

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods and Community Services

**DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015

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**WARD(S):** *Chalvey, Baylis & Stoke, Farnham*

**PART I**

**FOR CONSIDERATION AND COMMENT**

**PROSTITUTION UPDATE**

1. **Purpose of Report**

This paper is being submitted to update on action taken to tackle prostitution as requested by the Committee.

2. **Recommendation**

The Panel is requested to discuss the information provided and consider the effectiveness of the programmes of work in place to tackle prostitution.

3. **Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

- Health and Wellbeing – The SSP contributes to Health and Wellbeing through the provision of high quality drug and alcohol services and promoting positive behaviour change.
- Safer Communities – The SSP contributes to Safer Communities through working to ensure the borough is a safe place to live, visit, work and play; increasing confidence in reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour; and reducing crime, its fear and perception. The work of the SSP in supporting these priorities is set out in the report.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

*There are no financial implications of proposed action*

(b) **Risk Management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal	None	None
Property	None	None
Human Rights	None	None
Health and Safety	None	None
Employment Issues	None	None
Equalities Issues	None	None
Community Support	None	None
Communications	None	None
Community Safety	None	None
Financial	None	None
Timetable for delivery	None	None
Project Capacity	None	None
Other	None	None

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

*No legal implications*

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

*No implications*

## 5. Supporting Information

### 5.1 Background

- There are two distinct groups of street sex workers in Slough– British girls who are local to Slough and who have drink and/or drug addictions, and Romanians who come to the UK to earn as much as they can from prostitution to send home to their families, and who do not usually have addictions. The British group are aged from mid twenties to thirties in age range. The Romanian workers are younger, aged from eighteen to twenty five.
- The good transport links bring regular clients into Slough (for example, airport workers on their way home).
- The main ‘hotspots’ have traditionally been Chalvey (around Ledgers Road and Montem Lane) and Stoke and Baylis (on Stoke Poges Lane). Farnham Road has recently emerged as a hotspot.
- There is a council-led Thames Valley-wide prostitution strategy forum, comprising Milton Keynes, High Wycombe, Reading, Oxford and Slough, which meets quarterly.

### 5.2 Issues discussed and concerns raised at previous scrutiny panels

Issue	Outcome of discussion	Current situation
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<p>Why Slough attracts prostitution</p>	<p>The British sex workers are born and bred in Slough so it is close to home for them. Romanian girls come here due to the good transport links (eg near Heathrow). Also it is hard to deter them via Police enforcement due to changes in legislation.</p>	<p>Enforcement activity with UK Border Agency (UKBA) is ongoing to tackle and deter the Romanian sex workers. Support and engagement work with British girls is still looking positive and the female outreach report worker carries out regular outreach (see 5.4.2 below)</p>
<p>Use of ASBOs (now replaced by CBOs – Criminal Behaviour Orders)</p>	<p>ASBOs and now CBOs need a lot of evidence, which is very hard to collect due to changes in legislation (eg street cautions – need 3 in a 3-month period before an arrest can be made). Courts see sex workers as the victims.</p>	<p>As before. Officers will consider CBOs, however it is a long process to get to court and CBOs are not always appropriate. Can also use Community Protection Notices and Dispersal powers.</p>
<p>How best to tackle kerb crawlers</p>	<p>Warning letters eg from CCTV intelligence, and prosecutions when operations are run. Discussions with Reading re possibility of sharing their ‘Change’ programme. The Change programme will provide education to kerb crawlers around the wider issue of sex working – but only if numbers are sufficient and courses are self funding and run regularly.</p>	<p>At present there are not sufficient numbers to warrant a programme. We will continue to monitor and review the situation. Kerb crawling warning letters sent out when suspicious activity is observed.</p>
<p>Reporting levels</p>	<p>Reporting levels are low despite the anecdotal evidence from residents – we encourage people to report on the Police non-emergency 101 number or the council’s ASB hotline.</p>	<p>Reporting levels are still fairly low however they have increased most likely due to proactive police operations around brothels. Reporting is to be encouraged.</p>
<p>Displacement</p>	<p>Evidence of displacement to Baylis and Stoke</p>	<p>There is more activity now on the Farnham Road. Outreach workers and Police are engaging with the sex workers in this location and the</p>

		British girls are all on the Sex Workers Action Group (SWAG) case management agenda. The Horlicks Bridge is now closed which has caused further displacement.
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5.3 The Thames Valley Police Strategy was replaced locally with a Partnership Action Plan which continues to be monitored. It covers four strands: prevention/support, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance.

Work in progress and arising from the action plan includes:

Strand	Activities taking place
Prevention of ASB related to prostitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted patrols – outreach workers and Police regularly engaging with sex workers</li> <li>• Town hall slip road was blocked off preventing use by kerb crawlers to circle area</li> <li>• Lookahead is a hostel for those with addictions and support needs and has emergency as well as long term accommodation</li> </ul>
Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sharing with partners and neighbouring boroughs eg Ealing, Hounslow, Reading</li> <li>• Use of targeted CCTV operations to identify kerb crawlers and sex workers</li> </ul>
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warning letters and street cautions issued (see 5.4.1 below)</li> <li>• Working with UKBA to serve letters served on Romanian sex workers, (see 5.4.3 below)</li> <li>• Kerb crawler prosecutions</li> <li>• Operations to close brothels</li> </ul>
Reassurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police attend residents' meetings and update as appropriate</li> <li>• Regular police presence in known 'hotspots'</li> </ul>

## 5.4 How the situation has changed

5.4.1 In 2014, officers issued:

- 70 street cautions to sex workers
- 5 UKBA letters
- 10 dispersals issued under section 35 of ASB and Policing Act 2014
- 2 prosecutions for men soliciting sex

5.4.2 Sex Workers action Group (SWAG) meeting: all street sex workers are referred to the SWAG case management meetings. Numbers of British girls remain constant as there are some with very chaotic lives who are not ready to exit street sex work, although most will engage with outreach workers and the Police. It is important to note that girls will only seek help and exit prostitution when they feel ready and support is there when they need it in the meantime.

5.4.3 The number of Romanian girls has recently increased. This may be because of recent operations in neighbouring boroughs. The UKBA has issued letters to Romanian sex workers inviting them to interview to look at their situation and whether they are exercising their treaty rights. If they do not turn up they will be due for arrest and removal from the UK. NB Removal is not the same as deportation and they would be able to return to the UK after removal if they wished to do so. The UKBA would have to allow them 3 months to show they are exercising their treaty rights before reissuing letters. Cross-borough work with Hounslow and Ealing is ongoing.

5.4.4 The number of kerb crawlers had reduced in Chalvey, due to the closure of the old town hall slip road and the changes to the road system, which made it impractical to circle the Montem Lane/Ledgers Road/A4 route. Numbers have risen in this location since the closure of the Horlicks Bridge. This is being monitored by Police and CCTV has been reinstated in Ledgers Road.

5.4.5 According to Police the number of street sex workers in Slough has dropped. However this may be because they tend to pick up customers in the street and take them to a home address or a brothel. There is also a trend to use the "Adult work" website where they can work from home or a brothel and book on via the website. During 2014 there were at least 15 known brothels in Slough, 8 of which were closed down.

5.4.6 According to Thames Valley Police, there is no evidence that British females are trafficked. The Romanian females are recruited in Romania and travel across Europe to work in the sex industry in the UK, Spain, France and Italy. This recruitment involves the workers being brought to the UK possibly by an organised crime group, however they do know why they are coming and what work they are going to do. The workers remain in possession of their passports and ID cards and are free to go back to Romania if they wish. These workers are tied in to the organisers until they have paid off the monies they owe to get them to the UK and for the accommodation. The police believe the girls keep approximately 25% of the money they take from the customers with the rest going to their organisers to pay off debts. Work around trafficking is ongoing.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

*n/a*

7. **Conclusion**

Ongoing work is taking place to tackle prostitution in the borough. The main hotspot was originally Chalvey, along with Baylis & Stoke and now Farnham wards. The number of complaints regarding these locations is low and Police activity and outreach is still focussed on tackling the problem. The action plan is ongoing and we encourage residents to report any concerns to the ASB hotline or Police 101 number.

8. **Appendices Attached**

*n/a*

9. **Background Papers**

*n/a*