

## Confidence and Consistency

### Case Study – Moto Primary Authority Partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council

*“We now make changes with confidence, knowing that they will be supported by our partner.”*



### Origin

Contact with regulatory officers from local authorities is a routine occurrence for Moto, as it is the UK leader in motorway service areas, with 66 locations and 5000 personnel. Prior to 2009, the company had a longstanding voluntary partnership with two Bedfordshire councils for food safety and trading standards. This worked well but dealings with certain individuals in other parts of the country were far less cordial. In one case, a simple request to discuss the reasons for an enforcement decision was refused. The introduction of Primary Authority was seen as a chance to ensure that this situation could never be repeated.

### Conception

Given the previous arrangements, Moto viewed a Primary Authority agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council as a natural progression, and this was signed in April 2009. At the outset, the scope of the arrangement was expanded to cover new areas, including metrology and petroleum licensing. Although the same people were involved, the relationship was also formed with the unitary authority that had just been created, and thus helped to raise the profile of the regulatory services in general in the new, merged organization.



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PRIMARY  
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## Evolution

Both partners cooperate closely, with council personnel actively encouraged to visit Moto's premises to better understand its operations. Central Bedfordshire has input into the company's overarching food safety policy, ensuring this remains fully compliant with relevant legislation. The council contacts other local authorities that check sites for feedback on potential areas for improvement. As a result, there is now an inspection plan for food safety, which identifies specific issues for review by enforcing officers – such as adherence to jewellery and clothing rules. Central Bedfordshire also made a major contribution to the food safety management system for the new Moto restaurant brand (EDC). Its views directly shaped site training and working procedures. Overall, the new approach has informed the company's performance assessment.

Moto Head of Risk Management Jonathan Hayes comments: "After an excellent trading year without any enforcement issues of significance, we are delighted with the agreement and look forward to extending it to further share learning and experience. We now make changes with confidence, knowing that they will be supported by our partner. At the same time, on a national level, there is still scope for improvement. Some local authorities are not using the new channels of communication and need to change their ways. In addition, with hindsight, if LBRO had hosted review meetings in the opening weeks, the full benefits of the partnership would have been obtained more quickly. I strongly believe that businesses participating in Primary Authority should receive recognition from the Government, possibly in the form of exemption from inspection. Instead, there could be an annual top level review, backed up by a few random spot checks. This would allow businesses to concentrate on improving their commercial performance and regulators to focus on tackling rogue traders."

## Project Summary

**Any company trading across council boundaries is entitled to robust and reliable advice about its regulatory responsibilities. This is provided through a legal partnership with a single primary authority, which liaises with other councils to ensure that any enforcement action proposed elsewhere in the UK reflects the advice given. A national inspection plan can also be produced, to avoid unnecessary checks and tests. Agreements can cover the full range of regulatory services or specific functions such as food safety. The question of resourcing is up to the participants: where necessary, cost recovery is permitted. LBRO registers new partnerships, provides guidance and helps resolve any disputes.**



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