



BRITISH HALLMARKING COUNCIL (BHC)

2022 CORPORATE STATEMENT

This Corporate Statement reviews the BHC's objectives and performance for 2021 and its planned objectives for 2022. It should be read in conjunction with the Framework Document signed by the BHC and its sponsor body the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy ("BEIS").

1 Review of BHC objectives for 2021

In its Business Plan for 2021, the BHC set the following objectives.

1. Future trade with Europe and rest of world

To host a webinar for the jewellery industry jointly with BEIS and carry out follow up actions. To continue to engage with BEIS discussions on legal, trading and regulatory structures and identify actions for the Council, disseminating information as appropriate. To maintain a list of issues that arise and would merit consideration for potential amendments to the HMA should this become possible.

Outcome

The BHC hosted a webinar for the jewellery industry jointly with BEIS and continued to engage with BEIS discussions on legal, trading and regulatory structures. A list of issues meriting consideration for potential amendments to the HMA is being maintained by the BHC's Technical Committee.

2. Enforcement strategy

To work with the Trading Standards Primary Authorities for major online retail platforms to improve compliance with the HMA. To develop and communicate requirements for online retailers to display the Dealer's Notice under s11 HMA together with guidance for retailers and contextual information for consumers. To keep under review the potential for the Protecting and Promoting Hallmarking project to be taken forward. To carry out a programme of online retailer audits through the Assay Offices if resources are available. To run the Touchstone Award for Trading Standards in 2021 if Covid-19 constraints allow.

Outcome

The BHC worked in partnership with the Primary Authorities for two major online retail platforms to help them improve compliance with the HMA, and good progress was made with removing and preventing non-compliant listings of precious metal items. A new format Dealers Notice under s11 HMA was developed and launched. Alongside this the BHC announced a new HALO Award for online retailers' innovation in promoting the importance and reassurance

of the UK hallmark. The Protecting and Promoting Hallmarking project remains under review. Sheffield Assay Office carried out online retailer audits and follow ups. The Touchstone Award for Trading Standards was run in 2021, attracting a strong field of applications.

3. Education and raising the profile of hallmarking

To run a programme for education of brick and mortar retailers on compliance with hallmarking law, for delivery by the Assay Offices. To run a programme of communications with trade bodies and the industry on the legal requirements of hallmarking and display of the Dealer's Notice in physical and online shops, and on enforcement of hallmarking law.

Outcome

Hallmarking was promoted during 2021 alongside the launch of the new online format for the Dealer's Notice and the new HALO Award, together with the launch of the commemorative mark for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

4. Operational integrity

To commence implementation of the programme for five-yearly revalidations of sub-offices, confirming plans for desktop and virtual reviews in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to carry out reviews of two sub-offices. To implement protocols for applications for new sub-offices if any new sub-office is proposed. To continue to maintain oversight of arrangements to ensure the continued integrity of Assay Office operations including sub-offices and to work with the Queen's Assay Master to co-ordinate activities.

Outcome

The programme for five-yearly revalidations of sub-offices was implemented during 2021. Four sub-offices have now been visited and revalidated. There were no applications for new sub-offices during 2021. The Applications Committee liaised with the Queen's Assay Master to co-ordinated activities.

5. Technical consistency

To issue guidance on partially constructed items of precious metal; to update the Hallmarking Guidance Notes; to continue to review the shared wiki of hallmarking decisions; to continue to keep under review items needing amendment in the HMA.

Outcome

The guidance on partially constructed items of precious metal was issued. The Technical Committee started work on a review of the Hallmarking Guidance Notes. Work continues on the shared wiki of hallmarking decisions. A list of issues meriting consideration for potential amendments to the HMA is being maintained by the BHC's Technical Committee.

6. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

To submit a proposed design for a commemorative hallmark to the Lord Chamberlain's Office in preparation for launch to the jewellery industry.

Outcome

The commemorative hallmark for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was produced and approved by the BHC. It was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office, which confirmed that there was no objection to the mark. The mark was launched and available for use from 1 November 2021 alongside hallmarks for all precious metal items.

7. Council members and Chair

To recruit new members for appointment on 1 January 2022. To conduct annual appraisals of Council members and Chair.

Outcome

The recruitment process was carried out. No suitable candidate for the trade role was found and one Council member's term was extended for a further year accordingly. Appraisals were carried out.

8. Governance and administration

To maintain the full suite of governance documentation; to operate financial, payroll and data protection procedures; to maintain the Council's decision log; to plan for handovers and inductions for new Council members to be appointed from 1 January 2022; to continue to hold committee meetings by virtual means; to implement plans for alternating Council meetings as face to face and virtual events as appropriate depending on Covid-19 conditions.

Outcome

Governance and administration procedures were maintained throughout the year. Plans for changes to Secretary of State-appointed members were put in place. The log of historic decisions has been maintained.

9. Regulators' Code

To review the 2019 audit of the Regulators' Code and identify any actions needed.

Outcome

The BHC's compliance with the Regulators' Code and the 2019 audit were reviewed and an updated audit document with actions was produced.

10. Diversity and inclusion

To maintain diversity and inclusion as a standing item for discussion at Joint Assay Offices Committee meetings with a view to increasing the current diversity of the Council.

Outcome

The issues of diversity and inclusion remained as a standing item on JAOC agendas and were discussed at JAOC and Council meetings to maintain awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion and with a view to increasing the current diversity of the Council.

2 BHC Objectives for 2022

1. Enterprise

To consider and make recommendations on how the BHC and Assay Offices can stimulate growth in the precious metals sector. To promote hallmarking as the guarantee of the integrity of the precious metals industry, stimulating growth via education and protection of legitimate businesses and consumers. To encourage and support the expansion and reach of UK jewellery and UK hallmarks into the rest of the world through work with the International Hallmarking Convention. To promote point of sale promotion of the protection offered by hallmarking through the Dealers Notice for physical and online retailers and to run the HALO Award 2022 and the Touchstone Award 2022.

2. To improve the regulation of precious metals marketed online

To introduce and induct a new member to the Education & Enforcement Committee; to review the possibilities for development of further guidance and assets relating to the online Dealer's Notice and related publicity; to run the HALO Award for the first time; to continue partnership working with Trading Standards Primary Authorities for major online retail platforms to improve compliance with hallmarking law; to devise plans for similar approaches to other online retail platforms; to run the Touchstone Award 2022.

3. To encourage risk-based and proportionate enforcement of hallmarking across trading standards

To run the Touchstone Award for Trading Standards in 2022 if Covid-19 constraints allow.

4. Operational integrity

To complete the programme of five-yearly revalidations of sub-offices; to implement new protocols for applications for any new sub-offices; to continue to maintain oversight of arrangements to ensure the continued integrity of Assay Office operations including sub-offices, and work with the Queen's Assay Master to co-ordinate activities and avoid duplication of work.

5. Council members and Chair

To carry out induction of new Council members on 15 March 2022. To assist with the recruitment of 4 new SoS-appointed members for appointment on 1 January 2023. To conduct annual appraisals of Council members and Chair.

6. Governance and administration

Working with NAO to issue the 2021 Annual Report and accounts in required timescales. To review governance against requirements of the revised Framework Document.

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Chair of the British Hallmarking Council

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