

Annex 2

The case for the priorities

Air quality is a high national political priority and actions taken to improve it will also contribute to tackling climate change. Local authorities have a vital role to play in delivering better outcomes. Air quality is a national enforcement priority because it impacts on whole populations, particularly the elderly and those more susceptible to air pollution. It is politically important to emphasise the role that local authorities can play in reducing its impacts, and its trans-boundary nature means that local action contributes to national outcomes.

- Air pollution damages health, quality of life and shortens life expectancy
- Health impacts from particulates in 2005 cost £9.1-£21 billion (though this cannot be tackled by local authority action alone)
- The issue is geographically spread though concentrated in urban and industrial areas and around roads
- Local action contributes to national outcomes, air pollution ignores local boundaries
- An important issue for citizens and for local authorities
- Hugely politically important

Alcohol licensing prevents high risks that are distributed throughout society. Anti-social behaviour and violence are seen throughout the UK, affecting all parts of society (particularly the young and vulnerable).

- 1 in 5 violent incidents were found to occur in or around public houses
- Up to 22,000 premature deaths per year are related to alcohol consumption
- 17 million working days lost through alcohol related absence
- Circa £0.5 billion in NHS A&E attendance and ambulance costs (up to 35 per cent of total costs) are alcohol related
- 61 per cent of the population perceive alcohol-related violence as worsening
- A quarter of the population consider drunk or rowdy behaviour a very or fairly big problem in their local area

The hygiene of food businesses is a national enforcement priority because of the high impact in terms of numbers of deaths and ill health caused by unhygienic food businesses and the high costs to the economy.

- 329 deaths can be anticipated as arising from food business operations (almost 1 death per day)
- 535,500 cases of food borne diseases (1,467 per day)
- Over 12,000 hospitalisations (33 per day)
- Both businesses and citizens considered that this policy area was a priority to ensure food safety and local authorities themselves considered this to be a top priority
- £900 million total costs to the economy in 2005 (including costs to the health care system)

Improving health in the workplace is a national enforcement priority due to the high risks posed to individuals, their families, damage to business and the costs to the economy as a whole.

- 560,000 workers per year experience an illness or ill-health condition caused or made worse by their work in local authority enforced sectors (4 per cent of workers)
- 147,000 people per year start an episode of work-related illness or ill-health in local authority enforced sectors (410 people per day)
- £360-£610 million costs to employers of ill-health in 2001/02 in the LA enforced sectors
- Costs to the economy of several billion pounds each year

Fair trading is a national enforcement priority because of the huge economic damage caused by rogue trading and mis-selling and the impact on individuals, particularly the vulnerable and elderly.

- Estimated £8 billion harm to consumers per year 5
- £3.2 billion lost to scams per year, 3.5 million victims per year
- £30 million lost to rogue doorstep sellers who target the elderly, and cause severe distress
- £1.3 billion costs due to theft of intellectual property per year 6
- Businesses saw this as a priority

An enforcement priority where roles and responsibilities are being reviewed

Protecting Animal and public health is a national enforcement priority because of the potentially huge impact that outbreaks have on local and national economies and because the enforcement system has to be complete and co-ordinated to provide protection.

- Extent of harm is severe, not only in risk but in actual cases in the last decade
- £8 billion costs due to the Foot and Mouth outbreak
- Over 0.1 per cent of UK GDP total resource costs to the economy due to the BSE crisis
- Circa £1.5 billion total public expenditure costs in the first year for industry compensation payments
- £3.9 billion costs due to the disposal of 8.5 million cattle aged over 30 months
- £600 million costs per year due to the BSE crisis as a result of on ban of exports of cattle and beef
- for over 10 years
- Damage to local communities and social networks in affected communities
- Requires local authorities to carry out co-ordinated action to be effective
- Existing delivery is fragmented undermining the control system