
PPP Performance Summary 2020/21 and Covid19 Response Update

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	14 June 2021
Chair of Committee:	TBC
Date JMB agreed report:	03 June 2021
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Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC4061

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Joint Public Protection Committee with an annual performance summary for the Public Protection Service as well as providing an update setting out the Service's response to the Covid19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee **NOTES** the role the Public Protection Service are playing across the Councils with respect to Covid19 response.
- 2.2 The Committee **NOTES** the 2020/21 Q4 update and 2021/22 performance outturn for the Public Protection Service.
- 2.3 The Committee **RESOLVES** to receive a further update at its September 2021 meeting on progress on both the Covid19 response and associated 2021/22 performance.
- 2.4 The Committee **RESOLVES** that the 2020/21 revenue budget underspend be carried forward into the 2021/22 Financial Year.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>In 2020/21 the Service received around £400K in Covid19 specific grant funding. The funding was provided by all three authorities and was spent on a number of activities including compliance, outbreak monitoring and investigation, local contact tracing, sector specific assurance work and the Covid Marshall Service (West Berkshire Only).</p> <p>The performance report attached at Appendix A to this report covers the 2020/21 general revenue update. There was an underspend of £198K identified at year end. This related primarily to the re-deployment of staff into grant funded Covid work as well as being unable to conduct some aspects of business as usual work to normal levels e.g. food safety and standards inspections. As it exceeds £50K the carry forward</p>

	<p>needs to be approved by JPPC. If agreed it is envisaged this will be used to assist with additional staff for recovery in 2021/22 and to provide a buffer for any income shortfall around licensing.</p> <p>With respect to the Covid19 response for 2021/22 grant support has been secured in the order of £250K to cover compliance, outbreaks, local contact tracing and events and gatherings assessment and compliance.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>The Service currently has very few vacancies. We are currently out to advert for a Trading Standards Officer post and a Licensing Officer post. In addition there are two short term appointments being sought to assist with priority enforcement areas as part of our recovery arrangements.</p> <p>There are currently a range of temporary and agency staff engaged by the Service. Primarily these are associated with Covid19 compliance work, events and backfilling PPP staff engaged on outbreak and event work and support for the licensing service. Some additional staff are engaged on recovery work primarily with respect to the food safety and standards areas of work. All of these costs are being met from Covid19 allocation or general revenue budgets.</p>
Legal:	<p>The Inter-Authority Agreement charges the Joint Public Protection Committee with the responsibility to oversee service delivery and performance including financial performance. This report addresses this responsibility.</p> <p>With respect to Covid19 the Service is the primary enforcement body for all three councils with respect to legal controls regulating businesses and events.</p>
Risk Management:	<p>We will continue to manage risk in line with the prevailing situation and corporate policies.</p> <p>In terms of operational delivery risks the most significant risk arises from the decision by Wokingham Borough Council to leave the shared service arrangement. These risks are being managed by the parties as part of the disaggregation process and the Committee will receive a report in September of on progress with respect to this matter.</p> <p>The other area of significant risk relates to service recovery should we see a third wave that requires the re-imposition of business restrictions once they are finally relaxed. At the time of writing it is unclear if the Step 4 easing will take place as planned on the 21st June 2021.</p> <p>Joint Management Board meet fortnightly and are kept informed of any service changes and adjustments and any consequences arising from these will be notified.</p>

Property:	Each Council is currently developing its post pandemic office and working arrangements. The service is effectively operated from its Offices in Theale and in line with the recommendations of the Service Review in 2018 we will look to centralise at Theale with service delivery points in Bracknell and Newbury once Wokingham have left the Partnership.			
Policy:	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.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		No implications
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		No implications
Environmental Impact:	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.
Health Impact:	x			The proposals create no direct health impacts on staff. They do however set out community based health protection measures.
ICT or Digital Services Impact:	x			The use of ICT on service delivery has been transformational. Telephone conferencing, MS Teams and Zoom have all been employed in the day today 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 JPPC will continue to meet in accordance with the decisions made by West Berkshire Council, as the host authority, about meeting arrangements. The Licensing Committees will be conducted under the meeting arrangements of their individual authorities.
PPP Priorities :	x			These set out how the Service has maximised 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.
Data Impact:		✓		None
Consultation and Engagement:	There is regular engagement with staff as well as senior officer and Member briefings in each of the three authorities that form the PPP.			

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 In June 2020, September 2020, December 2020 and March 2021 the Joint Public Protection Committee received reports variously covering aspects of Covid19 impact on service delivery, Covid19 response by the service and performance updates.
- 4.2 The report before Committee sets out our ongoing involvement in local the response to Covid19 and the final performance update for 202/21.

5. Local Covid19 Response

- 5.1 **Service Requests:** The performance report sets out service volumes for 2020/21. As previously reported these show a significant increase. The first two months of 2021/22 have seen a modest increase in service requests from April / May 2020/21. These include a total of 98 business related Covid SRs and 71 compliance related SR's.
- 5.2 April / May data also shows marked increase in other areas including:
 - (a) Food Safety / Standards – increase from 105 to 206 (138%)
 - (b) Housing – increase from 75 to 196 (216%)
 - (c) Licensing – increase of 117 to 212 (181%)

(d) Pests – increase from 85 to 134 (56%)

(e) Trading Standards Consumer complaint including notifications – Increase of 28%

5.3 At the time of writing we are seeing a large volume of application enquiries for licensing in particular regarding re-licensing of taxi and private hire vehicles and drivers and Temporary Event Notices. It is too early to say to what extent the recovery will see a return to pre-pandemic levels as a number of areas of trade were already being impacted by other dynamics e.g. the impact of Uber on the taxi trade in Bracknell and Wokingham. Other areas that may also be permanently impacted include home boarding if residents change their working patterns adopted in the pandemic on a more permanent basis.

5.4 **Outbreak Prevention and Local Outbreak Investigation:** Since the last report we have supported all three PPP authorities to update Local Outbreak Plans. In addition we have continued to support work on outbreak management in the following ways:

- Monitoring to and responding to outbreak reporting on a seven day basis across all three PPP authorities.
- Being 'Subject Matter Experts' with respect to commercial premises as well as advising in other subject areas such as schools.
- Monitoring of compliance at commercial premises including provision of advice, advisory and compliance visits and following up on public concerns.
- Carrying out contact tracing seven days per week in West Berkshire and at Weekends / Bank Holidays in Bracknell and Wokingham.

5.5 **Compliance:** Since the last report to JPPC we have been through Steps 1b, 2 and 3 of the Governments recovery roadmap. At each step of the way we have assisted businesses and service providers. Prior to Step 2 (12th April) we held sector non-essential retail, close contact services and hospitality briefings in each of the three authorities. These were followed by a further briefing for hospitality ahead of Step 3 on the 18th May. In addition we carried out briefings for Town and Parish Council's ahead of the return to face-to-face meetings in May. These briefings were generally well attended with businesses and parish councils reporting that they found them helpful. At the time of writing two prohibition notices were issued in Step 2 and one in Step 3.

5.6 We have carried out compliance checks since the first restrictions were introduced in March 2020 and these have continued through all stages of the pandemic. Since the autumn these have amounted to around 2000 visits consisting day time and evening / weekend visits. They are a combination of intelligence led (public, Police or Covid Marshal referrals), follow up visits, common exposure points and risk based visits.

5.7 Since Step 2 we have been conducting both weekday, evening and out of hours visits across all three areas. In April there were a total **440** visits consisting of 223 to hospitality venues, 145 to general retail, 38 to supermarkets and 34 to close contact such as hairdressers. In May we conducted a total of **436** visits consisting of 247 to hospitality, 108 to retail, 18 to gyms/sport settings, 6 to education settings and 57 to close contact settings. A total of three prohibition notices were issued. A number of businesses were provided with advice.

- 5.8 Beyond this point will very much depend on what happens with respect to the implementation of Step 4 proposals as well as local infection rates and matters such as variants of concern.
- 5.9 **Events:** Events (permitted gatherings as defined in law) present a challenge workload wise. At the moment any gathering is only permitted subject to a health and safety and Covid19 risk assessments. At the time of writing the events list consists of some 200+ events. Assessing all documentation and where appropriate holding Safety Advisory Group meetings and carrying out compliance visits is significant task. Additional resource to support these assessments and liaise with organisers have been engaged and we are currently holding around three Safety Advisory Groups per month. Again there is uncertainty as to what rules will be in place at the time of any given event as these could / will be subject to change at Step 4. In any respect there will always be a need for event plans and health and safety risk assessments as well as other aspects including public safety and nuisance.

6. Business as Usual

- 6.1 The matter of service request volumes are dealt with above and the priorities going forward are dealt with elsewhere on this agenda. The increase in licensing work is also referenced earlier in the report.
- 6.2 Most areas of the service are now operating a full service. Of particular note are the following matters:
- The tendering process has now been developed to deliver the Defra funded Air Quality Project around PM2.5 monitoring. We are also in the process of recruiting to the Project Officer post.
 - Training sessions have been conducted for Members of all three Licensing Committees on licensing in general / the Licensing Act 2003 and Licensing Panel hearings. We have also met with both West Berkshire and Bracknell Taxi / Private Hire Liaison Groups.
 - Meetings have also been conducted with the Parish and Town Councils in all three authorities about the impact of the expiry of the Remote Meeting Regulations and conducting safe public meetings after the 07 May 2021.
 - Work on the 2022/23 budget has commenced including a review of fees and charges for Bracknell and West Berkshire.
 - Development of new Gambling Statement of Policy for all three Council's as well as updating of Taxi / Private Hire vehicle and driver standards in line with government guidance.
 - Development of a recovery approach for food safety / standards.
 - Member briefings prepared on new CCTV and RIPA policies in Bracknell.
 - Strategic Assessment and Communication Strategies updated and appear elsewhere on this agenda.

- Development of an approach to ‘fit and proper’ assessments for regulated caravan site owners / managers – also on this agenda.
- Project team developed to manage the process of Wokingham BC leaving the partnership.
- Engaged Licensing Liaison Officers to assist with compliance and engagement around taxi / private hire / licenced premises and events and to assist with local recovery.

6.3 Case Management Unit: Since the last meeting the following cases have been taken with respect to PPP enforcement matters. These are summarised in the Members Bulletin at Appendix B to this report.

7. 2020/21 Performance Summary

7.1 The Committee is mandated by the Inter-Authority Agreement to keep under review the Performance of the Public Protection Service. Throughout the year the Committee has received updates on aspects of performance both Covid and non Covid related. The end of year performance summary can be found at **Appendix A** to this report. This report does not cover Covid work in detail as the Committee has received four updates in respect, including in the earlier part of this report.

8. Concluding Observations

8.1 This has been the most challenging year since the inception of the Service. The Service itself has played a key role in the local response to the pandemic. At all points they have sought to strike the balance between health protection and support for businesses and the economy whilst delivering the vast majority of the business-as-usual public protection services. The performance report shows that the Service has by and large maintained and, in some cases, improved key indicators whilst delivering against a significantly increased workload. The Service has been well supported by all three partners with additional grant allocations.

8.2 Above all, the achievements of 2020/21 have been down to the dedication and significant endeavours of the staff within the Service. For most of the year the Service has been on a seven day per week footing with staff volunteering to work evenings and weekends on tracing, compliance and outbreak work often whilst maintaining the routine functions of the Service in the day time. We now look forward to recovery whilst maintaining our Covid response as required. This too will be a challenging year for the Service but I am confident will rise to meet all challenges before us.

APPENDIX A – 2020/21 Performance Summary
