate of 8% commission of the total figure minus the void allowance is then removed and this is in effect SBC's commission for operating the agreement

- 5.7 To illustrate the arrangement, the financial breakdown of the Thames Water arrangement for 2014/15 is as follows:

Total charges requested by Thames Water:	£2,029,794.20
Deduction for void properties (3%):	£ 60,893.82
Deduction for commission (8%):	£ 157,512.02
Adjustments for changes in 2013/14 year:	£ 15,001.56

**Total payable by SBC to Thames Water: £1,796,386.80**

## **6 Water rates charges to tenants**

- 6.1 The charge is shown in tenants' annual rent review notification as 'Water'. Under the terms and conditions of SBC tenancies, payment of water charges is considered payment of rent; therefore any shortfall in rent payments is accounted for within the global rent arrears figure.

## **7 Housing Benefit**

- 7.1 Water charges, along with heating or fuel charges, are not eligible for housing benefit purposes. Therefore, if a tenant is entitled to help with their rent through the Housing Benefit scheme, the eligible rent figure is the total rent minus any water, heating or fuel charges.

Any shortfall due after any Housing Benefit rebate is paid is payable by the tenant to the council.

## **8 Recovery action for non-payment.**

- 8.1 As the annual bill amount is paid by the council directly to Thames Water and recovered by the council through the tenancy rent, there is no prospect of any interruption to or disconnection of supply as Thames Water are guaranteed full payment of the annual charge through the billing arrangement.
- 8.2 Non-payment of the water charge and any other shortfall in the rent is considered a breach of tenancy and consequently there is the possibility of enforcement action being taken for 'rent arrears' if a tenant does not pay the shortfall due. In very serious circumstances this could ultimately lead to eviction; however, in the last two years, there have been no tenants who have been evicted for non-payment of water charges alone.

## **9 Helping to reduce water charges**

- 9.1 The council has not historically promoted money-saving initiatives relating to water charges.
- 9.2 As there is typically no direct relationship between tenants and Thames Water, the likelihood is that tenants may not contact Thames Water or visit their website to obtain information on water-saving or bill-reduction initiatives. As a consequence, tenants are tied into water charge levels that may not be appropriate to their household circumstances and that they are paying higher charges than may be necessary.
- 9.6 Since the issuing of the 2014/15 bulk account, Thames Water have confirmed that:
- Two properties have been metered and are now billed directly to tenants.
  - Only one property was deemed unable to be metered and this now has an Assessed Household Charge.
  - No properties were metered prior to April 2015/2014/15.
- 9.4 In response to the specific questions raised by the Member's call in of the metering arrangements, the Council's approach would be:

1 & 2. Can the council identify which tenants are likely to benefit from metering and if so how can the council encourage facilitate them to have meters installed.

The council would expect that all properties that contain an individual water feed into the dwelling can be metered. It is Thames Water's decision as to whether or not a property can be metered and this will be for practical/cost reasons.

As information about occupancy levels (measurable against bed size) is taken at sign-up and through an ongoing tenancy audit process, it is possible to identify clear cases of either single-occupancy (in the case of new tenancies) or under-occupancy (for tenancy audits, contact regarding bedroom tax deductions).

Where there are clear indications that tenants are likely to benefit from either metering or an alternative charge structure, tenants can be advised to contact Thames Water to pursue an application for a meter.

The council will promote metering through encouraging tenants to consider their water usage and undergo an assessment by contacting Thames Water. This will be done through editions of the Streets Ahead newsletter, or individual casework and tenancy interventions or other publications around welfare reform, debt management and energy efficiency.

Where landlord's permission is required, the council will not withhold permission unless there are significant cost implications/alterations to be considered first, or if the installation of a meter or associated works has an impact on the management of supply to the rest of the building.

3. What percentage of let properties are currently metered

Neither Thames Water nor the council hold this information. Thames Water's account representative indicates that no properties have moved to metered during the several years they have worked on the SBC account.

4. Has the council identified any difficult to meter areas which would be subject to the assessed household charge, including the single occupier tariff?

Again, the decision to meter is Thames Water's but we do not envisage that there are any developments that present any exceptional difficulties that would prevent metering.

Where Thames Water identify properties that cannot be metered and are then considered for AHC, we will, on a case by case basis, consider the reasons to see whether there is a simply remedy to allow metering.

5. Is it possible to meter accommodation that was previously designated?

Subject to there being up to two cold supply pipes into the dwelling/unit then yes.

- 9.5 OFWAT governs the activities of water companies in bulk-marketing its client base to offer or prompt billing schemes. This extends to any work the council can do on Thames Water's behalf and does not recommend the council carries out any block-referral of buildings, dwellings or schemes to Thames Water but that it makes tenants aware of their initiatives and to request tenants contact TW directly, or if a Tenancy Sustainment or other support worker is engaged with the tenant, that they contact with their permission.

**10 Promoting water meters**

- 10.1 have agreed with Thames Water to signpost tenants towards their services through articles in forthcoming issues of Streets Ahead.
- 10.2 Where financial hardship is encountered through arrears casework, tenancy support/intervention or other case management processes, assistance or advice will be given to households to contact Thames Water for an assessment where either the single occupier or assessed household charge may be appropriate.

**11 Appendices Attached (if any)**

- 11.1
- Thames Water support initiatives – Appendix A

**Appendix 1**  
**Water Metering in SBC Properties**

Initiative	Eligibility	Restrictions / conditions																					
Water metering	Up to two meters per property subject to separately meter-able supply pipes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant must make application in person.</li> <li>Landlord cannot refer buildings/stock en bloc</li> <li>Property is removed from SBC billing arrangement.</li> </ul>																					
Single occupier / assessed household charge.	Only when water meter is not possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thames Water will assess usage to ensure that there will be a benefit to the customer.</li> <li>Tenant/SBC must notify Thames Water of any change in occupancy/entitlement so that the reduction can be removed.</li> <li>Once reduction is agreed, Thames Water notifies SBC who amends weekly rent charge – property remains on SBC billing arrangement.</li> </ul> <p>Examples of benefits of single occupier / assessed household charge</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Bedsizes</th><th>Average bill</th><th>Reduced bill</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single occupier</td><td>£310.00</td><td>£232.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>1 bed AHC</td><td>£310.00</td><td>£286.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>2 bed AHC</td><td>£355.00</td><td>£304.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>3 bed AHC</td><td>£366.00</td><td>£337.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>4 bed AHC</td><td>£404.00</td><td>£364.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>5 bed AHC</td><td>£440.00</td><td>£400.00</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Bedsizes	Average bill	Reduced bill	Single occupier	£310.00	£232.00	1 bed AHC	£310.00	£286.00	2 bed AHC	£355.00	£304.00	3 bed AHC	£366.00	£337.00	4 bed AHC	£404.00	£364.00	5 bed AHC	£440.00	£400.00
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4 bed AHC	£404.00	£364.00																					
5 bed AHC	£440.00	£400.00																					
Smart Meters	Work is in progress for completion by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thames Water starting with tenement blocks in inner London boroughs.</li> <li>No current timescale for Slough borough</li> </ul>																					
Water Sure	Metered properties only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there special reasons why water usage is high (medical/cultural reasons) then the bill will be capped up to a certain amount – variable.</li> </ul>																					
Water Sure Plus	Metered/unmetered properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bill will be reduced by 50% if the original bill is more than the bill payer's income.</li> <li>Targeted towards those on benefits but takes into account gross income, not disposable income.</li> </ul>																					
Trust Fund	All customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An emergency hardship fund dealing with applications for grants money for essential items in times of crisis</li> </ul>																					

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Neil Aves and Ray Haslam  
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875263

**WARD(S):** All

**PORTFOLIO:** Neighbourhoods and Regeneration; Councillor James Swindlehurst

**PART I**  
**FOR CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

**BEDS IN SHEDS (SLOUGH SHEDS)**

**1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update the members on the progress of the 'Slough Sheds' project and to detail the internal and external agency partnerships in tackling the unauthorised outbuildings that are used as accommodation and in turn those landlords who are not compliant with the required obligation in landlord and tenant legislation.

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

The committee is to note the 'Slough Sheds' project update report in relation to the change in project objectives to identify those properties that are not within the requirements for planning enforcement and have been subject to regularisation. The committee should also note that project objectives have moved to an income maximisation and landlord / owner compliance for accommodation standards.

**The Sustainable Community Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan**

**3a. Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities**

The quality of and access to housing is a key priority for the council. Slough's Wellbeing Strategy names housing as one of five priorities with the vision that:

"By 2028 Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth."

Housing is central to the health and wellbeing of the population, it gives the ability to access work and assists in providing a safe environment for educational achievement. This project will provide safeguards for the most vulnerable in society, and contributes to other council priorities by generating additional revenue income through council tax from legitimised dwellings and outbuildings

3b. **Sustainable Community Strategy: Cross-Cutting themes**

The proposed Allocation Scheme rewards civic responsibility by recognising applicants' community contribution in terms of employment, education, training and positive contribution to community priorities through sustained voluntary work. Anti social behaviour and failure to be financially responsible will not be tolerated in council housing and will prevent those who demonstrate this behaviour becoming ineligible, thus contributing to community safety.

Residents who are adequately housed, are able to take pride in their community and work to improve the image of the town as well as improving their own quality of life and life chances.

3c. **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

Housing is a contributory factor to the wellbeing of Slough residents, and the Sheds with beds project supports the priorities in the JSNA and it contributes to reducing inequalities in health through preventing access to poor quality sub-standard housing

3d **Corporate Plan 2013/14**

The project contributes to the priorities in the Corporate Plan by improving the customer experience by tackling the perceived degradation of the Slough environment by uncontrolled development and assists in the financial management of the council by identifying dwellings which are eligible for Council Tax

5 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no additional financial implications on any Slough Borough Council General fund Budget. The Communities and Local Government grant of £220,000.00 has been utilised to secure the required staff support and expertise within the project for to include, trading standards for the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) enforcement, planning enforcement and building control to establish the legality of outbuilding use through planning legislation, business support to facilitate the administrative and intelligence gathering functions of the project, a lead project manager and the funding for the thermal imaging data and associated GIS mapping information. The project lead manager has a budget monitoring and management system that is frequently reviewed. The grant budget is decreasing to an extent that the project can only continue through and invest to save model of income maximisation.

(b) **Risk Management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal	With no planning enforcement resource dedicated to the project, Planning enforcement has been assisted by head of	



	<p>legal with a small number of high profile cases been allocated to the lead planning enforcement for the purpose of seeking demolitions. With the scheme of delegations not as yet approved for operational officers and managers, the project officers are still reliant on other departments for access to problem properties if not granted by owners.</p>	
Property	None	
Human Rights	None	
Health and Safety	None	
Employment Issues	None	
Equalities Issues	None	
Community Support	None	
Communications	<p>There have been numerous press releases and coverage regarding the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) enforcement and the 'Blue Sky' thermal imagery data capture. There have also been communications in relation to the demolition of outbuildings in the borough and communications are managed and co-ordinated by Leo Tarring to ensure radio and media interviews reflect the Boroughs objectives to improve accommodation standards whilst tackling non compliant landlords.</p>	
Community Safety	none	
Financial	None	
Timetable for delivery	<p>With the project objectives changing slightly from full enforcement to effective regulation, SBC corporate management decided to continue the project through an invest to save model that required specific experienced inspection</p>	

	staff. The project team have had difficulties appointing these members of staff and the project could not deliver on its objectives or outcomes in the timetable previously stated.	
Project Capacity	All project post requirements have now been fulfilled with temporary appointments and budgeted for and have already started to deliver on the required targets for referrals and outcomes.	
Other		

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

*The project has no legal or human rights implications. The intelligence of properties with outbuildings is gathered from aerial images from both the thermal imaging data capture by 'Blue Sky' and by ordnance survey who conducted an aerial imagery capture of Slough prior to the London Olympics.*

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The Enforcement Policy of private sector housing service has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment Initial Screening in September 2008. It also complies with the aims of the enforcement concordat. It includes a range of mandatory and discretionary tools which the council has available for its use.

The equalities impact of Planning Enforcement forms part of the Initial Screening for the Planning Service carried out in September 2008. Planning Enforcement is a discretionary tool. Any action taken would be proportionate to the harm being caused by the independent occupation of the offending outbuildings. Efforts will be prioritised towards the more flagrant breaches of planning control with the potential for greater sensitivity to more minor / technical breaches.

(e) Workforce

This report will reveal that the previous work force implication of staff capacity has been addressed through the appointment of temporary staff to fulfil the project objectives as the housing and environment transformation restructure has not released any capacity to assist in the project inspections. The trading standards team offer their support for the regulation and enforcement of energy performance certificates on outbuildings that have been regularised and approved for independent dwellings but the limitations of enforcement due to the size of the properties and lack of evidence of tenancy commencement dates reveal a small amount of EPC enforcement. The Planning enforcement officers post has been deleted from the project team as the post could not be appointed to as the previous officer left SBC for another post and recruitment of this specialist post was not successful, SBC legal

and SBC planning enforcement have agreed to the high profile and difficult cases only due to capacity.

## **6 Supporting Information**

- 6.1 The initial regional Government grant funding of £220,000 in 2010 was utilised for the funding for a project to establish a multi agency approach to tackling Houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) and Slough Sheds. The key objectives of the project were to focus on improving standards in HMO's and reduce the number of Slough Sheds as anecdotally it was felt that Sheds were housing illegal workers. Early project outcomes revealed that the slough sheds were used as accommodation for a wide ranging population demographic and not primarily for illegal workers as first thought. However, it is clear that the accommodation was used and still is by persons who are in low paid work and in a small number of cases were sharing the outbuilding accommodation. As of April 2014 financial reporting has stated there is £80,000 remaining within the project budget but there are a number of temporary salary invoices that require reconciling to report a true financial figure.
- 6.2 The project has been reviewed corporately a number of times due to difficulties in achieving the initial outcome of robust planning enforcement and lack of available resources in existing teams to complete the property inspections. The review has also been prompted by Communities and Local Government departments who have stated that Local Authorities should also address the rising problems of 'rogue landlords' who provide poor quality housing for low paid vulnerable tenants. The change in project objectives and continuation of outbuilding identification has seen Slough Borough Council listed in the 'Shelter' best practise for dealing with 'Rogue landlords'. The review has seen Slough Borough Council work closely with owners of properties having outbuildings and advising them on the legal obligations for ensuring the properties offer safe accommodation. From this point it was prudent to ensure owners who rented out the independent outbuildings to non family members were correctly identified for additional taxation (Council tax)
- 6.3 The project now have referral links between the District Valuation Office (VOA) at Reading and the SBC Council tax collections and billing section, currently serviced by Arvato. The inspection regime now looks at referring owners of independently accessed outbuildings that have their own utility facilities of bathrooms and kitchens to the District Valuation Office. A determination is then made on individually banding the outbuilding for council tax and this has seen new objectives in the project brief to maximise income through improving housing and accommodation standards in outbuildings.
- 6.4 Since February 2014 (latest project review) we have successfully referred 38 outbuildings to the valuation office for council tax determination and banding. We have had 8 cases confirmed with 2 owners appealing against the determination and another 28 cases requiring further investigation and possible visits by the valuation office. This would see an additional income in the form of council tax and an additional central government grant called the new homes bonus. For each outbuilding that is added to the Council tax list would add £929.63 a year in Council tax and £1494.44 per year for 6 years. Over a 6 year period providing the property continues as an accommodation unit, each outbuilding would over a 6 year period add £5,577.78 in council tax and £8,966.64 for the new homes bonus grant giving a total of £14,544.42 for each property. Should all 38 referred properties be successful then Slough Borough Council would see an additional income of £552,687.96 over a 6 year period. The new homes bonus (NHB) is an un-ring fenced income.

- 6.5 Since 2010 we started with 299 owners paying additional council tax for outbuildings, these are people self referring to council tax. To date that has now reduced 115 live council tax accounts for outbuildings NOT including the latest batch of 38. This would see an annual council tax additional income of  $115 \times £929.63 = £106,907.45$  per year and there would have been an average additional NHB of  $115 \times £1494.44 = £171,860$  per year for 6 years. Although there would have been 299 in the early years of the project we have taken the lower figure of live accounts from this year so the success figure is based upon the lower number of live accounts but these accounts will continue to rise as more inspections are completed. We have also noted that there are a large number of outbuildings that now have the kitchen in the main property which negates the requirement for an additional council tax account but the VOA have rebanded the main property to a higher band as it sees the property as increasing in size and therefore larger council tax bills have been issued
- 6.6 Since the project review in February 2014 there have been 725 visited where access was granted by owners to 571 and there are 154 properties that will require access enforcement notices for officers to gain entry and inspect the outbuildings. We have also visited properties (15 to date) that have received approval direct or otherwise to use the outbuilding for accommodation and they have been assessed for hazards utilising part 1 of the Housing Act 2004. Of the 15 properties we have identified that 5 require substantial improvements to the accommodation standards and schedules of work have been issued to the owners to ensure the standards improve to a level that minimises risks to any occupants of the outbuildings.
- 6.7 The project lead (Ray Haslam) continues to attend the Communities and Local Government task group, which has members attending from 9 other local authorities. The latest meeting in April looked at revising the legislation regarding the accommodation conditions and enforcement penalties for landlords who continue to rent poor quality properties and continue with illegal landlord practises that would constitute illegal eviction or harassment. This legislative review has been distributed for a wide ranging consultation with a view to a revision of the 2004 Housing Act giving added protection to vulnerable tenants and added enforcement actions available to regulatory bodies.
- 6.8 Referrals to the HMRC hidden economy are quite high as the project facilitator has identified a large number of owners who are possibly gaining an income from the outbuildings from rental for accommodation purposes and these have been sent in batches to the lead of the hidden economy investigation team. Although we have identified 613 of these referrals SBC will continue to refer more, specifically where we have identified properties where there isn't a kitchen or bathroom in the outbuilding and therefore have to utilise the facilities in the main building and yet these outbuildings are still rented. This would negate an individual council tax determination but the owners are still gaining an income which they may or may not be declaring. HMRC are unable to respond with how many of the referrals will result in full investigations regarding undeclared income to the HMRC. The referral process will not give a qualitative or quantitative outcome other than SBC have made the referrals to HMRC. The same cases will also be data cleansed for overall area measurements to ensure those which are over 50M squared are referred to Trading Standards for the EPC enforcement process to which they have sufficient resourcing to complete their investigations and enforcement.

- 6.9 Ray Haslam and Cllr Rob Anderson were invited to make a presentation to the then Housing Minister Mark Prisk in 2013 regarding the principles of how Slough Borough Council are tackling rogue landlords and the rise of unauthorised outbuildings used as accommodation. Slough Borough Council were commended on their project aims and objectives specifically on the thermal imaging and referrals to internal and external agencies.
- 6.8 The Project has established reliable referrals routes to the Thames Valley Police and The Home Office to ensure two risk elements are mitigated, the risk of interrupting any ongoing investigations by these services or any risks of warning signs of occupants or visitors who have warning signs of violence. The referral process has enabled safe inspections completed by Slough Borough Council officers. The Home Office department that are now responsible for immigration enforcement through the initial 'Sheds' project are now identified as the Home Office immigration enforcement department, identified as an acronym (I.C.E.). This team have been removed from the external UKBA agency structure and now it is firmly embedded in the Home Office responsibility. Slough Borough Council representatives have met with the ICE team and re-established any working group links for both the 'Sheds' and neighbourhood enforcement projects and investigations into licensing in it's various guises within.
- 6.9 Ray Haslam has also joined other internal Groups to tackle elements of vulnerability of tenants and residents in poor quality housing and outbuildings in Slough with a view to identifying and tackling issues of alleged child sexual exploitation and domestic slavery. The sheds project team have worked closely with the child sexual exploitation groups and the Police Foundation for the safer slough partnership in detailed mapping of violent incidents and accommodation of both suspects and victims. The street and shed mapping data acquired when the thermal imaging data was captured will enable Slough borough Council to effectively target areas of alleged criminal activity that has a direct coloration to poor quality and at time unauthorised and unlicensed accommodation whether in an outbuilding or a house in multiple occupation. There are obvious benefits for the project team to work directly with other internal and external groups in sharing information and sharing strategic aims and objectives.
- 6.10 The thermal web portal is now operational and has had a launch that has also seen a press release that can assist those in private and Slough Borough Council stock properties to indicate how energy efficient the property is and can direct those in private properties to various Government funding streams to further improve the heat retention of the properties to tackle affordable warmth. This function is seen as a customer focused service for the revise Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) responsibility Slough Borough Council has to report on as of 2015

## **7 Comments of Other Committees**

None

## **8 Conclusion**

This report is for the committee to note the continued progress of the Slough Sheds project and that the review of the project has seen a shift in objectives in line with central Government legislative requirements and changes to the overall taskforce

aims and objectives, moving slightly away from sheds with beds as the main area to be tackled and to address the poor practises of 'rogue landlords' and the protection of vulnerable tenants.

9     **Background Papers**

None

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 4 September 2014

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Dave Gordon – Scrutiny Officer  
**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 875411

**WARDS:** All

**PART I**

**TO NOTE**

**NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL  
2014/15 WORK PROGRAMME**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 For the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (NCS Scrutiny Panel) to discuss its current work programme.

**2. Recommendations/Proposed Action**

- 2.1 That the NCS Scrutiny Panel note the current work programme for the 2014/15 municipal year

**3. Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

- **Housing**
- **Regeneration and Environment**
- **Safer Communities**

- 3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The NCS Scrutiny Panel, along with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the local authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.
- 3.2 In particular, the NCS Scrutiny Panel specifically takes responsibility for ensuring transparency and accountability for Council services relating to housing, regeneration and environment, and safer communities.

4. **Supporting Information**

- 4.1 The current work programme is based on the discussions of the NCS Scrutiny Panel at previous meetings, looking at requests for consideration of issues from officers and issues that have been brought to the attention of Members outside of the Panel's meetings.
- 4.2 The work programme is a flexible document which will be continually open to review throughout the municipal year.

5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 This report is intended to provide the NCS Panel with the opportunity to review its upcoming work programme and make any amendments it feels are required.

6. **Appendices Attached**

A - Work Programme for 2014/15 Municipal Year

7. **Background Papers**

None.



**NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

Meeting Date	
Thursday 4 September 2014	
<b>6.00-7.00 p.m. Crime and Disorder Training (tbc) 7.00-9.00 p.m. Panel meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood policing</li> <li>• Waste Collections</li> <li>• Water metering</li> <li>• Sheds with Beds</li> </ul>	
Wednesday 29 October 2014	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Car Parking</li> <li>• Garages</li> <li>• Road safety strategy</li> </ul>	
Wednesday 7 January 2015	
<b>Housing-themed meeting (final agenda to be agreed following Star Survey results)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Star Survey – results from annual survey</li> <li>• Housing Allocations Policy Implementation and Implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rehousing of bedroom tax residents</li> <li>○ Incentives to encourage residents to move</li> <li>○ Allocations and Vulnerable residents</li> <li>○ Unintended consequences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Thursday 26 February 2015	
<b>Crime and Disorder Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime and Disorder – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SSP Performance and Priorities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Meeting Date
Monday 30 March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be decided</li> </ul>

**Currently Un-programmed:**

Issue	Directorate	Date
<u>Transport Working Group</u> – review of progress	RHR	
<u>Waste Strategy</u>	RHR	
<u>Prostitution Update</u>	CC	

**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD**  
**NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2014 – 15**

	MEETING DATES					
COUNCILLOR	03/07/2014	04/09/2014	29/10/2014	07/01/2015	26/02/2015	30/03/2015
Coad	P					
Holledge	P					
Malik	P					
Mansoor	P					
Plenty	P					
Shah	P					
Sohal	P*					
Sidhu	Ap					
Wright	P					

P = Present for whole meeting  
 Ap = Apologies given

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

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