

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services **DATE:** 24th October, 2011

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WARD(S): Chalvey, Baylis & Stoke

PART I
FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION

PROSTITUTION – CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE ACTIONS

1. **Purpose of Report**

This paper is being submitted as a follow-up to the recent paper on Antisocial Behaviour to focus on prostitution as requested by the committee.

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

The Committee is requested to note the report and consider the options available to move forward with tackling prostitution in Slough as outlined at the end of the report.

3. **Community Strategy Priorities**

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**
- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**
- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**

This report considers how the diverse community in Chalvey is affected by prostitution on its streets and how best to tackle this, whilst working with the girls involved, making the environment safer and cleaner and enabling all concerned to live in a safe and pleasant environment.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial** (compulsory section to be included in **all** reports)

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) **Risk Management** (compulsory section to be included in **all** reports)

This section should set out significant risks, threats and opportunities associated with the approval or otherwise of the recommendations made in section 2 of this report, together with any proposed actions, with timescales, to mitigate the identified risks/threats.

To assist a template with examples is set out below.

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
The Committee is	No threats	

requested to note the report and consider the options available to move forward with tackling prostitution in Slough as outlined at the end of the report.		
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(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications (compulsory section to be included in **all** reports)

No legal implications

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment (compulsory section to be included in all reports which relate to a new or substantially revised policy, procedure or function)

No implications.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 Definition of prostitution and what the law says

Thames Valley Police uses the definition of 'prostitution' in line with that given in part 1, section 51 (2 and 3) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

'Prostitution is the act of offering or providing sexual services to another person in return for payment, or a promise of payment. 'Payment' refers to any financial advantage, including the provision of goods or services, or a discharge of a debt or obligation to pay for goods or services'.

In the United Kingdom, prostitution itself is not a crime but a number of related activities, including soliciting in a public place, kerb crawling, owning a brothel and pimping are crimes. Prostitution is often related to antisocial behaviour and criminal activity and can cause harassment, alarm and distress.

Prostitution is now considered to be a 'victim centred' crime, that is to say, prostitutes are victims and need to be offered support in order to change their lifestyles and get them off the streets.

5.2 Background

5.2.1 The police report that prostitution in Slough originally centred around the Baylis and Stoke area. However, after targeted work in this location, including Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) on the main perpetrators and the regular arrests of prostitutes seen soliciting (which is no longer possible due to changes in legislation, see section 5.10.3 below), the prostitution problem was much improved, reduced from around 45 at its peak in 2004, to the few that are around Baylis now. Around three to four years ago, a contingent of Eastern European prostitutes, mainly Romanian, started frequenting Chalvey mainly around Ledgers Road, and others soon joined them.

5.2.3 Currently about 20 girls work as prostitutes in the Chalvey area. They usually operate between 10pm and 4am although this can vary in the winter months when there are longer hours of darkness. There is no evidence of pimps and the girls appear to work independently.

5.2.4 Residents are understandably unhappy about this activity on their streets and the drugs litter and used condoms left behind, and they feel intimidated by kerb crawlers who approach them. They say it makes the area feel uncared for and it creates a poor perception of their neighbourhood despite the regeneration that is going on nearby. They would like to see tackling prostitution as an ongoing agenda and not just highlighted in the press when a police operation has taken place, and they would like to see numbers of prostitutes noticeably reduced. Prostitution is an emotive issue and people feel very strongly about the effect it has on their neighbourhood.

5.2.5 There are brothels in the area as well as street prostitution and Police tackle these under different legislation when they come to notice, as they usually do due to the associated antisocial behaviour that comes with them, for example, with punters ringing the wrong doorbells, and regular visitors throughout and day and night causing a disturbance. This report is focussing on the visible presence of street prostitution although more information can be provided separately on brothels if required.

5.3 How does this compare to other boroughs?

5.3.1 Numbers have reduced in Slough since February 2010 when there were 30 prostitutes in Chalvey (now 20). There were 18 in Reading's Oxford Road area in February 2010, now down to around 7, and 10 in Oxford, now down to 4, so it would appear that numbers are going down.

5.3.2 Ealing report that they have 40 girls working on the streets of Southall but mainly in commercial areas rather than residential areas so residents are not as aware of the activity. We are looking to work closely with Ealing to share information and action as the girls travel between the two places.

5.3.3 Ipswich report that as a result of intense coordinated multiagency work since 2006, they no longer have street prostitution in their town. This work was started off with a Home Office grant and then continued through the commitment of their Community Safety Partnership.

5.3.4 Northampton was faced with around 200 prostitutes working in two small districts 24/7, not just during the hours of darkness, and openly taking drugs, when they were given Home office funding to tackle the problems they were facing back in 2004, and they report that they no longer have street prostitution in Northampton. Clearly these areas have used successful strategies to tackle and remove prostitution from their streets.

5.4 Our aim

5.4.1 The last government's strategy of January 2006 (A Coordinated Prostitution Strategy) had the following as its aims:

- challenge the view that street prostitution is inevitable and here to stay
- achieve an overall reduction in street prostitution
- improve the safety and quality of life of communities affected by prostitution, including those directly involved in street sex markets
- reduce all forms of commercial sexual exploitation

5.4.2 We need to decide as a partnership, and in consultation with local residents, what the aims and outcomes are that we are working towards in our work to tackle prostitution in Slough. Are we simply looking to remove all visible signs of prostitution from the streets of Slough, or are we working towards reducing the numbers involved in prostitution through a combination of supportive outreach and enforcement action,

reducing related criminal activity and antisocial behaviour and promoting harm reduction?

5.5 Reporting

5.5.1 Reporting is really important as it gives police and partners a clear picture of what is happening and how many people are affected by prostitution. Whilst there could be the argument the police should know what is going on, and clearly past experience suggests what is likely, this is not sufficient when it comes to allocating existing resources and bidding for more. Prostitution needs to be reported to the police on 0845 8 505 505 (or 101 from 14th November).

5.5.2 Prostitution-related anti-social behaviour complaints in Chalvey (due to most of the hot spots being in Chalvey) made to Thames Valley Police have been analysed. The comparison time frames were January to June in 2010 and 2011. July to August were not analysed as figures were abnormally low during this period, possibly due to current road works or residents being away and therefore not reporting. The figures are:

- January to June 2010: 20 complaints
- January to June 2011: 28 complaints

There were 8 additional prostitution complaints January to June 2011 compared with January to June 2010.

- September 2011: awaiting confirmation of reporting statistics

5.5.3 Chalvey has higher levels of crime and antisocial behaviour than some other wards in Slough which means that Police resources are stretched to deal with these other priorities. It is not possible to directly connect these higher levels with prostitution although it is acknowledged that prostitution does tend to bring with it higher levels of certain crime types and antisocial behaviour.

5.5.4 Drug litter is reported to the Drugs and Alcohol Action team to enable them to map where drug use is taking place and direct outreach workers to these locations.

5.6 The prostitutes

There are two distinct groups of prostitutes (also referred to as sex workers): British girls who are addicted to drugs and are using prostitution to fund their habit, and who are likely to go straight from a client to a local dealer to obtain drugs before going straight back out to work – and Eastern European girls who do not drink or take drugs and are involved in prostitution for purely economic reasons and send money to their families back at home. Police records show that currently the figures are 50/50 for these two groups. The Eastern Europeans (mainly Romanians) have no recourse to public funds if they are not accessing their treaty rights (ie as they are not engaged in legal work, they cannot access support services, housing or benefits).

5.7 The location

Chalvey became attractive to prostitutes because of the round-trip kerb crawlers can take around Ledgers Road/Montem Lane/A4 (and the town hall service road) while deciding whether to stop and a number of the girls live in the area and use the cheap bed and breakfasts. There is also easy access to drugs. The police report that the girls now work to the North of this junction due to the roadworks but numbers do not seem to have reduced permanently as a result of the roadworks (although numbers initially dipped). Other locations where prostitution is known to take place/has taken place

include the service road to Slough town hall, Stoke Poges Lane, Lansdowne Avenue, Pickford Gardens, Everard Avenue, Chalvey High Street and Turton Way.

5.8 The clients

The demand for this 'supply' comes from the kerb crawlers who frequent the area.

- Of the 62 men arrested kerb crawling as part of the 4 day operations in 2010 and 2011 (Op Circle and Op Chevron), 42 were Asian (68%), 13 were White Northern European (21%), 4 were Black (7%), and 3 were White Southern European (5%).
- 46 were from Slough (74%).
- Of the 36 men who were arrested for kerb crawling during the 4 day operation in 2011 (Op Chevron), 5 were aged 19-25 (14%), 30 were aged 26-49 (83%), and 1 was aged 50-64 (3%). The average age was 34, the maximum age was 52, and the minimum age was 22. We do not have the age statistics for Operation Circle in 2010.

This information comes from Thames Valley Police's Command and Control, statistics from Operation Circle and Operation Chevron, and the local Neighbourhood Police team.

5.9 What can the Police do?

5.9.1 Thames Valley Police have a force-wide strategy on prostitution (2008-2011 – due to be updated) – **see appendix A**. Richard Humphrey, Local Area Police Commander for Slough, reports that the overall strategic aim of the Local Police Area (LPA) is to "remove or reduce the antisocial nuisance caused by prostitution over the next 18-24 months whilst balancing this with other policing priorities and current resourcing levels".

5.9.2 The South neighbourhood policing team patrol the area on their late shifts both to act as an active deterrent, and, where actual soliciting is witnessed, to give out street cautions or make arrests as appropriate. There are currently 7 officers on the team who are able to patrol on a regular basis. Specialist officers have also been used for Operations Circle and Chevron, following successful bids for these additional officers. They, like the neighbourhood team, act on the priorities of the LPA, which tend to be around Serious Acquisitive Crime (for example, burglary, robbery and car crime). Recently the team have been involved in patrols in Cippenham to deter burglaries and are therefore not always available to patrol Chalvey. The success of bids to Headquarters for funding or resources would be dependent on other bids which are likely to take priority. This is also why reporting prostitution is so important.

Officers have arrested 5 prostitutes in the last month, 10 in the last 3 months and 13 in the last year. These arrests have resulted in cautions, fines and/or support orders. The majority of the prostitutes habitually and persistently re-offend.

5.10 Available legislation

5.10.1 The 1956 Sexual Offences Act and the 1959 Street Offences Act between them outlawed running a brothel, loitering or soliciting for sex on the street and persistent kerb crawling.

5.10.2 In 2004 the Home Office floated a number of radical solutions including creating "managed areas", regulating off-street prostitution and licensing brothels. Two years later officials proposed changing the law to enable two prostitutes and a "maid or

receptionist" to work from the same property without fear of prosecution. However, the proposals were dropped following concerns that it would not only legalise prostitution but would cause tensions in neighbourhoods and would not completely solve the problem.

Instead, legislation was changed to acknowledge that in many cases, prostitutes are victims and criminalising them will not help them to get them off the streets. The new legislation was designed to protect women and children, and to bring those who exploit individuals through prostitution to justice. Therefore whilst previously, prostitutes could be arrested and charged with soliciting every time they were seen on the streets by Police, now two 'street cautions' must be issued within a three month period before an arrest can take place on the third occasion. The idea is that this proves there is persistence in their behaviour and that they are causing public nuisance. The period in which the cautions had to take place was also reduced from twelve months to three.

5.10.3 The Policing and Crime Act 2009, designed to tackle crime and disorder, made paying for services from a prostitute subjected to force an offence, as well as making amendments to the law on loitering for the purposes of prostitution, and the law on soliciting.

The main change was the shifting of focus from the prostitutes to the customers. Before 1 April 2010, it was illegal for a customer to kerb crawl/solicit only if this was done "persistently", or "in a manner likely to cause annoyance". Today, all forms of public solicitation by a customer are illegal, regardless of the manner in which the prostitute was solicited.

However, in regard to prostitutes, before 1 April 2010, a prostitute was always committing a crime by soliciting/loitering in a public place. Today, s/he commits a crime only if s/he does this "persistently" (which is considered to be three times in a three month period).

Section 17 of the act allows the courts to impose a rehabilitative order on people convicted of loitering and soliciting for the purpose of prostitution. An engagement and support order would be an alternative to a fine and requires an offender to attend meetings to look at a strategy to exit prostitution and any support required.

5.10.4 Other legislation includes:

- Sexual offences Act 2003 (with amendments to the earlier Street Offences Act 1959)
- Antisocial behaviour Act 2003 (ASBOs and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts - ABCs)
- Drugs Act 2005 (drugs testing for prostitution in Drug Intervention Programme – DIP - intensive areas)

5.10.5 The Police carry out kerb crawling operations when resources are available (see above under 'the clients' for recent statistics). These are resource intensive operations requiring up to 14 officers per night. Those arrested and charged appear in court and their names will be published in the local papers (the 'name and shame' approach). Persistent kerb crawlers can be penalised by a maximum fine of £1000 and, in England and Wales, under section 1 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts (sentencing) Act 2000, a court can disqualify kerb crawlers from driving as part of their sentence.

5.10.6 Police also send out kerb crawling warning letters to the registered owners of vehicles seen acting suspiciously in hot spot areas. These go to the registered owner of the vehicle, which may not be the person who was driving it (it may be their wife or partner, or a company vehicle). The letter now include a Section 59 warning (Police Reform Act 2002) regarding the antisocial use of a motor vehicle, which can be seized if seen a second time. Kerb crawlers may also be arrested and charged. Letters are issued when there are not two Police officers to witness the kerb crawling which is required by law to make an arrest.

71 letters have been sent out by Police since 1/10/10.

5.11 The Change course

An alternative to the 'name and shame approach' is the Change course. This is a one day group work programme for men who have been charged with the offence of kerb crawling as an alternative to prosecution and being 'named and shamed'. It costs £200 to attend, paid for by the perpetrator, which is the cost of the fine that would be handed out in court. This covers the cost of the course and the rest is given to charities supporting local initiatives to tackle prostitution. The scheme was originally set up for Hampshire Police. Between 2000 and 2010, 569 men were caught kerb crawling in the Southampton area of whom 137 failed to attend the course, and of those who did attend, 6 reoffended. Reading has sent 50 people on this course and they report that none have come to notice again in the Reading area. Those completing the course are given a caution for kerb crawling as well as paying £200 for the course. Other Police forces using the Change programme include Dorset, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Wiltshire, Avon & Somerset, Norfolk, Thames Valley and Tower Hamlets in London. Suffolk Police do not use the Change programme and arrested and charged over 130 men in an 18 month period in the Ipswich area.

7000 men have attended this course nationally and the reoffending rate is 2%.

However at a conference on prostitution in London in December 2010, the following feedback was given by an evaluator of the scheme, passed on by resident Christine Hulme:

"the person that did the evaluation for this initiative did not seem wholly convinced about its success mainly due to:

- Punters having to pay
- Pressure to go on the course rather than face the magistrates
- No follow up support following the course
- Impacts of supply and demand ie less men means a price reduction for the prostitutes, temporary displacement of the prostitutes and greater risk of violence against the prostitutes.
- The impact of the course needs to be evaluated over time. This course will not be a success unless proper effort is put into the exit strategy for the prostitutes. "

The Police, Probation and Slough Drugs and Alcohol Action team Slough have not adopted the Change programme. So far of all those arrested in Slough and convicted, none have reoffended. Slough has run 2 kerb crawling operations over the past year (Operation Circle and Operation Chevron) and more are planned for the future. It is still an option to take up the Change programme and Reading would be happy to work with Slough if we wanted to join forces.

5.12 What can partners do?

5.12.1 SWAG_(Sex Workers Action Group) – **see appendix B for Terms of Reference**

We recognize that enforcement action alone is not sufficient to deal with the problem of prostitution as past experience has shown that this may move the problem to another area (eg Ealing to Slough and vice versa). It is important to offer support to the prostitutes and enable them to change their lifestyles, for example through treatment for addiction, or access to housing benefit if eligible. After consultation with Reading and Oxford, Slough adopted the SWAG model. These meetings take place on a quarterly basis and are attended by agencies including the Police, Community Safety, Antisocial Behaviour officers, Drugs and Alcohol Action team (DAAT), East Berkshire Women's Aid, Slough Homeless Our Concern day hostel, Housing Needs, Primary Care Trust/NHS, Probation, Drug Intervention Project outreach workers and representatives from the women's prison (HMP Bronzefield).

5.12.2 Screening and infection/support

The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) are currently putting their services out to tender at the moment and so services may look very different when the new providers have been allocated. Slough is aiming to continue the holistic approach to look at all needs and not just drugs treatment. Targets will look at outcomes and recovery in future and not just numbers entering treatment, so for example if they have got a safe place to live, there has been a reduction in offending, or no further offending, or admittance to A&E since treatment began.

All Women accessing treatment are signposted to the Garden Clinic at Upton Park Hospital for sexual health and condoms, and information on sexual health and contraception is also given to the women once they are in treatment. In addition all women are referred to the Hepatitis Nurse at Slough Treatment Services where they are BBV (Blood Borne Virus) tested and vaccinated for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. The women can also access self test kits for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea, and information about needle exchange.

Other additional support offered includes counselling and specialist prescribing, assessments to a psychiatrist, structured day programmes, addiction group and abstinence group. For women with housing issues they are referred to Ability, Equinox Project 316 and the Homelessness Team at Slough Borough Council. Referrals are also made to Community Mental Health Trust.

For women accessing the service some have already been involved with Slough Social Services, so that also involves a lot of intense work and support needed by women whose children are in the care system. There are supportive programmes such as FIP (Family Intervention Programme) which offers support to women with children and Social Service issues and those women who find themselves pregnant can also gain support from the Substance Misuse Midwives.

Where women are assaulted or raped they are advised to report to the police and a referral as well as support can be made where needed. There is also the SARC - Thames Valley Sexual Assault Referral Centre. The first Thames Valley Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) opened on 1st April 2011 and is based at Upton Park Hospital in Slough (with a smaller site at Bletchley). It is run by Harmoni for Health and has been named 'Solace'. It is staffed by a manager and 8 Crisis workers 24 hours a day, 7 days

a week, all year round. It offers crisis intervention for all victims of sexual assault and rape whether or not they have been to the Police.

In areas of Education and Training, women are sign posted to local colleges e.g., Langley College and Long Life Courses.

In addition for women having hardship due to not having access to benefit allowances we are able to offer them food vouchers, the food bank in Slough provides assistance in form of food packages.

The women are also sign posted to their GPs, Slough Job Centre Plus, SHOC (Slough Homeless Our Concern), Mind and Volunteer Centre, Narcotics Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, dentists and many more agencies.

The majority of women have self-referred to gain access to treatment; whilst others have been referred to Slough Drug Intervention Project through the criminal justice system for drug related trigger offences (for example, robbery). Other referrals have been made from the SWAG meetings and one potential client has been referred from Slough Job Centre Plus.

5 out of 21 women see their clients in a home so the risks are as great – or even greater – as these women are sex working but not on the streets of Slough.

The Drugs Intervention Project (DIP) drugs and alcohol outreach worker reports the following:

- There have been 58 referrals to screening and intervention since the start of the SWAG. The drugs and alcohol outreach worker automatically refers every client on assessment.
- There are currently 25 girls on her caseload, but these are not all street prostitutes.
- Only the most chaotic high risk clients are selected for SWAG case review currently. This is because the main aim of the SWAG is harm reduction. So far, 5 have been referred and 2 have now come off the streets (see case studies below)
- There are no specific services for sex workers in Slough other than the drugs and alcohol outreach post (whereas Reading has the Rahab Project, Tower Hamlets has the Safe Exit Scheme at Toynbee Hall, and Camden has many such projects).
- Women's Aid will get involved if there is Domestic Abuse involved (and could offer a refuge place if available but only if the girl is not taking drugs).

Case study1

CB had received 2 street warnings and would have been arrested if she had come to notice again. She was a well-known street worker, involved in prostitution to fund her drug habit. Also she was part of a close-knit criminal group who she provided drugs for. The areas of need identified for CB were drug treatment, housing and more intense therapy. As of September 2011, CB is on a methadone maintenance programme and is no longer using drugs. She has a room at Look Ahead and is about to take up secretarial training. She has been referred for counselling and is no longer working as a prostitute. We are hoping she will chair the newly formed support meetings held in the evenings as a role model to others hoping to get off the streets.

Case study 2

DA initially came through the arrest referral scheme and was then referred for specialist prescribing and was put on a methadone programme. However she was not complying with the structured day programme she was due to attend as part of her referral order. Other issues raised were housing and the need for more intense therapy. DA then went to prison for robbery. As of September 2011, and since coming out of prison, DA has been living with her father in Bracknell. She is working well with Probation and drugs services and has started to turn her life around.

5.13 Ugly mug scheme

There is a great deal of research, which shows high levels of violence against women who are involved in street prostitution. As a result, local areas have set up “ugly mug” schemes. This allows victims to report their attacker so that the collection and distribution of ‘ugly mug’ reports alerts Police and multi-agency partners, for example, outreach workers (and other women) to the dangerous individual(s). It also encourages clients to report attacks to the police so that successful prosecutions can be achieved although they do not have to for the purposes of this scheme. In Slough this scheme is facilitated by our contact at HMP Bronzefield, the women’s prison, where often prostitutes feel safe to report.

5.14 Patrols and meeting with the community

There are regular community warden patrols as well as the Police patrols in the hotspot areas and Police and council attendance at residents meetings, including Action for Chalvey, Chalvey Partnership and Chalvey NAG.

5.15 The Way forward

Slough needs to continue in its joined up approach which combines support, harm reduction, enforcement and reassurance, and to look for other ways we can improve on what we are already doing.

5.15.1 Information sharing and best practice_– we have already got good contacts with Reading and Oxford (who advised on the SWAG and the Change programme) and we are looking at setting up a Thames Valley-wide forum for boroughs to get together and share best practice. We have visited Camden’s Kings Cross team and joined one of their case work meetings, and we have now met with Ealing Police and are working together on information sharing where cautions and ASBOs have been issued. We have contacts at Ipswich and High Wycombe. Ipswich has offered to come to Slough to talk us through how they have achieved their aims and are considered ‘best practice’ by the Home Office. They have just published a new strategy which I am waiting to receive.

5.15.2 Communications – it is important to have an effective two-way feedback process between local residents, Police and partners and an effective Communications strategy that keeps the issue of prostitution – and what we are doing to tackle it – high on the local agenda, without raising fear of crime amongst those who maybe are not so aware of it. The SWAG will continue as will feedback to residents and a new subgroup if residents are in agreement.

5.15.3 Funding_- community groups can apply for funding, for example from the Crime Innovation Fund, which could be used for further outreach work and research (Oxford have just carried out some research which they are going to send through) and provide further support for the girls on the streets.

5.15.4 Making the environment cleaner and safer

- Street angels - Slough will soon have a Street Angels scheme, which is a voluntary group organised by local churches who will patrol the area and offer support to those who need it and provide a reassuring presence.
- Continued community warden patrols, police patrols
- Improved lighting (eg security lighting in hotspots such as Oban Court if this does not cause 'light pollution')
- Gating off the town hall access roads

5.15.5 Tackling demand

- Intensive Police kerb crawling operations and regular publicity – word of mouth will soon spread eg amongst lorry drivers passing through.
- Look at Value for Money – the cost to services of putting people through the criminal justice system and dealing with crime in the area will be reduced in the longer term if the investment in time and resources is put in now.
- Name and shame for kerb crawlers, or pilot the Change programme?

5.15.6 Supporting prostitutes in exiting sex work

- Talk to other boroughs – what are they doing? What is considered 'best practice'? (Ipswich, Northampton)
- Get buy-in at senior level: Slough Borough Council (including Adult Social Care and Housing Needs), Thames Valley Police, Health/Primary Care Trust and Probation
- A support plan from Housing Needs and Homelessness team (although drugs are a problem when looking at housing options) – could we fund emergency accommodation?
- Immediate engagement with new faces, offering support
- Arrest and referral scheme rather than charging the girls (and give them a chance to access services first)
- Take on more female outreach workers (currently we have two males and one female)
- Getting benefits processed can take up to six months – can we speed this up?
- Where brothels are a problem, including b&bs, agencies should work together including the Department of Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs, Fire Service, Trading Standards, Housing Needs, UKBA and any other agencies who can look at closing down premises who do not stop this activity.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None.

7. **Conclusion**

This report gives an overview of the work taking place in Slough to tackle prostitution and looks at how we can work together in the future to reduce the problem still further. It would be helpful to hear the views of committee members and meeting attendees as to how to progress.

8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Thames Valley Police prostitution strategy

'B' - Sex Workers Action Group terms of reference

9. **Background Papers**

None.