



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

Year End 2020-21

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1. Executive Summary

2020/21 was a year like no other in living memory including for the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). Just prior to the start of the service year the country was deep in the grip of a global pandemic with significant restrictions on the lives of people and on businesses.

The Service was restructured in April to respond to the pandemic with effectively a Covid response function and a pro-active advice and enforcement function. From July onwards the Service became the lead on outbreak monitoring for all three authorities and this was complemented by work in all three areas looking at high-risk settings such as early years.

From November we conducted local contact tracing in Wokingham (at weekends) and West Berkshire seven days per week and from March 2021 have also conducted weekend contact tracing in Bracknell.

The summer period when infections were lower also saw the Service involved in lots of additional work around events. Compliance visits continued throughout the whole period and the Service conducted around 100-150 visits per week on average. The Service has also been on a seven day footing since July 2020.

In terms of 'business as usual' much has been achieved. Some areas such as food inspections were heavily impacted whilst others continued throughout at broadly normal levels.

The Service was restructured again in August to its current structure which is a blend of community response, partnership support and a number of functional teams which included the newly formed Private Sector Housing Team.

Communications remained a big feature and the Service's web-site and social media output came into their own. This report gives more detail on some measures of volume in this respect. We also looked at new ways of communicating including multiple webinars for business and eight general bulletins for Members and a number of targeted bulletins covering areas such as Air Quality and Housing.

We now look ahead to what recovery may look like. At the time of writing, service request volumes show no sign of abating. We have a significant backlog of inspection work in areas such as food standards and safety and plans are in place to recover this position. Finally, we also have a significant project with respect to Wokingham Council's decision to leave the Partnership.

It has been a year like no other for the Service but it is also a year when the Service came to the fore in many respects.

Sean Murphy
Public Protection Manager

2. Key Strategic Progress

Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External grant funding to support investigations, animal feed regulation, case management and public health work exceeded £150K. The Service was supported by grants of over £400K for Covid specific work. The Service year outturn was a 198K underspend. By year end income was within 5% of the target. The Service was awarded a £259K grant for air quality work covering 2021/23
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service finished the year with no vacancies. A significant number of temporary staff were engaged (up to 18 at one point) to deal with both high levels of service requests but also the various strands of Covid specific work. A part time (0.4FTE) Lead Officer for Training and Development was recruited on a permanent basis. The Principal Officer – Policy and Governance was also recruited on a permanent basis.
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work has been underway to put in place the single case management system procured in Q4 of the previous year. This will be live by the beginning of 2022/23. A temporary 'project lead' has been retained to deliver the single case management system. Remote working for the majority of the Service due to Covid 19 was deemed to be implemented well and has become very much 'business as usual'.
Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theale has been the operational hub throughout the pandemic response. CCTV has been installed at Theale and a number of internal alterations made to remove the need to share common areas with the library. Going forward work is underway to look at accommodation needs in light of the new ways of working being adopted by Bracknell and West Berkshire. It is likely Theale will remain the main PPP hub.
Case Management and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Case Management Unit is fully staffed. There have been four JPPC meetings in 2020/21 and all were held remotely. There were also two remote Licensing Committee Meetings in each Council. The team have also dealt with two licensing panel hearings remotely. Taxi and Private Hire Trade Liaison Meetings were held in West Berkshire and Bracknell. Meetings have been held with parish councils across all three authorities. The Accredited Financial Investigators are at capacity and continue to work with Reading Borough Council providing support in this area as well as carrying out work for Wokingham Borough Council with respect to Planning matters. There was a significant backlog of cases managed by the Case Management Unit post June once the Court re-opened.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act training has been conducted in 2021 in BFC and the BFC updated policy for RIPA and CCTV drafted and approved. Criminal Procedure update training has been conducted in 2020/21 for case managers and this was followed up recently by training for investigative officers.
Performance and Service Development	Overall the picture for the Service is Green for the work we have been able to or have been required to complete. This has been managed through temporary structural arrangements, demand variations, improved communications and officer resilience. The recovery plan will need to balance the ongoing business as usual work alongside catching up on work which was parked during the pandemic.
Risk (Emergency Planning and Business Continuity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Business Continuity Plan is complete and up to date. The Strategic and Operational Risk Registers are complete and up to date.

3. Communication and Community projects

Communication is at the heart of the delivery model for PPP. This year with Covid this has never been more to the fore. It serves five primary purposes:

- To advise people in a way that helps protect them e.g. becoming a victim of crime, food poisoning etc. or to allow people to help themselves by taking preventative actions.
- To encourage people to report matters to the Service where they relate to key priorities e.g. rogue trader activity, licensing issues, sale of illegal items on line.
- To provide reassurance to the community.
- To act as a deterrent to would be offenders.
- To highlight the work of the Councils in protecting the public.

To assist understanding the Service produced seven General Member Bulletins and specific bulletin for Air Quality and Housing. The Members Bulletins have become a popular feature and will continue going forward,

Table 1 shows the key data collated in relation to communications:

Title	Target 2020/21	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Outturn	RAG status
Number of Public Protection service requests and complaints reported via online methods	≥ 140 (10% increase on 19/20)	666	265	145	342	1,418	G
Number of small businesses that have received direct support regarding food, health and safety and licensing by attending or accessing a PPP business advice session	80	0	100	45	20	165	G
Number of page views, social media hits and followers of business advice content on the PPP website	≥ 62,126 (5% increase on 19/20)	40,785	36,901	38,538	38,631	154,855	G
*Page views	-	40,555	36,686	38,301	38,280	0	
*Facebook page likes	-	160	185	221	320	0	
*Twitter likes	-	70	30	16	31	0	

4. Key Performance Indicators for 20/21

- At the Joint Public Protection Committee meeting in September 2018 it was resolved to remove a number of the KPIs set out within the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) and retain the following:

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

4.1 Effective budget management and use of resources

- By using Project Methodology and the National Intelligence Model the Strategic Tasking Group and Joint Management Board have the ability to scrutinise resources to ensure the delivery is in the highest priority areas.
- The KPI around income and expenditure:

1920-075	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Management of budget to within 1% of baseline				£198K underspend (approx 5%)
1920-076	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Management of income to within 5% of budget	On target	On target	On target	Met

- The significant underspend related to resource being redeployed into Covid grant funded work and some business as usual work that would have required the Service to engage additional

staff, such as food safety and standards, did not take place. It was also increased at the end of the year by some costs for larger cases that were paid over in the last few days by the Courts. Subject to Committee Agreement this will be carried forward to assist with recovery and mitigate any licensing income risks.

4.2 Maintaining levels of customer and business satisfaction

- Customer satisfaction has always been a key indicator for all three authorities with the Service priding itself on a consistently high achievement. Where issues have arisen there is a procedure for following these up (as on many occasions it has been interactions with other services that has resulted in a negative response). Service improvements are managed through the Quality Management System and recorded within our Improvement Action Logs.

Title	Target 2020/2021	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Outturn	RAG status
% of service users satisfied with the Public Protection Partnership (proactive telephone campaign to wider customer base for Q4)	75%	50.0%	52.8%	43.5%	88.0%	78.9%	G
% of service users satisfied with the Public Protection Partnership business webinars	75%	New measure added Q3 2020/21	New measure added Q3 2020/21	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	G

- We continue to receive positive responses about the services we provide and the standards delivered by the staff. We have also received direct emails from members of the public thanking officers for dealing with their complaints:
- ✓ Thank you again for your support, for the links you have provided and the speedy return emails. I hope they recognise the effort you put into your work...I'll have to book the Disability Awareness Course again in the next couple of weeks. Thank you again for your help and patience. 😊
- ✓ I felt listened to and they were really helpful.
- ✓ I felt very supported and was given very clear advice. The officer showed great empathy whilst remaining very professional.
- ✓ The situation was handled professionally and taken seriously. Appropriate action was taken without hesitation. Instructions for potential future issues were clearly outlined.
- ✓ I was actually surprised how quickly this was dealt with - a speedy informative and helpful answer to my query.

5. Service Performance across the Partnership

5.1 Service Request Data

- There was a significant increase in service requests in 2019/20. Included in this was close to 2000 Covid related Service Requests but also significant increases in other areas such as noise, bonfires and fly-tipping which were believed to be linked in part to Covid restrictions. Licensing and Scams /Doorstep Crime SR's were also up significantly on previous volumes. Areas such as food safety were down on the previous year as many premises were closed for part of the year. Overall the service requests were up year-on-year by 34% (excluding trading standards notifications). The following is a breakdown by category:

	2019/20	2020/21	%increase/decrease
Covid	107	1906	1681%
Bonfire	304	1016	234%
Dogs	549	386	-30%
Envirocrime (Inc abandoned vehicles)	413	372	-10%
Food Related	1033	884	-14%
Housing	746	690	-8%
Licensing	647	848	31%
Noise	1611	1929	20%
Other	1448	1393	-4%
Pest	405	509	26%
Planning	878	854	-3%
Public Health Funeral	32	30	-6%
Fly Tipping	64	140	119%
Animal Health	94	144	53%
Door Step/Scam/No cold calling zones	274	405	48%
Food Standards	115	103	-10%
Misleading Description	62	58	-6%
Other	207	224	8%
Unsafe goods	57	87	53%
What are my rights? (Business)	102	120	18%
What are my rights? (Consumer)	701	978	40%
Trading Standards Notifications of civil issues	4485	5553	24%
Weight Restrictions	182	388	113%
Grand Total (Inc Covid)	14516	19017	31%
Grand Total (Without Civil Notifications)	10031	13464	34%

5.2 Measures of Volume

- As outlined in the previous Covid updates and performance information the PPP Service has not only adapted to rapidly changing regulation changes but has maintained the performance across the business as usual workload. As a number of inspection regimes were curtailed officers capacity was redeployed into other areas. When it was possible for inspections to be

completed in a Covid safe manner we were able to focus on high risk work or areas where overseeing bodies such as Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Food Standards Agency had set out expectations.

Area of work	2019/20 MOV	2020/21 MOV	Observations
Formal Notices served	36 notices	163 notices	There was an opportunity to witness more events and lockdown meant some individuals were unable to offer explanations for their actions. Focus on housing work increased activity
Private Water Sampling	176	147 Samples	We continued to test supplies
Accidents	112	171 accidents	These are accidents requiring some form of intervention from the Service
Infectious Disease incidents reported	761reports	544 reports	Impact of food establishments not being open
Permitted Site inspections (Environmental Permit)	27 inspections	21 inspections	Where premises were operating we conducted Covid safe visits and inspections
Food inspections	867 inspections	58 inspections	Unable to carry out inspections planned for the year. Focus on High Risk premises

5.3 Response Times

- At the beginning of the year the Service, like many services, experienced the issues associated with staff working at home. In addition visits to the homes of others was not permitted so officers had to adapt the services delivered and also the messages and expectations from our Customer Delivery team were reviewed and amended. Where targets were not met a commentary has been provided.

Key Performance Indicator	Q4 Figure	End of Year	Notes/Comments
% of reported food safety incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	97.7%	98.6%	Slight dip in Q4 with almost double the number of inquiries and complaints
% of reported Covid incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	99.2%	98.9%	High priority work
% of reported envirocrime incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	82.5%	85.0%	This continued to be low priority work unless imminent public health risk
% of reported private sector housing concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	97.6%	95.4%	
% of reported air quality concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	97.7%	97.7%	

% of reported noise incidents appropriately responded to in 10 working days	99.1% (Domestic)	86.7%	Officers worked to improve service (earlier performance in the first lockdown and summer meant the % couldn't improve enough)
	94.1% (Commercial)	88.5%	
% of reported health and safety at work concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	100%	98.4%	
% of reported other incidents/concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	98.9%	96.8%	
% of reported door step crime incidents appropriately responded to in 1 working day	100%	100%	
% of reported product safety concerns appropriately responded to in 10 working days	100%	100%	
% of general Trading Standards requests responded to within 10 days	98.7%	99.1%	
% of licensing complaints/requests for advice dealt with appropriately within 10 working days	96.3%	94.7%	
% of Planning Applications appropriately responded to within consultation period	96.2%	96.8%	
% of whole service response within appropriate times	98%	97.7%	Overall the Service is responding appropriately to real time issues and focusing on priority work

6. Service Complaints and Information Requests

- Although there was a reduction in the general volume of Freedom of Information requests during the last year, the Service saw an increased number of requests concerning Covid related work, from inspections numbers to specific complaints about "purchasing masks". This work was not considered high priority for the Service, however due to the requirements for the Authority this work was completed where possible in a timely manner.

Authority	Quarter 4			Year End Total		
	FOI	Service Complaints	Cllr/MP/Board	FOI	Service Complaints	Cllr/MP/Board
Bracknell Forest	52	9	4	172	24	26
West Berkshire	51	8	13	202	26	49
Wokingham	32	1	8	94	10	48
Total	135	18	25	468	60	123