
Joint Public Protection Partnership – Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 West Berkshire and Wokingham currently share environmental health and trading standards functions. These currently operate as two separate services under two separate agreements having commenced at different times. This arrangement has already delivered significant savings for both authorities primarily through reducing management overheads, merging of systems and procurement savings. This proposal seeks to take the learning from the current arrangement and Bracknell Forest and combine it into one service department serving the Southern half of Berkshire.
- 1.2 There are several drivers for seeking change within all three councils, not least the need to contribute to the savings targets. A merger enables the realisation of significant savings whilst also providing greater opportunity for job enrichment and advancement. The proposals would result in one large team of over 100 staff. Bigger teams working across a wider area provide a greater range of professional challenge as well as scope for operational and management efficiencies. The alternative is limited to ongoing small cuts year on year potentially making the service unviable and filling vacant posts challenging.
- 1.3 The existing arrangements have provided savings to West Berkshire Council in the order of £200K per annum. These proposals will increase the annual saving by £110K to a total of £310K This will be done through further reduction in management overhead by the new partnership arrangement and through rationalisation of systems, licensing and supplies costs.

2. Remit of the New Partnership and Support Arrangements

- 2.1 The current shared service arrangements cover the Environmental Health and Licensing and Trading Standards functions of both West Berkshire and Wokingham. Operationally these are delivered by West Berkshire Council with staff based in Newbury and Wokingham. Each Council still maintains its own Licensing Committee and sub committees / panels as required. Included in this arrangement are the pest control functions and animal warden service.
- 2.2 This proposal would extend to include those services on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council. Bracknell Forest also has a number of small contracts for example in relation to stray dogs and air quality monitoring. These would be transferred as part of the arrangements and in time they would be renegotiated by the new organisation to establish common arrangements to cover all three councils.
- 2.3 The legal functions associated with enforcement of legislation will also become the responsibility of the partnership and these will be funded from the overall revenue budget of the partnership. Where there are financial implications for west Berkshire Legal Services these will be met by the Partnership.

3. Governance arrangements

- 3.1 The proposed Governance arrangements are set out in Schedule 1 of the draft agreement attached at Appendix 3 to this report. As can be seen from that detail the proposal is for the new service to be given the strategic direction and be held to account through joint management arrangements led by a statutory Joint Committee. This will comprise of two members from each council and one substitute is permitted. Legislation requires one of the nominees to be an Executive Member. It is suggested that this should be the Executive Member within whose remit the services fall.
- 3.2 The Joint Committee would not assume any responsibility that already falls to the Licencing Committee of the Council. Each council would retain its own licensing functions, associated legal processes and appeal panels.
- 3.3 The Board would be supported by the Joint (Officer) Management Group. This Group would and would comprise of nominated senior (client) officers from each of the three councils. The Group will be responsible for driving core business and ensuring the respective needs of the three councils are properly considered at an operational level. Overall daily management will be a function of the operational management team lead by the host authority through the Joint Service Managers and the operational team managers. The Group would manage the overall operational needs and ensure progress against targets are reported to the Joint Committee through a number of pre determined key performance indicators.
- 3.4 In order to drive out efficiencies one of the early needs would be to try to develop common policies and practices. When it comes to licensing for example the Joint Committee would be responsible for ensuring that the necessary resources are available to do this. Each licensing Authority would then be asked to adopt them. The need is to ensure an effective interface between the Joint Committee at all times. The Committee would have the authority and responsibility to manage risk and deliver the required service levels within the approved budget. The committee will propose a fee structure for consideration by each Council on an annual basis.
- 3.5 From a practical point of view the Joint Committee will be hosted by West Berkshire Council and the standing orders of West Berkshire Council would apply. The Chair will rotate annually and it is proposed the initial Chair is from Bracknell Forest and Vice Chair from Wokingham.

4. Staff implications

- 4.1 West Berkshire would under the proposals become the employing and administrative authority. They are the current employer for the Wokingham and West Berks joint services arrangements and there is no merit in changing this arrangement. To get the efficiencies needed there can only be one central body with such responsibilities. West Berkshire has the necessary experience to perform this role and the implications are set out in the draft Inter Authority Agreement. Effectively West Berkshire will become the delivery body for the Partnership. Given the nature of the service and the need to take responsibility for the actions of staff within the service it is proposed that existing Bracknell Forest staff transfer to West Berkshire where the functions they perform fall within the scope of the agreement.

TUPE will apply to these transfers and HR have been involved in the discussions with counterparts in Bracknell.

- 4.2 The nature of any proposal of this nature inevitably has a bearing on the current workforce. For these reasons regular updates and briefings have taken place. Most staff having worked in the existing shared service recognise the benefits of such arrangements. Within regulatory services the proposed model is becoming more common across the country. The main implication for existing staff initially will be that their geographical remit will be extended to include Bracknell Forest Council area. In due course the structure of the Service will become a matter for the Joint Committee.
- 4.3 In terms of accommodation Bracknell are making available the existing accommodation at their offices at Times Square. Both West Berkshire and Wokingham will permit the staff to use their offices for the duration of this agreement. ICT equipment for existing Bracknell staff is being provided by Bracknell Forest Council along with network access etc. Access to West Berkshire systems will be via Citrix.

5. Service Delivery Model

- 5.1 Reducing budget cannot be done without there being some service reduction. The proposed arrangements will achieve the most significant level of saving by a reduction in management costs and service efficiencies from day one. However, there will be some other operational changes relative to what and how the service in Bracknell and the existing Environmental Health and Licensing function at West Berkshire and Wokingham is currently delivered. Those services will be brought into line with the existing model for Trading Standards which is based on the National Intelligence Model to set priorities and to identify and respond to those matters which are considered to be of high risk or impact whilst allowing for the development of an understanding of emerging issues. The benefits of this can be seen in the work relating to tackling doorstep crime and financial abuse.
- 5.2 Effective relationships with key Council delivery services such as Adult Social Care, Housing, Planning and Building Control be key to effective service delivery as will effective partnerships with the myriad of bodies. These include the Police, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards South East and National Trading Standards, Housing Associations, 3rd Sector bodies along with neighbouring and other local authorities. Where service specific grants are available these will be sought on behalf of all three Councils to maintain and improve effective delivery.
- 5.3 The core service objectives and specification is set out in Schedule 5 to the agreement.

6. Opportunities for the future

- 6.1 The new service would be able to seek new sources of income. This will include the considering the admittance of additional Councils into the arrangements or other such arrangement collaborative or otherwise for the delivery of services. Where the Committee considers the business case to be made out (including an assessment of the implications for support services) they will make recommendations for consideration by the partners. Where efficiencies give rise to savings the proposals

provide a mechanism for equitable sharing of any future savings based on the original cost basis.

7. Contract term and time table

- 7.1 The timetable for any change is tight and the proposal is to enter into an agreement commencing 13 January 2017. The initial agreement is for a ten year term. The agreement includes for break clauses and extensions.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wards affected:

All

Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aims:

- X SLE – A stronger local economy**
- X MEC – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:

- X MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council**

Officer details:

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Appendix B

Equality Impact Assessment - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity.

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Name of policy, strategy or function:	Shared Public Protection Service
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Steve Broughton
Name of assessor:	Sean Murphy
Date of assessment:	

Is this a:		Is this:	
Policy	No	New or proposed	/No
Strategy	No	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes
Function	Yes	Is changing	Yes
Service	Yes		

1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, strategy function or service and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To develop a more robust and effective Public Protection Service covering West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell
Objectives:	To provide sustainability of the service and improve its effectiveness
Outcomes:	
Benefits:	A strong and effective high quality service.

<p>2. Note which groups may be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</p> <p>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)</p>
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Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Further Comments relating to the item:		
None		

3. Result	
Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or service, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	No
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
Will the policy, strategy, function or service have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	No
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered ‘yes’ to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

If a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage Two template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	

Name: Sean Murphy

Date:

Please now forward this completed form to Rachel Craggs, the Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) for publication on the WBC website.