

## Notice of Meeting

# Joint Public Protection Committee

A shared service provided by Bracknell Forest Council,  
West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council

**Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 4.00pm**

This meeting will be held in a virtual format in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

This meeting will be streamed live here:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/jointpublicprotectioncommitteelive>

**To:** Councillors Parry Batth (Chairman) and John Halsall (Wokingham Borough Council), Hilary Cole and James Cole (West Berkshire Council), John Harrison and John Porter (Bracknell Forest Council)

## Part I

Page No.

1 **Apologies**

To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting.

2 **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 15 December 2020.

To Follow

3 **Declarations of Interest**

Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration, and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members' Interests, the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.

**Public Protection Partnership Agenda - Wednesday, 31 March 2021** *(continued)*

**4 Notice of Public Speaking and Questions**

While the Partnership welcomes questions from members of the public about their work no applications have been received for the public to speak on items not included on this agenda.

Subject to meeting certain timescales up to thirty minutes is set aside on the agenda for questions which can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Partnership or an item which is on the agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact Democratic Services.

**5 Forward Plan**

1 - 2

To consider items for inclusion on future agendas.

## Items for Discussion

**6 PPP Covid-19 Response and Service Update 3**

3 - 32

Purpose: To provide the Joint Public Protection Committee with an update on the service response to Covid19 as well as an update on other service delivery matters including performance and an update on the work of the Case Management Unit.

## Items for Information

**7 PPP DEFRA Grant Funded Air Quality Project**

33 - 50

Purpose: To set out the details of the Air Quality Project proposed by the Public Protection Partnership for which West Berkshire Council (on behalf of the Partnership) have been awarded £259,406 from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

**8 The Future of the Public Protection Partnership - Outline response to Wokingham Borough Council's Executive Decision**

To Follow

Purpose: To outline the response of West Berkshire Council and Bracknell Forest Borough Council, to the paper presented by the Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough Council recommending that all functions currently governed through the Joint Public Protection Committee and delivered by the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) would be brought back in-house to Wokingham and to provide an overview of options available to the West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest Councils to ensure any operational and financial risks are appropriately managed.

**Contact Officer:**

Stephen Chard, Legal and Strategic Support, West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD

**Public Protection Partnership Agenda - Wednesday, 31 March 2021** *(continued)*

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## JPPC Forward Plan May 2021 to June 2022

No.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Lead Member
June 2021					
1.		Public Protection Partnership - Food and Feed Plan	To agree the PPP Food and Feed Plan	Rosalynd Gater	
2.		PPP Covid19 Response and Service Update 3	To provide the Joint Public Protection Committee with an update on the service response to Covid19 as well as an update on other service delivery matters including performance and an update on the work of the Case Management Unit.	Sean Murphy	
3.		Strategic Assessment and 2021/22 Recovery Work Plan		Sean Murphy	
4.		Noise Policy - Annual Review	To note any changes to the Policy	Anna Smy	
5.	LC4043	Fireworks Policy	To consider the policy that will be presented to West Berkshire Council's Licensing Committee on the 21 June 2021.	Anna Amy	Councillor Hilary Cole
September 2021					
6.		Annual Air Quality Report	For information to the Committee to update on the PPP Position for 2020 with Air Quality across all 3 areas	Anna Smy	
7.		Vehicle Emissions Policy	To agree a policy.	Anna Smy	
8.		PPP list of Fees and Charges 2022/23	To approve the PPP list of Fees and Charges to be submitted to each LA budget setting cycle	Sean Murphy	
9.		Fee Policy for Relevant Protected Sites under Caravan Sites and Mobile Homes Legislation	To consider the responses to the consultation with the site owners, comparative data on average administration time and inspection times and agree a way forward in terms of the fee setting.	Rosalynd Gater	

No.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Lead Member
10.		PPP Private Sector Housing Policy	To consider and if appropriate agreed the policy.	Rosalynd Gater	
11.		Public Protection Partnership Q1 2021/22 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 1 Performance Report	Moir Fraser	
December 2021					
12.		Public Protection Partnership Q2 2021/22 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 2 Performance Report		
13.		RIPA Policy	To agree a policy following on from the recent audit of these processes.	Sean Murphy	
14.		CCTV Policy	To agree a policy.	Sean Murphy	
March 2022					
15.		Public Protection Partnership Q3 2021/22 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 3 Performance Report	Anna Smy/ Moir Fraser	
June 2022					
16.		Update on the DEFRA Grant Funded Air Quality Project	To provide the Committee with a project update report.	Anna Smy	

## PPP Covid19 Response and Service Update 3

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Parry Batth
Date JMB agreed report:	JMB Approval: 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021
Report Author:	Sean Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	N/a

### Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Joint Public Protection Committee with an update on the service response to Covid19 as well as an update on other service delivery matters including performance and an update on the work of the Case Management Unit.

### Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee **NOTES** the role PPP are playing across the Councils with respect to Covid19 response.
- 1.2 The Committee **NOTES** the status of non-Covid related service delivery including the Q3 performance report.
- 1.3 The Committee **RESOLVES** to receive a further update at its June 2021 meeting on progress and priorities for 2021/22 including recovery.

### Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>The Covid19 pandemic has presented a number of financial challenges for the service particularly with respect to income from licensing. Many sectors of the licence trade including hospitality, taxi and private hire, street trading and licensed animal establishments have been significantly hit by the combination of the Covid19 business restrictions and the restrictions around essential travel. This has resulted in a significant number of licences being surrendered or not renewed.</p> <p>At the time of writing the impact in terms of lost income from licence receipts is estimated to have stabilised at around £70K for the period April 2020 – February 2021. This is lower than previously estimated. The primary losses have come from the taxi and private hire sectors but we have also seen some premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 close as well as some animal establishments / businesses cease trading.</p>

	<p>In relation to the new duties the PPP has obtained it has accessed a total £169K of the local outbreak response grant to cover the period July 2020 to December 2021. The commitment to this has been shared across the three PPP Councils. Grant funding has also been accessed to support the local tracing functions set out in this report.</p> <p>The service has also accessed grant funding with respect to Covid compliance work and specific projects relating to care settings. This has enabled additional staffing resource to support work around compliance checks, enforcement, business advice and events and safety advisory group.</p>
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<p>The service now has only three full-time / part time vacancies and at the time of writing these are in the process of being recruited too. We have around 18 agency and casual staff currently in the service. These are mostly grant funded for work around Covid and investigations as well as providing cover to long term absence such as maternity leave or are working on the single system project.</p> <p>Recently we have recruited to the Principal Officer – Policy and Governance role. The service is now effectively fully staffed.</p>
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>The service is the primary enforcement body for all three councils with respect to Covid legal controls.</p> <p>At the moment these controls fall into two categories. The first deals with business restrictions of which very few still exist. These can be re-introduced as a result of so-called local lockdowns.</p> <p>The second category relates to controls on Premises, Events (gatherings) and Public Spaces where the Councils have powers to issue directions and prohibitions.</p> <p>These are enforced under delegated authority from the Secretary of State or through the existing delegations to officers.</p> <p>It is a statutory duty to enforce many of the provisions in place to tackle Covid19 at a local level.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>We will continue to manage risk in line with the prevailing situation and corporate policies.</p> <p>The most significant risks relate to workload and income. In the former we are managing this through effective prioritisation of workload and the deployment of additional grant funded resource. The long-term sustainability of working a seven day service with evening / late evening working is a challenge but</p>

	<p>many staff have come forward to assist with this to ensure that people can get effective breaks.</p> <p>Lost income is being covered this year in part by government support schemes for local authorities. It is understood the lost income will be covered for the first quarter of 2021/2022. Beyond this we are looking at how lost income can be managed within the service whilst allowing time to see if this income returns as businesses may re-enter the market as lockdown restrictions are eased,</p>			
<b>Property:</b>	<p>There are no direct implications arising from these proposals. Each Council is taking its own approach to property issues.</p> <p>The support elements of the service are largely operated from a central base at Theale and this has provided for efficiencies for example in the area of licence applications where we now have the ability to produce licences for all three areas from one central office.</p>			
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>The role of the Joint Committee includes consideration of reports relating to service delivery matters. This report addresses that requirement by setting out the approach to service recovery.</p>			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		<p>This is not a decision report.</p> <p>The report does however set out the steps taken to protect vulnerable staff and address community need during this period.</p>
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		<p>The level of service will be improved with competent and appropriately qualified staff delivering to our customers, from initial contact through to enforcement action.</p> <p>Staff will also have the opportunity for personal development and self-worth.</p>

<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	x			There has been an unquantifiable environmental impact from the new service arrangements as travel has been significantly reduced. Longer term it is anticipated that this impact will be maintained as new ways of working are embedded in service delivery.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	x			The proposals create no direct health impacts on staff. They do however set out community based health protection measures.
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>	x			The use of ICT on service delivery has been transformational. Telephone conferencing, MS Teams and Zoom have all been employed in the day to day running of the service but also in the delivery of democratic decision making. Staff have engaged in planning meetings remotely and all three PPP authorities have held virtual licensing panels where the technology has delivered effectively. The Joint Public Protection Committee has also met remotely.
<b>PPP Priorities :</b>	x			The proposal is to maximise the use of resource to deliver against the JPPC priorities particularly around health protection, protection of vulnerable people and environmental protection on a risk led basis. The priority relating to effective and efficient service delivery has been at the core of arrangements.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		✓		None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Managers and JMB have been involved in the development of the service delivery proposals.			

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In June 2020, September 2020 and December 2020 the JPPC received reports setting out the service response to Covid as well as highlighting the steps taken to prioritise business as usual workloads. At its meeting in December 2020 the Committee resolved to receive a further update report at this meeting.
- 1.2 This report builds on those previous three reports as well as providing an interim performance update.

## 2.0 Local Covid19 Response

- 2.1 **Service Requests:** In the period up until the 28<sup>th</sup> February the Service received 11,155 service requests. This is a year on year increase of 32% compared with the same period in 2019/20. In addition we received around 4600 trading standards notifications from the national reporting system. This represents an increase of 27% year on year. Of the 11,155 service requests 1708 related directly to Covid19 matters. These

included requests for advice from local businesses as well as reports from the public and others of alleged non compliances. Business as usual areas that saw a significant rise included bonfires and other reports of burning with 883 reports (an increase of 246%), licensing related enquiries at 681 (an increase of 24%), fly-tipping referrals for investigation at 123 (an increase of 124%) and noise at 1650 (an increase of 13%). Other areas that saw increases were animal health related SR's (64% increase, doorstep crime and scams (31% increase) and matters relating to product safety (60% increase). Areas where service request numbers fell year on year included food safety and standards (fall of around 22%) – believed to be linked to many premises being closed and animal warden SR's (a fall of 34%). This has presented a significant challenge for the service but with the additional resource and redistribution of staff we have maintained a response. A summary of response times against performance indicators is set out at **Appendix A** to this report.

- 2.2 **Outbreak Planning and Local Outbreak Investigation:** Each local authority has in place a local outbreak control plan. These have recently been refreshed and where called upon to do so we have assisted with that refresh. The Public Protection Service has a significant role to play in investigating, managing and preventing outbreaks.

The period since the Committee last met has been the busiest yet for the service as the country went through the second wave of the virus. We provided support monitoring outbreaks all through the Christmas and New Year holiday period and since the last report have contributed as follows to outbreak related matters:

- We carried out weekday local contact tracing for West Berkshire and weekend contact tracing for West Berkshire and Wokingham. Since numbers have stabilised the service now also carries out weekend contact tracing for Bracknell. At the peak this saw the service carrying out upwards of 50 local contact tracing calls in a single day and apart from four days over Christmas when these were picked up by the national system (in line with agreed protocol) we have provided this service 7 days a week including the new year period.
- Monitoring and review of all Covid notifications from PHE as well as 'soft intelligence' notifications from businesses, employees and members of the public. These notifications increased significantly through the second wave period and the service carried out a number of investigations in high risk settings including retail premises, industrial settings and other work places. We also carried out investigations in care homes, learning difficulty care settings and early years when asked to do so. The service has been tailored to meet each individual authorities' needs and to respond in accordance with their outbreak plans.
- In addition we have carried out targeted pro-active advisory calls and visits to settings which saw increases in cases to look at how outbreaks were occurring and provide advice on how they could be reduced and contained. In West Berkshire specific work was carried out in care settings and across all three authorities we have carried out advisory calls and / or visits to early years settings. This work is ongoing as we follow up on the advice given.
- Since the last report nationally and locally we have overseen the implementation of a raft of business and other restrictions put in place. Through December we carried out both daytime and evening visits to businesses to ensure compliance with the Tier 2 restrictions affecting hospitality and other retail and business settings. At one stage



we were carrying out several hundred proactive and reactive visits per week. Towards the end of December we entered Tier 3 for one day and then Tier 4 (which latterly became national lockdown). Since we entered tier 4 we have continued with reactive and proactive visits to those premises still open and have carried out around 100 visits per week prioritising common exposure settings and in particular supermarkets where guidance changed in January. A small number of prohibition notices have been issued on businesses that should not have been operating. In cases where improvements were needed advice has been given and follow up visits have been made. Weekly activity on compliance has been routinely reported back to each authority. We have also provided advice on other restrictions to the PPP partner councils and to towns and parishes.

- The service has worked very closely with the Wokingham Covid Marshals and Bracknell Covid Ambassadors to provide a joined up approach to achieving compliance. More recently (mid-February) West Berkshire introduced Covid Marshals and this service is managed directly by the Public Protection Service. This ongoing relationship will be very important in the coming weeks and months as lockdown restrictions are gradually eased in line with the government roadmap.
- Events and gatherings were limited in the run up to Tier 4 restrictions but we continued through the Safety Advisory Group to oversee the events and carried out compliance and monitoring visits where needed. An example of this was the work carried out with Bracknell public health colleagues at the Lapland UK event until its eventual closure on entering Tier 4.

2.3 **Support for the Businesses:** As has been stated in the section on Service Requests we have carried out a lot of work to support local businesses through the provision of advice and advisory visits. This has included advice on what businesses or aspect of businesses can still operate but also advice on how they can operate safely within the legislative and guidance framework. Many compliance visits have been advisory in nature.

### **3.0 Business as Usual**

3.1 In terms of business as usual work, outside of service request work, we have carried out a large volume of risk managed activity. The following, whilst not exhaustive, gives an indication of the work conducted since the last report:

3.2 From an Environmental Quality perspective we have continued with provision of advice on planning related matters, routine air quality monitoring, sampling and testing private water supplies, inspections relating to environmental permitting and responded to allegations of commercial related nuisance.

The team have also successfully been awarded a Defra grant for air quality work and there is more on this elsewhere on this agenda.

The team prepared a policy report for Bracknell Forest Executive on the introduction of activity in relation to vehicle idling as well as applying for authority to carry out roadside emissions testing in the Boroughs air quality management areas. Finally, in Wokingham we have overseen the soon to be introduced PM2.5 particulate monitoring in parts of the Borough to align with local priorities in this area



- 3.3 The Community and Trading Standards Team have continued to respond to a large volume of service requests on top of Covid-19 related compliance requests from businesses. Many of the business as usual service requests relate to nuisance, neighbour disputes, public health pest complaints, animal warden related matters and public health funerals. To date, the team has successfully supported 12 mediation cases as part of its work involving complex neighbour disputes.

Other work includes the provision of support for fraud victims, the reintroduction of animal health and animal feed visits on farms, responding to food standards matters, inspections of petroleum storage facilities, responding to product safety related matters, response to incidents of alleged fraud and doorstep crime.

So far this year, the team has put in place work to recover almost £250,000 for victims of fraud and has recently purchased 16 doorbell camera's that will be used to protect residents from doorstep crime as well as investing in 'call-blocker' equipment to help prevent exposure to telephone scams.

The team has also led a number of public health related matters relating to tobacco and alcohol around Covid related hygiene with primary school children. The Berkshire West Tobacco Control Plan has also been refreshed by the team. Support with Confidence also goes from strength to strength.

Finally the service ran an on-line webinar for local importers and exporters on managing the requirements post Brexit.

- 3.4 The Food and Health and Safety Team have primarily been focussed on Covid compliance work, outbreak investigation, local contact tracing and looking at forthcoming events as well as carrying out advice work in early years and care settings. In addition they have maintained some food work concentrating on new businesses as well as considering and responding to reports of workplace accidents and non Covid infectious disease related matters.
- 3.5 The Housing Team has carried on with a large volume of licensing related matters appertaining to Houses of Multiple Occupation and Caravan Sites. They have also dealt with a number of complex housing related matters including investigations into housing and caravan site standards breaches. There is more on the work of this team in the first Member Housing Bulletin at Appendix C to this report.
- 3.6 The licensing team have a dealt with a large volume of licensing related SR work. They have also supported Licensing Committee meetings in West Berkshire and Wokingham as well as conducting statutory consultations on taxi and private hire fees and charges.

Further work on vehicle standards is being prepared for consultation and in West Berkshire the team drafted a response to the RSPCA motion on fireworks which was considered by the Licensing Committee and a policy will be brought forward in due course. In addition the team have updated the Bracknell Forest policy under the Licensing Act 2003 which was recently approved by BFC Licensing Committee and Executive and Full Council.

The licensing team are now working with all three Councils to review and update the Statement of Gambling Policy which will be put before all three Councils later this

year. Finally meetings have been / are being arranged with all three taxi liaison groups.

- 3.7 Across the service a large volume of investigation work has continued throughout the pandemic. This covers a wide range matters including fraud, doorstep crime, housing, nuisance, fly-tipping and counterfeiting. Funding and other resources have been secured from regional and national sources to support a number of cases of national significance. This work is supported by the PPP intelligence team.
- 3.8 The Joint Case Management Unit has supported the work around investigations and Covid response as well as prosecuting a number of cases on behalf of the partner authorities and working with West Berkshire legal services on West Berkshire matters. They continue to support Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards and Fire and Rescue Services as well as Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Cases successfully prosecuted with respect to PPP enforcement since the last meeting of JPPC are as follows:
- Bracknell case: Confiscation Orders of £16K plus £9K costs following conviction of Maidenhead based couple convicted of selling counterfeit goods.
  - West Berkshire – breach of an improvement notice under the Housing Act 2004. Ordered to pay £1280 fine and prosecution costs of £4725.50
  - Wokingham based landowner convicted of breach of a prohibition notice served under the Housing Act 2004 – fined £2800 and awarded costs of £1513 + £20 per day ongoing fine if breach continues.
  - Wokingham case – Reading based gas fitter ordered to pay £2000 compensation following conviction for unfair trading.
  - Bracknell based resident convicted of breach of abatement notice following a trial over two days. Fined £600 with £2500 contribution towards costs.
  - West Berkshire based retailer convicted of five offences in relation to food hygiene. Conditionally discharged for 12 months. Costs £1247.26 awarded.
  - West Berkshire – prosecution of a roofer for unfair trading. Ordered to pay £8870 compensation to two victims
  - Bracknell – supermarket fined £536K for two breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act
  - Bracknell – London based seller of counterfeit goods ordered to pay £12,366.19 confiscation and £5K costs
  - In addition the unit prosecuted a number of matters under the Road Traffic Regulation Act for breach of weight restrictions.
- 3.9 In terms of other corporate matters the service has supported the introduction and delivery of both the new RIPA policy at Bracknell and the new CCTV policy for Bracknell Forest. Both of which were approved by Executive in February. We are now assisting with staff and member awareness sessions. We are also working to achieve

accreditation for a range of powers under the Consumer Safety Accreditation Scheme which will in due course assist us to deal with a range of community related issues. In Quarter three the following FOI / MP / Member enquiries were received:

Type	Bracknell	West Berks	Wokingham	PPP Total
FOI	26 (12 "land charges searches")	27 (32 "land charges searches")	24	77 (44 "searches")
MP/Cllr	9	11	7	27
Service	7	6	6	19
Authority Total	42 (+12)	44 (+32)	37	123 (+44)

- 3.10 The PPP one system project, which will enhance both investigation efficiency and customer journey has experienced a series of delays due to availability of specialist officers. This is a direct result of prioritising staff for the Covid response. Recent meetings with the supplier has also indicated that they are not able to provide additional support during 2022/23 to reduce the delay. Based on current progress the project is now looking at a 2022/23 Q4 deadline. The JMB has focussed additional resources at improving data quality and reducing file duplication in advance of the main data transfers due in the autumn.

## 4.0 Communications

- 4.1 Communication remains a key element of effective service delivery and is an important part of the delivery model which has a focus on prevention and intelligence gathering as well as enforcement. We use many channels to communicate including visits to businesses and residents, press releases, website and social media.
- 4.2 A range of communication channels have been deployed since the last update. These have included:
- Further staff briefing notes / briefing sessions
  - Presentation to Norreys Neighbourhood Action Group
  - Licensing Update Session for Members of all three Licensing Committees
  - 1 further Members Bulletins (No7) at Appendix B
  - PPP website / Social Media – Update at Appendix D
  - Members Housing Bulletin at Appendix C
  - Air Quality Update Bulletin appended to the report elsewhere on this agenda.
  - News releases – available on PPP website  
[www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news](http://www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news)
- 4.3 We are finding there is a significant take up by local media and large amount of our press releases, warnings and court reports are reproduced on-line which help raise awareness of issues with a view to preventing harms and increasing reporting. We have also carried out a number of interviews on Radio Berkshire on subjects ranging from scams to the illegal sale of puppies.

## **5.0 Looking Ahead**

- 5.1 In line with the national picture the number of reported Covid cases has now fallen significantly. It is not known at this time what effect there will be from schools returning and the gradual easing of restrictions against a backdrop of the vaccination programme roll-out. Local tracing continues and we still receive reports of outbreaks in workplaces and other settings but these are few.
- 5.2 One of the key priorities for the service (as it has been before) in the coming period will be to assist businesses and communities through the process of the gradual easing of restrictions. A communication plan is in place which will include several business briefings in all three Council areas along with sector specific advice aimed at hospitality, non-essential retail, close contact services, grass roots sports and public bodies who manage public spaces. Plans are in place to carry out regular daytime and evening checks as part of our compliance and advisory roles. In performing this role we will be, as we have been since restrictions were first introduced, holding the balance between supporting businesses and the economy and the overarching public health imperative.
- 5.3 A significant area for the service will be events. A large number of events have been notified already and more are being submitted every week. We are also seeing a significant number of Temporary Event Notices being applied for. The service is putting in place additional resource to consider risk assessments as well as policing events from the point of view of Covid compliance, health and safety, food safety and environmental nuisance. Attendance will be on a risk based basis.
- 5.4 Beyond Covid there is much to be done in terms of recovery. To assist with this the government have set out proposed priorities for recovery. By and large these accord with previous priorities set by this Committee. It is proposed at the June meeting to bring forward a full recovery plan for consideration proposals for local priorities to meet the needs of the PPP authorities.
- 5.5 Elsewhere on this agenda the decision of Wokingham Borough Council to leave the Partnership is reported. This will clearly feature significantly in management workload capacity issues in coming months but all steps will be taken to mitigate the impact on service delivery.

## **6.0 Appendices**

**Appendix A** – Response Times

**Appendix B** – Members Bulletin no 7

**Appendix C** – Member Housing Bulletin

**Appendix D** – Communications Summary Report

**APPENDIX A**

**2020/21 Q3 Data**

Key Performance Indicator	Q3 Figure	Current Year End Status	Year to Date	Notes/Comments
% of reported food safety incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	99.3%	G	99.9%	
% of reported Covid incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	99.1%	G	98.8%	
% of reported envirocrime incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	84.4%	A	85.0%	This continued to be low priority work unless imminent public health risk
% of reported air quality concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	94.4%	G	97.7%	
% of reported commercial noise incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	80.5%	A	86.7%	Dip in Q3 performance due to resource issues, temporary officer to deal with planning and free staff to deal with complaints.
% of reported door step crime incidents appropriately responded to in 1 working day	100.0%	G	100.0%	
% of reported product safety concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	100.0%	G	100.0%	
% of reported private sector housing concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	95.8%	A	94.4%	Improved Housing resource reflected in responses in Q3 but year to date affected
% of reported health and safety at work concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	97.6%	G	98.0%	
% of reported other incidents/concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	94.3%	G	96.1%	
% of reported noise cases (non-commercial) appropriately responded to in 10 days	96.2%	G	96.8%	
% of general Trading Standards requests responded to within 10 days	99.1%	G	99.3%	
% of licensing complaints/requests for advice dealt with appropriately within 10 working days	97.5%	G	94.1%	
% of whole service response within appropriate times	97.3%	G	97.5%	Overall the service is responding appropriately to real time issues and focusing on priority work

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## PPP Members Briefing Bulletin #7

## Public Protection Partnership

Bracknell Forest  
West Berkshire  
Wokingham

### New Regulations

The latest National Lockdown came into force on Wednesday 5th January. The key message being to stay at home and to only leave home for a limited number of reasons. See [here](#) for details.

The lockdown also resulted in some businesses being allowed to stay open, whilst others had to close. There were many similarities to the November lockdown so businesses, in general, were better prepared. There was also more clarity on some of the more vague guidelines from the November lockdown, such as hand car washes must close but automatic car washes can remain open. For full details of business which can remain open and those that must be closed see [here](#).

### Enforcement of Regulations & Patrols Across the Areas

Since the last bulletin at the beginning of December we have moved through the tiers at an alarming rate until ultimately, like the rest of England, we were placed in National Lockdown.

Since 2nd December 2020 (movement into Tier 2) to current day we have undertaken in excess of 310 visits/compliance checks. These are primarily reactive now meaning they are in response to complaints and intelligence received.

Tier 2 posed serious challenges to, and enforcing in, hospitality settings in terms on the restrictions on gatherings indoors and outdoors and the substantial meal provisions.

Training was undertaken with the trade to assist in understanding these rules. Our intention is to provide written advice, to be provided to non-compliant hospitality premises that concerns were raised with whilst in T2, and to repeatedly non compliant car washes – to make it very clear of expectations and when they are permitted to reopen.

High complaint areas for non-compliance with lockdown restrictions were car washes and gyms.

Areas seeking high levels of advice were dog groomers and mobile car valeters.

We have also worked closely with Covid ambassadors in Bracknell and the wardens in Wokingham regarding support and sharing information.

PPP Officers have been exceptional in their support of these monitoring visits, giving up weekends and evenings to support the response to the pandemic.

PPP have been receiving referrals from the marshals in Wokingham and Bracknell. We're also responding to complaints and visiting premises that the public health teams have identified as priorities, these have included food manufacturers/processors in



## Enforcement of Regulations & Patrols cont...

consultation with HSE, undertakers, street markets and estate agents' offices. We have also looked at premises where we know positive cases have visited, although an individual could have potentially contracted Covid in a number of locations. So the visit is usually to check on compliance just in case, rather than there being a very strong link or strong suspicion of a link to a premises.

Earlier this week (week commencing 18th January) central government instructed local authorities to carry out compliance checks at supermarkets, so we are once again focusing on these premises, although we have already carried out many checks at these types of businesses.

## Events

Many events have obviously had to be postponed due to the current lockdown. There was a large running event that we had to cancel just before Christmas, were the tier 4 restrictions would have been breached (informally no enforcement action).

We are now starting to get enquiries from organisers who are looking ahead to spring and summer events. We have just had our first meeting to discuss one of our largest summer events with the organisers. At this stage we do not know if any of the summer events will go ahead, or in what format or with what restrictions. However we need to start planning with organisers as if these events will take place, alongside monitoring the latest COVID guidelines and regulations. As we get nearer to spring the number of event enquiries will increase as organisers will be keen to get things up and running again.

## Advice & Complaints

Since the last bulletin we have seen a big change in the tier system and lockdown implications in the area. This has been reflected in the types of complaints that we have received within the PPP.

As with the 1st and 2nd lockdowns we have seen an increase in Covid related enquiries from reopening after lockdown 2 through to tier 4 and the new lockdown.

In terms of enforcement we have also seen several complaints being made regarding premises being open which shouldn't be and others where compliance appears to be lacking.

For general business as usual type complaints, such as bonfires and noise, we have not experienced the peak we did in the first lockdown, this is mainly due to weather conditions and the civic amenity sites remaining open in this instance.

Some people are struggling with spending so much time at home and we have noticed a small increase of tinnitus and low frequency type noise complaints which rarely fall into our legal remit of statutory nuisance. We offer support to residents where we can and make use of local Mediation service (Resolve) as well as other low frequency and tinnitus support organisations.



## Advice and Complaints cont...

Trading Standards related complaints continue to focus on holidays and internet purchases. As we continue in the uncertainty of the Covid situation, we have shared a lot of information on scams and it is disappointing to see that there continue to be opportunists out in our communities who seek to exploit the current circumstances.

## Case Management Update

The Case Management Unit remains busy as the Justice System is continuing to operate as an essential public service throughout this lockdown. Strict rules are in place in court buildings and footfall is being kept to a minimum. Wherever possible hearings are being conducted virtually using the CVS platform rolled out by HMCTS.

The Courts are still working through the backlog of cases built up during the first period of lockdown in March 2020 when all but essential work was stopped. Jury trials have now resumed in most Crown Courts however due to the measures required to conduct trials at the current time the Courts are able to accommodate fewer listings meaning that cases are being given trial dates well into 2021 and in some cases cannot be heard until 2022.

Recent examples of cases before the Courts –

13th November 2020 – Wokingham Trader issued with a £1000 Fixed Penalty Notice under Covid Regulations for breaking the 10pm closing rule. The Fixed Penalty Notice was issued following an earlier prohibition notice which was ignored.

15th December 2020 – Bracknell Forest - Tesco Stores Limited sentenced Reading Magistrates Court after pleading guilty to two health and safety offences arising out of an incident on 9th July 2017 at their store on County Lane, Warfield where a child

received an electric shock. Tesco were fined £268,000 for each offence and ordered to pay a victim's surcharge of £170 and the full costs of the case.

11th December 2020 – Bracknell Forest – Proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 following the conviction of a trader for counterfeiting offences. Confiscation order made in the sum of £12,366.19 and costs awarded. The defendant was given three months in which to pay or faces a sentence of 6 months in custody in default.

8th January 2021 – Wokingham trader convicted of unfair trading and ordered to pay compensation of £2000 to the victim after pleading guilty to one offence under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

8th January 2021 – West Berkshire - Drivers fined for breach of weight restrictions - Offences under section 5 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Five drivers appeared before Reading Magistrates Court on this occasion following routine checks by officers of weight restrictions in place.

8th January 2021 - West Berkshire – Chieveley Village Stores – guilty pleas were entered in relation to 5 offences following a mouse infestation in the store along with other food hygiene issues – Magistrates sentenced by way of a conditional discharge for 12 months and full costs were awarded to the Council.

15th January 2021 – West Berkshire - Drivers fined for breach of weight restrictions - Offences under section 5 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Five drivers appeared before Reading Magistrates Court on this occasion following routine checks by officers of weight restrictions in place.

22nd January 2021 - Rogue trader who preyed on Thatcham pensioners narrowly avoids jail

## Animal Warden Service

One of the big challenges the animal warden team is facing at the moment is that a quick Google search for pet microchipping services don't give verified sites as the top results. These 'bogus' sites are paying Google to appear higher in the rankings. Therefore when a pet owner updates their details, or registers their pet, they're increasingly doing it on non-DEFRA compliant databases. This results in the Animal Wardens been unable to obtain owner details.

This has been raised with DEFRA and to IDB. The IDB, Intelligence Database, shares information with other local authorities improving links where common companies and people arise.

We are continuing to promote the message via the website and on social media that pet owners need to check the microchipping database they're using is registered with DEFRA. They can do this via the link [here](#). We've worked with PPP comms and below is an example of a poster we've had printed and are delivering to veterinary practices across the area to display on their notice boards. We've also had stickers for lamp posts created to display in popular dog walking areas.



As of yet we are pleased to report that we have not had an influx of lock down puppies being picked up, however we have had a few dogs abandoned due to ill health and therefore veterinary treatment required.

## 9th November 2019 - 19th January 2020

	Bracknell	West Berks	Wokingham
Handled	5	14	5
To Rescue	4	3	5

## 9th November 2020 - 19th January 2021

	Bracknell	West Berks	Wokingham
Handled	6	15	6
To Rescue	1	8	0

## Campaigns Update

### Alcohol Work Campaign

During the last 10 months school visits have been very difficult, however alcohol awareness information has still been available virtually, power points have been sent made accessible to all schools in both West Berkshire and Wokingham. These power points included quizzes and project work for students to complete.

The Last Orders Performance that has been going into schools as a live performance for thirteen years, this year has been available to all secondary school, year 9 students in West Berkshire and Wokingham virtually. In October we launched a series of podcasts for secondary school students, to date we have launched three podcasts. The first one relating to Covid, the second the harms of smoking the third the harms behind alcohol and the forth one being recorded later this month relating to Mental Health issues. See link [here](#) for podcasts.

## Campaigns Update cont...

CAP (Community Alcohol Partnership) work is still happening, CAP offered schools a Young Health Championship opportunity during lockdown one which was offered to all CAP 1 and CAP 2 schools all done remotely. Kicks offered an online gaming challenge with young people in our area, playing online FIFA PlayStation/Xbox games to help with young people's mental health which we supported.

A virtual retailer conference took place in November, which was attended by retailers where they could access up to date information regarding current COVID information and general licensing queries etc.

Social media posts were put out advising people of alcohol awareness week and dry January.

### Loan Shark / Credit Union Training

Due to COVID affecting people financially we have done four online training sessions with the Loan Shark awareness team. Which has given us a great insight as to what to look out for when we are out visiting vulnerable people in our community.

We also attended another virtual training session on Credit unions, which links in well with education people how to avoid using loan sharks and getting back on track.

This is information that has been posted out on the PPP social media accounts and can be used to help our communities in the future when dealing with people who have been scammed or may be at risk of being scammed.

### Support with Confidence

Support with Confidence is a directory and vetting

scheme of local carers. It is designed to raise standards and provide assurance in the adult social care sector particularly regarding those self-employed providers that fall outside the Care Quality Commission regulatory framework.

The scheme has been a lifeline to our self-employed Personal Assistants by providing information, access to PPE, testing and the vaccine, and generally supporting the members through this difficult time.

For more information about the scheme please see our webpages [here](#).

### Handwashing Session

This January PPP launched a new project with Primary Schools to help the children learn how to wash their hands effectively. The aim is to run the project in West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell. Due to the latest lockdown, this has been put on hold until the children return.

A few West Berkshire schools are running the session with their keyworker and vulnerable children. So far we have run the project with four West Berkshire Schools and piloted it in another. The feedback has been very positive.

### Smoke Free Homes

Smoking in the home causes those living with a smoker to take in smoke and associated toxins, released by the smoker-this is known as second hand smoke.

Second-hand smoke is particularly harmful to children, but has a health harm effect on all that are exposed to it. This includes adults living or visiting, and pets living in the home. Smoking indoors and exposing others to harmful chemicals, can have both immediate and long term effects on health.

### Campaigns Update cont...

The campaign is asking those that smoke in the home to stop smoking in the home. It provides information on the health effects of second hand smoke to other.

The launch, in January 2021, coincides with:

- The Better Health Campaign, launched in January 2021.
- Setting of New Year resolutions-many of which are around unhealthy habits.

Messages supporting Smoke Free Homes have been pushed out via the PPP social media channels throughout January.

The results to date have been positive, working with housing colleagues and associations has given a greater understanding of the work they do and for them to gain knowledge of the working of PPP and the tobacco control agenda.

### Trading Standards COVID Scams



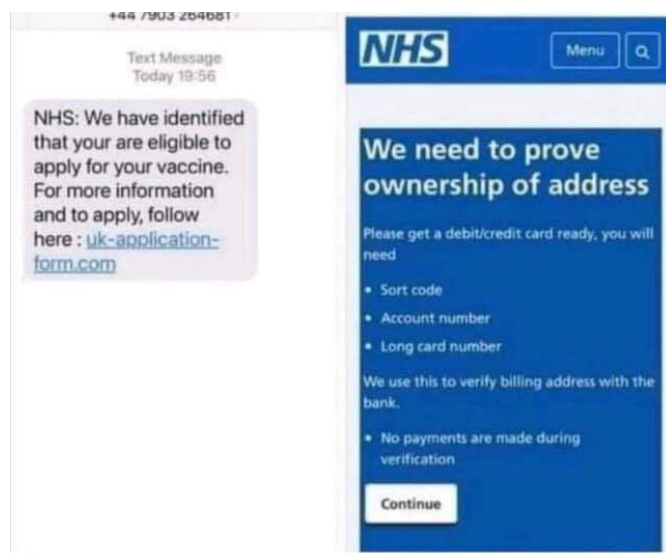
Around the UK, Trading Standards are experiencing an increase in the number of complaints about Covid scams, designed to prey on the concerns of people. We have pushed out a number of social media messages, radio interviews and press releases on this topic.

A dedicated Crimestoppers COVID scam hot line has been created and members of the public are urged to report scams relating to COVID to this number (0800 587 5030) or to report online [here](#). See [here](#) for full details.

Covid scams we are currently aware of:

- Fake NHS text telling people they're eligible to apply for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Automated call telling them they're being called to organise their COVID vaccine.
- Scammers are selling fake 'Vaccination Cards'.
- Financial scams where text and email messages are received, which appear to be from Government departments.
- Reports of the sale of fake Coronavirus testing kits and vaccines.
- Emails / text messages purporting to be from HMRC regarding claiming tax back or grants, which are again a way of tricking people into providing bank details.

For full details of the scams and of how to report see link [here](#).





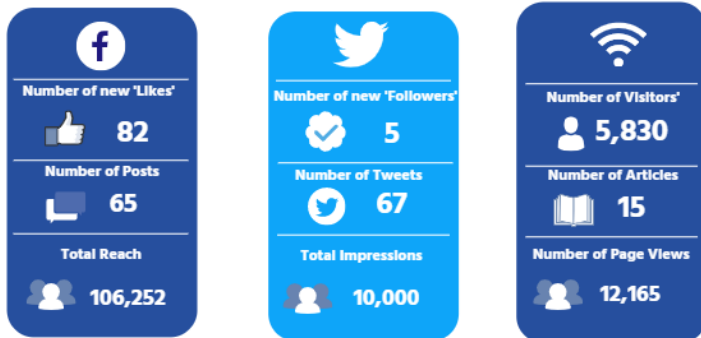
## Communication

Social media reach continues to grow with Facebook now at over 1290 followers. The most popular FB posts from December and January to date are to the left.

A local radio ad campaign to raise awareness of scams and how to report to PPP is being trialed in Newbury on Radio Kennett for three months. Results from that will determine if we do more local radio ads across the other areas.

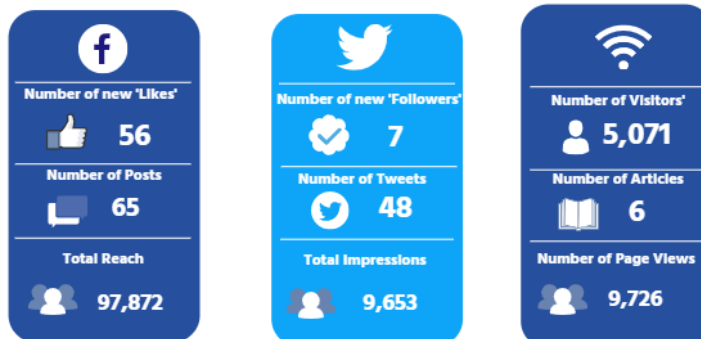
We have also produced posters for the Animal Warden team and for the Clean Air Day School competition.

### PPP Social Media Update 1st Nov -30th November



Total combined reach for November to date is 128,417

### PPP Social Media Update 1st Dec -31st December



Total combined reach for December to date is 117,251

## Top 3 Facebook Posts - December to January to date

**Public Protection Partnership**  
Published by Lisa Barnes (7) · ★ Favourites · 17 December 2020 ·

⚠️ **SCAM WARNING** - Please be aware of two COVID vaccine scams we have reports on from other areas of the country. These may well travel to our region so please be vigilant.

📞 **SCAM 1** - The elderly and the vulnerable are being called via an automated call out telling them they're being called to organise their COVID vaccine. They're then asked to press a number to be put through to organise the vaccine. **HANG UP AND DO NOT PRESS A NUMBER.** The number will allow them to access your... See more



Public Protection Partnership | Bracknell Forest | West Berkshire | Wokingham

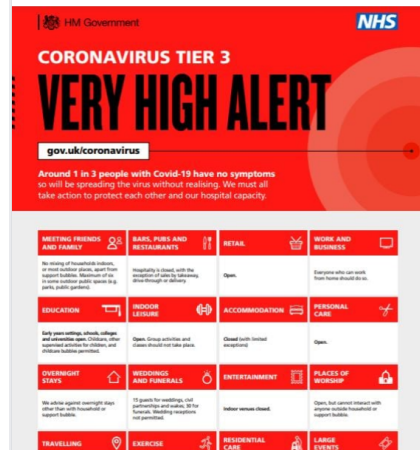
**17th December COVID Scams - Reach 11,100**

**Public Protection Partnership**  
Published by Lisa Barnes (7) · ★ Favourites · 17 December 2020 ·

⚠️ **Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire & Wokingham's Covid Alert Level** has now changed to Tier 3 'Very High', with new rules we must ALL follow to keep ourselves and others safe.

This will be effective from Saturday 00:01 ⚠️  
Information on what this means here... See more

**17th December - Tier 4 Announcement. Reach 5,300**



Advice to Pet Owners – what the law says about taking your pet for grooming.

The latest lockdown is because we need to prevent transmission of the virus. We need to stay at home - there are of course exemptions, food shopping, exercising your pet - but we must remember every time we leave our homes we are at risk of transmitting or catching the virus.

You may also leave your home to take your pet to the vets if he or she is unwell. You can also take your pet to the groomer... See more



Public Protection Partnership | Bracknell Forest | West Berkshire | Wokingham

**15th January - Advice to Pet Owners re Grooming in Lockdown reach 4,700**

## Who to Contact

Reporting of complaints relating to Covid-19 can be made on the website via the Enforcement Form on the front page. [Link here](#).

### Trading Standards:

Concerned residents or anybody with information about coronavirus related scams are being asked to contact Trading Standards directly via: [TSadvice@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:TSadvice@westberks.gov.uk)

### Environmental Health:

Environmental Health matters are to contact us by emailing: [ehadvice@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:ehadvice@westberks.gov.uk)

### Licensing:

Bracknell Forest Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: [Licence.All@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk](mailto:Licence.All@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk)

West Berkshire Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: [Licensing@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@westberks.gov.uk)

Wokingham Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: [Licensing@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@wokingham.gov.uk)

## Keeping in Touch With Updates



[@PublicProtectionPartnershipUK](#)



[@PublicPP\\_UK](#)



[www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk](#)



# Public Protection Partnership Private Rented Sector Housing Newsletter

March 2021

## Introduction

On 9th January 2017 Public Protection Partnership (PPP) was formed, this is a shared service covering environmental health, licensing and trading standards provided by Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

Private rented sector (PRS) housing sits within the compliance and programme team in PPP and is headed by Rosalyn Gater the strategic manager. The team also enforces all aspects of food from food hygiene, food standards to feed and farm; health and safety in all local authority enforced premises and deal with a range of Covid related enforcement and activity. C&P also licence petroleum sites and issue explosive licenses.

Our health and the environment are closely linked and the work of the PPP. We protect the health and wellbeing through focused projects, planned inspection programmes and responding to complaints. By targeting our resources we can ensure the most beneficial outcomes for our community.

The services and functions relating to private rented sector housing is aimed at supporting landlords and tenants in ensuring properties and living conditions within our area meet minimum standards.

These include:

- enforcing houses in multiple occupation (HMO) management standards
- licensing of houses in multiple occupation licencing caravan sites
- enforcing against breaches of caravan site licensing conditions
- providing an advisory services within certain areas of the private rented sector regulating housing safety using the housing health and safety rating system
- leading on campaigns
- tackling rogue landlords.

The delivery of and targeted resource for the private rented sector is through the environmental health housing team.

## Environmental Health Housing Provisions

The main provisions for private sector housing are found in the Housing Act 2004 and associated regulations. The main provisions for caravan sites and park homes are found in the Caravan Sites Control of Development Act 1960, The Caravan Sites Act 1983 and The Mobile Homes Act 2013 (as amended).

## Private Sector Housing Policy

The private sector housing policy was approved by the joint public protection committee in September 2020. It is a two year plan which lays out the priority areas for the environmental health housing team and the direction we are moving in. For example it covers areas such as houses in multiple occupancy, caravan parks inspections, landlord forums, a move to using enforcement to ensure a directional change in compliance, and the use of civil penalty notices. We also want to ensure more joint working with the housing departments in the councils.

A copy of can be found by following <https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/environmental-health/housing/>

## Civil Penalty Notices with regard to Environmental Health Housing

At the joint public protection committee 28th September 2020 the PPP private sector housing strategy and accompanying report were put before the committee.

The committee subsequently approved the issue of civil penalties notices as an additional tool to prosecution for relevant offences under the Housing Act 2004.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced civil penalties as a power to be used against landlords who are in breach of one or more of the sections of the Housing Act 2004; specifically,

- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice (section 30);
- Offences in relation to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (section 72);
- Offences in relation to licensing of houses under Part 3 of the Act (section 95);
- Offences in contravention of an overcrowding notice (section 139)
- Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (section 234)

The maximum penalty is £30,000, the amount of penalty is determined by the local housing authority in each case. The Government has laid out statutory guidance as to the process and the criteria it advises should be considered when determining civil penalties.

In PPP this will be based on the level of culpability, the level of harm (potential or actual), it will also take in to account aggravating factors and mitigating factors.

## Examples of recent work

A Wokingham landlord recently pleaded guilty to having breached a prohibition order served under the Housing Act 2004 in a recent case heard in the Magistrates Court. Despite the Order being served to prohibit the use of substandard living accommodation, the landlord continued to rent out the property. This successful case highlights the team's commitment to ensuring decent living standards are maintained in the private rented sector. The sentencing hearing is to take place in the near future.



The owner of a rented property has been sentenced at Reading Magistrate Court for failing to comply with an Improvement Notice served under the Housing Act 2004. The owner was fined £1,280 (reduced to reflect an early guilty plea) and a victim surcharge of £128. Prosecution costs were ordered in full of £4,725.50. The investigation carried out was extensive and involved numerous visits to the property. Compliance was secured eventually, however the owner took some time to rectify the defects. The total paid was £6,133.50.

On Christmas Eve 2020 an Emergency Remedial Notice was served on a Housing Association landlord in West Berkshire for failing to act promptly to repair a defective boiler. This inaction resulted in an inadequate supply of hot and cold water to a property occupied by a tenant in the late stages of pregnancy, and her young child. Having been left in the position of not being able to maintain an adequate level of personal hygiene and food safety the tenant called on us for help. The PPP housing officer worked swiftly to engage a contractor to carry out repair works and reinstate the hot water. Suffice to say the family welcomed the officer's intervention, especially so close to Christmas.

We work closely with partner organisations to ensure that residents get the best service. Recently a PPP Housing Officer was investigating a case and he uncovered risks to the fire safety of the premises which affected at least 100 tenants in a block of flats, this was passed over to the RBFRS. This resulted in safety measures being put into place by the brigade which in turn meant the tenants could remain safely in their own homes.

A PPP Housing Officer played a critical role in helping a vulnerable elderly gentleman found living in his home amongst possessions and items of accumulated rubbish and food waste he had gathered over the years, resulting in him living in conditions detrimental to his health. Whilst this type of situation is very sensitive and needs to be handled in a sympathetic way the officer spent time building up trust and links with partner agencies who together helped improve his home environment for the better.

The team have been carrying out inspections of caravan sites as part of the programme of visits due on licenced sites. These are to ensure the site is still complying in terms of site safety, and to ensure that the site licence is still fit for purpose or whether any reviews are needed. We will also follow up sites known to the team that are required to be licensed under the Caravan Sites Control of Development Act 1960, but have not responded to the request to apply for a licence. These site owners/operators are committing an offence and we will be looking to ensure that they comply, and taking the appropriate action against them.

The team are continuing to inspect premises and issue licences as part of the HMO licence inspection programme. The second phase, which is ongoing, involves investigation of premises that have come to our attention as suspected HMOs. Action will be taken as necessary and we can report back through this newsletter. The third phase, which is currently on hold due to Covid, will be to actively survey the LA areas for HMOs that are not licenced.

As part of our service planning for 2021 /22 we have been looking at the priority areas, which will run alongside our HMO, caravan and reactive work. The following are examples of the projects we will look to run;

- Looking at converted office to residential properties as this type of dwelling provides much needed housing for the private rented sector.
- Joint working with our Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue colleagues looking at fire safety and the protection of those who live in the HMO sector and high rise residential accommodation.
- Setting up a private sector landlord forum to include HMO landlords
- Communication and enforcement of the Electrical Certificate Regulations 2020

## The Effect of COVID-19 on Environmental Health Housing

Within PPP the effect of Covid on the work priorities cannot be understated. As experts in public protection and enforcement we have been at the front line in ensuring Covid compliance in workplaces, we have been enforcing the ever changing legislation that is being enacted regarding Covid, we have been active in outbreak control and in local contact tracing.

In relation to environmental health housing, Covid has had an effect to the way in which we work, and the work which we have been able to do in the year.

Currently we are in national lockdown. Over the year we have worked through times where restrictions have been listed slightly also. We assess the work we can carry out accordingly, while bearing in mind that we are in roles that must remain actively working to assist with protecting the public, be it from Covid related or from poor housing, and other issues.

We must also consider the risk of us being vectors in spreading the infection, and the risk of becoming infected, with the risk of not carry out our work in the community.

Due to the nature of our work being the protection of the public we will still be required to carry out certain business as usual work and the work on Covid compliance an investigation – some of this work, by its nature will be required to be on site.

Some site visits (a site visit includes any visit to a premises or vicinity of a premises – commercial and residential) are unavoidable as they form part of statutory functions that the council has a duty to ensure are provided, and by the nature of our work as public protection. PPP needs to assess the requirements for which work is deemed to be essential and prioritised to continue during the epidemic, and which work has been stopped or moved entirely to remote.

Where the work continues and site visits would normally form a part of the activity, the following graduated approach should be taken

- Is the site visit absolutely necessary?
- Could the service be provided in a different way e.g. via the telephone or email.
- Could you ask the person to email you pictures or video? If this is appropriate.
- Can you use conference calls or video conferencing? If appropriate and available.
- Is there another way that the information can be received and investigated?
- Think about the risk of Covid transmission (to yourself and others) and does this outweigh the risks posed by not physically carrying out the visit, or witnessing for enforcement purposes.

If after considering the above the site visit is still necessary then we have controls that we must follow, for example, facemasks, social distancing, thinking about controlled spaces and ventilation etc.

In reality, we have been able to carry out the majority of work relating to environmental health housing over the pandemic, whether by on site visits or in alternative ways.

One piece of work which we made a decision to halt is work on unlicensed houses in multiple occupancy, as this will involve entering homes where the circumstances of the residents is unknown and this laces a risk to them and to the officers. However, if there is intelligence that there are issues at the premises, that suggests the residents are at risk, we have been carrying out on site work.

**Coming up in further Newsletters**

- **Rogue Landlords**
- **Caravan Site Licensing – Fit and Proper Person**
- **Caravan Site Licensing Fees**

**Contact us at:**

**01635 503242 for or email  
ehadvice@westberks.gov.uk**

The delivery of and targeted resource for the Private Rented Sector is through the Environmental Health Housing Team (EHHT):

Mary Glomé, Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Mary.glome@westberks.gov.uk

John Shiri, Senior Environmental Control Officer  
John.shiri@westberks.gov.uk

Emma Choules, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
Emma.choules@westberks.gov.uk

Georgina Rosso, Environmental Control Officer  
Georgina.rosso@westberks.gov.uk

John Stowe, Environmental Health Officer  
John.stowe1@westberks.gov.uk

David Bridle, Environmental Control Officer  
David.stowe1@westberks.gov.uk

Graham Smith, Housing and Grants Officer  
Graham.smith@westberks.gov.uk

## Keeping in Touch With Updates



[@PublicProtectionPartnershipUK](https://www.facebook.com/PublicProtectionPartnershipUK)



[@PublicPP\\_UK](https://twitter.com/PublicPP_UK)



[www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk](http://www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)

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## PPP Social Media Summary Q3



Number of new 'Likes'



221

Number of Posts



182

Total Reach



320,385



Number of new 'Followers'



16

Number of Tweets

156

Total Impressions



31,153



Number of Visitors'



20,570

Number of Articles



36

Number of Page Views



38,301

**Total combined reach Q3 2020/21 - 389,839**

Month	Visitors	Page Views	Articles Published
Oct	9,669	16,410	15
Nov	5,830	12,165	15
Dec	5,071	9,726	6

## Social Platforms Traffic

Number of views to website from social media posts.

	Facebook	Twitter
Oct	1,478	502
Nov	596	302
Dec	395	69

	New Likes	Reach	No. Posts
Oct	83	116,261	52
Nov	82	106,252	65
Dec	56	97,872	65

## Top Performing Facebook Posts in Q3

### Congratulations Kaspas's - Reach 13,508

**Public Protection Partnership**  
Published by Lisa Barnes (7) · ★ Favourites · 19 October ·

Congratulations to Kaspas's in Bracknell for scooping a five hygiene rating following work with PPP and council health professionals.

Kaspas's Desserts has scooped a five rating for hygiene and praise from environmental health experts for its new and updated COVID-19 control measures.

Last month, Kaspas's in Bracknell town centre (located under Royal Winchester House) voluntarily agreed to close temporarily following concerns by the council's environmental health and public health...

[See more](#)



### Warning - Supermarket Distraction Thieves - Reach 12,243

**Public Protection Partnership**  
Published by Lisa Barnes (7) · ★ Favourites · 7 October ·

⚠️⚠️ WARNING - Supermarket Distraction Thieves Operating in Bracknell Town Centre ⚠️⚠️

We've recently been notified by Thames Valley Police that during the past week fraudsters are operating in Bracknell town again. They are targeting supermarket shoppers, who used either a credit or debit card to make payments by way of entering a 4 digit PIN at the point of sale.

The offenders sometimes appear to be on their own but are likely to be working in small teams.... [See more](#)



### Covid-19 Scams - Reach 10,926

**Public Protection Partnership**  
Published by Lisa Barnes (7) · ★ Favourites · 17 December 2020 ·

⚠️ SCAM WARNING - Please be aware of two COVID vaccine scams we have reports on from other areas of the country. These may well travel to our region so please be vigilant.

SCAM 1 - The elderly and the vulnerable are being called via an automated call out telling them they're being called to organise their COVID vaccine. They're then asked to press a number to be put through to organise the vaccine. HANG UP AND DO NOT PRESS A NUMBER. The number will allow them to access your... [See more](#)





	New Followers	Impressions	No. Tweets
Oct	4	11,500	41
Nov	5	10,000	67
Dec	7	9,653	48

## Top Performing Twitter Posts in Q3

### Coronavirus Christmas Reminder - Gatherings - reach 1,408



**Public Protection Partnership**

@PublicPP\_UK

Please remember Coronavirus hasn't gone away for Christmas. 🌲 Gatherings will increase your risk of exposure and the potential for you, and those around you, to have to self-isolate over Christmas.

Follow the basics - Hands - Face - Space

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-2-high-alert> ... [pic.twitter.com/TtwEA5Hae2](https://pic.twitter.com/TtwEA5Hae2)

### Resolved dispute in Bracknell from mobile sauna - reach 1,370



**Public Protection Partnership**

@PublicPP\_UK

Resolved dispute thanks to our Community & Trading Standards Team. "A smell & smoke nuisance emanating from a mobile sauna in the #Bracknell. Local residents complained but nothing happened. Our discussion with source resulted in stopping use of Sauna and happy residents." [pic.twitter.com/fkMjEpjQ8e](https://pic.twitter.com/fkMjEpjQ8e)



**Public Protection Partnership**

@PublicPP\_UK

⚠️ Supermarket Distraction Thieves. We've been notified by @ThamesVP that during the past week thieves are operating in #Bracknell. They're targeting lone supermarket shoppers, who pay using their card & pin.

See link for details:

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/supermarket-distraction-thieves/> ...

@BracknellForest  
[pic.twitter.com/5ORxyQecQt](https://pic.twitter.com/5ORxyQecQt)



# PPP DEFRA Grant Funded Air Quality Project

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Joint Public Protection Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	31st March 2021
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Hilary Cole Councillor Parry Batth Councillor John Harrison
<b>Report Author:</b>	Anna Smy
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	N/a

## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the details of the Air Quality Project proposed by the Public Protection Partnership for which West Berkshire Council (on behalf of the Partnership) have been awarded £259,406 from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The project focuses on behavioural change for the 448,000 residents who drive in the three boroughs by launching an anti-idling campaign. To support this we will be working closely with schools and significantly expanding our air quality monitoring programme.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee **NOTE** the information provided about the project and how PPP plan to deliver it.
- 2.2 The committee **NOTE** that a project update report will be provided at the Joint Public Protection Committee in June 2022.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	The application committed the partnership to an expenditure of 10% of the application (c£25K). Some of this is already covered by the existing Environmental Quality budget within the PPP. A budget was submitted within the application. The key expenditure is the £125k towards the monitoring programme over the 2 year period. In accordance with the West Berkshire Procurement Strategy this level of expenditure will be going through the Procurement Board before going out to tender. It is proposed that a separate cost centre is set up to manage the project as a whole (total project value is £259,030).

<b>Human Resource:</b>	The awarded grant allows for the appointment of a project officer to help deliver the agreed outcomes over 2 years. Part of this role will be to liaise with the successful provider to deliver the monitoring programme. Appendix B sets out the anticipated use of the existing officers, this works sits within their current roles.			
<b>Legal:</b>	The Inter Authority Agreement sets out the legal relationship and responsibilities within the service and requirements on each partner. We will be bound by the terms of the Grant and will need to notify DEFRA of any changes or deviation from the agreed project scope.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>The funding is provided for all 3 areas over a two year project. The position with Wokingham Borough Council leaving the partnership needs to be considered and reflected in the risk register and form part of the exit plan.</p> <p>There is limited financial risk to the authority as their contribution is in line with current air quality expenditure.</p> <p>There is a vulnerability of using one provider to supply our additional monitoring programme and will need to be mitigated, there are some alternative monitoring programmes where the outcomes could still be monitored, however we would need to return any finance associated.</p> <p>There is also a risk that the monitoring data measures incorrectly and decisions and actions are made on the basis of that information. This could cause reputational risk issues.</p>			
<b>Property:</b>	Some of the locations for the equipment may be on School property or nearby lampposts/street furniture.			
<b>Policy:</b>	This work is undertaken to support national air quality policies as well as more local strategies			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			✓	If monitoring is found to identify significant levels of pollutants there may issues of stigma, concern by home owners

<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	✓			The aim is to work with schools, identify if air quality is an issue and then engender behavioural change to make improvements
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	✓			The purpose of the grant is to understand better and make improvements to the local environment
<b>Health Impact:</b>		✓		This is a neutral area as for some by identifying poor air quality we may be able to take positive action and improve the air they breathe, for other areas. In identifying air pollution from PM <sub>2.5</sub> this could have a negative impact on health with concerns from residents and those supporting children attending or living near the school locations.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>				There are no known impacts
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		✓		There may be scope for the results of any monitoring to be provided on the website however during the project itself there will be limited need.
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	✓			<p>Delivery of the project meets:</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Council Strategic Theme – Protecting and enhancing our environment</p> <p>West Berkshire Priorities for Improvement – Maintain a green district</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council Strategic Priority – A Clean and Green Borough</p> <p>It will also have links with a number of the health and wellbeing, and community linked priorities</p> <p>This work also sits within the Climate Change Action Plan of each authority.</p>
<b>Core Business:</b>		✓		Some of this work expands on our current business as usual work delivering the Air

				Quality objectives and requirements of the Local Air Quality Management regime.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		✓		This project has no significant impact on the rights of data subjects.
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	There are a number internal officer groups which officers attend have advised of the successful application. These groups include Heads of Service, Highways Managers, My Journey and Transport Policy Teams, Public Health and Climate Change officers. This has been across all 3 areas.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The responsibility for monitoring air quality is that of the Public Protection Service and under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated, local authorities are required to produce an air quality Action Plan describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place. If a Local Authority has an AQMA they are able to apply to DEFRA for funding towards measures which help tackle poor air quality.
- 4.2 The profile of our air quality work has changed significantly over the last year or so with actions embedded in each authorities Climate Change Action Plans, anti-idling projects and more regrettably the links to health seen in the landmark ruling in October that air pollution “made a material contribution” to the death of 9 year old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah. We have also maintained our monitoring regime throughout the pandemic which has enabled us to look at the impact the changes which have taken place in transport related pollution during this time.
- 4.3 The service developed a project which would help each Council by bringing together the air quality related campaigns to ensure they are properly funded and also to provide an additional monitoring programme to understand the true picture of the pollutant PM<sub>2.5</sub> and to be able to demonstrate the impact of the work being undertaken.
- 4.4 This is an ambitious and exciting project for the PPP to lead on and has the opportunity to demonstrate tangible improvements in the local environment. We know that although there are localised areas of pollution at an undesirable level across all 3 authority areas we benefit from some of the best countryside, forest and parklands in the country. However we know that we do have areas where the levels of particular matter could be at a level above that set by the World Health Organisation and DEFRA. At the moment we do not monitor this pollutant so are reliant on indicative and modelled data.
- 4.5 The purpose of the grant is clearly stated by DEFRA. *“The purpose of the grant is to provide support to LAs in England to develop and/or implement measures that deliver air quality benefits in the near future (one to two years), projects which develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes, and new, innovative ideas if they will successfully and as closely as possible meet the needs and objectives of the Applicant’s local area. Specifically, projects should contribute to*

*reductions in air pollutant emissions and/or concentrations in areas in current and projected”*

## 5 Supporting Information

### Proposals

5.1 Our project proposals have been fully appraised by DEFRA and the full grant amount awarded. We are in the process of finalising a more detailed project plan. Following Full Council decisions at both Wokingham and Bracknell Councils we have project plans for the introduction of the anti-idling campaigns and work with schools and promotional work such as the banners (which are shown in Appendix C – PPP Air Quality Newsletter) we are now working with the necessary teams to bring this into a wider project plan.

5.2 DEFRA are clear in their requirements for any funding applications and list the following objectives for authorities to demonstrate:

Funding is awarded for approved projects that meet the grant objectives:

- i. To help deliver compliance in areas in current and projected exceedance of UK air pollution targets in the shortest possible time;
- ii. To support LAs (particularly those with a Smoke Control Area) to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions from domestic wood and coal burning;
- iii. To support projects which develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes.
- iv. To support projects that align with the objectives of Defra’s Clean Air strategy
- v. To support projects that reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) emissions
- vi. To support innovative projects that can improve local air quality, especially in relation to delivering effective air pollutant emissions reduction measures, and to share this best practice.

5.3 Appendix B shows the areas the project will cover and proposed outcomes and monitoring standards. In particular these are local benefits and public health improvements.

5.4 Officers will provide regular project updates to the Joint Management Board and will provide an interim project update report to the Joint Public Protection Committee in June 2022 (approx. half way through the project)

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 For the PPP to purchase their own equipment and carry out all the associated calibration, maintenance and management. This was not deemed cost effective due to the costs of the equipment, short term nature of the project.

6.2 To continue the current arrangements of working in isolation with each authority on ad hoc projects, this is not an effective use of resource and had the funding not been provided we would have been looking at more co-ordinated project work.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The PPP have been awarded the sum of £259k to deliver on a behavioural change project around the pollutant PM<sub>2.5</sub> which is known to cause health issues particularly in those with underlying health problems associated with their lungs, including asthma (it is also linked to strokes and other neurological issues). There is a significant sum of £125k allocated to providing the monitoring equipment and support costs to enable the authority to act on accurate and detailed data. We therefore need to ensure that the best available equipment is provided at a cost that will allow maximum coverage of the 3 local authorities and in particular in and around schools.

## 8 Appendices

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Key Outcomes of the project

Appendix C – PPP Air Quality Newsletter

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### Background Papers:

Costings detailed in the Grant application

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

Report is to note only ☒

**Wards affected:** All (West Berkshire Council, Bracknell Forest Council and Wokingham Borough Council)

### Officer details:

Name: Anna Smy  
Job Title: Strategic Manager  
Tel No: 01635 503257  
E-mail: anna.smy@westberks.gov.uk

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## Appendix A

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	There is no decision being made – they are noting the proposed project
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes</li> <li>• Support everyone to reach their full potential</li> <li>• Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire</li> <li>• Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships</li> </ul>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name of Budget Holder:</b>	Anna Smy
<b>Name of Service/Directorate:</b>	Public Protection and Culture
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Anna Smy
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	17/03/2021
<b>Version and release date (if applicable):</b>	

Is this a .... ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
<b>Aims:</b>	To see changes in pollutant levels through a combination of monitoring and behavioural changes from residents

<b>Objectives:</b>	To establish actual levels of a particular pollutant (currently only inactive mapping is available).
<b>Outcomes:</b>	Full 2 year monitoring data across the local authority areas Identification of areas of concern for further assessment
<b>Benefits:</b>	Improvements in areas where poor air quality may be identified.

**(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?**

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
<b>Further Comments:</b>		

**(3) Result**

<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>This is not a decision</b>	
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>This is not a decision</b>	



<b>(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:</b>	
<b>EqlA Stage 2 required</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Owner of EqlA Stage Two:</b>	
<b>Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:</b>	

**Name:** Anna Smy

**Date:** 21/03/2021

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**Project activities, evaluation and monitoring**

Desired Outcome	Baseline Data/Monitoring Methods	Success	
		Short Term	Long Term
<b>Competition to be entered by the schools</b>	Total number of schools engaged in project	Schools accepting the project in 2021	Schools continuing to promote the project in 2022+
	Total number of children engaged in the competitions (attending the schools)	Lots of children entering the competition	Children still promoting the AQ values to their Families
	Total Number of parents given the information	All of the Parents in the 3 boroughs to receive all the information	The parents still receiving the information, this time about how well they are all doing in 2022+
	Total number of extra schools requesting to be involved.	More Schools wanting to join the project	New Schools continuing to promote the project in 2022+
	Total number of entries	Total Number of entries	Gaining a pictures we can use "forever"
	Total number of Bumper Stickers Displayed	Issuing the children with the bumper sticker	Children continuing to get their parents to display it on all their cars 2022+
<b>Biggest NO<sub>2</sub> Loser entries, and to continue running each year.</b>	Total Number of Schools entering	Schools accepting the challenge and us putting up the AQ tubes	The same schools continuing to enter, and more schools entering and the NO <sub>2</sub> always decreasing. Eventually the competition will have to be change to "Who can keep the NO <sub>2</sub> the lowest.
	Continuing reduction in NO <sub>2</sub> – or not!	Reduction in NO <sub>2</sub>	Baseline % reductions from COVID results achieved.
	Those who continue to enter in 2020 +	Number of schools	Number of schools who continue to lose or achieve COVID baseline.
<b>Changes in behaviours</b>	Schools asked to see if the idling has reduced	School noticing less cars idling and less cars driving to school	The NO <sub>2</sub> reducing outside the school and an increase of alternative transports to school.
	Parents to find out if they have changed their behaviour/ or seen a change in others.	Parents actively changing their habits and turning off the engines and using alternative methods of transport to collect their child(s).	The NO <sub>2</sub> reducing outside the school and an increase of alternative transports to school.  Displaying the bumper stickers.
	Taxi drivers to find out if they have changed their behaviour/ or seen a change in others.	Monitoring at taxi ranks and seeing that they have turned off. No Warning of FPNs issued	Monitoring at taxi ranks and seeing that they have turned off. No Warning of FPNs issued

			& bumper stickers displayed.
	Air Quality Officer to see if behaviour has changed in relation all 3 of the PPP Boroughs	NO <sub>2</sub> from the Diffusions tubes and CM showing a reduction.	NO <sub>2</sub> from the Diffusions tubes and CM continuing showing a reduction year on year.
<b>Improvement in local air quality within/near AQMAs</b>	Assessment of levels of idling in the AQMAs.	Reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> levels	A continual reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> levels to prove that the message is spreading and be habit has been formed
	Levels of NO <sub>2</sub> measured within/adjacent to the AQMAs.	Reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> levels	A continual reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> levels to prove that the message is spreading and be habit has been formed
	Levels of NO <sub>2</sub> taken at the schools	Reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> levels	A continual reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> levels to prove that the message is spreading and be habit has been formed
<b>Sign/ Banner deployed</b>	The number of signs/banner deployed	The number of banners deployed and people who actually notice them and take action.	A reduction of NO <sub>2</sub> in those locations (monitored by diffusion tubes – already in place)
<b>Publics Change in Behaviour from the AQMA signs and press</b>	Checking to see if more people have stopped idling under the posters, banners, and behind the bumper stickers.	Reduction in idling and NO <sub>2</sub> and they areas which are advertising not to idle	A continuing reduction on NO <sub>2</sub> to show that the behaviours have changed.
<b>Bumper Stickers to be used</b>	Seeing the vehicles with them on	Seeing the vehicles with them displayed and seeing that the idling has decreased.	Reduction in NO <sub>2</sub> as more vehicles continue to display them.
<b>PM 2.5 Reductions</b>	Indicative Monitors	Finding what the annual mean is for PM <sub>2.5</sub> at each school, and ascertaining any peaks and if so what is causing them.	Achieving the PM <sub>2.5</sub> objectives (2025) and removing the localise PM <sub>2.5</sub> sources if peaks are found.
<b>Deliver the project within budget</b>	Check level of spend for budget code against anticipated spend. (Cost Code allocated)	Spread sheet balancing at all times	Amount spent in-line with DEFRA's time table



# Air Quality Newsletter

March 2021

## Why we monitor the air quality

The Public Protection Partnership measure air quality as it is a statutory requirement regulated by DEFRA to ensure the UK meets with the 'Air Quality Objectives' set by the EU Directive.

The team measure nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in all three areas and PM<sub>10</sub> (particulate matter) in Bracknell Forest. They manage seven air quality management areas (AQMA), of which some have air quality action plans (AQAP) to reduce levels of pollution.

Each local authority has a duty to constantly review and assess the air quality within its area and compare pollution concentrations against a set of European and National air quality standards. Conventional vehicles (diesel and petrol engines) when their engines are running emit gases, which include, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and carbon dioxide. Nitrogen Dioxide and particulate matter are identified air quality pollutants under the long-established air quality framework, owing to their impact on health. Carbon Dioxide is a greenhouse gas, which, when emitted in excess, in particular from anthropogenic activities, contributes to climate change.

Particulates are classified by their mass (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), with the smaller particulates, PM<sub>2.5</sub> being more harmful due to their ability to travel further into the lung. PM 2.5 is understood to have no safe limit for health, it is therefore beneficial to reduce levels at all locations, not just hotspots that break a set limit.

## The team

The air quality is managed by the environmental quality team. They manage the air quality monitoring programme. They prepare and submit the AQSR (annual air quality status report) as well as, change the monthly diffusion tubes (approximately 130) renew the contracts, carry out projects, work with other services and partners who implement actions in the air quality action plan, apply for relevant grants, run competitions, answer queries from the public, parishes, members and councillors questions.



## How we monitor the air

The borough wide NO<sub>2</sub> is monitored using diffusion tubes which are changed monthly. The data is collected and following bias correction the annual air quality status report is reported. The diffusion tubes are located in areas close to major sources of traffic pollution within the air quality management areas. We have four continuous monitoring sites (Twyford, Newbury and Wokingham) which all measure NO<sub>2</sub> every fifteen minutes which give us one hour and annual mean data. In addition the Bracknell site monitors PM<sub>10</sub>. This data is published in the annual air quality status report. Which are available on our website here.

See [link here](#) for details of Annual Air Quality Status Report.



## The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on air quality

As you would all expect the NO<sub>2</sub> levels were much lower for 2020. Throughout lockdown the officers continued monitoring. As scientists the air quality officers had a rare opportunity to actually measure the NO<sub>2</sub> with very little traffic. There has always been speculation that a reduction in traffic would reflect in a reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> and the team would be able to scientifically prove or disprove that theory.

As you can see from all the graphs (next page) the overall NO<sub>2</sub> was lower for 2020. This data is the only chance we have ever had, or likely to have, to measure the NO<sub>2</sub> with far fewer cars on the road. From the data we can conclude that vehicles are the greatest producers of NO<sub>2</sub> throughout PPP areas.

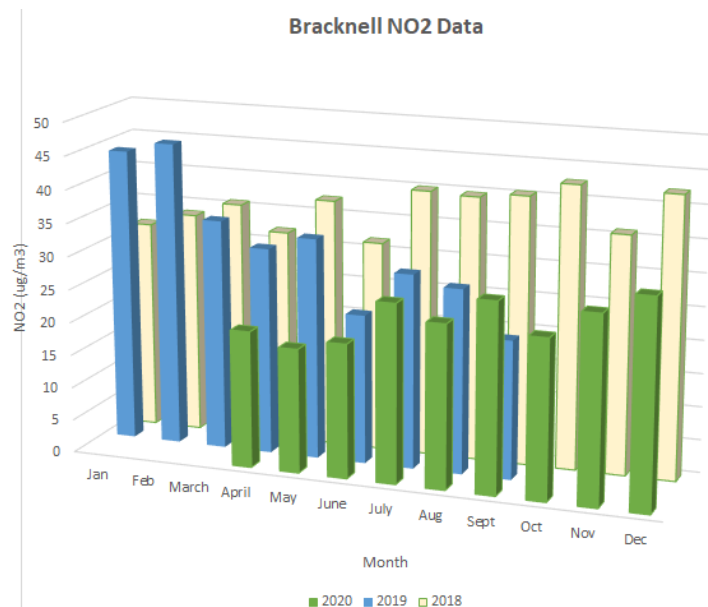
### Twyford Cross Roads

The 2020 data shows that COVID has had a positive effect on the air quality in Twyford. The greatest decline of NO<sub>2</sub> was during the first lockdown. As lockdown restrictions were lifted and schools went back the levels, although increased still remained lower than 2019. We assume this is because more people are working from home and less people travelling around on a daily basis.

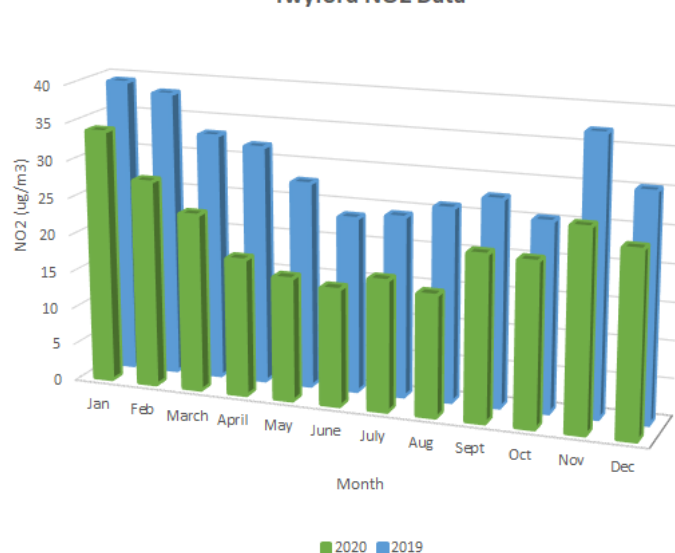
### Wokingham Town Centre (Peach Street)

The 2020 data shows a decline of NO<sub>2</sub> compared to that of 2019, this is due to the reduction of the traffic on the road due to the lockdowns and the High Street being closed for a proportion of the year.

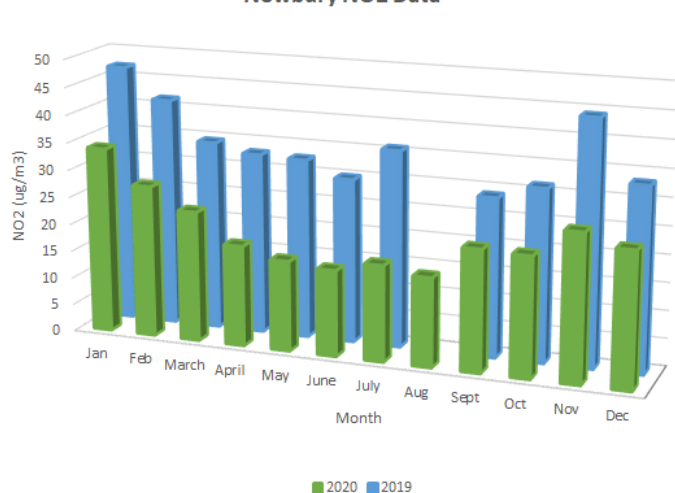
Bracknell NO2 Data



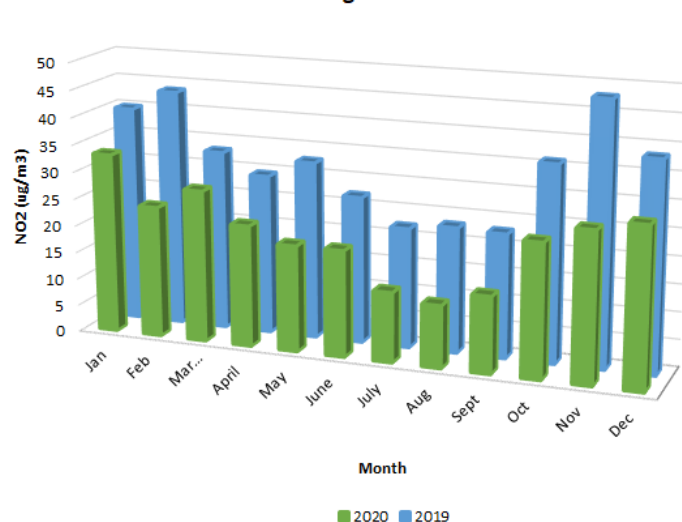
Twyford NO2 Data



Newbury NO2 Data



Wokingham NO2 Data



### Bracknell (Downshire Way – M3/M4 corridor)

For this site we have included the 2018 data for comparison as due to the ongoing roadworks the unit was turned off for 6 months (3 at the end of 2019 and the first 3 months of 2020). In order to make a direct comparison of the impact of Covid we will need a calendar year of data with no Covid impacts (likely 2022) as the new road layout was completed at the beginning of 2020 (March). However looking at the data it shows that NO2 level is much lower than the 2018 data. The September 2020 levels show the NO2 increases above the 2019 levels. This may be due to commuter's car sharing less and being encouraged not to take public transport, the schools going back.

### Newbury (A339 – Burger King Roundabout)

As you can see from the Newbury data for both 2019 & 2020 the 2020 NO2 levels are lower except for June and September. This increase coincides with lockdown restrictions been lifted. Schools were open and car sharing and the use of public transport was discouraged by the Central Government. However the levels are still well within the AQO.

## Schools competition

PPP ran a competition for school children in Bracknell and West Berkshire in October 2020. This was to get the children to design an "Anti-Idling Poster" to be used as a banner outside schools around the areas involved. We were delighted that eight schools entered the competition, with twenty six posters submitted. There were six winners awarded to West Berkshire and six winners to Bracknell Forest.

The competition in Wokingham was run by the My Journey team as it linked well with other work being undertaken by them. The winning posters were produced into banners and PPP produced three banners, one for each area.

We understand that some of the children who submitted their designs to us have also been awarded a green 'Blue Peter' badge for helping the environment.

See below for the Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham schools banners.





## Defra Grant of £259,000

PPP successfully bid for a DEFRA grant to provide support to local authorities to develop and/or implement measures that deliver air quality benefits in the near future. The value of the grant awarded is just over £259,000.

The purpose of the grant is to support projects that will develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes. Projects will specifically contribute to reductions in air pollutant emissions and/or concentrations in areas in current and projected exceedance of the legal limits.

Funding is awarded for approved projects that meet the grant objectives:

- To help deliver compliance in areas in current and projected exceedance of UK air pollution targets in the shortest possible time;
- To support LAs (particularly those with a Smoke Control Area) to reduce PM2.5 emissions from domestic wood and coal burning;
- To support projects which develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes.
- To support projects that align with the objectives of Defra's Clean Air strategy v. To support projects that reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO2) emissions
- To support innovative projects that can improve local air quality, especially in relation to delivering effective air pollutant emissions reduction measures, and to share this best practice.

A project plan is currently in development and more details on the specific activities will be available at a later date.

## Anti idling areas

Agreement is being sought (agreed in Bracknell Forest on 9/2/2021) to enforce the provisions of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 in so far as they relate to idling of vehicles and where appropriate to do so to issue fixed penalty notices in accordance with The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed penalty) England Regulations 2002. This will permit officers of the Council (including officers from the Public Protection Partnership) and others so authorised to raise awareness, engage, educate and ultimately enforce the relevant legislation to tackle vehicle idling across the LA and carry out emissions testing within the Air Quality Management Areas.

These proposals are considered to complement the efforts to 'change habits' by people using vehicles in the local authority. It is to be stressed that the aim is to bring about change as part of a wider package of measures and not to be seen as a source of revenue generation. The penalties are such that the work is unlikely to achieve cost neutrality but will be seen as part of the Councils wider approach to improving air quality as part of its Climate Change strategy.

## Air Quality Facts

The Public Protection Partnership team has over 80 years of air quality experience between them. That puts you in safe enthusiastic hands!

There are seven air quality management areas across the PPP areas.

There are four air quality continuous monitors in the PPP areas.

There are four air quality action plans running in PPP.

PPP comment on planning applications with regards to air quality to ensure new areas aren't created which will need air quality monitoring.

There are three officers that change over one hundred and thirty tubes, on a monthly basis, no matter what the weather!

PPP have secured funding for £259,000 to help understand PM2.5 and improve our air quality.

The PPP officers are passionate about improving air quality.