

City Executive Board – 11 February 2016

Report of the Guest Houses Review Group

Suggested City Executive Board response provided by the Leader of the Council:

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Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Officer
1. That the City Council should maintain an accurate list of guest houses operating in the Oxford area that is updated at least annually (The Human Exploitation Co-ordinator has produced a basic list which could be developed into an accurate list).	In part	<p>Guest houses are an important part of the visitor and tourist economy in Oxford and the City Council wishes to encourage guest house owners to play their part in keeping users safe. The Say Something If You See Something campaign highlights safeguarding risks to vulnerable adults and young people and has identified the guest house accommodation sector as having an important part to play in successfully securing progress in this domain. The campaign aims to increase the awareness of people employed in the sector, by training them in what to look for, how to report concerns and where to turn to for help.</p> <p>A code of conduct for guest houses seems likely to make a useful contribution if it is widely respected and publicised. The Board will discuss with senior officers the serious resource implications of the agenda set out in the Scrutiny report and seek to identify</p>	Tim Sadler & Richard Adams
2. That the City Council should, in consultation and collaboration with other relevant statutory, commercial and voluntary agencies, lead on the introduction of a voluntary code of good practice for owners of guest houses in the Oxford area to sign up to. This code should be jointly branded and linked to existing initiatives such as the Say Something if you See Something campaign.	Y		
3. That, subject to further consultation, the voluntary code of good practice should commit owners of guest houses operating in Oxford to the following practices which would help to protect guest house owners and their businesses as well as guests and the wider community. These practices should extend to subcontractors working in guest houses where relevant: a) Signing up to a basic safeguarding policy statement; b) Providing details of an identified ‘single point of contact’ who has oversight of the running of the guest house and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the code of good practice; c) Having an identified responsible person on duty at the guest house at all times during its hours of operation; d) Providing Basic Disclosure certificates for the single point of contact and responsible person(s) and if possible, obtaining	In part		

<p>certificates for all staff who permanently or regularly work in the guest house;</p> <p>e) Having a free crime prevention check every 3 years and implementing recommendations made by the Crime Prevention and Reduction Advisor;</p> <p>f) Cooperating with the police, including by providing available CCTV footage upon request and allowing the police to freely enter the premises where illegal behaviour is suspected to be taking place;</p> <p>g) Registering with Thames Valley Alert and participating in the hotel partnership to strengthen two-way information sharing between guest houses and the authorities;</p> <p>h) Retaining records of the single point of contact and responsible person(s) completing the ECPAT 'Every Child, Everywhere' e-learning course, and providing all staff working in the guest house with the Thames Valley Police Staff Guide for the hotel trade;</p> <p>i) Having a 'no cash without ID' policy, recording vehicle registration numbers where relevant and requiring visitors to register with reception;</p> <p>j) Holding and restricting access to master keys for all rooms and ensuring that guest rooms are checked daily;</p> <p>k) Having suitable and proportionate arrangements in place for monitoring comings and goings at the premises, including during the night, and where relevant, retaining CCTV footage for a minimum of 28 days.</p>		<p>the how to effectively deliver the actions proposed within current administrative resources. Additionally, the Board will draw on the expertise of key partner agencies to assess the viability of a worthwhile initiative in this important area of safeguarding and personal safety.</p>	
<p>4. That the owners of guest houses in the Oxford area should be asked to self-certify that they comply with the voluntary code of good practice on an annual basis. This process could be prompted by a letter signed by the Local Policing Area Commander, as well as through the hotel partnership and any other relevant channels.</p>	Y		
<p>5. That guest house owners signed up to the code should be signposted to sources of advice and guidance.</p>	Y		

6. That the City Council asks Thames Valley Police to give prompt attention to requests for assistance at local guest houses.	Y		
7. That relevant agencies including City Council functions such as Environmental Health and Community Safety, and those provided by partner organisations such as the Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards, should be asked to report to the code administrator if they have reason to believe that, having been signed up to the voluntary code of good practice, the management of a guest house is non-compliant with it. The single point of contact should then be asked to demonstrate that they have addressed the concerns raised or risk being suspended from the code.	In part		
8. That the administration of the voluntary code of good practice should be adequately resourced. Consideration should be given to where in the organisation this responsibility should sit but the Human Exploitation Manager should have oversight of this administrative function.	In part		
9. That a suitable logo should be created for the voluntary code of good practice that could be displayed on guest house websites.	N		
10. That a list of guest houses covered by the voluntary code of good practice should be displayed on the City Council's website together with details of what the owners of these guest houses have signed up to. The introduction of the code should also be promoted to targeted institutions, such as language schools, as well as more widely, including through a City Council press release.	Y		
11. That Experience Oxfordshire should be informed which guest houses are covered by the voluntary code of good practice and asked to display the logo next to participating guest houses on their website.	Y		
12. That the City Council should encourage the larger tour operators and hotels operating in Oxford to sign up to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.	In part		

<p>13. That the City Council should ask organisations such as Experience Oxfordshire and the local Chamber of Commerce to do more to promote the Say Something if you See Something campaign, including through existing relationships.</p>	<p>In part</p>		
<p>14. That the City Council should look for opportunities to join with partners, perhaps through the National Working Group, in pressing government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Grant additional powers to local authorities to require the embedding of good practices in guest houses, b) Do more to involve the hotel accreditation agencies and major travel website companies, as well as guest houses, in efforts to promote good safeguarding practices in the hospitality sector; c) Introduce a public awareness campaign that empowers people to come forward with safeguarding concerns. 	<p>N</p>		