

JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

Wokingham BOROUGH COUNCIL, SHUTE END, WOKINGHAM, RG40 1BN

Present: Norman Jorgensen, Marcus Franks, Emma Webster, Nick Allen and Iain McCracken

Also Present: Sean Murphy (Public Protection Manager), Paul Anstey (Head of Public Protection and Culture), Anna Smy (Team Manager - Environmental Quality) and Claire Lockwood (Lead Officer - Community Engagement, Public Protection Partnership), Clare Lawrence (Wokingham Borough Council), Damian James (Chair of the PPP Joint Management Board), Jo Reeves (Principal Policy Officer) and Peter Baveystock (Wokingham)

PART I

57 Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 June 2018 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed Damian James to the Committee who had recently been appointed the Assistant Director for Contract Services for Bracknell Forest Council.

The Chairman also invited officers to participate fully in the discussions of the Committee.

58 Declarations of Interest

In the course of the discussion, Councillors Iain McCracken and Emma Webster declared an interest in Agenda Item 7.

59 Notice of Public Speaking and Questions

No public questions were submitted.

60 Future Plan

The Committee noted the Future Plan. Anna Smy updated that three reports would be added to the agenda for the December meeting regarding operational delegation of work, implementation of the external review and the performance report.

61 PPP Communications Report August 2018

The Committee considered the PPP Communications Evaluation Report (Agenda Item 8). In introducing the report, Claire Lockwood advised that her role was to raise public awareness of the PPP and encourage community engagement. The report set out the activities that had been undertaken to support the key priorities in the PPP Communications Strategy.

Councillor Iain McCracken noted that the total digital reach was presented at 3.5m and asked what the target was. Claire Lockwood advised that a target had not been set due to resource implications, however the PPP had gained knowledge of what they could achieve. Councillor Emma Webster asked how digital reach was defined. Claire Lockwood responded that organisations such as media outlets provided the data and had their own definitions.

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Councillor Webster commented that while the figures were impressive, digital reach needed to be targeted to individuals within the PPP's geography in order to be relevant and to ensure resources were being directed appropriately. The pick-up rate of press releases into news outlets, for example, might be a more effective way to measure the PPP's impact. Claire Lockwood highlighted that the PPP had one communications officer and resources were limited.

Paul Anstey advised that performance targets had not been set in relation to the PPP's communications work and the overarching aim was to use the PPP's profile for demand management and to gather intelligence. There had been a significant improvement in communications with staff and Members since Claire Lockwood came into post. However, as the post was additional capacity rather than part of the core staffing, it had been necessary to consider resourcing when setting the ambitions for the Communications Strategy.

Councillor McCracken expressed the view that the report had provided Members with an informative and invaluable insight and thanked Claire Lockwood. He expressed support for a proactive and positive approach to communications.

Claire Lockwood, in answering a question from Councillor McCracken regarding relationships with the Councils' Communications Teams, advised that a draft protocol had been developed and was optimistic about strengthening working relationships.

Councillor Marcus Franks expressed the view that the PPP was also trying to achieve business development through its communications work and it was important this was reflected in future iterations of the report. It was also important that PPP officers could be involved in social media responses; Claire Lockwood confirmed she was.

Councillor Norman Jorgensen stated that he had found the Members' bulletins useful and he requested that in future all press releases were circulated to JPPC Members. **(Action: Claire Lockwood).**

Sean Murphy reported that the PPP's website would be launched in November and Members would have an opportunity to see it in advance. **(Action: Sean Murphy).** Sean Murphy also reported that the PPP was participating in a BBC programme regarding rogue traders.

RESOLVED that:

The JPPC noted the PPP Communications Evaluation Report and the PPP Brand Guidelines and Style Guide; agreed to circulate them to appropriate members; and gave guidance regarding the PPP communications function.

The following documents would be rolled out in September and sent to all PPP Members and all Partner authority Members:

- PPP Communications Evaluation Report – The difference communications is making (9 October 2017-30 June 2018)
- PPP Brand Guidelines and Style Guide

62 Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 6) which set out the draft Revenue Budget for 2019/20 including fees and charges. In introducing the report, Sean Murphy explained that the Inter-Authority Agreement, which established the PPP, had set a percentage contribution required from each local authority. Officers were satisfied that these contribution proportions were still correct. After publication of the agenda, officers had learnt that the correct uplift to pension contributions had not been applied for Wokingham and West Berkshire and a corrected report had been issued.

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The report proposed an overall budget reduction of £145k in recognition of the financial pressures facing each of the local authorities.

Sean Murphy clarified that the Committee's role was to recommend a budget to each of the three local authorities, who would take the final decision.

Councillor Nick Allen enquired what impact the budget reduction would have. Sean Murphy advised that a review of the PPP service was being undertaken and it was likely that a number of efficiencies would be proposed to the December meeting of the JPPC. Sean Murphy also clarified that West Berkshire Council's contribution would be 40.01% of the total PPP budget in 2019/20.

Councillor McCracken stated that it would be useful for the report recommendations to clarify the overall net budget the Committee were being asked to set.

Councillor McCracken enquired whether the £145k savings would be achievable and whether a similar level of savings might be required in 2020/21. Paul Anstey advised that following the implementation of the operating model and vacancies which had arisen, the opportunity had been taken to commence a review and officers were confident that efficiencies identified in the review would lead to the savings being achieved. Damian James advised that officers would monitor the situation throughout 2019/20 and evaluate the budget where necessary.

Councillor Franks stated that West Berkshire Council had asked whether it would be possible to reduce the budget and was mindful that he did not want to harm the PPP. He was confident that the PPP would not be harmed and would deliver the service in an efficient way.

Councillor Allen stated it was difficult to understand the proposed budget for 2019/20 without the current year budget being included in the report. Sean Murphy advised that Appendix A to the report contained further information.

Sean Murphy outlined that a schedule of fees and charges had been included in the report. The JPPC had agreed to apply a full cost recovery methodology to fees and charges at a previous meeting. Officers had also sought to make fees and charges consistent, focusing on high impact areas such as taxi and private hire fees in the first instance.

Councillor Franks expressed his support for a standard charging regime across the three local authority areas and enquired whether the requirements on taxis were the same across the areas. Sean Murphy advised that some work was required to standardise policies. Councillor Franks suggested that some proactive communications around the proposed fees and charge might help to mitigate any concerns raised by the trade. Sean Murphy advised that the proposed fees and charges would be subject to statutory consultation and require approval by each council's Licensing Committee.

The Committee noted that where there was a blank column on page 27 of the agenda, the fees would remain the same as the previous year and 2.5% should be added where 'n/a' was shown against ice cream sellers.

Councillor Webster stated that she was supportive of the approach and noted that it would be essential to inform their fellow Council Members of the proposals. She noted that there was also an important message which should be shared with the public regarding the protections that consumers could be confident of when using licensed services. Sean Murphy agreed that the taxi industry was not without risks and proper regulation gave consumers confidence.

Councillor Jorgensen suggested that Licensing Committees would find the benchmarking information useful. He also expressed that he would like the budget to be set in alignment with the Councils' usual budget setting timescales.

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In response to a query from Councillor Nick Allen regarding fees for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, Sean Murphy advised that the contractor, Capita, had not yet set their fee but the fee the PPP charged would be the actual cost plus 30 minutes of processing time plus 2.5%.

A discussion was held regarding the differences in the charges applied to taxis between the three local authorities and the influence of the trade associations was noted.

RESOLVED that:

The Committee agree the Joint Management Board's proposal for a contribution reduction of £145K as set out in paragraph 5.4 of the corrected report.

The Committee recommend to the Councils the contributions set out at Table 2 at 5.8 in the report along with the fees and charges set out in Appendix B, subject to the amendments highlighted in the discussion (above).

The JPPC recommends that the proposed net budget of the Public Protection Partnership for 2019/20 is £3.404m.

63 Public Protection Partnership Performance Report and Strategic Projects Update

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which sought to inform the Committee of the current performance of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) in line with the operating model and business plan and to outline the 2018/19 reporting format in line with the Strategic Assessment 2018/19.

Councillor Webster commended the report which she had found to provide a useful level of detail.

Councillor Allen requested that where there was a target to make an improvement, the previous year's figure be provided in order to demonstrate whether performance had in fact improved.

Regarding the 'red' risk action plans on page 72 and the updated version tabled by Anna Smy, Councillor Jorgensen enquired about accommodation changes. Sean Murphy advised that IT issues were a barrier to colocation and there was an impact on staff morale caused by the service being spread over many areas.

(Councillors McCracken and Webster declared an interest by virtue of the fact that they were members of the Fire Authority and colocation with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service had been an option discussed at a previous meeting.)

Councillor McCracken requested further information regarding the implementation of the proposed shared case management system. Anna Smy reported that there had been issues regarding software licenses and she would provide an update at the next meeting.
(Action: Anna Smy).

In response to a query regarding complaints, Anna Smy advised that many complaints submitted by Councillors were on behalf of residents and further work was required to provide clarity on the source of complaints.

Councillor McCracken commended the presentation of the risk information and requested that future iterations also included completion or revised dates.

RESOLVED that

The Committee approved the report and noted actions for areas of improvement.

The Committee agreed to the new reporting process outlined in the report.

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The Committee agreed that only two Key Performance Indicators outlined in the IAA should be specifically retained:

- Effective budget management and use of resources, and;
- Maintain high levels of customer and business satisfaction.

64 Air Quality Annual Status Report Update

The Committee noted a report for information regarding an update on the Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASR) 2018. Anna Smy advised that as the Annual Status report had been submitted to the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs in good time, a quick response had been received. Paul Anstey noted that the timely submission of the report might leave the PPP in a good position should any grants be announced later in the year.

Councillor Webster asked that the latest version be made available on the Councils' websites. **(Action: Anna Smy).**

Post meeting note: the updated reports are available from the following link:
<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/airquality>

RESOLVED that the report for information be noted.

65 Any other items the Chairman considers to be urgent

No other matters were raised by the Chairman.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and closed at 8.50 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature