

Local Government Association

fitness for purpose

lessons from local authorities' pilot studies

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foreword

Following the endorsement of a strategic framework for Fitness for Purpose by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and tourism industry leaders in 2002, the Local Government Association, with the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, developed plans to pilot the initiative with local authorities from Spring 2003. This report is the culmination of the pilot studies that took place in six local authorities over the course of 2003.

The role of the Fitness for Purpose task force has been to provide direction and oversight during the pilot phase of the project. We would like to thank, in particular, the support of the consultant John Dyson who has worked with each pilot authority in setting up their study, monitoring their progress and evaluating outcomes.

While the pilot studies are now complete, we are encouraged by the continued willingness of each of the six authorities to remain involved with the initiative. They now meet as an informal network to share best practice on operating protocols, complaints management and research. This by-product of the pilot phase was unforeseen, but indicative not only of the impact of Fitness for Purpose on working practices but also of officers' commitment to continuous improvement. Local government has a strong track record of building on innovation, a factor that should assist in taking this initiative beyond theory into practice.

We are pleased to present this document as it provides both a balanced evaluation of the pilot studies and our recommendations which flow from the experiences of these local authorities. We hope it will move Fitness for Purpose closer to being widely adopted in England, to the benefit of tourist destinations, tourism businesses and, most importantly, the consumer.

LGA fitness for purpose task force

introduction

In order to help drive up standards in tourism accommodation, Fitness for Purpose is promoting better inspection and regulation of tourist accommodation as a way of tackling poor safety and trading standards and ensuring that minimum legal standards are met.

Fitness for Purpose is targeted at hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs, that are failing to meet minimum legal requirements for health and safety, fire and food safety and trading standards, in order to help them improve. It aims to give those businesses the support they need to raise standards in those areas, while also taking a lighter-touch approach towards regulating well-run businesses that are compliant.

The customer-focused objective of Fitness for Purpose is essentially about consumer protection; it is not primarily concerned with “cosmetic” or subjective quality issues. The National Quality Standards scheme, which grades English accommodation, deals with quality issues such as appearance, levels of service and cleanliness. The underlying premise of Fitness for Purpose is to ensure that basic legal safeguards are in place before poor quality issues can be tackled. By ensuring that businesses comply with minimum legal requirements, we then have a firm foundation upon which to improve quality.

The five key areas identified for improvement under Fitness for Purpose are:

- providing better consumer protection
- making regulatory standards clear for businesses
- educating businesses better about their obligations
- coordinating inspections more effectively
- allowing more self-assessment for well-run businesses

An LGA-led Fitness for Purpose Task Force of lead local authority officers in enforcement and tourism defined detailed models and evaluation methods for the pilots. A consultant was also engaged to support the pilot authorities from initial set up through to the final evaluation of the outcomes of their studies.

Six local authorities were chosen to carry out Fitness for Purpose Pilots. These were:

- Blackpool Borough Council
- Bournemouth Borough Council
- London Borough of Camden
- Canterbury City Council
- London Borough of Greenwich
- West Sussex County Council

These authorities were chosen because they provide a good geographical spread and represented rural, coastal and city destinations, as well as London. The London Development Agency match funded the two London pilots and SEEDA the West Sussex pilot. The cost of the other pilots was found from within existing council resources.

methodology

All the pilots were asked to demonstrate two core elements of Fitness for Purpose but each was also expected to focus on at least one other aspect of the initiative. In choosing the optional elements, the pilot authorities were free to focus either on aspects in which they already had particular expertise, or on those of significant concern.

Core aspects that all pilots were asked to include were:

- ***joined-up working between tourism and enforcement departments*** - Fitness for Purpose could have been driven by either the tourism or enforcement departments of the local authority. However, in either instance, the pilot initiative had to be “owned” by both departments. The pilot should have demonstrated actively (a) formalised links between tourism officers and enforcement officers and (b) that tourism and enforcement activities were coordinated to the benefit of the local community, the tourism industry, its customers and the local environment.
- ***communication with local businesses*** – Each pilot also had to engage actively with local accommodation providers, including Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), about the basic requirements to meet the legal minimum standards in order to be fit for purpose. This included, but was not limited to, distributing a Fitness for Purpose ‘catalogue’ to all accommodation providers, that would detail what the minimum standards are. An important element of this communication with business was to establish arrangements for accommodation providers to feed back their views on the project, its successes, failures and what it achieved for them.

Optional elements of which each pilot was asked to include at least one:

- ***co-ordinated food, health and safety and fire inspections*** – For example, by organising Environmental Health teams so that one designated adviser had responsibility for coordinating all inspections for a single premises, including those for fire. The designated adviser would ensure rationalisation of paperwork and reduction in form filling where possible. He/she would meet monthly with the Tourism Officer to exchange information about non-compliant businesses and decide the measures that to be taken to address those failings.
- ***introducing self-assessment for compliant businesses*** – For example, by calculating the cost-savings from taking a lighter touch for compliant businesses
- ***creating a comprehensive accommodation register*** – For example, by working with the Regional Tourist Board to compile a list of all accommodation businesses advertising in their areas via all known advertising routes. That list would be compared with the lists of businesses already known to the local authority, followed by inspection of those businesses of which they had not previously been aware.

- ***creating a business regulation unit*** – For example, by setting up a unit to provide consultancy advice to businesses on regulatory compliance (which could have a specialist tourism component). Through this unit, non-compliant businesses would be identified, with the assistance of the Tourism Officer, and targeted for further educational support.
- ***creating targeted training for accommodation providers on compliance with minimum standards.***

As part of the evaluation of the pilots, each authority was asked to describe their approach to the pilot and how this differed from previous arrangements. They also detailed how they worked with the accommodation providers who took part in the pilot and how they saw the future of the project (see detailed evaluation reports for each pilot authority **attached** in annex 1).

lessons from the pilot studies

1. Fitness for Purpose was successful in **identifying issues of serious non-compliance**. Whilst targeting tourist accommodation specifically, each pilot authority used a “lighter touch” regulatory stance when visiting businesses and emphasised advice and assistance. However where serious non-compliance was found, enforcement action was taken, either by referring to the appropriate agency, in the case of fire safety, or by taking action as a follow up. This can be summarised as follows:

- Blackpool – one hotel where improvement notices were served.
- Bournemouth – one hotel where major issues were dealt with by a number of agencies.
- Canterbury – two referrals to the fire and rescue services.
- Greenwich – two accommodation providers closed voluntarily due to serious breaches of fire safety regulations.

The Fitness for Purpose model demonstrated that it could enhance a local authority’s ability to identify and take appropriate action against non-compliant tourist accommodation providers. Without Fitness for Purpose, the breaches in health and safety in these premises would not have been as readily addressed, as these businesses would not have been subject to the same level of interaction with enforcement officers. In addition, this initiative enabled the pilot authorities to improve their intelligence about businesses operating in their areas and to target inspection activity more effectively at all accommodation providers covered by the pilot studies.

2. **Local political support** and leadership is essential for successful delivery of the objectives of Fitness for Purpose, with five out of the six pilot projects being championed by the councillor holding the portfolio for tourism. This is especially important to ensure cross departmental and cross-discipline working, as well as in two-tier authorities.

3. Fitness for Purpose significantly **improved inter-departmental working** within all of the pilot authorities. In the longer term this could be the model for the joined up working for all regulatory services in local authorities.

4. A **“memorandum of understanding”** assisted in ensuring the sustainability of the multi-disciplinary team. This was a particularly important tool used in the pilot covering a two-tier area, West Sussex, for bringing together both county and district services.

5. Project teams can be **led by either tourism or environmental health** departments. The critical factor is the multi-disciplinary approach with the involvement of other agencies including the fire and rescue service.

6. Most of the pilot authorities believe that Fitness for Purpose is **sustainable in the long term** providing two critical conditions are in place:

- the Foods Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive give recognition to this approach to enforcement, which is lighter touch and risk-based; this would entail greater flexibility to allow local priorities to be met and a reduced emphasis purely on centrally determined enforcement targets. The intention, however, is not to introduce this initiative to the detriment of other high risk core work. Rather, Fitness for Purpose should provide a better approach to dealing with low-risk, well-run businesses. Without this **support and flexibility from central regulatory agencies** it will be difficult for local authorities to implement Fitness for Purpose effectively.
- some **initial funding**, additional to existing resources, can be found to cover implementation costs. This funding could be found from an external source or from reallocation of local authority budgets.

7. There is an inherent gap and inconsistency between the national grading schemes and Fitness for Purpose. While there are assumptions that graded accommodation, which meets quality assurance standards, is also compliant with regulations, this is not necessarily the case. Likewise, meeting Fitness for Purpose standards, e.g. compliance with minimum legal requirements, does not necessarily impact on quality issues e.g. customer care. There needs to be a **stronger integration of the two schemes** so that ultimately the experience of customers meets their expectations..

8. The development of an integrated database of accommodation providers enables local authorities to **'work smarter'** and engage in more efficient and effective intelligence-led activity. It can also support local authorities' efforts to **promote economic development**, through greater opportunities to assist businesses in raising standards and improving.

9. Despite initial scepticism, local tourism **businesses are broadly positive** towards the Fitness for Purpose scheme, which provides opportunities for enhanced business support, education and training.

10. The **communication process** is critical to success in achieving business support and local authorities need to work with local trade associations, colleges and business support agencies to achieve this.

issues outside of the scope of the pilot studies

Given the scope and length of the pilot studies, there were some questions that were not answered by the process. These were:

- whether Fitness for Purpose can resolve issues around Houses of Multiple Occupation (i.e. the use of HMOs as tourist accommodation)
- whether Fitness for Purpose can be cost neutral to local authorities in the long term.

conclusion

The six pilot studies have successfully demonstrated what can be achieved when enforcement officers work with tourism divisions in local authorities. This joined up, multi-disciplinary working is one of the cornerstones of Fitness for Purpose, and many of the achievements of the pilots have flowed directly from this aspect of the initiative. Even if embedding this practice were the only result of the studies, this would have a considerable impact on improving service.

Fitness for Purpose has also garnered a high level of political support in the pilot authorities. In the same way the strategic development of the initiative has benefited from strong Ministerial support, the pilot studies succeeded because of the elected members who championed Fitness for Purpose – with local businesses, local communities and council officers.

The level of business satisfaction, demonstrated particularly strongly in both Blackpool and West Sussex, has been a positive feature of the pilot studies. The fact that business' initial caution was transformed into support for the new approach to enforcement should make it easier to promote Fitness for Purpose to other businesses in other areas of the county.

For Fitness for Purpose to move onto the next phase, a number of issues external to local authorities still need to be addressed. It is clear, for instance, that it will be essential to work with the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive to resolve issues around the perceived "low risk" of many tourism businesses and the perceived inflexibility of national targets at the local level.

Another consistent theme that emerged from the pilot studies was the gap between minimum regulatory standards and the NQAS. This issue has now been raised with those undertaking the review of NQAS and it is essential that it is resolved in the current review.

All six authorities indicated that initial funding is essential as new working practices are tested. This funding could come from external sources, from within existing local authority budgets or from schemes run as part of the project (as was the case in Bournemouth). While all six authorities are keen to continue with the development of the project, several would also require resources to support this work. It is the responsibility now for central government, with the LGA, to explore whether funding for start up costs in a national rollout of Fitness for Purpose can be found.

The pilot studies have proved that the flexible nature of Fitness for Purpose is both one of its strengths and an essential component to maintain in the future rollout of the project. It is this flexibility that enables authorities to tailor Fitness for Purpose to the needs of their particular tourism industry and to the individual circumstances in each authority.

Encouragingly, the studies have generated significant interest from across local government and from central government agencies. It is important that this interest is harnessed and the momentum built up around the pilot studies is built upon to extend Fitness for Purpose more widely.

annex 1: pilot studies

Blackpool Borough Council

description

Blackpool implemented the project in a defined area of the town, Gynn Square, and set up a cohort study for comparison purposes. They used the services of private consultants to work with accommodation providers, encouraging compliance with the full range of regulatory functions using a self-assessment checklist.

evaluation report

Q1. How was the project team developed and what role has it fulfilled?

A partnership was formed between the Tourism and Environmental Health Divisions of the Blackpool Borough Council, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Department. The role of the project team was to plan the delivery of the project and they subsequently appointed Independent Environmental Health Co-operative Consultants to implement the project.

Q2. Is the approach sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism Sector?

Yes, Blackpool believes the Fitness for Purpose approach can be sustained.

Q3. What are the key differences between the Fitness for Purpose approach to enforcement in your area and the more traditional approach previously used by the Authority?

Fitness for Purpose promotes a holistic and educative approach using Consultants and self-assessment backed by enforcement as opposed to the traditional inspection approach.

Q4. What, if any, political support has there been achieved for the pilot project?

Substantial political support was given to the project through Councillor Eddie Collett, Blackpool Borough Council, Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Tourism.

Q5. Has the pilot project been managed within the resources of the authority and, if so, what are the estimated costs?

The pilot was managed within internal costs. Total Cost £28,000.

Q6. Have additional or external resources been required and what are the costs of these resources?

No external funding was sought.

Q7. *What are the key benefits to the Authority from the Fitness For Purpose approach to enforcement?*

The key benefits were the clear division of the enforcers and advisory roles. It reduces bureaucracy and provides a more positive approach.

Q8. *Have accommodation providers been provided with the opportunity of receiving additional business support e.g. marketing, website? If so, what resources have been offered and have the costs been evaluated?*

No other business support offered.

Q9. *Have areas of non-compliance with Regulation been found during the pilot and, if so, what are the strategies for assisting business to comply (including future enforcement)?*

Areas of serious non-compliance were limited to one hotel with enforcement notices served as a result.

Q10. *What are the key economic benefits to the Local Authority from the Fitness for Purpose pilot, e.g. additional bed spaces, development towards the National Quality Schemes?*

The pilot scheme area was not large enough to generate economic benefits although improved levels of compliance should result in a better experience for visitors.

Q11. *What are the barriers to the further development of Fitness for Purpose?*

Compliance with regulatory standards in Fitness for Purpose does not have an impact on Quality e.g. customer care.

communication with accommodation providers

Q1. *Has the pilot resulted in an improved database of accommodation providers and if so how many additional business units?*

No because the pilot project was restricted to an area of the Town.

Q2. *How has the communication of Fitness for Purpose been achieved in the local area?*

Press releases, formal launch, visit by Richard Caborn MP to the area, meeting with hoteliers and Local Associations.

Q3. *What are the results of feed back exercises from accommodation providers?*

There are however a large number of verbal comments in the Local Authority's report (at Annex 2)

Q4. *Have training opportunities been given to accommodation providers and what take up of these opportunities has there been?*

Signposting of training opportunities at the local College.

Q5. *How has information on compliance with regulations been given to accommodation providers?*

Use of a self assessment checklist and visits by consultants to accommodation providers.

general

Q1. *Having implemented Fitness for Purpose do you see development opportunities for this approach in enforcement generally?*

The development of a business advice unit and help line for guidance on regulatory compliance.

Q2. *What are the additional features which could be included in any future Fitness for Purpose projects?*

There needs to be a link between Regulatory compliance and the Quality schemes.

Q3. *Would you be prepared to assist in the roll out of Fitness for Purpose across the U.K?*

Willing to assist subject to commitment of the Local Authority.

key lessons

The key benefits were the clear division of the enforcers and advisory roles. Fitness for Purpose reduces bureaucracy and provides a more positive approach. The holistic and educative approach of the project was a welcome change from the traditional approach to enforcement. Lack of a link with the Quality Standards scheme is a serious barrier to the success of Fitness for Purpose.

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Bournemouth Borough Council

description

Bournemouth Borough Council implemented the Bournemouth Quality Scheme, which encouraged all accommodation providers in the area to meet minimum standards. They employed two inspectors to carry out inspections, which were paid for through subscription to the Quality Scheme.

evaluation report

Q1. How was the project team developed and what role has it fulfilled?

The project team had a core group consisting of:

- Head of Tourism and Seafront Services
- Commercial Officer
- Environmental Health Officer
- Chair of Bournemouth Area Hospitality Association
- Bournemouth Quality Standards Inspectors.

Also other groups were involved over the year on an ad hoc basis, e.g. Police, Planning Enforcement, Housing, Fire Brigade and Trading Standards.

Q2. Is the approach sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism Sector?

The project team will continue to meet to improve the quality of local accommodation.

Q3. What are the key differences between the Fitness for Purpose approach to enforcement in your area and the more traditional approach previously used by the Authority?

We now have more power to enforce standards locally with the Bournemouth Quality Standards scheme (B.Q.S.). This has been achieved with the backing of the trade and the Council.

Q4. What, if any, political support has there been achieved for the pilot project?

The change to locally inspected accommodation as opposed to self-registration was backed with a policy change by Bournemouth Borough Council.

Q5. Has the pilot project been managed within the resources of the authority and, if so, what are the estimated costs?

The costs of £8,000 per annum have been fully funded by registration fees from the trade.

Q6. Have additional or external resources been required and what are the costs of these resources?

In addition there has been an additional managerial cost of around £3,000 in officer time to co-ordinate the project.

Q7. What are the key benefits to the Authority from the Fitness For Purpose approach to enforcement?

- Tighter control
- Greater co-operation between sections of the council
- Maintaining standards
- Stronger partnership with trade
- Clarity for customers
- More efficient complaint handling
- Building a better database of accommodation – integrated between departments to provide better quality of information
- Locally held information

Q8. Have accommodation providers been provided with the opportunity of receiving additional business support e.g. marketing, website? If so, what resources have been offered and have the costs been evaluated?

Extra site visits have been provided as a result of the project. Demonstrable improvements have been made to the accommodation stock. Extra guidance/time to meet standards. No charge for second visit

Q9. Have areas of non-compliance with Regulation been found during the pilot and, if so, what are the strategies for assisting business to comply (including future enforcement)?

Accommodation not meeting the required standards has been given the necessary guidance. If standards still not met, the accommodation has been withdrawn from tourism marketing and endorsement. In some instances, planning enforcement action has been taken through the courts.

Q10. What are the key economic benefits to the Local Authority from the Fitness for Purpose pilot, e.g. additional bed spaces, development towards the National Quality Schemes?

Main economic advantage has been maintaining the maximum choice of graded (high quality) accommodation

Q11. What are the barriers to the further development of Fitness for Purpose?

Limitations on enforcement. Limited sanctions. Ultimately we cannot close down sub-standard premises. Local authority financial cuts limits the time that officers can spend helping accommodation providers. Lack of training for inspectors. High workload for LA officers, e.g. EHO's.

communication with accommodation providers

Q1. *Has the pilot resulted in an improved database of accommodation providers and if so how many additional business units?*

The quantity (number) of accommodation providers on the database has not increased. However, the quality of the information held has improved significantly.

Q2. *How has the communication of Fitness for Purpose been achieved in the local area?*

This was planned to reach accommodation providers through:

- Direct mail from L.A.
- Seminar (Tourism Briefing)
- Hotel Association newsletter/meetings
- Hotline to Commercial Officer
- Word-of-mouth

Q3. *What are the results of feedback exercises from accommodation providers?*

Positive reaction from trade body. Very small number of dissatisfied accommodation providers. Reaction through inspectors largely supportive.

Q4. *Have training opportunities been given to accommodation providers and what take up of these opportunities has there been?*

New programme of training organised by the local authority.

Q5. *How has information on compliance with regulations been given to accommodation providers?*

Written information always provided.

general

Q1. *Having implemented Fitness for Purpose do you see development opportunities for this approach in enforcement generally?*

Communication can always be improved, but there needs to be a main driver for change. In Bournemouth's case this was the need to have local, affordable inspection scheme in place. See limitations mentioned above.

Q2. *What are the additional features which could be included in any future Fitness for Purpose projects?*

Dedicated staff for development and enforcement. Statutory registration with minimum quality/facility standards is necessary to give some real choice of improving overall offer to public.

Q3. *Would you be prepared to assist in the roll out of Fitness for Purpose across the U.K?*

Bournemouth would be pleased to share the lessons learnt, subject to officer availability. It should also be noted that the Bournemouth Fitness for Purpose pilot was perhaps not typical of the other pilot projects.

key lessons

There were many benefits to the local authority from the pilot scheme, including tighter control on tourism businesses, greater co-operation between sections of the council, stronger partnership with trade and the better database of accommodation (integrated between departments) provided better quality of information.

Ideally the project should have dedicated staff for development and enforcement. Statutory registration with minimum quality/facility standards is necessary to give some real choice of improving overall offer to public.

Potential barriers to the success of the project include: Local authority financial cuts limits the time that officers can spend helping accommodation providers; lack of training for inspectors; high workload for LA officers, e.g. EHO's.

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London Borough of Camden

description

London Borough of Camden implemented the project using the consultants employed by Blackpool Borough Council and the self-assessment checklist in the Kings Cross area of the Borough. The visits were followed up by a seminar and workshops to which accommodation providers were invited. A partnership arrangement was also set up between Camden and Business Link for London so that arrangements were made for diagnostic visits to identify business support needs to those accommodation providers who requested them.

evaluation report

Q1. How was the project team developed and what role has it fulfilled?

The initial project team consisted of the Service Manager for Consumer Protection and the team managers (Trading Standards, Food and Health and Safety), the lead officer for the Regeneration Team/Local Business Partnership, the local fire officer and input from Camden tourism officer. A consultant Project Manager was appointed to co-ordinate the project on behalf of Camden. Partnerships were developed with local agencies and consultancy organisations to deliver the project. Although enforcement staff had minimal involvement of the delivery of the pilot phase, they are keen to develop the concept and take ownership of future developments.

Q2. Is the approach sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism Sector?

The project is sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism sector and other sectors, but must be appropriately resourced at the start and this approach to enforcement is accepted by central government agencies from its inception.

Q3. What are the key differences between the Fitness for Purpose approach to enforcement in your area and the more traditional approach previously used by the Authority?

The key difference is the use of a compliance audit booklet, which covers all the main aspects of food, health and safety, fire safety and trading standards. One officer acting in an advisory role conducts the audit. Prior to Fitness For Purpose initiative a Camden hotelier can expect to receive visits from at least four different enforcement officers.

Q4. What, if any, political support has there been achieved for the pilot project?

The lead councillor for tourism and ward members were briefed on the initiative and invited to the seminar, unfortunately they were unable to attend. The pilot project was delivered by officers from different departments working together with assistance from external agencies, without the need for political intervention.

Q5. *Has the pilot project been managed within the resources of the authority and, if so, what are the estimated costs?*

Initially the project was to be delivered using internal resources. However after a preliminary examination of the project brief it became apparent that additional resources would have to supplement internal resources. A grant application was submitted to the London Development Agency and the bid was successful, providing Camden matched the funding – see 6 below.

Q6. *Have additional or external resources been required and what are the costs of these resources?*

A consultant project manager was appointed and external consultants were used to carry out a sample of compliance audits. Camden was granted funding of £13,275 from the London Development Agency and has to provide matched funding of £6,770.

Q7. *What are the key benefits to the Authority from the Fitness For Purpose approach to enforcement?*

Efficient use of resources. Composite service-led initiative. Providing a service that focuses on the actual needs of a business. True risk-based approach to enforcement.

Q8. *Have accommodation providers been provided with the opportunity of receiving additional business support e.g. marketing, website? If so, what resources have been offered and have the costs been evaluated?*

Yes, Business Link for London has offered support, however they are behind schedule and visits, which were to follow on from the compliance audits in early October, still have to be scheduled. Some of the services on offer such as environment audits and waste management audits are free (grant aided); in addition businesses will receive a free diagnostics of requirements (this is part of the regular service) and the offer of consultancy services (charged for) to assist with specific issues.

Q9. *Have areas of non-compliance with Regulation been found during the pilot and, if so, what are the strategies for assisting business to comply (including future enforcement)?*

Yes, areas of non-compliance were identified during the sample of compliance audits. Action lists were left with the hoteliers and revisits will be carried out in the New Year. Additional assistance will be provided if an hotelier is struggling to comply and a further visit will be arranged to check on progress. As this is a new approach and in the spirit of fitness for purpose, more time will be given to encourage the proprietor to comply than would be expected from the traditional enforcement approach. If after the second revisit the proprietor has made little effort to comply nor acted on offers of assistance, Camden will advise the business that they may no longer participate in the initiative and they will revert back to the traditional enforcement programme.

Q10. What are the key economic benefits to the Local Authority from the Fitness for Purpose pilot, e.g. additional bed spaces, development towards the National Quality Schemes?

These have not been identified at this stage. It is anticipated that more hotels will qualify for National Quality Schemes, however there are issues surrounding participation in these schemes due to the preliminary costs and annual renewal costs, and the fact that there is no recognised quality mark for branded hotels.

Q11. What are the barriers to the further development of Fitness for Purpose?

Funding is a major issue, as Camden cannot devote resources to the development of the initiative without a further injection of grant. Improved co-ordination and guidance from central government is required together with regular feedback. Similarly a position statement from both HSE and FSA regarding how fitness for purpose audited premises are counted in the annual returns.

communication with accommodation providers

Q1. Has the pilot resulted in an improved database of accommodation providers and if so how many additional business units?

Yes, a lot of work was done comparing lists from a wide variety of sources, both internal to the Council and from external agencies. A composite list was drawn up and many records updated. There were significant changes in ownership, and some premises had closed for refurbishment or ceased trading, whilst other premises had opened for business following major refurbishments. In most cases the enforcement services were unaware of these changes. The net effect is at least 5 new businesses operating (10% within the pilot ward); this percentage change may be replicated across the other wards.

Q2. How has the communication of Fitness for Purpose been achieved in the local area?

Because of the issues found with the existing data available within Consumer Protection and the conflict with other data sources, the majority of hoteliers in the pilot area were visited at the beginning of September to verify contact details and introduce the initiative. This was followed up with a letter the following week providing information about the benefits of fitness for purpose and advising on Camden's approach and inviting the hoteliers to a seminar at the end of October. A further letter and advice note was sent a week later with respect to the compliance audits. Hoteliers who had not responded to the seminar invitation were followed up during the week of the compliance audits (if they were included in the seminar); otherwise they were contacted immediately after. Articles were released to the major commercial trade journals, and the local business partnership news (circulation 5000 businesses within Camden).

Q3. What are the results of feedback exercises from accommodation providers?

During the sample compliance audits, the hoteliers were provided with the opportunity to comment on the approach, generally hoteliers favoured this approach. Practical advice was given, non-compliant issues were prioritised and the hoteliers received signposting to other agencies which could provide additional support to help them achieve compliance. Feedback sheets were handed out at the end of the seminar, and again the response was very favourable.

Q4. Have training opportunities been given to accommodation providers and what take up of these opportunities has there been?

Signposting to accredited trainers was provided in the information packs handed out at the seminar. In addition Camden is currently considering a number of alternatives to source subsidised training for hoteliers. Business Link are also considering offering tailored training packages for hoteliers based upon the outcome of the visits early scheduled in the new year.

Q5. How has information on compliance with regulations been given to accommodation providers?

As part of the compliance audits already undertaken and at during revisits when scheduled in the New Year.

general

Q1. Having implemented Fitness for Purpose do you see development opportunities for this approach in enforcement generally?

Yes, the approach can be adapted for other sectors and new businesses. The concept allows for joined up working with other enforcement disciplines and advisory services to provide a comprehensive service for businesses. However, there will need to be recognition by government agencies such as the Food Standards Agency and the HSE of this non-traditional approach to enforcement.

Q2. What are the additional features which could be included in any future Fitness for Purpose projects?

Relevant and effective business advice for the hospitality industry, but this must be genuine advice and not a front for a hard sell of consultancy services. Camden's experience with Business Link during the pilot project was disappointing. Initially it appeared to be an offer of free advice to businesses, but actually the focus was on selling consultancy services, even the promise of free environmental audits and waste management/recycling audits (which are grant aided) have not materialised as yet.

Q3. Would you be prepared to assist in the roll out of Fitness for Purpose across the U.K.

In principle yes, providing there was funding available to recoup some of the costs. Camden has built up a wealth of experience as a result of participating in the pilot project, and would be keen to share this with other authorities but to do so may be resource intensive.

key lessons

The key benefits were the efficient use of resources; a composite service-led initiative; provision of a service that focuses on the actual needs of a business and a true risk-based approach to enforcement.

There are issues around the National Quality Schemes due to the preliminary costs and annual renewal costs, and the fact that there is no recognised quality mark for branded hotels.

The need for funding to continue the project is a major issue.

Improved co-ordination and guidance from central government is required together with regular feedback. Similarly a position statement from both HSE and FSA regarding how Fitness for Purpose audited premises are counted in the annual returns.

Camden's experience with Business Link during the pilot project was disappointing. Initially it appeared to be an offer of free advice to businesses, but actually the focus was on selling consultancy services.

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Canterbury City Council

description

Canterbury City Council recognised the need for a database of accommodation providers in their area and integrated information across eight agencies. A Senior Environmental Health Officer made consultancy visits to 19 accommodation providers together with a pack covering information across all regulatory functions. A seminar was held to which all accommodation providers were invited which provided a mix of information and training.

evaluation report

Q1. How was the project team developed and what role has it fulfilled?

The project team consisting of representative from Tourism, Environmental Health and Trading Standards was formed to manage the pilot project.

Q2. Is the approach sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism Sector?

Yes, if funding is provided.

Q3. What are the key differences between the Fitness for Purpose approach to enforcement in your area and the more traditional approach previously used by the Authority?

Visits to accommodation providers covered a wide range of subject areas by assessing compliance with Food Safety and Health & Safety, providing information on Fire Safety and Trading Standards.

The normal inspection regime would need separate officers from the departments to visit the accommodation provider.

Q4. What, if any, political support has there been achieved for the pilot project?

Support from the Canterbury City Council, Portfolio Holder Councillor Roger Matthews.

Q5. Has the pilot project been managed within the resources of the authority and, if so, what are the estimated costs?

Council resources only. Cost: £13,452.93

Q6. Have additional or external resources been required and what are the costs of these resources?

No external funding obtained.

Q7. *What are the key benefits to the Authority from the Fitness For Purpose approach to enforcement?*

Communications between the regulatory functions and Tourism formalised.
Common database of premises providing accommodation was developed.

Q8. *Have accommodation providers been provided with the opportunity of receiving additional business support e.g. marketing, website? If so, what resources have been offered and have the costs been evaluated?*

Packs of information covering food safety, fire safety, health and safety, trading standards and quality schemes for Tourism were provided.

Q9. *Have areas of non-compliance with Regulation been found during the pilot and, if so, what are the strategies for assisting business to comply (including future enforcement)?*

Two premises with food safety minor non-compliance were identified and dealt with. Two fire safety non-compliances were referred to the Fire Service who found the referrals helpful in obtaining compliance.

Q10. *What are the key economic benefits to the Local Authority from the fitness for purpose pilot, e.g. additional bed spaces, development towards the National Quality Schemes?*

The improved database has enabled the Tourism Department to identify more accommodation providers who may join one of the national quality schemes.

Q11. *What are the barriers to the further development of Fitness for Purpose?*

Availability of resources. The gap between regulatory compliance and the Quality schemes.

communication with accommodation providers

Q1. *Has the pilot resulted in an improved database of accommodation providers and if so how many additional business units?*

Yes. 185 accommodation providers identified on a common database of which only 20% were known to at least four of the agencies involved.

Q2. *How has the communication of Fitness for Purpose been achieved in the local area?*

Mail shot to accommodation providers who are to be visited. Seminar "Staying with us" – 148 invitations sent out.

Q3. *What are the results of feedback exercises from accommodation providers?*

Feedback from Seminar

13 out of 16 attendees found the seminar useful or very useful

9 out of 16 attendees found fitness for purpose approach as a good way of enforcing the law

Q4. Have training opportunities been given to accommodation providers and what take up of these opportunities has there been?

Training signposted in information pack.

Q5. How has information on compliance with regulations been given to accommodation providers?

Information pack given during visits by Environmental Health Officer to nineteen accommodation providers.

general

Q1. Having implemented Fitness for Purpose do you see development opportunities for this approach in enforcement generally?

Potential development involving licensing, building control and planning.

Q2. What are the additional features which could be included in any future Fitness for Purpose projects?

Fitness for Purpose could be linked to accreditation

Q3. Would you be prepared to assist in the rollout of Fitness for Purpose across the U.K?

Yes, if resources available and support provided.

key lessons

The availability of funding is key to the continuation of the project.

Improved working between tourism and enforcement officers has resulted in a vastly improved database of accommodation in the area for all to work with.

The link between Fitness for Purpose and quality grading schemes is essential.

contact

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London Borough of Greenwich

description

London Borough of Greenwich concentrated their resources on public houses which provide accommodation, with the objective of increasing the number of bed spaces available in the area, in premises which meet National Quality standards as well as regulatory compliance. 53 premises were visited by Environmental Health Officers providing a consultancy service, self-assessment checklist and information pack which included business support.

evaluation report

Q1. How was the project team developed and what role has it fulfilled?

Project team lead by Tourism Department consisting of Officers from Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Building Control, Greenwich Business Centre, Greenwich Environmental Management Services and Greenwich Enterprise Board. The team was responsible for developing and managing the project.

Q2. Is the approach sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism Sector?

This approach can be sustained by development of a communication protocol between Tourism and regulatory departments.

Q3. What are the key differences between the Fitness for Purpose approach to enforcement in your area and the more traditional approach previously used by the Authority?

The Fitness for Purpose project concentrated on Public Houses, who also provided accommodation, in an area of the Borough.

The normal approach would be a visit from an EHO and enforcement. The Fitness for Purpose approach involved prior arrangement for the visit which was carried out in a consultancy style, self assessment check list, information pack and sign posting to training.

Q4. What, if any, political support has there been achieved for the pilot project?

Substantial political support at Cabinet level and by the Portfolio Holder for Councillor, Vicki Morse.

Q5. Has the pilot project been managed within the resources of the authority and, if so, what are the estimated costs?

Resources were provided by the London Development Agency with matched funding 50% from the London Borough of Greenwich. Costs were £25,000.

Q6. *Have additional or external resources been required and what are the costs of these resources?*

A consultant was employed to assist with the management and development of the project.

Q7. *What are the key benefits to the Authority from the Fitness For Purpose approach to enforcement?*

Key benefits:

visits made to premises which would not have otherwise been programmed
information sharing between Tourism and Regulatory Departments
business friendly approach.

Q8. *Have accommodation providers been provided with the opportunity of receiving additional business support e.g. marketing, website? If so, what resources have been offered and have the costs been evaluated?*

Yes. The opportunity for accommodation providers to be assisted with the development of websites and marketing. Costs within existing budgets.

Q9. *Have areas of non-compliance with Regulation been found during the pilot and, if so, what are the strategies for assisting business to comply (including future enforcement)?*

Yes. Two accommodation providers voluntarily closed due to identification of serious fire non-compliance.

Q10. *What are the key economic benefits to the Local Authority from the Fitness for Purpose pilot, e.g. additional bed spaces, development towards the National Quality Schemes?*

Identification of up to 10 accommodation providers to develop up to BQAS standards over the next 12 months. This will provide additional bed spaces in the Borough where 92% of visitors do not stay overnight.

Q11. *What are the barriers to the further development of Fitness for Purpose?*

Targets set by Food Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive require Local Authority Resources to concentrate on "high risk" premises not "low risk" smaller accommodation providers.

The gap between Quality standards and Regulatory Compliance.

communication with accommodation providers

Q1. *Has the pilot resulted in an improved database of accommodation providers and if so how many additional business units?*

Additional units of accommodation identified, however, they do not meet NQAS standards and will not be placed on Tourist Information Centre approved list.

Q2. *How has the communication of Fitness for Purpose been achieved in the local area?*

Formal launch
Visit by Richard Caborn MP
Press/Mail shots

Q3. *What are the results of feedback exercises from accommodation providers?*

No formal feedback exercise. However a telephone follow-up has been arranged and self-assessment checklists returned.

Q4. *Have training opportunities been given to accommodation providers and what take up of these opportunities has there been?*

Training signposted to accommodation providers during visits.

Q5. *How has information on compliance with regulations been given to accommodation providers?*

Visits and self-assessment check lists.

general

Q1. *Having implemented Fitness for Purpose do you see development opportunities for this approach in enforcement generally?*

Development and Fitness for Purpose towards enforcement of standards in "high risk premises" linked to a food safety award scheme.

Q2. *What are the additional features which could be included in any future Fitness for Purpose projects?*

Further development of complaints procedures.

Q3. *Would you be prepared to assist in the rollout of Fitness for Purpose across the U.K.?*

Yes. Resources permitting.

key lessons

Key benefits

- visits made to premises which would not have otherwise been programmed
- information sharing between Tourism and Regulatory Departments

- business friendly approach.

Targets set by Food Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive require Local Authority Resources to concentrate on “high risk” premises not “low risk” smaller accommodation providers.

The gap between Quality standards and Regulatory Compliance needs to be addressed.

contact

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West Sussex County Council

description

West Sussex County Council set up training courses for accommodation providers, which were given by regulators to help explain the practicalities of meeting Fitness for Purpose. A Visit Sussex database was developed with improved complaints procedures. Audits of 46 premises were carried out to assist with compliance and where non-compliance was found it was referred to the appropriate agency.

evaluation report

Q1. How was the project team developed and what role has it fulfilled?

The project team is made up of a steering group with representatives of West Sussex County Council Trading Standards, West Sussex Tourism Initiative, Worthing Environmental Health (representing all District E H Departments) Worthing Tourism Department (representing all district Tourism Departments). The role of the steering group is to co-ordinate activities in relation to Fitness for Purpose across the County.

Q2. Is the approach sustainable for future work on enforcement in the Tourism Sector?

Yes, the approach is sustainable providing resources are available.

Q3. What are the key differences between the Fitness for Purpose approach to enforcement in your area and the more traditional approach previously used by the Authority?

Partnership working between County and District Councils involving development and implementation of training courses run by regulators. Joining up regulation & business advice.

Q4. What, if any, political support has there been achieved for the pilot project?

High level of Political Support at County level.

Q5. Has the pilot project been managed within the resources of the authority and, if so, what are the estimated costs?

West Sussex County Council provided matched funding of £15,600.

Q6. Have additional or external resources been required and what are the costs of these resources?

SEEDA provided funding of £24,500.

Q7. *What are the key benefits to the Authority from the Fitness For Purpose approach to enforcement?*

Raised awareness on regulatory issues and joined up working between Tourism Officers and Regulators as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding (see Annex 3)
Improved monitoring of complaints will enable targeting of resources in the future.
The development of a Visit Sussex database. Interagency training.

Q8. *Have accommodation providers been provided with the opportunity of receiving additional business support e.g. marketing, website? If so, what resources have been offered and have the costs been evaluated?*

Yes. Business support packs, newsletters and a proactive web site.

Q9. *Have areas of non-compliance with regulations been found during the pilot and, if so, what are the strategies for assisting business to comply (including future enforcement)?*

46 audit visits carried out. Non-compliances referred to regulation for enforcement as required.

Q10. *What are the key economic benefits to the Local Authority from the fitness for purpose pilot, e.g. additional bed spaces, development towards the National Quality Schemes?*

Improved confidence and awareness levels of operators, tourism officers, and tourism information centre staff as a result of courses.

Q11. *What are the barriers to the further development of Fitness for Purpose?*

Small businesses who provide tourist accommodation are seen as "low risk" and hence "low priority" by enforcers on food safety and health and safety.

communication with accommodation providers

Q1. *Has the pilot resulted in an improved database of accommodation providers and if so how many additional business units?*

Yes. More information on non-accredited and non-assessed tourist accommodation.

Q2. *How has the communication of Fitness for Purpose been achieved in the local area?*

Press coverage of Richard Caborn's visit. Press release. Mail shots to the Trade.

Q3. *What are the results of feedback exercises from accommodation providers?*

Course reviews (see Annex 2)

Q4. *Have training opportunities been given to accommodation providers and what take up of these opportunities has there been?*

Yes. Training courses attended by 36 accommodation providers.

Q5. *How has information on compliance with regulations been given to accommodation providers?*

Information packs and visits by Auditors.

general

Q1. *Having implemented Fitness for Purpose do you see development opportunities for this approach in enforcement generally?*

Regulators would like to use Fitness for Purpose approach in "high risk" premises. There is trade resistance to "joint inspections" of premises by officers enforcing different functions. The use of an auditor is well received for referral purposes to regulators in the District Authorities.

Q2. *What are the additional features which could be included in any future Fitness for Purpose projects?*

Use of self-assessment

Q3. *Would you be prepared to assist in the rollout of Fitness for Purpose across the U.K.?*

Yes. If funding is available.

key lessons

- Memorandum of Understanding helpful in facilitating joined-up working between Tourism Officers and Regulators.
- Improved monitoring of complaints will enable targeting of resources in the future.
- Small businesses who provide tourist accommodation are seen as "low risk" and hence "low priority" by enforcers on food safety and health and safety.
- Regulators would like to use this approach in "high risk" premises. There is trade resistance to "joint inspections" of premises by officers enforcing different functions. Use of an auditor is well received for referral purposes to regulators in district councils.

contacts

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annex 2: detailed reports

Blackpool Borough Council

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INTRODUCTION

Blackpool Borough Council have been at the forefront of driving up quality in accommodation with the adoption of the HOAST stepping stones scheme and it was appropriate that being the major resort in the UK, *Fitness for Purpose* was piloted in the resort.

The Blackpool HOAST stepping-stones initiative has been implemented in partnership with local accommodation associations, Visit Britain Quality Standards and Unicorn who deliver the inspection regime of the National Quality Standards. The success of the scheme has seen graded/inspected premises grow from a base of 85 in 1999 to over 500 by July 2003.

It is with this success in raising quality within the accommodation sector that Blackpool Borough Council were eager to be part of the *Fitness for Purpose* pilot.

This initiative was presented at the Local Government Association Conference in Nottingham on September 2002. It was following this date that key discussions were held between Tourism and Environmental Health Officers of Blackpool Borough Council planning how this pilot would be developed, rolled-out, measured and reported in partnership with the industry.

Following the launch of the position statement on *Fitness for Purpose* by the Department of Culture Media and Sport and the Local Government Association in March 2003, a partnership was formed between Tourism and Environmental Health Divisions of the Blackpool Borough Council, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority and Independent Environmental Health Co-operative to plan for the delivery of the overall project.

Representatives of local associations were also consulted as to the project and all were supportive of the principles of *Fitness for Purpose* in driving up quality standards in accommodation and the resort. Meetings were also arranged with representatives of accommodation providers in the chosen pilot area to discuss the concepts, prior to the launch by the local authority in June 2003.

A number of representatives of local organisations and authorities have been involved in the launch and their input has been welcomed. Among these have been Blackpool Tourism Support Bureau, Hospitality in Training Project, British Resorts Association, North West Tourist Board, Lancashire Tourism Partnership, NW Tourism Skills Network and neighbouring local authority representatives from Lancaster, Wyre and Fylde.

Consultants from the Independent Environmental Health Co-operative (IEHC) were employed to drive the project forward with Blackpool Borough Council. The consultants had an intimate knowledge of Blackpool hotels and food outlets. Also, their wide experience of environmental health across the country, both within enforcement agencies and private industry allowed them to bring a diversity of ideas. Peter Montandon is an experienced Environmental Health consultant to local authorities, having previously served many years as a Chief Environmental Health Officer. Peter Phillips is a long serving environmental health consultant to both public service and the commercial world with extensive experience in education, including work with television radio and the press.

They were both familiar with Blackpool Borough Council's current systems and personnel.

Objectives

Following discussions with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Blackpool Borough Council the following objectives were determined:

- (a) To ensure that legal requirements are met in all premises based upon a risk-based approach.
- (b) To provide an infrastructure wherein hotels could self-assess their compliance and determine their risk management status with relevant legislation.
- (c) To provide appropriate support and individual development in the form of advice, documentation and training.
- (d) To pilot the concept of co-ordinated inspections with other agencies.
- (e) To provide detailed statistical data to guide enforcement and training policy.
- (f) To provide a comparison between project approach and traditional inspection methods.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BLACKPOOL PILOT STUDY

The consultants were to act in a purely advisory roll and the local authority staff were to act as enforcers.

Fundamental Principals

Self-assessment (with help)

The proprietors were to complete the document with the consultant's assistance. The proprietors would then agree the action plan and the priority given to each action. The document would then be left with the proprietor to use as a management tool, reference document and for future re-use to assess progress.

Objective b)

Joint Working

Independent uncoordinated inspections by a multiplicity of statutory bodies. In any one year a hotel could be subjected to separate inspections for Food Safety, Health and Safety, Licensing, Fire Safety and Trading Standards. Hoteliers are often confused over what is a legal requirement and what is a recommendation. Shortage of resources makes it very difficult for some authorities to maintain their full inspection programme and almost impossible to get involved in educational and advisory activities in any depth. One holistic prearranged visit covering all of these areas would be more efficient and allow time to give detailed advice and guidance.

(Objective d)

Advisory/Enforcement split.

Most traditional inspections are a mixture of advice and enforcement. This can lead to confusion over what needs to be done legally and what is best practice. In some cases this

may lead to excessive expenditure by a proprietor on a recommendation, or conversely a failure to recognise the significance of the works which are required.

In this pilot the role was to be clearly separate.

Failure to participate

All participants were to be told that failure to participate in the pilot would result in them being subject to a routine enforcement inspection. In this case non participant Hotels were to be entered, inspected and appropriate formal enforcement action was to be taken. In cases where there were justifiable reasons for non-participation i.e. infirmity or closing down, no action would be taken but they would still be kept informed as to the progress of the project.

(Objective b)

Community Orientation

Traditional inspections are geographically dispersed based upon risk rating. This project was based upon a tightly defined geographical area and an identified community. Each participant would see that his/her neighbours were being similarly treated. Good community links would be identified and built upon. Co-operative problem solving and support would be enhanced.

Identification of Training Needs

It was recognised that there should be an efficient method of identifying training needs as opposed to requiring or recommending established food hygiene or health and safety packages. The *Fitness for Purpose* project was designed to not only provide considerable education and guidance during the visit but also to gather accurate statistics on training needs so that appropriate resources could be developed and applied.

(objective c)

Support Documentation

The development team determined that any material used in the project should be easily understood, relevant to the business and designed to engender 'ownership' as a cornerstone to the project. Furthermore it was essential that the documentation should provide a basis for discussion, an audit record of the state of compliance and a reference manual.

(Objective c)

One-to-One

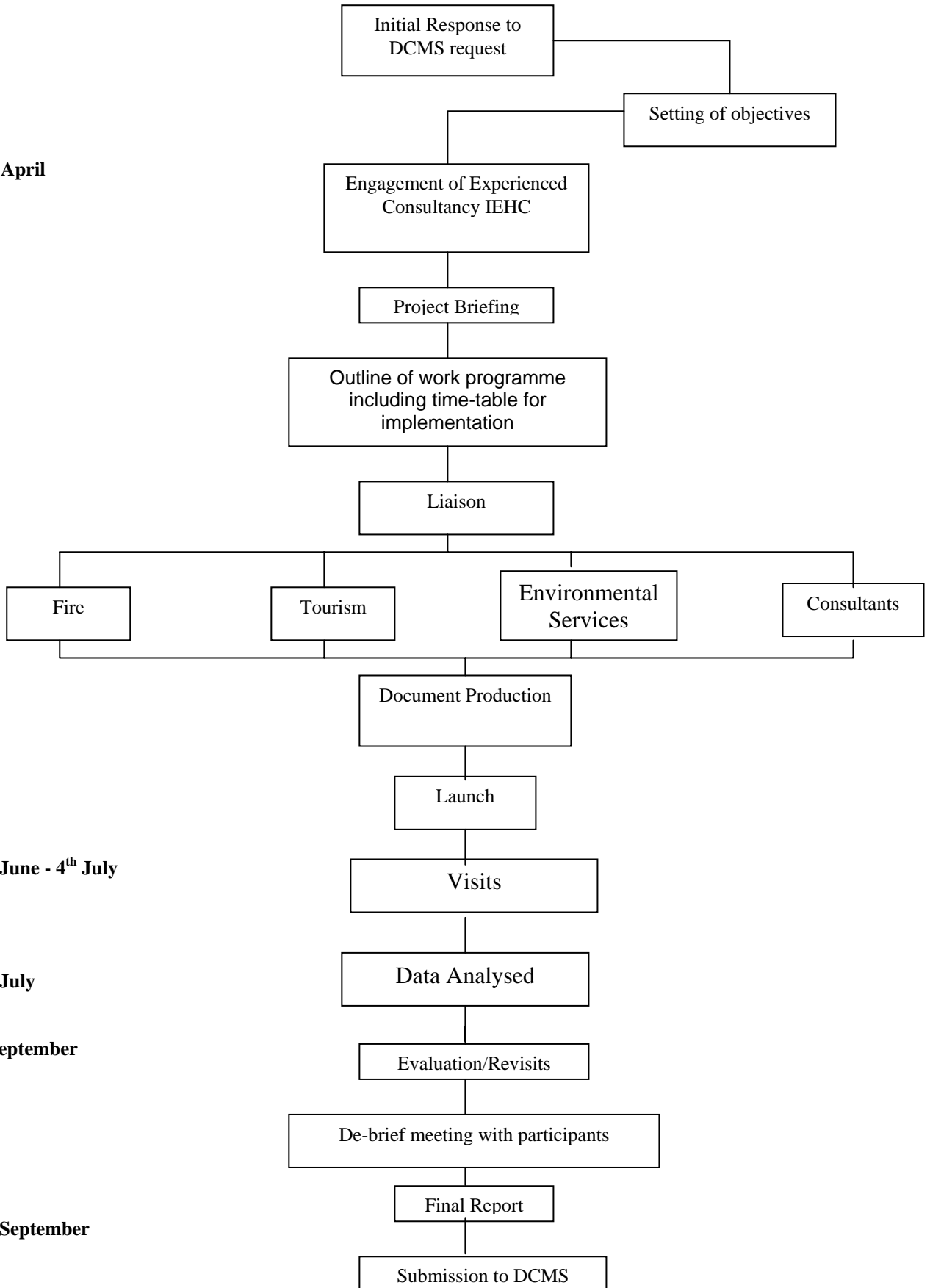
Because appointments were made time could be devoted to issues that were important to the proprietor or new issues highlighted by the consultant. These intensive one-to-one interviews meant that advice was very specific and therefore likely to be implemented appropriately. The interview structure ensured that hotel operators fully understood the relative importance of the tasks they had identified and they were able to plan and prioritise with help from the support documentation. The interviews covered all aspects of the business and therefore it was possible to highlight all of the positive aspects and encouraged the proprietors to deal with the relatively few areas of concern.

(objective c)

ALGORITHM

“How it worked”

23rd April



24th June - 4th July

14th July

1st September

30th September

THE PROJECT AREA

The project area is situated in the Gynn Avenue district of North Shore. It was chosen because it is a compact area with a high density of hotels. The project sample consisted of 52 hotels. These were mostly small hotels run by a couple without staff although ten of them were larger buildings on the Promenade itself. A core of 28 hotels were in Gynn Avenue where there already existed a strong co-operative association between the hoteliers. Most of the premises were Victorian terrace properties and had a shared domestic/commercial kitchen. The majority of the hotels were in good condition with proprietors that were trying to promote good standards.

The area is currently viewed as predominantly serving family and mature guests with the development of 'stag and hen' parties being a major area of contention among the proprietors.

Project Structure

The project can be divided into three phases: Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.

The Planning Phase:

- Setting up the interdisciplinary project team.
- Choosing the project area.
- Liaison with the target community
- Agreeing the brief with consultants from IEHC.
- Development of key documentation.

The Implementation Phase

- Sending invitations to hoteliers to join in the project.
- The launch presentation.
- Publicity
- The consultancy visit
- The follow-up visit
- Comparison study

The Evaluation Phase

- Analysing the statistical information gained
- Analysing the feedback from the community
- Highlighting training, enforcement and support needs as apparent from the statistical analysis
- Comparison with traditional inspection methods
- Drafting final report
- Considering future development of the *Fitness for Purpose* methodology.

THE PILOT STUDY AND FINDINGS

Proportional Enforcement (*objective a,b,d*)

The project promoted the concept and practice of proportional enforcement in that:

- A lighter consultancy approach was used with proprietors that were obviously trying to attain good standards.
- Consultants demonstrated genuine respect for the competence, compliance and effort of proprietors.
- The 'in-house' staff demonstrated appropriate, transparent and firm enforcement action against premises that refused to participate in the project.
- Individual proprietors were given the information and knowledge to make informed judgements on what actions were required to comply with legislation and demonstrate good practice.

Promotion of Best Practice (*objective b*)

The *Fitness for Purpose* project has promoted genuine best practice. :

- Measurable and significant raising of standards.
- Problem solving rather than faultfinding.
- Improvements that were seen as worthwhile rather than simply superficial compliance with perceived statutory requirements.
- Real risk management.

Risk based Approach (*objective a*)

Blackpool's *Fitness for Purpose* project was wholly designed and implemented on a risk based approach. It provided the proprietors with realistic perspective, enabling them to see hazards in proportion and plan remedies having regard to proper prioritisation and cost benefit.

Holistic Approach (*objective d*)

The *Fitness for Purpose* project spanned a wide spectrum of statutory requirement and areas of civil liability. Its purpose was to not only aid proprietors in total legal compliance but also to promote the good practice that would protect them from civil claims, and at the same time protecting the general public that might be affected by the work that they do. As well as covering the key areas of hygiene, safety and quality control the project documentation and consultancy was designed to provide a foundation for good integrated business management.

Community Based Programme

The project's success was enhanced by it being community based within a closely defined geographical area. Benefits included:

- Making use of existing local co-operative working.
- Encouraging new co-operative links between neighbouring businesses.
- Transparency of advice and enforcement due to existing communication between proprietors and the 'in-house' team's prompt response in dealing with neighbourhood problems raised during the visits.
- A shared belief in the fairness, common sense and problem solving approach of the project.

These benefits were greatly enhanced by the consultants staying at one of the hotels in the project area.

Mentoring (objective b)

Part of the original concept provided for expertise to be shared within the community group. In this case the Hilton Hotel volunteered to offer assistance to hoteliers who may have needed help with technical or procedural matters i.e. how to do a risk assessment, RIDDOR form filling etc.

As far as we know no one in the study area took up the offer; we think that whilst the Hilton staff have the expertise and were willing to share it the gap between a large international hotel chain and owner/occupier bed and breakfast was too wide to bridge. However, one of the proprietors had had training in risk assessments from a former employment and was very helpful to at least two other hoteliers. The concept of mentoring was not fully explored or promoted but we consider it should form a part of any future development of the project. Indeed there is still opportunity now that the consultants have withdrawn for the council to promote mentoring as an on-going independent support mechanism.

Support Material (objective c)

The documentary support material for the project was extremely well received. The users found it:

- Easy to read, understand and use.
- Presented in a logical format.
- Helpful in breaking down complex legal requirements into understandable and acceptable concepts.
- Useful as a reference document.
- A useful tool in satisfying the statutory requirements for general risk assessment.
- Useful as an audit checklist.
- Helpful in prioritising necessary actions.
- A key tool in an integrated management system.

Co-operative Working (objective d)

The benefits of co-operative working were clearly demonstrated in the well-established Gynn Avenue Hotels Association and in the more informal links between other neighbouring hotels. Benefits included:

- Confidence building by working with others.
- Sharing of expertise and services.
- Mutual aid in times of difficulty
- Organising tuition and presentations at more convenient times and locations.
- Cost sharing and bulk purchasing discounts.

Statistical Information (objective e)

The project incorporates an efficient method of collecting meaningful statistics not available from traditional inspection techniques. This method allows for:

- Identification of common faults.
- Targeting of key subject areas for training, support and enforcement.
- Accurate measuring of improvement

Training and Support Needs (objective c)

The training and support needs that were clearly identified during the project related to the following:

- Training provision at times convenient to the hotel trade.
- Food hygiene refresher training.
- Intermediate Food Hygiene Certificate training.
- Basic Health and Safety Certificate training.
- Generic style risk assessments for use by hoteliers with their contractors, such as window cleaners.
- Assessing competent contactors

Time Sensitivity

There was a general feeling among the project participants that the local authority and training providers could be a little more sensitive to the time restrictions of the hotel trade. All the participants involved are particularly busy around the breakfast and evening meal periods. Their trade is also affected seasonally, with their least busy period between November and Easter. Participants pointed out the following key points:

- Major works and training are most conveniently carried out during the winter period and it would be useful if enforcement requirements and local training provision reflected this.
- During the busy season, training and meetings can only be easily accommodated between 11 am and 3 pm.
- It was regrettable that the Blackpool *Fitness for Purpose* project coincided with the trade's busiest time.
- Although enforcement officers were welcome to inspect at any time several participants in the project told of incidents where enforcement officers had been inconsiderate of the time pressures of the business and had taken up excessive time at critical moments in the working day.

A Popular Exercise

It is pleasing to report that Blackpool's *Fitness for Purpose* project was received with great enthusiasm, after some initial scepticism by the participants. The consultants were very grateful for the warm reception they received and for the valuable time the participants gave up for the project. It was particularly pleasing to note the considerable improvements that were made during the project period. Some of the feedback from the participants is recorded within the body of the report.

THE COHORT STUDY AND FINDINGS

(Objective f)

It was useful, throughout the project, to compare this holistic, educative approach in the Pilot study with traditional inspection methods, in order that future enforcement agency activities can be planned for greater efficiency.

Using traditional inspection techniques the 'in-house' team inspected 43 Hotels and Guest Houses, similar to those in type and size of the pilot area and revisited them to assess improvement. Unfortunately this could only be done for food safety matters only.

NB: Routine food hygiene inspections are carried out based upon guidelines prepared by the Food Standards Agency. Inspections are arranged according to the

premises 'risk rating', which is based upon the inspectors judgement of the type of foods used, the vulnerability of the individuals consuming the food (i.e. the elderly or under 5s), the handling methods, structural conditions and confidence of the management to comply with basic food hygiene rules. In this study all premises were C rated requiring an inspection at least once every 18 months.

The Inspection

Inspections involved an unannounced visit during working hours, an interview with the person responsible for food production, often not the proprietor, and an inspection of working practices. In addition, cleaning routines, the provision of facilities, and the basic structure are examined.

Advice is given, supported by a short written statement left at the time of the inspection. Letters usually follow up to 10 working days later outlining legal non-compliance and recommendations for best practice.

Comparison Study Results

The comparison Inspection was by the traditional method to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Act 1990 and the associated Food Safety Regulations, but not Health and Safety, Fire Safety and Trading Standards

These premises were initially inspected between April – May then revisited between July – September 2003 to assess the levels of compliance achieved.

Legal Compliance After Revisit (Food Safety Only)

Subject	No of Hotels	% of Total
Full Compliance	14	33%
Part Compliance	17	40%
No Compliance	12	28%

Of the 43 premises revisited 14 (33%) had fully complied with the content of the officer's letter relating to legal matters.

17 premises (40%) had partly complied with the content of the officer's letter. Most, if not all of the cleaning matters had been completed by the time of the revisit. Common outstanding issues included:

- Food hygiene training
- Written records of hot food and refrigerator temperatures
- Split refrigerator seals
- Structural repairs to ceilings, walls and floors

The remaining 12 premises (28%) had not attempted any of the works specified. Of these premises 3 claimed to have a refurbishment planned for the end of the season, citing this as the reason for not yet having completed the necessary structural works.

Few of the recommendations had been implemented.

It is worth bearing in mind however that none of these premises were expecting a revisit as the letter stated that works would be checked during the next routine visit.

The present 'in-house' computer system and methods of working do not provide the breakdown of statistical information that the *Fitness for Purpose* project provided. This information could enable training needs and resources to be accurately targeted across a range of enforcement activities.

The above description and success rate is typical of the vast majority of Local Authorities in the UK.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the findings of the Fitness for Purpose project, together with the wider public health experience of the consultants, leads to the following conclusions:

1. The Enforcement Culture

(objective a,b,c,d)

There appears to be a need to change the delivery of environmental health enforcement. We believe Blackpool has been forward thinking in believing that higher standards can be achieved with a lighter touch. The pilot has revealed that traditional inspection and report methodology is generally perceived by the trade as being:

- Bureaucratic.
- Very inefficient of time and use of the inspectorate
- Seen only as fault finding and negative
- Far too indiscriminate between the majority of proprietors attempting to carry out good hygiene and safety management and the minority who clearly have no regard to it at all.
- Inconsistent with regard to its requirements and best value

In addition we believe that traditional inspection methods are:

- Potentially demoralising for both the inspectorate and the proprietors.
- Unable to provide meaningful statistical analysis.

2. Clear Division Between Enforcer and Advisor Role.

(objective a,c)

Clear benefits were identified from splitting the enforcer and advisor roles. Despite being funded by the local authority the consultants were seen as independent, impartial and there to help the business rather than create another problem for it. A spirit of trust and confidence was engendered between the consultants and the proprietors. Problems were openly discussed and solutions planned without the proprietors feeling the need to be defensive.

The open meeting and the consultants' visits both identified a distrust and dislike of the local authority for reasons totally unrelated to the conduct or performance of the Environmental Services Division. To address this situation the Head of Environmental Services undertook at the open meeting to respond to any complaints within 24 hours and a number of matters such as dog fouling, a noisy neighbour, a drainage problem and street cleaning were identified and immediately addressed.

Investigation indicates that the trade perceive poor quality accommodation where housekeeping is unsatisfactory and service is poor to be those where the council's efforts should be focussed. As such matters are subjective and not encompassed in statutory controls, it is difficult to satisfy trade expectations.

Further development and what we would do differently

The success of the Blackpool's *Fitness for Purpose* project encourages consideration of developing it further.

- Its documentation could easily be adapted to a starter pack for new businesses.
- It can be used as a course pack for risk assessment training.
- It can be used as the basis of a hygiene or safety award scheme.
- It can be used as an inspection and report tool by 'in-house' staff.
- Due to the documentation's modular nature it can be easily adapted to any type of business and any aspect of good business management.

Having implemented the pilot study, the officers and consultants agree that the scheme provides an effective alternative to traditional inspection and they recommend the following:

- A funded project to test the Blackpool model in a wide range of authorities.
- A funded project targeted upon category premises in the resort.
- Funding for Blackpool Borough Council to monitor support and report on the pilot area for a 3-year period.

PILOT STUDY INITIAL VISIT COMPLIANCE

PART 1 RESULTS OF INITIAL VISIT

The statistics have been compiled using a matrix identifying each question against each premises. Only the top 9/10 questions have been examined here The matrix can highlight the compliance with any of the questions asked

Table 1

Number of hotels invited to participate in programme =	52
Number of hotels not inspected due to individual circumstances =	4
Number of hotels not willing to participate =	1
Number of hotels participating in programme =	47

Table 2

Areas of excellence. (Legal Compliance)

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are adequate</i>	<i>% of total</i>
5	Employees liability / insurance	47	100
47	Contractors competent	47	100
107	Handling cash	47	100
140	Floors kept free from slip, trip + falls hazard	47	100
156	Fire escape routes regularly maintained	47	100
159	Audibility checks of fire alarms	47	100
166	Removal of combustible material from premises	47	100
213	Raw foods kept separate from ready-to-eat food	47	100
253	Exclusion of staff for intestinal illness	47	100
260	Staff know how to wash hands	47	100
276	Effective cleaning	47	100

Table 3

Areas of concern. (Legislative non-compliance)

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are inadequate</i>	<i>% of total</i>
251c	Food Hygiene Training (intermediate)	25	53
19	NICEIC or equivalent electrical examination	20	43
7	Accident book	18	38
53	Risk assessment window cleaners	18	38
310	Advice on peanut extract in foods	17	36
54	Protection of windows cleaners	15	32
289	Fly screens	14	30
252	Retraining	13	28
74	Low level glazing	12	26

Table 4

Best Practice (non compliance)

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels with BP non-compliance</i>	<i>% of total</i>
23	Recording PAT	22	47
8	Accident reporting system	18	38
20	Electrical certificate documentation	18	38
307	Advice on GM foods	17	36
225	Recording calibration tests	16	34
236	Recording of core temps	16	34
255	Protective head gear	16	34
111	Procedure for bomb threats	15	32
224	Calibration of thermometers	15	32
218	Recording storage temps	14	30

Table 5

Health and Safety priority areas

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are inadequate</i>	<i>% of total</i>
63	Identification of Slips trips and falls	1	2
115	Stress (staff breaks)	3	6
116	Stress (work in excess of 40 hrs)	5	11
117	Stress(extra staff)	5	11

PILOT STUDY REVISIT COMPLIANCE**PART 2 – RESULTS AFTER REVISIT (2 Months)****Table 6
Overview**

<i>Revisit</i>		<i>% of total</i>
Hotels where some improvements have been made	46	98
Hotels where no improvements have been made	1	2
Hotels wholly compliant with all questions	9	20

**Table 7
Areas of concern (Legislative non compliance)**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are inadequate</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are now adequate</i>	<i>Hotels still inadequate after revisit</i>	<i>% Improvement Rate</i>
251c	Food Hygiene Training (Intermediate)	25	16	9	64
19	NICEIC or equivalent electrical examination	20	12	8	60
7	Accident book	18	18	0	100
53	Risk assessment window cleaners	18	10	8	56
310	Advice on peanut extract in foods	17	15	2	88
54	Protection of windows cleaners	15	8	7	53
289	Fly screens	14	8	6	57
252	Retraining	13	10	3	77
74	Low level glazing	12	7	5	58

Average Improvement Rate	68
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**Table 8
Best practice (non-compliance)**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are inadequate</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are now adequate</i>	<i>Hotels Still inadequate after revisit</i>	<i>% Improvement Rate</i>
23	Recording PAT	22	15	7	68
8	Accident reporting system	18	18	0	100
20	Electrical certificate documentation	18	7	11	39
307	Advice on GM foods	17	17	0	100
225	Recording calibration tests	16	13	3	81
236	Recording of core temps	16	12	4	75
255	Protective head gear	16	12	4	75
111	Procedure for bomb threats	15	12	5	80
224	Calibration of thermometers	15	14	1	93
218	Recording storage temps	14	12	2	86

Average improvement Rate	79
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**Table 9
Health and Safety (Priority Areas)**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are inadequate</i>	<i>Hotels where controls are now adequate</i>	<i>Hotels still inadequate after revisit</i>	<i>% Improvement Rate</i>
63	Identification of slips trips and falls	1	0	0	100
115	Stress (staff breaks)	3	2	1	67
116	Stress (work in excess of 40 hrs)	5	2	3	40
117	Stress(extra staff)	5	3	2	60

Average Improvements Rate	67
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COHORT STUDY REVISIT COMPLIANCE (FOOD HYGIENE ONLY)**Legal Compliance After Revisit (Food Safety Only)**

Subject	No of Hotels	% of Total
Full Compliance	14	33%
Part Compliance	17	40%
No Compliance	12	28%

MEDIA RELEASES**Blackpool chosen to pilot legal and safety standards initiative**

Blackpool has been chosen to pilot a Government initiative to drive up standards in the tourism industry. The joint initiative developed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Local Government Association is targeted at hotels and guest houses to give visitors a firmer assurance that these establishments meet at least minimum legal and safety standards.

The Minister for Tourism, Richard Caborn MP is very keen to visit the area to see how the *Fitness for Purpose* pilot is working, as the Department of Culture, Media and Sport strongly support this initiative. Blackpool is the first pilot to launch and DCMS are impressed at the way in which Blackpool has embraced this opportunity.

The area around Gynn Square in the resort has been chosen and those participating have been invited to the launch which is to take place on Thursday 26 June 2003 at the Hilton Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool at 1015 hours.

Councillor Eddie Collett, Deputy Leader of Blackpool Borough Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Tourism, will be launching the initiative said:

“I am delighted that Blackpool, Britain’s top seaside resort, will be at the forefront of piloting this initiative to achieve the goal of raising safety and quality standards in accommodation. All hoteliers have nothing to fear, apart from those properties that are grossly unsatisfactory, indeed by being involved they can only benefit from the guidance of the independent consultants which the Council is funding. There is no good reason for anyone not to participate and of course, the Council has the right to inspect any such premises at any time without notice and to take appropriate formal action.

The *Fitness for Purpose* pilot initiative builds on the pioneering work that is being undertaken in quality accreditation and business support for the tourism industry.”

ENDS

For further information: please contact

Katherine O'Connor, Tourism and Advertising Manager, Blackpool Borough Council –
01253 478205

Notes for Editors

Fitness for Purpose is an initiative aimed at improving the quality of the tourism industry by driving up standards in the important area of tourism accommodation.

The initiative aims to promote better inspection and regulation of tourist accommodation as a way of tackling poor safety and trading standards and ensuring that minimum legal requirements are met. It is targeted at Hotels, Guest Houses and B and B's which are failing to meet minimum, legal requirements on health and safety, food hygiene, trading standards and fire safety, in order to help them to improve. It aims to give these businesses the support they need to raise standards in these areas, while also taking a lighter regulatory enforcement touch to well-run businesses that are already complying with the necessary regulations.

Local authorities in Blackpool, Bournemouth, Camden, Canterbury, Greenwich and West Sussex are testing out the model until Autumn 2003.

The scheme is being jointly led by Tourism and Environmental Health employees of Blackpool Borough Council.



PRESS RELEASE

Minister Visits Trailblazing Blackpool Pilot

The Rt Hon Richard Caborn MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism, visited Blackpool this week (Tuesday, July 22) to hear about the progress of a pilot initiative to drive up standards in the tourism industry.

Blackpool was one of six local authority areas chosen to pilot a Government initiative called “Fitness for Purpose” – a joint initiative developed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Government Association. Targeted at hotels, B & Bs and guesthouses, it aims to give visitors a firmer assurance that these establishments meet minimum legal and health and safety standards.

In Blackpool 54 hoteliers from the area around Gynn Square are taking part in the pilot and are very enthusiastic about the progress of the scheme launched in June.

Under the pilot, Blackpool Borough Council has employed two environmental health consultants to help hoteliers comply with both the law and best commercial practice. They provide free advice to the hoteliers on everything from preventing trips and falls, to electricity and gas safety, to fire and food safety, and offer practical and cost-effective solutions on the best way to make improvements.

On Tuesday, July 22 several of the hoteliers and representatives from Blackpool Borough Council met Mr Caborn for face-to-face discussions on progress to date at Blackpool Sports Centre. Two of those attending were Ann and Brian Murgatroyd owners of Seabreeze in Gynn Avenue.

Mrs Murgatroyd, who is **secretary** of the Gynn Avenue Hotel Association, said: “We have been in this business many years but the pilot project has been brilliant and we have learned a lot. There is so much new legislation coming in so it’s really good to be able to ask the consultant questions. We’re very pleased indeed to be in the pilot project.”

Her next door neighbours are Peter and Margaret Collinge owners of “Sandalwood”. Mrs Collinge said: “We started in the business in March and when we saw the extent of what we had to do we were pretty daunted. However with the help of the consultants we worked our way through it and learnt a tremendous amount.

“When you first start out there are a hundred and one things you have to do and our neighbours have been a great help, but having professional help has been really helpful. We think it should be made compulsory to all new hoteliers.”

Blackpool's was the first pilot to launch and the DCMS are impressed at the way in which Blackpool has embraced the opportunity. The results from the pilot which ends in Autumn will inform the national rollout of Fitness for Purpose next year.

Mr Caborn said: "Blackpool is one of the jewels in this country's tourism crown, visited by millions of people each year. Blackpool's world famous attractions bring people here, but the accommodation on offer plays a crucial role in encouraging them to stay for longer and making sure they return time after time.

"So it's vitally important, for the whole of Blackpool's tourist economy, that when visitors book into a B &B, guesthouse or hotel they can be assured their accommodation will meet the standards they expect. Fitness for Purpose is a way of helping business to help themselves, by giving them the support and information they need. I am pleased and encouraged by the way Blackpool has embraced this new scheme."

Councillor Eddie Collett, Blackpool Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Tourism attended the meeting. He said: "Fitness for Purpose aims to give our overnight guests in Blackpool a firmer assurance that the minimum legal and health and safety standards are being met by their accommodation. As well as providing better consumer protection, the advantage to hoteliers is a lighter regulatory touch for well-run businesses that already comply with minimum standards.

"I am delighted that Blackpool, Britain's top seaside resort is at the forefront of piloting this initiative and we are extremely pleased that a minister of Mr Caborn's stature came to our town. I am sure he was extremely pleased with the progress made to date and with the enthusiasm with which hoteliers have greeted this initiative."

Ends

Photo caption: Pictured left to right are Joan Humble MP (Blackpool North and Fleetwood), Margaret Collinge, Peter Collinge (hoteliers), the Rt Hon Richard Caborn MP, Ann Murgatroyd and Brian Murgatroyd (hoteliers).

For further information contact:

Katherine O'Connor, Tourism and Advertising Manager, on 01253 478205

Caron Lett, Public Relations Officer, on 01253 477189

COMMENTARY FROM PARTICIPANTS

“Our attitude to the project has totally changed. We thought it was going to be another burden, costing us money and time, but it was actually very helpful.” Rothwell, 18 Gynn Avenue.

“The existing accreditation schemes are far from unbiased, as only those that pay a large fee are accredited. I would like to see Fitness for Purpose developed into a truly unbiased, free accreditation scheme for hotels. I would also like the authorities in Blackpool to adopt more of a zero tolerance policy with persistent offenders. The Council needs to deal firmly with filthy premises and some of the unsociable behaviour associated with stag and hen parties, because this is destroying Blackpool’s economy.” Michael Langford, Wilmar Hotel, 24 Warbeck Hill Road.

“The Fitness for Purpose documentation provided a good reminder and the consultancy actually saved us money.” 10 Gynn Avenue.

“The most important thing I have learnt from this project, that I will take elsewhere, is the real benefit of co-operative working groups as demonstrated by the Gynn Avenue Hotels Association.” Peter Phillips, Consultant IEHC.

“Following Peter’s visit I was very worried about my electricity supply because it hadn’t been checked for a number of years. I got some estimates and they were more than I could pay. Not known by me, Peter found that the son of one of my neighbours was an electrician who was able to put my mind at rest” (name withheld).

“After the first visit we split the work between me and Sonney. I’ve done all my jobs but he is still working on his. But then, he is a man isn’t he? We have decided to go on a first aid and a disability awareness course this winter.” Jannie Oliver, Bracondale, 14 Warley Road.

“I wish I had this system years ago. It would have made my businesses much easier to run. It offers excellent protection not only from statutory action but, more importantly, from civil claims.” Mr Hawadi, Sherwood Hotel, 412-414 North Promenade.

“This is a lot less stressful than a formal inspection. This dwells on what is good about my business and highlights the positive rather than the negative.” Mrs Pat Nelson, Northdene, 19 Gynn Avenue

“This project has been very helpful and far less intimidating than the usual inspections. The documentation will provide a useful key reference for the business in the future.” Jon and Estelle Barrot, Cherry Blossom Inn, 2 Warley Road.

“We can’t understand why Blackpool don’t inspect residential and holiday flats in the same way as hotels. It really disgusts us that they seem to get away with murder.” Mark and Diane, Claremont, 14 Gynn Avenue.

“Far more relaxed and open than usual inspection system which benefits those wanting to do a good job. There must be a stricter system for those who persistently operate to bad

standards as they would not co-operate with a self-assessment system or would simply lie when completing the form. Ideally all hotels should be licensed for hygiene and safety before they open.” Dave and Lynn Weatherall, Nevele, 11 Gynn Avenue.

“It was good to have an outside view on our hygiene and safety as sometimes we get too engrossed in our work to see some things.” (anon)

“Because we were relaxed, we asked questions and discussed problems openly. The consultant’s approach was totally different to what we have experienced during previous inspections. It allowed us to think things through rather than be defensive. Previous inspections seemed to be geared to finding something wrong each time.” Sheila and Conrad Tyson, Merginn, 9 Gynn Avenue.

“Complaints raised during the fitness for purpose project regarding neighbourhood noise appeared to be promptly dealt with by the Council.” Mr and Mrs Maker, South Lea Hotel, 4 Willshaw Road.

“Most hotel proprietors want standards to rise. This was a useful exercise in helping to achieve that. The informal style of this project suited businesses that were trying to get it right but a more forceful approach is still needed for the bad guys.” Stuart Braid, Pilatus, 10 Wilshaw Road.

“We thought the project was good but we want the Council to target the bad hotels.” Mr and Mrs King, Craigmore Hotel, 8 Wilshaw Road.

“The project was based on common sense, but it did prompt you to get things done. I would still like to see the authorities taking firmer action with the really bad hotels.” Hilary Gallimore, Parkside Hotel, 18 Wilshaw Road.

“It gave me confidence in the things I am doing right and provides a good reminder to do things.” Teri Franks, Belvedere Hotel, 408 North Promenade.

“We want to apply for ETC accreditation and we think this will help our application.” Janet, Avendale Hotel, 23 Gynn Avenue.

“We had a few things to do and it’s been a bit expensive, but it’s done now and it’s all part of keeping going.” Susan Doharty, Haldene, 4 Gynn Avenue.

“The Fitness for Purpose system allows you to prioritise and plan improvements sensibly at your own convenience.” Philip Avenell, Glenmere, 7 Glynn Avenue.

“It put risks into perspective.” Deborah Hawes, Elsenore, 29-31 Gynn Avenue.

“It made me think about looking after my own health as an essential part of running my business.” Mrs. P Horton, Braeside, 6 Willshaw Road.

“You made us think of a number of things we needed to do and helped us decide what were the important things to do first.” Daphne Meakins, Gynn View, 11 Finchley Road.

“Peter told us about people falling through glass. We have been in the business 18 years and had never had any such problems then, the other day as I stood on a chair to open a window, the chair rocked and I put my hand out suddenly to stop myself falling. Thankfully my hand hit the window frame and not the glass.”

“It gave us confidence that were meeting all necessary requirements. It was nice to have all the standards in one document. It was like having a comprehensive manual on how to run a hotel.” Richard Barrington, Collingwood Hotel, 394 North Promenade.

“Because Peter explained the reason behind requirements we carried out far more work, to a higher standard, than a normal inspection would have required us to do. I also liked the idea of not being singled out and knowing that my neighbours where being similarly treated.” Chrissey, Queensgate Hotel, 398-402 North Promenade.

“The Hilton Hotel welcomes getting involved in the Fitness for Purpose project and would be happy to share its expertise in risk management with some of our smaller neighbours.” Hilton Hotel, Blackpool.

“It was better than I thought. It made me aware of potential problem areas that I hadn’t thought of before. I hadn’t really considered the safety of window cleaners before but now recognise them as a potential serious liability.” Stephen Fellows, Sheron, 21 Gynn Avenue.

“This project made my job easier and took pressure off me. The documentation was broken down into easy to understand parts. It was so good that the RNIB have adopted the system across the group. It would be very nice if the Council issues a certificate to all those who took part in the project.” David McAngus, RNIB Century Hotel, 406 North Promenade.

“The advice was good and helpful. The document gives us something to look at later and help us remember what was said. Peter’s approach was not scary like a formal inspection.” Dawn Lockhart, Marina Hotel, 30 Gynn Avenue.

“Peter put me in contact with more experienced hotel operators, who were able to help put my mind at rest.” Lorraine, Glenwalden, 382 North Promenade.

*“When I talked to the window cleaner about safety he said ‘**** off, I’m insured. Don’t worry.’” John, Queensgate Hotel, 392-402 North Promenade.*

“I hope the Council can provide economic and conveniently timed training courses.” Sea Breeze, 1a Gynn Avenue.

“I would like to see courses offered at times and locations convenient to the hotel trade.” Mrs Taylor, Lyngarth Hotel, 12 Wilshaw Road.

“To be honest, we won’t be able to action the things we identified in the project until the end of the season.” (Anon).

“We are new to the business and Peter has steered us in the right direction.” Rita and Phil, The Burns, 8 Gynn Avenue.

“This is a good scheme but I would like to see every hotel licensed for hygiene and safety and having to adopt these standards.” Jason Cotillard, Windsor Carlton Guest House, 6 Warley Road.

ANNEX 6

ENQUIRY/CONTACT INFORMATION

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Canterbury City Council

F4P Summary of Pilot Project

The Project

In March 2003, Canterbury City Council was chosen to be one of six local authorities selected nationally to be a pilot authority to test the Fitness for Purpose Model on behalf of the DCMS.

A small working group was formed to progress the project and a Project Management Sheet was drawn up. This detailed what needed to be done. The items identified and their outcomes are summarised in the table with details below.

	What Needed To Be Done	Details
1	Complete the project management toolkit	Project Management Sheet completed June 2003
2	Compile up to date list of accommodation providers	Completed December 2003
3	Establish a procedure for updating the accommodation list	Data capture sheet completed August 2003
4	Obtain enough information on each accommodation provider to be useful to each enforcement body	Data capture sheet completed August 2003
5	Devise self-assessment form for premises to use for areas of non-conformity identified by EHO for food and health and safety	Completed as part of project – see below for details
6	Complete pilot project	Completed – see below for details
7	Run seminar for providers, possibly combined with holistic accommodation day	Seminar for accommodation providers and other parties interested in tourism held on 2 December 2003
8	Develop / adapt / acquire information to give to accommodation providers	Completed as part of project – see below for details
9	Provide feedback to the DCMS, in a form to be specified by them, by end July 2004 (or as otherwise advised by DCMS)	Feedback session 14 January 2004

1 Complete the Project Management Toolkit

See project Management Sheet at Appendix 1.

2 Compile an Up To Date List of Accommodation Providers

A common database was compiled based on information from Commercial Health, the Fire Safety Service, Housing, Trading Standards, Business Rates, Tourism, Marketing, and Trading Standards. The process was extremely time-consuming and was therefore not completed until December 2003.

185 premises were identified between all enforcement authorities involved. 37 premises (20%) were known by one agency only and 37 premises (20%) were known by at least 4 of the 8 agencies. This list has been circulated to all agencies to update / amend their own databases.

3 Establish a Procedure For Updating The Accommodation List and **4 Obtain Enough Information On Each Accommodation Provider To Be Useful To Each Enforcement Body**

The list compiled in 2 above has been circulated to all agencies to update / amend their own databases. Jane Lovell has offered to hold the master copy of the database. The person finding any subsequent amendments and deletions will email all agencies for them to make the appropriate changes to their database / the master database.

During the pilot, all providers visited were asked to complete a data capture sheet (please see Appendix 2). This contained sufficient basic information to be useful for all enforcement bodies.

In order to update the list in the future, when a provider approaches any agency, that agency is responsible for getting a completed data capture sheet and forwarding a copy to the other agencies for them to update their databases.

5 Complete pilot project (and Devise self-assessment form)

The pilot project was to run as follows:

- Identify 20 – 25 target premises from the accommodation database. Select (if possible) 10 from the coast and 10 from the city, at random. This will enable comparison between coast & city.
- Write an introductory letter to each identified premises.
- One officer (EHO) to visit the target premises and inspect for basic compliance with Health and Safety and Food Safety.
- The visiting officer to also deliver guidance, if agreed, on Fire Safety and Trading Standards matters.
- Data recovery sheet to be completed for each business and a Schedule of Contraventions issued.
- Letter to go to each business indicating areas of non-conformity.
- Follow up letter after 1 month with self-assessment form on dealing with non-conformity and seeking evaluation of our intervention.
- Analyse results of pilot and feedback to group.

Summary of Pilot Survey

Following agreement by Canterbury City Council to become a Pilot Authority for the Government's Fitness for Purpose Initiative, a survey of a number of relevant businesses was carried out. The premises visited during the survey were selected, at random, from a list of premises compiled from those held by the Commercial Health Section, Environment and Street Scene, Tourism Section and from the Fire Safety Service. The purpose of the visits was to:

1. Provide information to the selected businesses on
 - Food Hygiene
 - Health and Safety
 - Fire Safety
 - Trading Standards
 - Tourism – Quality Programmes
2. Assess the level of compliance in the various businesses with the legislation on
 - Food Safety
 - Health and Safety for guests and staff
3. Record any apparent breaches of Fire Safety requirements and draw these to the attention of the Fire Safety Service.

The Survey

The survey was of 19 premises, two of which did not receive a full inspection. In one case this was due to imminent closure and in another an inspection had already been carried out recently by an officer of the Commercial Health Team. A further two premises which had been selected could not be contacted and it is understood that these may be closed or closing.

Information was given to providers by means of a pack, comprising leaflets and booklets provided by the relevant departments. Each person visited was introduced to the guidance, explaining how they may find it useful.

The premises were audited in the presence of the proprietor or manager to assess basic compliance. It was explained that the inspection replaced their normal priority planned audit under Food Hygiene and Health and Safety legislation.

Typically, the inspection commenced in the food preparation area and the level of inspection depended on the food provided to guests. Standards were, on the whole, very satisfactory with only minor contraventions observed. These were pointed out and discussed.

Very few businesses offered more than breakfast. Those offering an evening meal tended to do it on request, allowing the guest to choose their meal before the food was purchased.

The inspection then moved to the bedrooms and common areas. Standards in Health and Safety were again generally good. Very few of the businesses employed staff. There were examples where maintenance standards lead to minor health and safety risks. Some examples of poor electrical work were noted. The main issue identified in several of the premises was,

as expected, poor awareness of window safety in rooms above ground level. Again, the issues were discussed and actions agreed.

In two cases, where Fire Certificates were in place, fire safety matters were referred to the Fire Safety Service using an agreed memo.

Except where very minor infringements were noted, the businesses have received a letter setting out what needs to be done. Recipients were also invited to request any further information if they needed it. To date, no contact has been received from any of the businesses.

Follow Up

Each of the businesses visited were sent a letter which asked them the following:

1. Did they find the visit to their business useful.
2. Have they found the guidance handed to them useful in securing compliance with legislation.
3. Are there any areas in which they feel the need for more guidance
4. (Where appropriate) what action have they taken to deal with the matters in the letters they have received.

Comments

The businesses were generally pleased to receive the visit and there was no real disagreement over issues which were raised. 100% of premises found the visit of at least some help (83.33% found it very helpful). Further details are given in Appendix 3. In a compliance-only scheme, any follow-up visits would normally be prioritised according to the seriousness of any matters raised. This would be in accordance with the normal priority planned inspection programme. Although the scheme is not intended to place any additional burden on the business (or the enforcer), the comments of the team were invited on whether or not further visits are necessary. The group decided that all premises had received a letter should be revisited to assess the value of the intervention.

Run Seminar for Providers

A seminar for accommodation providers and other parties interested in tourism was held at the County Hotel, Canterbury on 2 December 2003. The afternoon included sessions on fire safety, food hygiene, trading standards, health and safety and quality assurance in tourism.

148 invitations to providers were sent out, 22 premises said they would come but disappointingly, only about 13 providers attended. A number of other interested parties, such as tourism officers from across Kent, came.

Attendees were given a seminar feedback form to complete, anonymously if they wished. The responses are summarised at Appendix 4, but 81.25% said that the seminar and the information they received was useful or very useful.

Levels of Understanding

In an attempt to assess levels of understanding of areas covered by Fitness For Purpose amongst accommodation providers, a questionnaire was designed. This consisted of twelve questions covering food safety, health and safety, fire safety and trading standards. Providers were asked to mark the correct answer from a choice of four. Questionnaires were sent to three different groups of accommodation providers:

- those who attended the seminar but were not visited as part of the pilot
- those visited as part of the pilot
- those not visited and who didn't attend the seminar

Since only 19 providers had been visited, a similar number of questionnaires was sent to the other groups. It was hoped that the different groups could be compared but response rates ranged from 40% to 70% so results are not statistically valid.

The results are given in Appendix 5. In most cases, no conclusions can be drawn from comparison of the answers but five respondents did say that they would like further training.

Develop / Adapt / Acquire Information To Give To Accommodation Providers

A bed and breakfast start-up sheet has been designed to summarise the main areas covered by the group, and includes contact details. This will be given to all prospective providers.

Resources

Attendance at meetings by members of the group is detailed in Table 1. In summary, 83 hours and 10 minutes (plus travelling time) was spent in meetings. This does not include time spent discussing the scheme before Canterbury was selected as a pilot authority.

Table 2 summarises the costs of implementing the fitness for purpose project. Over 301.45 hours were spent on the project and total costs are over £13452.93. These figures do not take into account time and other costs for all people involved (many more people had an input) but should be used as a guide to minimum implementation costs only. Ongoing costs can not, at this stage, be quantified but are likely to be significantly less.

Summary

The following points summarise the pilot:

- The agencies involved had existing good informal lines of communication. Fitness for purpose formalised these.
- The production of a joint database and a means for updating it are seen as the main benefit.
- The group had long discussions, especially initially, as to what fitness for purpose was intended to do. The group saw a number of problems with the scheme
 - If all agencies inspect providers in line with their own legislation (including on a risk-based or prioritised basis as relevant), there is no benefit to the agencies or

the businesses. Potential deficiencies in other legislation may however be identified: for example, apparent non-compliance with a fire-certificate, but enforcers other than the Fire Safety Service don't have the authority or expertise to investigate or enforce.

- Current fire safety legislation does not allow routine inspection of some premises.
 - Many bed and breakfast establishments escape local authority intervention on health and safety where they have two or less rooms for guests. Such businesses fall to the HSE. This was not formally examined during the pilot, but may need amendment at government department level to avoid confusion.
 - Quality accreditation schemes do not consider minimum legal standards so accredited premises could be of a legally poor standard. Equally, good premises may not be accredited.
 - Current legislation may give a “stick” for enforcement, but there is no obvious “carrot” to improve standards.
- Some businesses were interested in improving and / or attending (further) training, but funding would need to be considered.
 - The set-up costs of the scheme were very expensive for the perceived benefits. This was partly due to a lack of a clear brief with aims, objectives and methods.

Conclusion

The project management sheet identified three core concerns that under-pinned the project.

The pilot has shown that of those premises visited, few were identified as being of poor quality, and it is difficult to determine whether the quality of the accommodation has a measurable effect on the tourism industry.

Similarly, the perception that a proportion of the sector was not 'fit for purpose' and therefore not fit to trade was not born out by the pilot.

It is difficult to measure whether current enforcement resources are effectively targeted, given the poor response to the pilot from accommodation providers. The pilot however, did not appear to identify any particular gaps in the application of the existing enforcement regime although suggestions have been made that the regime itself has potential weaknesses.

	<u>Time</u>	<u>Sandra Jones</u> Commercial Health	<u>Dick Langridge</u> Commercial Health	<u>Jane Lovell</u> Tourism Development	<u>Nen Coles</u> Private Sector Housing	<u>Pete Safety Service</u>	<u>James Whiddett</u> KCC Trading Standards	<u>Nen McCollum</u> Tourism (joined Oct 2003)	<u>Others</u>
1 April	9.30 - 11.00	T		T					John Dyson, Gvt Consultant for F4P
8 April	3.30 - 4.00	T	T	T	T				Sarah Maloney, Commercial Health
7 May	2.30 - 4.00	T	T		T	T			
9 June	9.00 - 11.00	T	T	T	T				
17 June	12.30 - 1.30	T							Hilary Moger
18 July	9.00 - 10.25	T	T	T	T				
12 Aug	3.15 - 4.20	T	T		T	T			
19 Aug	3.00 - 4.30	T	T		T	T			John Dyson, Gvt Consultant for F4P
12 Sept	3.00 - 4.45	T	T	T	T	T	T		
20 Oct	3.00 - 4.45	T	T	T	T	T		T	
10 Nov	3.00 - 3.45	T	T	T	T				
1 Dec	9.30 - 11.30	T	T		T	T		T	
ec	2.00 - 3.30	T							Camilla Woods, BHA
17 Dec	9.30 - 10.50	T	T	T	T		T		
14 Jan	2.00 - ?	T	T		T	T			John Dyson, Gvt Consultant for F4P
	Time	19 hours 35 mins + ?	15 hours 35 mins + ?	10 hours	15 hours 35 mins + ?	9 hours 35 mins + ?	3 hours 5 mins	3 hours 45 mins	6 hours + ?
Total Time		83 hours 10 minutes (+ 5 x ?)							

Table 2: Minimum Costs of the Fitness for Purpose Pilot

Officer	Details	Hourly rate	Officer total (£)
Sandra Jones	19 hours 35 mins meetings 57 hours taking minutes, organising meetings, database work 6 hours seminar preparation and attendance	82 hours 35 mins @ £42.18	3483.22
Dick Langridge	15 hours 35 mins meetings 62 hours inspections, admin, seminar preparation & attendance	77 hours 35 mins @ £43.29	3358.44
Jane Lovell	10 hours meetings 4 hours seminar attendance 11 hours seminar preparation & database work	25 hours @ £30.00	750.00
Neil Coles (& private sector housing)	15 hours 35 mins meetings 6 hours seminar preparation & attendance 12 hours database work	33 hours 35 mins @ £36.22	1216.27
	14 hours seminar preparation, attendance and database work	14 hours @ £10.00	140.00
Fire Safety Service	10 hours seminar attendance 11 hours seminar attendance, seminar preparation & database work	21 hours @ £45.00	945.00
KCC Trading Standards	<u>hours 5 mins meetings</u> seminar attendance seminar preparation database work	40 hours @ £75	3000.00
Neil McCollum	4 hours 45 mins meetings 4 hours seminar attendance	8 hours @ £40.00	320.00
Officer time total			301 hours 45 mins
Officer time costs total			£13,212.93
Seminar - venue costs			240.00
Total			£13,452.93

Fitness for Purpose – Project Management Sheet

Project Level

B. Partnership – A project which involves a range of services or external agencies at an operational level.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Project Sponsor	Management Team
Project Champion	Tony Parker, Head of Environment and Street Scene
Project Manager	Sandra Jones, Commercial Health Section
Project Team (Core)	Dick Langridge, Commercial Health Section Neil Coles, Private Sector Housing Jim Rose, Fire Safety Service Jane Lovell, Tourism Development Officer James Whiddett, Trading Standards
Project Team (Peripheral)	Communications Economic Development Planning Building Control Council Tax / Business Rates

Concern

- 1 Poor quality premises are damaging the English sector of the tourism industry in the market-place.
- 2 Perceived view that premises are not fit for the purpose ie not fit to be trading because they do not meet legal standards.
- 3 Enforcement resources are not effectively targeted.

Task

To create a framework by 31 December 2003 which would be:

- customer focused: to provide the customer with a firmer assurance that the accommodation providers are fit for the purpose ie fit to be trading
- industry focused: to take a lighter enforcement touch with well-run providers that are complying with the law and to take a more robust approach to those businesses that consistently failed to comply by providing them with help to improve, but ultimately requiring them to comply with their legal obligations.

Also to provide feedback to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (as requested) by July 2004.

Purpose

Work to identify ways in which the existing law could be better enforced to ensure that any accommodation is fit for purpose.

Scope

Customer

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
Food Standards Agency (FSA)

End User

Members of the Project Team and their respective Sections / Organisations
Accommodation providers
Accommodation users

Success Criteria

- 1 Complete the task by 31st December 2003
- 2 Provide feedback to the DCMS (as requested) by July 2004
- 3 Establish and put into place an effective complaints procedure for customers by 31 December 2003
- 4 Increase the levels of awareness of legal requirements amongst accommodation providers.

Information

Known

- 1 Time scales of the project
- 2 Who is on the Project Team
- 3 Names and addresses of some accommodation providers
- 4 The legal standards to be met
- 5 Dates of the last contact (if any) with the providers

Not Known

- 1 If the list of accommodation providers is complete
- 2 Existing levels of awareness of standards amongst accommodation providers
- 3 Levels of satisfaction with accommodation amongst customers
- 4 The effectiveness of the existing complaints procedures
- 5 The current levels of compliance with legal requirements in all areas amongst providers

What Has To Be Done

- 1 Complete the project management toolkit. SDJ to circulate by next meeting.
- 2 Compile up to date list of accommodation providers. SDJ to co-ordinate, at latest by next meeting.
- 3 Establish a procedure for updating the accommodation list. SDJ to co-ordinate data capture sheet by 23/06/03.
- 4 Obtain enough information on each accommodation provider to be useful to each enforcement body. SDJ to co-ordinate data capture sheet by 23/06/03.
- 5 Devise self-assessment form for premises to use for areas of non-conformity identified by EHO for food and health and safety. RGL to devise by 30/06/03.
- 6 Complete pilot project (see separate sheet) by 31/07/2003.

The pilot should run as follows:

- Identify 20 – 25 target premises from the accommodation database. Select (if possible) 10 from the coast and 10 from the city, at random. This will enable comparison between coast & city.
 - Write an introductory letter to each identified premises.
 - One officer (EHO) to visit the target premises and inspect for basic compliance with Health and Safety and Food Safety.
 - The visiting officer to also deliver guidance, if agreed, on Fire Safety and Trading Standards matters.
 - Data recovery sheet to be completed for each business and a Schedule of Contraventions issued.
 - Letter to go to each business indicating areas of non-conformity.
 - Follow up letter after 1 month with self-assessment form on dealing with non-conformity and seeking evaluation of our intervention.
 - Analyse results of pilot and feedback to group.
- 7 Run seminar (e.g. mid-September) for providers, possibly combined with holistic accommodation day. JL to organise and arrange funding.
- 8 Develop / adapt / acquire information to give to accommodation providers. All to acquire and pass to RGL by 23/06/03.
- 9 Provide feedback to the DCMS, in a form to be specified by them, by end July 2004 (or as otherwise advised by DCMS).

Risk Assessment

Risk	Level of Risk	Risk Minimisation
Team members no longer able to participate	High	Appoint alternative contacts: SDJ = Sarah Maloney RGL = Nick Mayne JL = Amanda Monk Peak NC = Paula Skinner Jim Rose = any other FSS officer James Whiddett = any other TS Officer
Data incorrect	High	Compile data on providers from various sources
Other major enforcement demands	Medium	Extend time-scales (within 2003) / review plans at the time of demands
Accommodation providers unwilling to participate in seminars	Medium	Premises visited regardless if come to seminar or not. Seminar to be part of other event (holistic tourist day).
Funding unavailable	Low	Costs are minimal Costs are part of existing enforcement work Costs to be shared.



Accommodation Providers Data Sheet

1. **Name:** Title: Surname:
First name(s):

2. **Position in Business**

3. **Name and address of accommodation**
.....
.....
Post Code: Telephone:

4. **Is the business part of a group or a national chain?**
Yes (please give details below) No
.....
.....

5. **Name and address of registered business**
.....
.....
Post Code: Telephone:.....

6. **Type of accommodation**
Bed & breakfast / guest house Hotel Other (please state)
.....
Number of rooms Number of bed-spaces: Guests.....
Staff.....

7. **Do you provide accommodation all year?**
Yes No (please state times you operate)
.....

8. **Do you have a fire certificate from the fire safety service under the Fire Precautions Act 1971?**
Yes No

9. How many floors is accommodation provided on?

10. Is sleeping accommodation provided for guests or staff above first floor?

Yes No

11. Is sleeping accommodation provided for guests or staff in a basement?

Yes No

12. If you are a family business, how many family members are involved in the business?

.....

13. How many staff (not family) do you employ?

14. Have you carried out any building works in the past 12 months?

Yes (please give details No

.....

.....

15. Do you provide: Breakfast: Yes No
Lunch: Yes No
Dinner: Yes No

16. Do you have a licence to sell alcohol? Yes No

17. Do you ever let out any rooms as a place to live (eg bedsit rooms)?

Yes (please give details No

.....

.....

18. Do you have or are you applying for a quality grading from:

AA RAC Tourist Board

Signed Date

Please return this form to: Dick Langridge, Commercial Health Section, Canterbury City Council, Military Road, CANTERBURY, Kent CT1 1YW Tel. (01227) 862 215

For office use only								
	C.Health	Housing	TS	FSS	Tourism	Planning	B.Cont	C.tax
Copy sent to ... (3)								

Tourist Accommodation: Fitness For Purpose – Response Form

Number of respondents = 6

It helps us to know whether or not our visit to you was useful and whether or not you can get information on the legislation that you need to comply with it easily. Please take a couple of minutes to answer the following questions. Just circle the answer you feel indicates your view.

Q1 The officer who visited me was

Not helpful	-	-
Some help	1	16.67%
Very helpful	5	83.33%

Q2 The suggestions made during the visit were

Vague	-	-
A little unclear	-	-
Clear	1	16.67%
Very clear	4	66.67%
No reply	1	16.67%

Q3 The information booklets provided by the officer are

Not useful	-	-
Quite useful	3	50.00%
Very useful	2	33.33%
Don't know	-	-
No reply	1	16.67%

Q4 When I need information on legal requirements I would prefer to

Phone the officer concerned	4	66.67%
Phone a single advice centre	-	-
Search on a website	-	-
Request it via email	-	-
Request a visit to my premises	-	-
No reply	2	33.33%

If you received a letter following the visit, please complete the next section

Q5 With respect to the letter I received from the officer, I

Have dealt with all the matters set out in the letter	1	16.67%
Do not feel that the matters necessitate me making changes	1	16.67%
Have dealt with the most important ones and will complete the rest by ... (insert date)	1	16.67%
I need further advice on some matters	1	16.67%
No reply	2	33.33%

Staying With Us Seminar Feedback Form

Number of respondents = 16

The council is committed to improving its service to you. To help us, please answer the following questions and hand the form in before you leave.

Q1 How useful did you find the seminar and the information you received?

Very useful	7	43.75%
Useful	6	37.50%
Not much use	2	12.50%
No use at all	1	6.25%

Q2 Which session did you find the most useful?

Fit for purpose	2	12.50%
Fire safety	11	68.75%
Food hygiene	8	50.00%
Trading Standards	5	31.25%
Health and Safety	6	37.50%
Quality initiatives	3	18.75%
No reply	1	6.25%

Q3 Do you think that the staying with us/fitness for purpose approach is a good way of enforcing the law?

Yes	9	56.25%
No	-	-
Don't know	4	25.00%
Another way would be better	-	-
No reply	3	18.75%

In all cases please give your reasons below

Not in a position to judge the big picture.

Provides a clear standard and motivation.

Will make complaints easier to deal with, like potential acc providers with specifics.

Would like to see greater enforcement.

I don't know about enforcing, but it does enable us to take informed actions.

Most of the information supplied was relevant to smaller businesses than ours. Not much detail given - lots of talk. I suppose the idea is good but maybe bringing businesses together to work through problems/queries would be better. Less general info - more detail. Trading standards bit was good for detail.

Very small premises do not want to be overburdened. Customers could be confused in the fitness for purpose and grading system. Please avoid duplication and confusion.

Good way of gaining and updating knowledge of issues covered.

Clear information, given contacts and friendly.

Diverse approach in different presentations.

It doesn't scare you into complying.

Q4 How could we have improved the seminar?

Thank you for a useful seminar.

Chairs were uncomfortable - I was squirming after half an hour.

Very satisfied.

N/A - good central location, focussed presentation.

Trading standards talk was aimed more at hotels or restaurants, not B&Bs, so that could have been skipped or shortened. (I almost fell asleep)

All very worthwhile - certainly filled in lots of gaps and I would be very keen for Ashford to be included along with our E Kent partners in the Fitness for Purpose Pathfinder group. Thanks for inviting us!

As there were not too many present, it would have been useful to know where people came from - just name and establishment. Query re who seminar aimed at - at times seem to be for those setting up and not already established or accredited - eg all of that known. Benefits of accreditation section - am aware that not easy to include all sections of market but as Mr Langridge recognised some B&Bs part of normal home with just a few rooms used for part of year. Much of trading standards - beer, cigarettes, prices etc not relevant to 3 or less rooms, as were other sections.

The times should have been made more appropriate, I have children to collect at 3pm.

The times should be a bit more flexible.

Q5 What topics would you like us to run any future seminars on?

Small business (owner or 1 employee) opportunities to finance sound development and enterprise.

Marketing

Would be interested in fire safety seminar/active session. It was commented that many people know how to use fire equipment - why not teach us? Safety of staff and guests in unusual circumstances.

How to use fire safety equipment.

Q6 Would you like us to contact you to discuss your feedback?

Yes	1	6.25%
No	6	37.50%
No reply	9	56.25%

If yes, please give your details below:

David Kemp	CCC	
Lyn Newton	Swale BC	01795 417420
Janis Hawken	Kingsbridge Villa, 15 Best Lane, Canterbury	01227 766415
Sarah Barber	Ashford Borough Council, Tourism and Heritage Manager	
	Hornbeams, Jesses Hill, Kingston, Canterbury, Kent CT4 6JD	

Staying With Us Questionnaire – All Groups

Number of respondents = 15

(correct answers are in grey)

Food Safety

Q1 Are accommodation providers serving meals required to inform the council or any other organisation?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
No	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Yes - Kent Fire and Rescue Service to obtain a fire certificate	2	-	1	1
	13.33%	-	25.00%	25.00%
Yes - Canterbury City Council to register as a food business	15	7	4	4
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Yes - Kent County Council Trading Standards	1	-	1	-
	6.67%	-	25.00%	-

Q2 Are there any special requirements for persons who prepare meals for guests?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
No - anyone can prepare meals	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
No - as long as they wear gloves	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Yes - they generally need to be trained in basic food hygiene	15	7	4	4
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Yes - they need to be qualified chefs	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

Q3 The person in charge of a food business must make sure that they identify all the steps to ensure food safety by carrying out a hazard analysis. Which one of the following is true?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
The hazard analysis must be written down	5	2	1	2
	33.33%	28.57%	25.00%	50.00%
The hazard analysis only needs to be completed when the food business starts up	1	1	-	-
	6.67%	14.29%	-	-
The hazard analysis must say what to do if critical limits aren't met	4	2	1	-
	26.67%	28.57%	50.00%	-
The hazard analysis must be formally reviewed every year	8	4	3	1
	53.33%	57.14%	75.00%	25.00%
No reply	2	1	-	1
	13.33%	14.29%	-	25.00%

Health and Safety

Q4 Do accommodation providers need to provide a health and safety risk assessment?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
No	1	-	-	1
	6.67%	-	-	25.00%
No - unless they're part of a national company	-	-	-	-
Yes - if there is anyone employed	9	3	4	2
	60.00%	42.86%	100.00%	50.00%
Yes - if there are more than five employees	5	5	-	-
	33.33%	71.43%	-	-
No reply	1	-	-	1
	6.67%	-	-	25.00%

Q5 Do portable electrical appliances (for example hairdryers) provided for guests need to be tested for electrical safety by a competent electrician?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
No	4	3	-	1
	26.67%	42.86%	-	25.00%
No - except for trouser press	-	-	-	-
Yes - every six months	3	1	-	2
	20.00%	14.29%	-	50.00%
Yes - every year	7	2	4	1
	46.67%	28.57%	100.00%	25.00%
No reply	1	1	-	-
	6.67%	14.29%	-	-

Q6 What can an accommodation provider do if they believe an enforcement officer is requiring excessive works to remedy a health and safety problem?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Nothing - that's the law	2	-	-	2
	13.33%	-	-	50.00%
Ignore the requirements and carry on regardless	-	-	-	-
Appeal against the requirements in writing	12	6	4	2
	80.00%	85.71%	100.00%	50.00%
Take legal action against the council	-	-	-	-
No reply	1	1	-	-
	6.67%	14.29%	-	-

Fire Safety

Q7 Who is responsible for maintaining fire extinguishers in a guest house/hotel?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Canterbury City Council	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
The guest house/hotel owners	15	7	4	4
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Q8 Who is responsible if a guest is injured in a fire at a guest house/hotel?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
The management and staff of the hotel/guest house	15	7	4	4
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Yes - every six months	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Yes - every year	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

Q9 When does a guest house/hotel require a fire certificate under the Fire Precautions Act 1971?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Never - unless they're part of a national company	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
When there are more than six persons sleeping in accommodation on the ground and first floors	10	6	2	2
	66.67%	85.71%	50.00%	50.00%
When there are more than six persons sleeping in accommodation on the ground, first & second floors	6	2	2	2
	40.00%	28.57%	50.00%	50.00%
In every case	1	-	1	-
	6.67%	-	25.00%	-

Trading Standards

Q10 When must a guest house/hotel display a price list for accommodation in the entrance/reception area?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Never	1	-	-	1
	6.67%	-	-	25.00%
Only when all rooms are pre-booked	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
When there are more than four rooms or 8 beds	5	3	-	2
	33.33%	42.86%	-	50.00%
Always	9	4	4	1
	60.00%	57.14%	100.00%	25.00%

Q11 When must a guest house/hotel display prices for food and drinks?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Never	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Only if meals are provided separately from the accommodation	8	4	1	3
	53.33%	57.14%	25.00%	75.00%
Only where bed and breakfast packages are provided	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Always	7	3	3	1
	46.67%	42.86%	100.00%	25.00%

Q12 Which of these pricing details is acceptable?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Rooms £30	1	1	-	-
	6.67%	14.29%	-	-
Singles £20/Double £37.50	9	5	-	4
	60.00%	71.43%	-	100.00%
Bed and Breakfast - single room £17.50	6	3	3	-
	40.00%	42.86%	75.00%	-
Room with a sea view £37.50	1	1	-	-
	6.67%	14.29%	-	-
No reply	1	-	1	-
	6.67%	-	25.00%	-

Q13 Are there any areas that you would like further training on the requirements of your business?

	Overall	Seminar	Nothing	Pilot
	15	7	4	4
Fire Safety	1 6.67%	1 14.29%	- -	- -
Food Safety	2 13.33%	- -	1 25.00%	1 25.00%
Health and Safety	1 6.67%	1 14.29%	- -	- -
Trading Standards	2 13.33%	1 14.29%	1 25.00%	- -
No reply	10 66.67%	5 71.43%	2 50.00%	3 75.00%

West Sussex County Council

BRIEFING NOTE – WEST SUSSEX FITNESS FOR PURPOSE PILOT

Partners involved in the design of the project

West Sussex Tourism Initiative Ltd (WSTI), West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Trading Standards, West Sussex Fire Brigade, the District and Borough Environmental Health departments in West Sussex, local authority tourism officers and Hotel Associations in West Sussex.

Background to West Sussex pilot

Over 18 months ago WSTI and WSCC Trading Standards formulated the idea of a training initiative for tourism businesses and a co-ordinated approach to handling complaints. The EHOs and Fire Brigade were approached and expressed interest. Opportunities were sought to attract funding, but were unsuccessful, mainly because the training would not lead to a recognised qualification. WSTI spotted the news item on the DCMS/LGA Fitness for Purpose initiative that appeared to match the idea behind the West Sussex idea. An approach was made to the LGA and West Sussex was officially adopted as one of the six national pilots.

Tourism product in West Sussex

Approximate numbers are:

- 80 hotels
- 750 B&Bs/Guest Houses/pubs with accommodation
- 250 self-catering cottages
- 25 touring and static caravan parks (one very large)
- 95 visitor attractions
- 80+ non-assessed (by AA/RAC/ETC) establishments (mainly small B&Bs and pubs with rooms)
- All L.A.s in West Sussex operate an ‘inspected-only’ policy – i.e. by one of the three assessing bodies – AA/RAC/ETC (except Adur D.C. which has very little product and does only minimal tourism promotion) No promotion via Tourist Information Centres or in L.A. Guides is permitted unless the establishment has been Quality Assessed
- Generally the quality of the accommodation is good and in many cases of a very high quality
- However there are some examples of poor quality accommodation, either in the more popular areas, e.g. Gatwick and pubs in the rural areas
- Industry awareness of compliance issues is reasonably good, but cancellation policies tend to be poorly communicated to customers
- The smaller operators are very anxious to find out more about the forthcoming changes in Fire Regulations
- Until launch of pilot tourism officers were generally unaware of role of Trading Standards officers in dealing with complaints – huge opportunity to work together to raise standards and improve performance of industry
- Occupancy levels high around Gatwick and in urban areas. However, many businesses operating well below capacity

The West Sussex pilot

The pilot project aims to support accommodation providers in meeting minimum legal standards in Health & Safety, Food Safety, Fire and Trading Standards.

The project partners are concerned to raise the confidence of operators in compliance matters and raise the quality of the tourism offer to visitors by ensuring that operators treat their guests fairly and safely.

The pilot involves partners in seeking out the non-compliant businesses and making advisory visits.

It also aims to communicate the FfP 'message' to as many businesses as possible, through training courses, attendance at hotel association meetings, via newsletters etc. West Sussex wants to build a reputation for being a 'Quality Place to Visit'. By increasing the operators' understanding of the issues and advising on how to manage the business sensibly, complaints from customers should reduce and repeat business should increase, thereby improving competitiveness and profitability.

The West Sussex pilot has four main strands:

- A training module, delivered as two half-day courses, to promote best practice and help operators understand their legal obligations to safeguard the safety of their guests and ensure that they are treated fairly (Training subsidised through funding secured through ESF/LSC 'Quality Edge' programme and administered by local F.E. college). Training delivered by compliance officers from each of the three agencies. Courses aimed initially at SMEs (to date only serviced accommodation).
- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between tourism, environmental health, trading standards and fire brigade officers to work closely together to deal with complaints regarding accommodation providers, to foster higher standards across the sector and tackle enforcement with the non-compliant businesses, using the Visit Sussex/VISIT database to share information efficiently
- During the pilot phase a dedicated officer will carry out advisory visits to a number of businesses that have not been previously Quality Assessed (by AA/RAC/ETC). The visits will provide businesses with information on how to comply with legislation, encouraging them to attend training courses and promoting the NQAS scheme. Clearly any major non-compliance found during the visit will be communicated to the appropriate enforcing authority. The officer will also follow up on reports of any incorrect displaying of signs and ask for their removal.(Funding for auditor received from SEEDA for 3 mth period).
- To produce appropriate information packs to mail out to businesses, tailored in each case to the type and size of tourism business – with consideration of a web-based/email format later. A **'Fitness for Purpose' Conference** is planned for **6th February 2004 at South Lodge Hotel, Lower Beeding**, which will be open to all accommodation providers in West Sussex. The conference will be an opportunity to review the pilot and ask the industry how they would like to project to be taken forward. A general overview of the key compliance issues will be covered during the conference and there will be an

exhibition area with stands from the National Quality Assessing bodies (AA/RAC/ETC). A speaker from one of the five other pilot areas will be invited to attend to compare results and issues that they have highlighted.

Progress since April 2003

- All known (small) accommodation providers in West Sussex mailed about courses
- 3 courses, of 2 half-days each, ran in June/July (19 delegates total) under Quality Edge programme (LSC/ESF-funded)
- 4 more courses run in October/November/December (aiming for 40 delegates)
- Delegates on courses have appreciated opportunity to meet the ‘regulators’ (EHOs, Fire Officers and Trading Standards officers) in an informal setting. Huge interest from industry in new fire regulations and implications. Informal style of training sessions (venues were small establishments) allowed operators to share experiences and learn from each other
- MoU developed and most partners have signed
- SEEDA-funded ‘auditor’ (Trading Standards officer) started work from end of October making ‘mystery’ (unannounced) visits to non-inspected establishments and following up complaints received and passed to him
- Bespoke development of Visit Sussex (VISIT) software to allow for shared access of ‘Fitness for Purpose’ information between partners. Will allow for better monitoring of level of non-assessed operators. Currently estimate this to be about 10-20 % of all accommodation providers

Advantages of link to Fitness for Purpose

- Gave project idea more status – picked up by senior management, which in turn led to offer of ESF/LSC funding for training
- Support of FfP consultant encouraged WSTI to pursue bid to Regional Tourist Board/ SEEDA for funding for pilot. Example of London Boroughs’ receipt of funds from LDA was helpful. £24,000 received from SEEDA for project activities in October 2003
- Opportunity to share results of the pilot with DCMS and LGA. Tourism Officers particularly concerned that local policy of ‘Inspected-Only’ should not be diluted by Fitness for Purpose, rather strengthened

Issues identified at this stage in pilot

- Will the three regulatory agencies be able to sustain support for the training in future? – if additional funding received, more likely
- Most tourism businesses not deemed to be ‘High-Risk’
- Targeting pubs may be a stronger case
- Need to work more closely with TSE (Unicorn) Quality Assessors and RAC and AA inspectors
- Case needs to be made for ensuring that key FfP elements (e.g. clear communication of cancellation policy) are covered by all assessors (suspect there is currently some inconsistency)
- Ideally all three inspecting bodies should sign MoU and share complaints
- Expect use of Trading Standards Officer as ‘Auditor’ to be more effective in ‘policing’ role than ETC/AA/RAC inspectors, especially where businesses have ‘lapsed’ and are displaying incorrect signs.
- Expect ‘Quality Assessed’ businesses to welcome unannounced ‘visits’ to non-assessed businesses

Chichester College Quality Edge
Fitness for Purpose

Report on Fitness For Purpose courses run in Autumn Schedule

1. Introduction
2. Course dates, locations and trainers
3. Names of people who attended
4. Analysis

Att. 1 Flver and booking slin

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers courses run in October and November 2003 under the Quality Edge programme at Chichester College.

2. COURSE DATES, LOCATIONS AND TRAINERS

Event	Area	Dates		Location	Trading Stds	EHO	Fire Safety
					Ray Nicholson	David Bowen	Neil Odin
4	Arun						
	Day 1	Th	09-Oct	Merve & Pauline Simmonds Amberley Court, Climping 01903 725131	am Margaret Butler	pm Alison Lindley 01903 737678	
	Day 2	Th	16-Oct	Mr & Mrs B Lane Eastmere House, Eastergate 01243 544204	pm Ray Nicholson		am Andy Peters 01903 228430
5	Mid Sussex						
	Day 1	Th	23-Oct	Mrs M Marshall, The Coach House, Sharpthorne 01342 810512	am Ray Nicholson	pm Jan Lear 01444 477299	
	Day 2	Th	30-Oct	Ockenden Manor Cuckfield (Jennie) 01444 - 416111	pm Ray Nicholson		am Mark Hayter 01444 452329
6	Chichester 1						
	Day 1	We	05-Nov	Vikki Steward Litten House, Chichester 01243 774503	am Margaret Butler	pm Warren Townsend 785166 x2241	
	Day 2	We	12-Nov	Anna Williams Hollybank House, Emsworth 01243 375502	pm Bruce Treloar		am Andy Peters 01903 228430
7	Chichester 2						
	Day 1	Tu	18-Nov	Vicki Richards Woodacre 01243 814301	am Margaret Butler	pm Warren Townsend 785166 x2241	
	Day 2	Tu	25-Nov	Roger Longman Mucky Duck Inn, Rudgwick 01403 822300	pm Ray Nicholson		am Andy Peters 01903 228430

3. NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED

A “flyer” was designed and sent to people from an address list provided by West Sussex Tourism. This included a tear-off booking slip (see Attachment 1)

Event	Dates		Person	Establishment
4	Arun 9 th and 16 th October	1	Carol Clarke	Harkaway
		2	Marilyn Craine	Baron’s Hall @ the Well House
		3	Martin Gregory	Camelot House
		4	Gwen Hall	Houghton Bridge Tea Rooms
		5	Bernard Lane	Eastmere House
		6	Vicki Richards	Woodacre
		7	Pauline Simmonds	Amberley Court
		8	Mervyn Simmonds	Amberley Court
		9	Trudy Smith	Merton House
5	Mid Sussex 23 rd & 30 th October	1	Jennifer Baker	St Owens
		2	Sharon Ballard	New Close Farm
		3	Simon Markham	The Red Lyon
		4	Marjorie Marshall	Coach House
		5	Liz Pedlow	April Cottage
		6	Brian Pedlow	April Cottage
6	Chichester 1 5 th and 12 th November	1	Silma Bruford	The Brufords
		2	Tina Marie Coffey	The Brufords
		3	David Hare	Eedes Cottage
		4	Christine Hirlehey	Willowbrook Riding Centre
		5	Sylvia Jones	Englewood B&B
		6	Michael Martell	Horse and Groom
		7	Michelle Martell	Horse and Groom
		8	Clive Newman	Pindars
		9	Janie Stanley	Lane End
		10	Victoria Steward	Litten House
		11	Anna Williams	Hollybank House
7	Chichester 2 18 th & 25 th November	1	Jan Howard	Spire Cottage
		2	Susan Kemble	The Flint Cottage
		3	Thelma Lacy	Alancourt Hotel
		4	Roger Longman	The Mucky Duck Inn
		5	John Nelson	Ivy House
		6	Steve Palmer	Longacre B&B
		7	Majella Taylor	Friary Close
		8	Alan Thomas	Racing Greens

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Numbers of people

A total of 34 people attended the 4 courses, against a maximum capacity of 40 (85% occupancy). Pink Booklets from the English Tourism Council were given or sent to all those who attended.

4.2 Venues

Thanks should be expressed to all those who hosted the events, for which they received a fee of £120.

The following is based on personal observation and feedback from evaluation sheets from those attending.

9 th October	Amberley Court	Friendly atmosphere; good food. Projector inappropriate
16 th October	Eastmere House	Welcoming
23 rd October	The Coach House	Cramped, but chicken recipe excellent
30 th October	Ockenden Manor	Least successful venue; more like a training event
5 th November	Litten House	Car parking a problem on market day in central Chichester
12 th November	Hollybank House	Excellent location
18 th November	Woodacre	Friendly and informal
25 th November	The Mucky Duck Inn	'Remote' location discouraged some from attending from south of the county

4.3 Trainers

I facilitated every event, outlining the objectives, introducing the trainers and soliciting feedback.

Thanks should be expressed to all the trainers. The standard of presentation was generally high, but most benefit was achieved through questions and answers and in discussions with other accommodation providers in an informal atmosphere.

It was belatedly agreed that those organisations providing trainers would be reimbursed at £75 per session. The following invoices have been received for providing trainers for courses from 5th June:

- 28 Oct West Sussex County Council: £750 (10 sessions on criminal and civil law)
- 13 Nov Mid Sussex District Council: £75 (1 session on environmental health)
- 3 Dec West Sussex County Council: £300 (4 sessions on criminal and civil law)

Ron Palmer

Quality Edge Coordinator
Chichester College

Distribution: Pam Foden, West Sussex Enterprise
Birgit Bartlett, West Sussex Enterprise
Mo Toft, Chichester College
Nicky Woollard, Sussex DFITNESS FOR owns College

Practical Advice for Accommodation Providers in West Sussex

“Fitness for Purpose” is an initiative set up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to drive up standards within the tourism industry. West Sussex has been chosen as one of six areas to be part of a National pilot, involving hotels, B&Bs and guest- houses. The aim of the scheme is to give accommodation providers support to raise standards in health and safety, fire and food safety and trading standards.

I

Who should attend?

Small and medium sized accommodation proprietors in West Sussex.

I

Learning outcomes

- ❖ To share best practice in health and safety, fire safety and fair- trading.
- ❖ To provide an understanding of legal requirements and practical tips on how to meet the....

I

Course details

The course provides you with an opportunity to gain advice and guidance from officers within West Sussex’ Trading Standards, Environmental Health Department and Fire Brigade, in an informal setting.

It will be run over two half days from **11am to 3pm** each day (including lunch), on the following dates:

Event	Area	Day 1	Day 2
4	<u>Arun</u>	Thursday 9 th October	Thursday 16 th October
5	Mid Sussex	Thursday 23 rd October	Thursday 30 th October
6	Chichester 1	Wednesday 5 th November	Wednesday 12 th November
7	Chichester 2	Tuesday 18 th November	Tuesday 25 th November

How to book

Course numbers are strictly limited, so to book your place on the course most convenient for you, please complete the slip below and return it with a cheque for £25 per person as soon as possible. Joining instructions, including course location etc. will then be sent to you.

Further details from: Birgit Bartlett Tel: 01903 – 839839 West Sussex Tourism
Ron Palmer Tel: 01243 – 773545 Chichester College

.....
...

Please book me place(s) on the following Fitness for Purpose learning event:

Event No.	Area	Name and address of contact person
		Tel:

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Chichester College

Signed Date

Please post this slip together with your cheque for £25 per person to:



Ron Palmer, Workforce Development, Chichester College, Westgate Fields,
Chichester, PO19 1SB

2 May 2003

Dear Colleague

'Fitness for Purpose' Training courses for Bed and Breakfast owners
The Pink booklet de-mystified!

For a while we have been working on developing a training initiative with the Trading Standards team at WSCC that would give you all practical advice on understanding the various regulations that affect a small B&B or guest house operation. We are pleased to announce that we have been selected as one of six national pilots for a Government initiative called 'Fitness for Purpose' and have secured funding for the short training courses under the Quality Edge programme.

The courses are to be run over two half-days, a week apart, with the training delivered by a County Trading Standards officer, a District Environmental Health officer and one of the officers of the County Fire Brigade. The courses will give you practical advice on issues such as:

- *writing a brochure*
- *taking deposits*
- *simple ways to avoid 'no shows'*
- *use of credit cards*
- *setting up a cancellation policy that suits your business*
- *the law relating to discrimination*
- *your health and safety obligations*
- *the new regulations from the Fire Department which are due to come in from April 2004. (It looks like the '6-bed rule' is on the way out!)*

The cost of the two half days is only £25 (total). Each course will be run at a local B&B/Guest house, so if you would like to host a course, please let us know. There is a fee paid to the hosting establishment. Numbers are limited to a maximum of 10-15, depending on the size of the venue!

There is great enthusiasm for this project from the Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Fire departments. They are looking forward to helping you find simple ways to trade 'safely' and 'fairly'. The tourism officers in West Sussex are equally supportive. We want to promote West Sussex as a place where the customers will be treated well and be safe. The publicity around this national pilot will, we hope, encourage more people to come and stay in West Sussex!

If you have any questions about the project, please call our office. Birgit, Gillian or I will be happy to provide more details. Bookings for the courses should be made with Jenny Anderton at Chichester College, who is the Quality Edge co-ordinator. The full programme of courses for Quality Edge is included in this mailing, in case any other courses appeal to you.

I look forward to seeing some of you on the first courses in June. More dates will follow, which we will announce later.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Pam Foden

Executive Director

1. Project Details

Applicant:

West Sussex Tourism Initiative Ltd

Centenary House

Durrington Lane

Worthing

West Sussex

BN13 2QB

Tel: 01903 839370

Fax: 01903 839374

Email: pam.foden@wsep.org.uk

Local Authority District where the project will be implemented:

West Sussex, with potential rollout to rest of region.

West Sussex is one of 6 national pilots in the Government's Fitness for Purpose initiative.

The amount of SEEDA funding required

£24,500

Forecast beginning and end of project

Beginning – May 2003

End – December 2003

2. Project Summary and Development

The type of project

Tourism development – regeneration of coastal resorts, stimulation of rural economies, improve competitiveness of businesses

Briefly describe the project and its objectives

Fitness for purpose is an initiative set up by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport working with the Local Government Association to drive up standards in Tourist Accommodation by ensuring that minimum legal standards are met in all serviced accommodation. West Sussex has been chosen as one of six Local Authorities to pilot the project. The pilot project will aim to support accommodation providers in meeting minimum legal standards in Health & Safety, Food Safety, Fire and Trading Standards .

The West Sussex pilot has four main strands:

- A training module, delivered as two half-day courses, to promote best practice and help operators understand their legal obligations to safeguard the safety of their guests and ensure that they are treated fairly.

- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between tourism, environmental health, trading standards and fire officers to work closely together to deal with complaints regarding accommodation providers, to foster higher standards across the sector and tackle enforcement with the non-compliant businesses, using the VISIT database to share information efficiently.
- During the pilot phase a dedicated officer will carry out advisory visits to businesses who have not been previously inspected. The visits will provide businesses with information on how to comply with legislation and encourage them to attend training courses. Clearly any major non-compliance found during the visit will be communicated to the appropriate enforcing authority.
- To produce appropriate information packs to mail out to businesses, tailored in each case to the type and size of tourism business – with consideration of a web-based/email format

Partners involved in the design of the project

West Sussex Tourism Initiative Ltd (WSTI), West Sussex Trading Standards, West Sussex Fire Dept., the District Environmental Health departments in West Sussex and the tourism officers of each district, borough and the county council, Hotel Associations in West Sussex.

3. Rationale

Why is the project needed

- General lack of awareness among SMEs in the tourism industry of their statutory obligations
- Many complaints stem from issues such as misuse of credit cards and unclear customer cancellation policy
- Perception from industry and public that nothing will (or can) be done about the non-compliant businesses
- Despite Countywide commitment to promote only Quality-Assessed accommodation in L.A. publications/websites, it is relatively easy to trade without a grading, using commercial marketing opportunities, especially websites.
- Lack of resources among three statutory agencies to inspect accommodation businesses on a regular basis, as seen as ‘low risk’
- Desire to promote West Sussex as a county where the businesses treat their customers especially well, to encourage more repeat business

Why Public Involvement is required

- Considerable time has been given to date by the various partners, but additional resources are required to make more impact in five areas:
 - to visit more non-inspected businesses in an advisory capacity and expose and report to the relevant agencies any non-compliant businesses, who might close them down, if necessary
 - to establish a fully-functional shared electronic database between the partners to log complaints, visits, and record follow-up

- to establish a robust method of receiving from the Tourist Board up-to-date information on Quality Assessed tourism businesses, to include monthly reports on changes to gradings, lapses from the scheme etc.
 - promote the courses better and produce more educational material
 - to improve tourism department staff's awareness of issues relating to compliance, with training sessions
- Interest from neighbouring counties (Surrey and East Sussex) in the pilot

Who will benefit from the project

- Estimate 60 SMEs will attend training courses by end December 2003 (incl. 20 who attended first round of courses held in June/July 2003)
- Minimum of 700 businesses will receive information via newsletter
- Part-time assessor will make advisory visits into 70 businesses in 3 months from Sept '03 to Dec '03 (50% of these having no National Quality Grading)
- Minimum of 25 Tourist Information Centre staff and tourism officers will receive training
- Expect increase in applications for Quality Assessment (reduce non-assessed stock by 20% in 12 months)

4. Project Links

Describe any links with other projects

- Five other Fitness for Purpose pilot projects in Greenwich, Camden, Blackpool, Bournemouth and Canterbury (Greenwich and Camden having received funding from London Development Agency).

5. Options

- To continue with training module only and joint working between agencies, visits only being made into establishments when triggered by receipt of a complaint
- Secondment of Trading Standards assessor as Advisor only possible if additional funding received
- Would not be able to make any significant impact in raising standards of non-inspected establishments, so pilot would only be marginally successful from enforcement point of view
- Attendance on training courses might be reduced without additional funding for marketing
- Pilot would not therefore make major impact on raising standards in West Sussex

6. SEEDA Core Direct Outputs

- **Jobs (New and safeguarded)**
By supporting Accommodation providers it is likely that a significant number may wish to further develop their businesses resulting in further employment opportunities.

- **Learning opportunities supported**

The training courses provided will encourage accommodation providers to increase their learning and during the courses they will be encouraged to participate in further business development courses e.g. e-commerce, business planning, guest care

7. **SEEDA Supplementary Outputs**

SEEDA priorities addressed:

- Encouraging growth of indigenous businesses and, where appropriate, inward investment (SEEDA priorities 1 & 2). Project will improve business competitiveness
- Developing a thriving local economy, especially in rural areas. Supporting and developing the tourism sector. (SEEDA priority 15) project will focus on improving product standards. The training module also helps to build networks, bringing together SMEs to share best practice.

8. **Funding and Costs**

SEEDA funding sought

Secondment of lead assessor qualified Trading Standards Officer for 3 months (3 days a week)	6,000
Travel and subsistence	1,500
IT equipment for assessor	2,000
Purchase of software licences to expand shared VISIT database plus some software development to provide FfP features	5,000
Admin support to assist with organising visits and maintain database for 3 months (3 days a week)	3,000
Publicity (inc. newsletter)	<u>7,000</u>

TOTAL £24,500

Matched funding contributions

WSSC Trading Standards officers'/managers' time To date – since Jan 2003 – 30 days (240 hrs @ £25) incl. preparation of Memorandum of Understanding	6,000
EHO/Fire dept officers' time since April 2003 10 days (80 hours @ £25)	2,000
West Sussex Tourism Initiative's manager's time Since Jan 03 – 18 days (144 hrs @ £25)	<u>3,600</u>

SUB -TOTAL £11,600

Between Sept and Dec 03 expect WSTI/Trad.Stnds/EHO/Fire officers to spend 20 days total

(160 hrs @ £25)

4,000

TOTAL

£15,600

9. Risks

- Industry might be resistant to taking up training and/or resist advisory visits (Can be minimised by working through trade associations) First tranche of courses was very successful – have waiting list for next round.

10. Forward Strategy

- Invest to Save budget bid may provide ‘top-up’ funding. Local Authority matched funding will be on-going.