



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

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Summary for Members of the Joint Public Protection
Committee

Q1 and Q2 2020-21

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1. Executive Summary

This report covers a period where the service has worked to deliver new statutory roles and responsibilities and at the same time maintain a high standard of business as usual. The economic uncertainties and impact of the current pandemic have started to be seen with the pressures predominantly linked to the licenced trade. Due to when annual fees are due we have not seen the true impact on the hospitality business, however with the second lockdown this may change. The budget report has already set out for 2021/22 the position and we will continue to feed into corporate finance teams.

As already reported we have revised our ways of working to maximise the capacity for delivering on Covid issues. We have also supported business as usual. We recognised the ability to deal with nuisance was compromised (with visits to properties limited) and we looked at alternative service deliver which reduced the need to visit complainant's properties such as the Noise App. We have brought back in contractors and casual staff to help support the back office pressures with increased inquiries (those dealt with at point of contact on the phone) and increased email traffic, also being able to support officers whilst working at home.

At year end we reported the progress on community engagement, with social media and the website becoming a sought out guide for many residents and businesses. This resource has been invaluable to many residents and businesses and our messages are getting out to an ever growing number of people (last week we celebrated 1,000 people liking the PPP Facebook page). We have provided updates on the service as well as any issues we may be experiencing such as phones or printing taxi licence plates. Members' bulletins have continued to provide information across the PPP area and we have had positive feedback on these.

During this period we have continued support and train our Regulatory Services Apprentices. There has been a move to online training by many providers and there have been regular sessions concerning Covid held with Public Health England and South East, Associate of Chief Trading Standards Officers and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. We have also seen two of our officers qualify as Environmental Health Officers during this period. One of these was a sponsored officer from before the PPP was set up and shows our commitment to development as well as the commitments to the two officers involved. There are two officers being sponsored on the Environmental Health MSc course who again have been sponsored by the PPP and have adapted well to changes in course delivery.

The service has improved its delivery on important matters such as in the private rented sector housing market, where much more work is being done to regulate houses in multiple occupation, protecting vulnerable people from mass marketing scams and recovering their money as well as working with the taxi trade to improve awareness about safeguarding.

We have continued to see the growth and development of the Case Management Unit in supporting PPP cases and those of our partner agencies. Notable recent cases have again raised the profile of the service and helps sets the standards for our residents and businesses

Sean Murphy
Public Protection Manager

2. Key Strategic Progress

Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The substantive report set out the issues for 2021/22 discussions at JPPC of the potential impact of Covid ▪ Financial support from each of the Councils has helped with supporting staff and back filling in some areas to allow existing staff to focus on delivering Covid needs. ▪ We have seen some of the benefits of reduced travel footprints and in some other areas.
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have seen, as with many services the impact of staff delivering the service from home. We are looking at the issues of stress within the service and have recognised the need to some staff to return to the office. ▪ The staff only has two substantive vacancies which is the lowest vacancy rate since formation. ▪ We have brought in a number of agency staff to support the work of the PPP ▪ It should be noted that there has been a demand from all authorities for qualified Environmental Health Officers to assist with tracing work and the more risk assessment Covid-secure approach to managing the pandemic.
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During this period all West Berkshire laptops were moved across to Windows 10 and this has allowed some opportunities in delivering more access to officers to the information within the other two authorities. This work has progressed into Q3. ▪ There were initial issues around the choice of online meeting/conferencing capabilities with 2 using Teams and one Zoom. We have been able to obtain licences for more officers to have teams and improved our connectivity across the PPP. ▪ Progress has been made on the single system project with the Tascomi project starting and configuration and migration work starting.
Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During this period officers have continued to use offices in a Covid secure way. Legal papers and notices have had to be printed and evidence appropriately stored. ▪ We have managed a database of staff attending offices to limit the numbers but recognising the business need for some presence.
Case Management and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The work of this team and its development is outlined in a separate report. ▪ Some RIPA training for staff has been updated but Authorising officer RIPA training has been re-arranged in January. ▪ We been deli
Performance and Service Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have focused on delivering the work around Covid. The incoming complaints, queries and ▪ We have used proactive messages to provide information to the public and manage expectations, we have improved the 1st Response times across the

	service, however we have not managed targets set around inspection work. This is recognised by agencies such as the Food Standards Agency.
Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have worked to develop our contact and profile with local businesses ▪ There continues to be demands with the Primary Authority work (in particular with
Risk (Emergency Planning and Business Continuity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The service was able to use the business continuity plan to manage the risks around Covid. ▪ We identified priority work for the service for the lockdown period and then within the recovery phase (Q2). ▪ We have piloted a Lone Working app for some staff and are now rolling this out across the service.

3. Communications

Communication has been key in our ability to deliver the PPP service during Q1 and Q2. The internal communications have improved across all 3 areas as groups of officers across a range of areas have come together to achieve a common goal.

Officers have welcomed the updates from each authority with a mix of weekly emails and “let’s chat” zoom calls. Within the PPP the managers have tried to keep staff abreast of the fast moving issues, however this has not be as consistent as we would have liked.

Attached are the Q1 and Q2 communications reports, they show the interactions in detail with the service. In particular we have noted times when there is increased social media traffic and also the posts which generate the most interest.

Whilst providing Covid support and advice we have tried to ensure a wider picture of activities across the PPP such as the meet the animal warden’s videos and scam and consumer safety information.

The key communication channels continue to be

Website: www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk

Twitter: https://twitter.com/PublicPP_UK

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/publicprotectionpartnershipuk/>

4 Maintaining levels of customer and business satisfaction

- The customer survey results will be provided on an annual basis. We continue to receive praise from those we have been able to help or resolve issues for.
- We asked for feedback on the webinars that took place and these were well received and there have been positive messages from those staff within the authorities working with the PPP perhaps for the first time.

- We have so really positive and helpful comments which help with staff morale and their own satisfaction in doing a good job.

"It was fast, efficient and I was pleased that my request was dealt with professionally as well as promptly"

"Prompt response to initial query. Excellent customer service. The Duty Officer was very helpful and pleasant to talk to"

"I reported an abandoned car and a few later... Hey presto it's gone!"

"Really prompt and my concern was taken seriously. I felt listened to."

"Helpful and informative information regarding initial enquiry regarding possible ground contamination. Further excellent response by officer dealing with almost daily fires on neighbouring land which had been ongoing we believe for a number of years prior to our contacting PPP. His intervention has stopped these fires and we feel reassured that should there be a problem again it will be dealt with again. All communication has been supportive, informative and courteous during a period of considerable stressful events."

"Just keep doing, in the same method and timescale, as you're doing now. A first class council service."

"Our complaint was dealt with very well on the telephone we presume our neighbours have been contacted regarding this by your department as things have vastly improved we hope it continues many thanks"

- We have had some good feedback from our Support with Confidence scheme where additional work has included advice on emergency cover, PPE supplies, Coronavirus testing. Compliments specific to this work included

" X got all we need for 2 or 3 weeks. Thank You. You are doing a brilliant job."

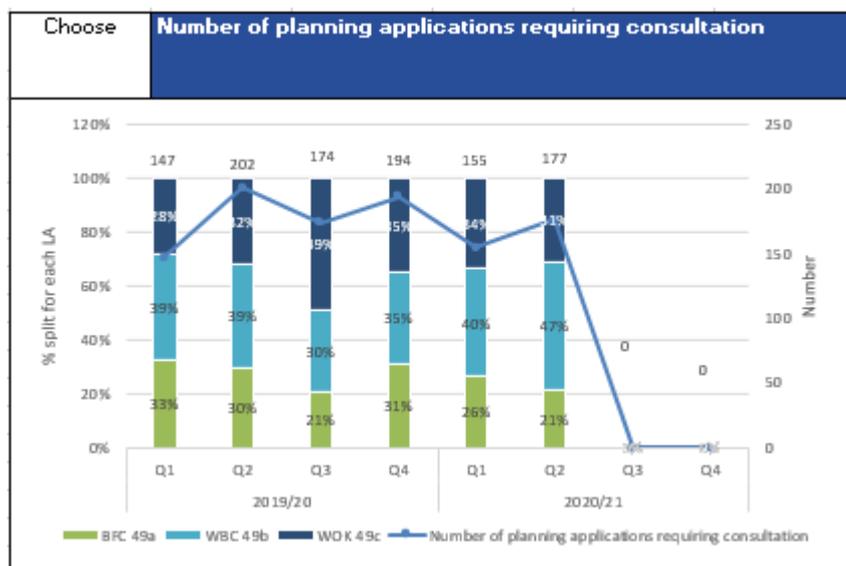
"Thank you X for your support, as always. We are so privileged to have you around."

- Other public health work which continued or was adapted was the Schools Attitudinal Survey 2020 (Alcohol and Smoking) and The Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP). We received thank you emails from all three UA PH teams on these results and the trends data report that followed it. Thames Valley Police emailed us to say "Thank you for your work on this." regarding the CAP work.

4. Service Performance across the Partnership

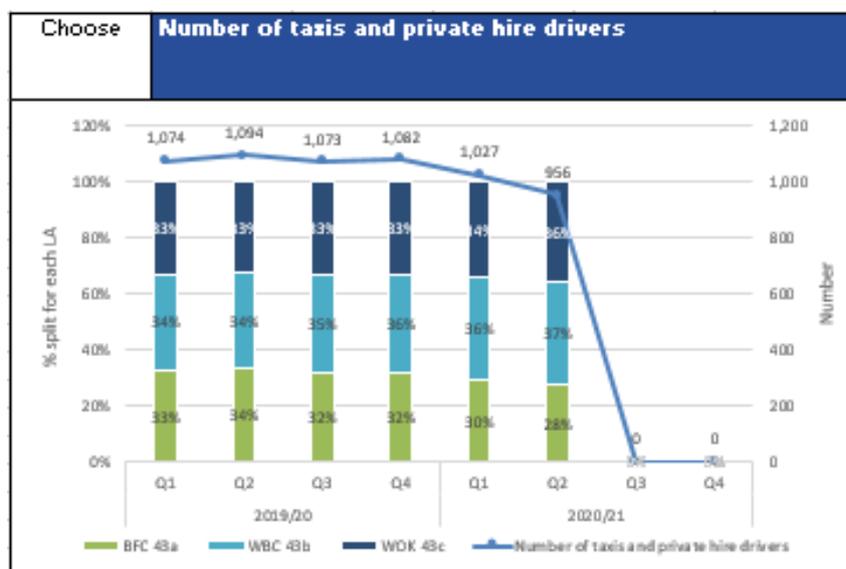
4.1 Measures of Volume and Key Demographics

Many inspections ceased as did a number of projects which were set up to meet our core priority work. Whilst we moved the public health work with schools on line during lockdown we did not have the access to the schools to deliver this work. The graphs shown below illustrate the impact the pandemic has had on the work of the service and the future trajectory if the situation does not improve significantly.



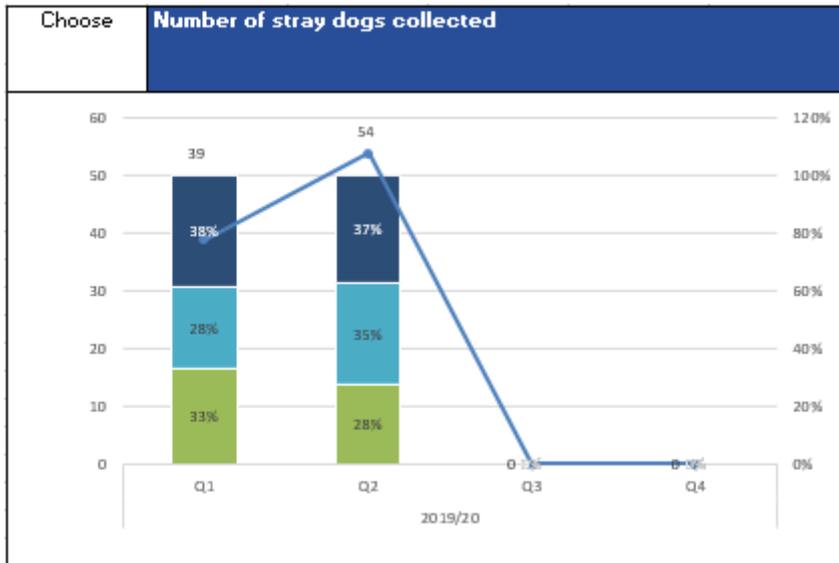
Planning Applications

This work continued throughout the lockdown period with very little change on previous volumes of work. We also had officers remotely attending both Bracknell Planning Committee and West Berkshire Western Area Planning Committee meetings during Q1 and 2.



Taxi and Private hire driver licences

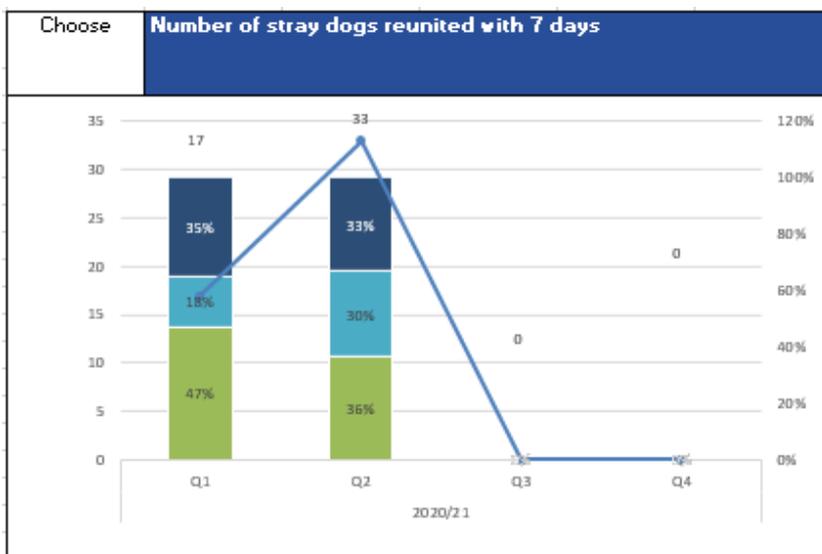
Although many have retained their badges in case the situation improves we have seen a decline in driver numbers. These are mainly those up for renewal who have chosen to not renew rather than drivers voluntarily surrendering their licences.



Animal Wardens

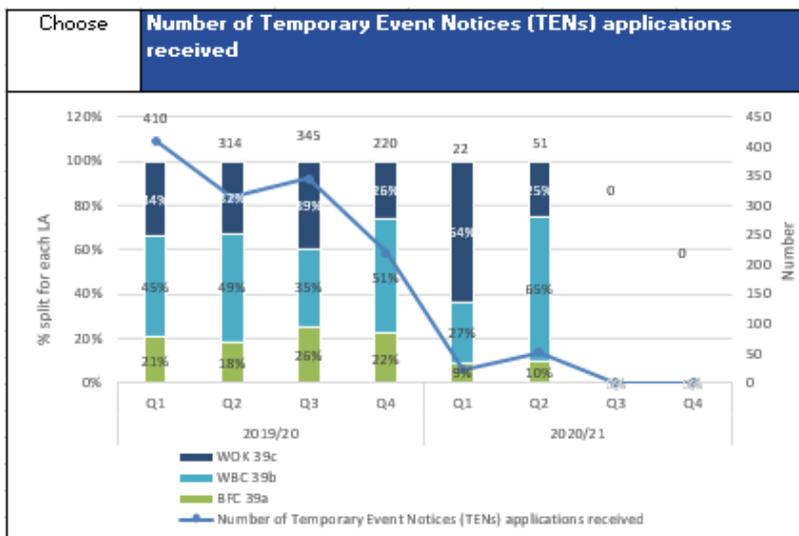
In Q1 we welcomed an additional Animal Warden to the service. The plan for the 2 officers was to provide day time stray dog collection across the PPP, this is now in place. The role was expanded and they are now dealing with barking dog complaints. They also be out at events and in the community giving advice and information (which due to Covid has not been possible). They have been visible on our social media platforms and have worked with local vets as well as supporting our out of hours contractors.

We saw an increase in strays in the period after lockdown, however this is in line with the monthly average of 52 in 2019/20



Temporary Events Notices

This area saw the greatest shift when lockdown commenced. Very few applications were received. Although events were permitted in some of the summer months the uncertainty around investing in even small scale events was apparent. Significant work went into ensuring all applications during this period were Covid secure and relevant risk assessments completed



4.2 Response times

The new structure set up provided a Response Team who were able to be the frontline of the service. This team was larger than under the previous structure and was able to deliver a greater response rate than previously. The area of abandoned vehicles was low and this has been looked at and due to stopping this activity (unless imminent risk was present) repeat complaints were being left. Commercial noise delays arose in Q2 due to resource issues. This is being addressed an improvements being made.

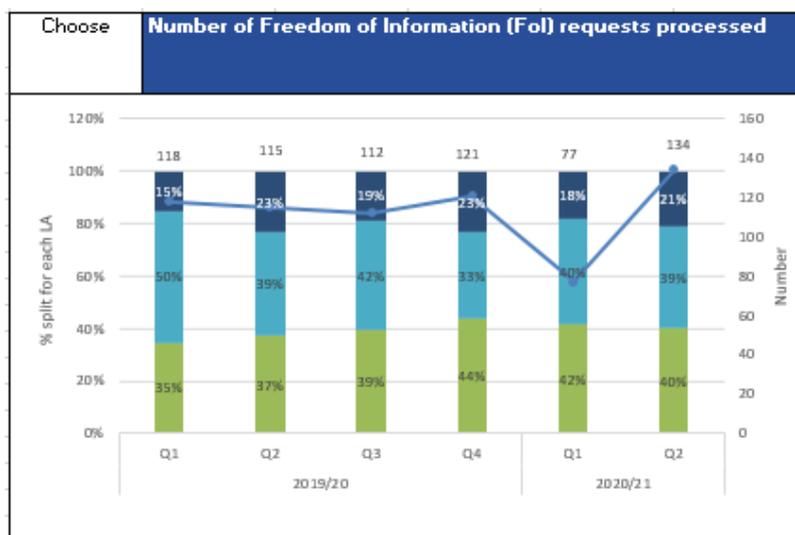
KPI	Target	Q1	Q2	YTD
% of licensing applications processed within statutory timescales or 5 days	85%	82.7%	79.2%	80.8%
Bracknell	85%	82.7%	79.3%	80.9%
West Berks	85%	83.9%	76.9%	80.1%
Wokingham	85%	80.9%	81.8%	81.5%
% of reported food safety incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	99.4%	98.4%	98.8%
% of reported Covid incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	98.4%	98.8%	98.6%
% of reported envirocrime incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	84.4%	85.7%	85.3%
% of reported air quality concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	99.4%	95.6%	98.2%
% of reported commercial noise incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	99.3%	77.0%	88.5%
% of reported door step crime incidents appropriately responded to in 1 working day	95%	100.0%	data not available	100%
% of reported product safety concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	100.0%	data not available	100%
% of reported private sector housing concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	95.9%	91.9%	93.5%
% of reported health and safety at work concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	94.4%	100.0%	98.1%
% of reported other incidents/concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	90%	98.9%	94.9%	96.8%
% of reported noise cases (non Commercial) appropriately responded to in 10 days	90%	98.6%	95.3%	97.0%
% of general Trading Standards requests responded to within 10 days	90%	99.9%	99.0%	99.4%
% of licensing complaints/requests for advice dealt with appropriately within 10 working days	90%	87.5%	98.0%	92.8%

Table 1: Showing key performance data on response times

5. Service Complaints and Information Requests

There was a drop off in numbers of Freedom of Information requests in the first quarter although 77 were still received and took 59hrs to respond. In Q2 the volume increased to the highest level since we started monitoring. These were mainly Covid related and linked to complaints and compliance. Although we were unable to direct to published data the reports we have meant that many were responded to swiftly taking 64 hours (an average of 30mins per inquiry)

We had an increase in requests from Councillors and MP's there were a number concerned with bonfires and individual issues but some were related to a few specific cases which were either exacerbated by the lockdown or concerns things would stop due to the focus on Covid. We tried to address some of the issues within the member's bulletin and by our detailed reports to JPPC during this time.



Type	Complaints about service (Stage 1)	MP and Cllr inquiries	FOI requests	Time spent on FOI requests
Bracknell – Q1	5	7	32	22hrs
West Berks – Q1	4	10	31	24hrs
Wokingham – Q1	2	19	14	12hrs 25mins
PPP Total	11	36	77	59hrs
Type	Complaints about service (Stage 1)	MP and Cllr inquiries	FOI requests	Time spent on FOI requests
Bracknell – Q2	3	5	54	17hours 20mins
West Berks – Q2	5	15	52	33hours
Wokingham – Q2	0	15	28	13hrs 25mins
PPP Total – Q2	8	35	134	64hrs