

# Notice of Meeting

## Joint Public Protection Committee

A shared service provided by Bracknell Forest Council  
and West Berkshire Council

**Monday 16 December 2024 at 7.00pm**

Venue: Bracknell Forest Council, Time Square, Market Street,  
Bracknell, RG12 1JD

**Note:** This meeting will be streamed live here:

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

**To:** Councillors Nick Allen (Bracknell Forest Council), Jeremy Cottam (West Berkshire Council), Iskandar Jefferies (Bracknell Forest Council), Justin Pemberton (West Berkshire Council), Cherise Welch (Bracknell Forest Council) and Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council)

### Part I

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1	<b>Apologies</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	1 - 2
2	<b>Appointment of the Vice-Chairman</b> To appoint the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year.	3 - 4
3	<b>Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of this Committee held on 10 June 2024, 7 October 2024 and 11 October 2024.	5 - 20
4	<b>Outstanding issues from previous meetings</b>	21 - 22
5	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> 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.	23 - 24

**Public Protection Partnership Agenda - Monday 16 December 2024** *(continued)*

- 6 **Notice of Public Speaking and Questions** 25 - 26  
To note those agenda items which have received an application for public speaking.  
A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.  
The Partnership welcomes questions from members of the public about their work.  
Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions 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.
- 7 **Forward Plan** 27 - 30  
To detail future items that the Committee will be considering.
- 8 **Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q2 Report for 2024/25** 31 - 66  
To inform the Committee of the performance of the Public Protection Partnership in line with the operating model and business plan, and provide an update setting out performance during the second quarter of 2024/25.
- 9 **Air Quality Status Reports 2024** 67 - 94  
To inform the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) of the submission and results of the annual air quality reports for Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils. These reports are for the monitoring data and action planning update for the calendar year 2023.  
To inform the JPPC that the annual air quality report for Wokingham Borough Council has also been submitted and the results received and passed on to Wokingham Borough Council in accordance with the shared service arrangements effective from the 1 April 2022.
- 10 **Update on fraud and unfair trading** 95 - 108  
To provide the Committee with an update on the work of the Public Protection Service in tackling fraud, unfair trading and financial abuse.

**Contact Officer:**

Stephen Chard, Legal and Democratic Services, West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD

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JPPC – 16 December 2024

## **Item 1 – Apologies for absence**

Verbal Item

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JPPC – 16 December 2024

## **Item 2 – Appointment of the Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year**

Verbal Item

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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## **JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024**

### **BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL, TIME SQUARE, MARKET STREET, BRACKNELL**

**Present:** Iskandar Jefferies (Chairman), Nick Allen, Jeremy Cottam, Cherise Welch, Howard Woollaston and Iain Cottingham (Substitute) (In place of Lee Dillon)

**Also Present:** Narinder Brar (Wokingham Borough Council), Moira Fraser (Public Protection Partnership), Damian James (Assistant Director – Contract Services), George Lawrence (Team Manager - Residential), Sean Murphy (Service Lead - Public Protection), Suzanne McLaughlin (Senior Environmental Health Officer), Councillor Jordan Montgomery (Wokingham Borough Council) and Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager)

**Apologies for absence:** Councillor Lee Dillon (Vice-Chairman)

#### **PART I**

#### **1 Election of the Chairman**

**RESOLVED that** Councillor Iskandar Jefferies of Bracknell Forest Council be elected as Chairman of the Joint Public Protection Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

#### **2 Appointment of the Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED that** Councillor Lee Dillon of West Berkshire Council be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Joint Public Protection Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

The Committee agreed to suspend standing orders for the duration of the meeting in order to allow Councillor Jordan Montgomery, from Wokingham Borough Council, to speak.

#### **3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **4 Outstanding Items from Previous Meetings**

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) gave an update on the outstanding action points from previous meetings:

**Item 1 – Revenue Budget 2024/25 (Fees and Charges Schedule)** - An update would be circulated following the discussions held at Berkshire Leaders and with the Berkshire Group of Officers.

Mr Murphy would also follow up on progress being made with the letter to be sent on behalf of the Licensing Chairs.

**Item 2 – Water Safety Annual Report 2023/24** - The actions had been completed.

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**Item 3 – Service Update and Q3 Performance Report** - A breakdown of the activities provided within the shared service arrangement for the relevant partners was included at Appendix C of the annual report.

**Item 4 – Young People and Vaping** – This would be actioned when the item was next brought to the Committee.

### 5 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Iain Cottingham declared that he had a personal interest in Agenda Items 10 and 11, by virtue of the fact that he was a non-executive Director of the Trading Standards Institute and ITSA Limited, and the Chairman of Thatcham Town Cricket Club which was a licensed premises. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the items.

### 6 **Notice of Public Speaking and Questions**

No public questions were received which related to either a general issue concerned with the work of the Public Protection Partnership or to an item on the agenda.

### 7 **Forward Plan**

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted with the following addition to be included:

- The annual vaping report would be scheduled for the Committee meeting on 10 March 2025.

### 8 **JPPC Terms of Reference (JPPC4370)**

Moira Fraser presented the Terms of Reference (Agenda Item 9) and noted that this was a standing agenda item at the first meeting of each Municipal Year.

While there had been substantial changes in the previous year, including an update of the membership of the Committee to include a Member of the Opposition from each of the authorities on the Committee, there were no proposals to change the Terms of Reference for the coming year.

**RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference be noted.

### 9 **Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q4 (Outturn) Report for 2023/24 (JPPC4371)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 10) which updated Members on the work of the Service in Quarter Four and which reported the end of year performance outturn.

Authority was sought from the Committee to carry forward the revenue underspend from 2023/24.

#### **Finances and Resources**

A deficit position continued in relation to income, creating a shortfall in the region of £100,000 in the 2023/24 financial year. It was necessary to hold vacancies in order to manage this shortfall.

However, at the end of the financial year there was an underspend of £61,000, made primarily of a £38,000 grant received at the very end of the previous financial year.

The report proposed that the underspend be carried forward into the 2024/25 financial year. This proposal had been discussed with Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils.



### **Customer Satisfaction Rates and Information Governance Data**

There had been a reduction in customer satisfaction. The sample size was however very low, and in one quarter there had been no returns. Officers were reviewing how best to collate data moving forward.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) reported that the number of vacancies was a contributing factor in terms of customer satisfaction.

A high number of Freedom of Information requests had been received by the service (an increase from the previous year to 371 requests).

The significant increase in the number of Member enquiries and MP enquiries was viewed positively as it showed the Service was getting the message out about the important work it did.

### **Human Resources**

The Licensing Teams would soon be fully staffed following successful recruitment. This included a trainee becoming a full member of the team.

Three of the Level Four apprentices had successfully completed their qualifications. The fourth (and remaining) apprentice was also expected to complete shortly. The aim was for the apprentices to become full members of the Service.

### **ICT Update**

Progress had been made since the previous meeting and the Service had been assigned more project support with the supplier. There was a plan in place to get the portal online, which would be used for temporary event notices, and then rolled out subject to it being successful.

### **Community and Trading Standards**

George Lawrence (Residential Team Manager) provided an update on the work of the community and trading standards team, highlighting the following points:

- 2000 service requests had been processed in the last quarter.
- Scam intervention work had been successful. This work had helped 85 victims and potential victims of scams save money totalling approximately £43,000. Further savings had been achieved following work with banks.
- Successful funding bids had funded awareness campaigns regarding the safe use of scooters and electric bikes.
- Work on the delivery of food inspection and food sampling continued. All high risk food standards inspections had been completed.
- Officers had tested many products including vape products. Work on underage sales had included the purchase of lottery tickets.
- The most complained about sector was second hand car dealers. Officers were looking to engage with businesses of concern to try and achieve improvements for customers.
- The disease surveillance programme had been rolled out and there had been no invasive mosquitos in the area. However, work would continue after the identification of some yellow fever mosquito eggs along the M4 Corridor.

**Commercial (Food Safety and Health & Safety)**

All high risk inspections for Category A, B and C food premises had been undertaken, 44% of D premises and 15% of the lowest risk premises. An increase to these percentages was limited by the level of resource and other competing priorities.

**Licensing**

The Bracknell Taxi and Private Hire Policy had been adopted. Consultations on gambling policies of West Berkshire and Bracknell were ongoing.

The report also listed the number of licensing hearings held in the past quarter. While the number had increased, it was currently at a manageable level.

**Environmental Health Housing**

A rise in the number of complaints from tenants of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) had continued. Officers had been working with the RSL sector, holding regular case conferences.

**Environmental Quality**

The Air Quality Action Plan for Crowthorne had been agreed by Central Government. The Action Plans for Bracknell, Newbury and Thatcham had been revoked as resolved at the last meeting.

**Investigations and Case Management**

Section 16.5 of the report outlined a summary of the criminal cases since the last meeting and the legal actions that had been taken.

**Questions**

Officers were then asked a number of questions, and responses were provided as follows:

- Mr Murphy explained that where there were vacancies, efforts were made to cover them by utilising the available resource across the different teams. This helped to widen the experience of officers including trainees.
- The use of agency staff was restricted by cost, taking into consideration the premiums charged by agencies. Finances were constrained across the three local authorities. However, while this was the case, there had been no indication from the local authorities that the money could not be used to backfill posts, which was the intention.
- Efforts had been made to raise the profile of the service to Members. This had increased the number of Member enquiries and this was invaluable in terms of collating intelligence.
- Moira Fraser acknowledged that FOIs took a significant amount of resource. However, mitigation methods were being put in place, such as putting more information on the Council websites so FOI replies could be completed via the provision of a link to the website.
- Damian James added that the service was attempting to utilise and mobilise Members in liaising with residents and assisting with their issues. This could include meeting with RSLs on behalf of residents.
- ICT – data transfer had been completed for one of the authorities' systems which included the retention of legacy data. Remaining data transfer was ongoing.
- Regarding e-scooters, the service had been working with the Police and retailers in response to a recent legislative change in terms of improving safety. Damian James stated that Bracknell Forest had recently recruited town centre ambassadors, paid for

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through central government funding. A role of these ambassadors was to seek to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and this could include the impact felt from the use of e-scooters in the town centre.

- George Lawrence stated that the work of petroleum inspections had gone well and was aware of no issues of non-compliance. However, he agreed to confirm this point and provide further details to Councillor Jordan Montgomery.

Councillor Iain Cottingham commended officers on all their hard work for residents, covering a wide range of activity. He felt the PPP's work made them worthy of a nomination to the Chartered Institute annual awards for Trading Standards. Sean Murphy agreed to explore that point.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The 2023/24 Q4 and year end data for the Public Protection Service be noted.
- The update on service delivery be noted.
- £61.69K of revenue funding be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year.

## **10 Public Protection Partnership Strategic Assessment 2024 - 2027 (JPPC4372)**

The Committee considered the PPP Strategic Assessment (Agenda Item 11). The Strategic Assessment served to identify the key service functions, activities and priorities, and identify the resource challenges for the Service.

The Strategic Assessment also mapped the Service against local, regional and national priorities and risks.

Sean Murphy presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- Much of the work on the report was completed prior to the General Election, it was therefore the case that some priority areas may no longer be taken forward.
- The report set out all known demands on the service, however it was noted that the demands on the service were constantly changing. I.e. recently announced priorities in relation to knives and the sale of knives.
- The document set out the breadth of the work undertaken by the PPP, the demands placed upon it and the available resource.
- The Strategic Assessment would form the basis for the future prioritisation of work. Future discussion would take place at Committee post a period of consultation.
- It contained a number of cross cutting priorities as well as the inclusion of the more local priorities held by the PPP.

Councillor Iskandar Jefferies gave thanks to officers for all their hard work in the production of the Strategic Assessment. He fully acknowledged the difficult task of balancing the many priority areas and this was an area requiring further work.

Councillor Iain Cottingham queried the sharing of intelligence with other relevant agencies, i.e. HMRC, and whether funding could be accessed in order to increase this area of work.

In response, Sean Murphy explained that officers held a broad range of powers as investigators. This, and the growing access to data, was greatly assisting investigations.

Information sharing protocols were in place, for example with the HMRC, and there was a shared intelligence database accessed by many relevant organisations. The PPP had made a number of intelligence submissions in the past year.

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The Service had been able to access national trading standards funds for conducting cross border investigations.

**RESOLVED that** the updated Strategic Assessment would form the basis of the PPP priority setting for 2024/25 through to January 2027.

**11 Draft Nuisance Policy 2024 - 2027 (JPPC4451)**

The Committee considered the Draft Nuisance Policy 2024-27 (Agenda Item 12). Suzanne McLaughlin, Senior Environmental Health Officer, introduced the report and raised the following points:

- The Policy would enable the continuation of nuisance related work within the Service, both reactive and proactive, that benefited both residents and businesses. The work undertaken strove to improve the quality of life and the health of residents.
- There were a significant number of reactive complaints received in the last financial year, but proactive work was also undertaken to try to resolve areas of concern. For example, guidance was offered on the Council’s website and made available through social media.
- The proposal was for the draft Policy to go out to public consultation for a period of six weeks. A report would then be provided to the next meeting of the Committee in October outlining the findings of the consultation together with the final Policy that would be proposed for formal adoption.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The draft Nuisance Policy 2024-2027 be approved for consultation.
- The Service Lead: Public Protection be authorised to proceed with a public consultation for a six week period between the 8 July 2024 and the 19 August 2024.
- Any comments on the draft Policy be brought to the 7 October 2024 Committee for discussion prior to the Policy being formally adopted.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 7.55pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 2024

### COUNCIL CHAMBER COUNCIL OFFICES MARKET STREET NEWBURY

**Present:** Nick Allen, Jeremy Cottam, Justin Pemberton and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** George Lawrence (Team Manager - Residential), Sean Murphy (Service Lead - Public Protection), April Peberdy (Service Director - Communities), Moira Fraser (Public Protection Partnership), Damian James (Bracknell Forest Council), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Sam Chiverton (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer) and Narinder Brar (Wokingham Borough Council)

**Apologies for absence:** Councillor Iskandar Jefferies and Councillor Cherise Welch

#### PART I

#### 1 Appointment of Chairman for this meeting

As the Chairman, Councillor Iskandar Jefferies, had given his apologies for absence, and without a Vice-Chairman, it was resolved that Councillor Justin Pemberton be elected as Chairman for this meeting.

It was also noted that the meeting was not quorate and it was agreed that Members would consider the items but no votes could be taken.

#### 2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 were noted by the Committee. They would be considered for approval at the next meeting.

#### 3 Outstanding Issues From Previous Meetings

Moira Fraser (Principal Officer – Policy & Governance) gave an update on the outstanding action points from previous meetings:

**Item 1 – Water Safety Partnership Annual Report** – The 2024/25 annual report was scheduled for Committee in March 2025.

**Item 2 – Young People and Vaping** – this would be provided at the Committee meeting in March 2025.

**Item 3 – Q1 Performance Report** – this action had been completed and would therefore be removed from the actions arising log.

#### 4 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

#### 5 Notice of Public Speaking and Questions

No public questions were received which related either to a general issue concerned with the work of the Public Protection Partnership or to an item on the agenda.

**6 Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan was noted.

**7 Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q1 Report for 2024/25 (JPPC4618)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 8) which informed Members of the performance of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) in line with the operating model and business plan, and provided an update setting out performance during the first quarter of 2024/25.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) explained that the different sections of the report aligned with the PPP’s priorities.

**Finances and Resources**

Sean Murphy reported that this had been a challenging year financially and it had been necessary for the income shortfall to be reprofiled into 2025/26. A balanced outturn was however forecast. A pressure bid had been submitted to Bracknell Forest Council.

**Human Resources**

Budget pressures had resulted in some recruitment being postponed. However, the recruitment process had commenced in order to fill two management positions. Further posts had been successfully recruited to and other areas of recruitment were ongoing.

Action had commenced to recruit to the vacancies listed in paragraph 6.4 of the report.

All four Level 4 Apprentices had passed their examinations. Level 6 training was in progress. This was positive in terms of having qualified staff for the future.

**Governance**

The statutory Feed and Food Standards Controls Service Plan had been signed off for 2024/25.

The Peer Review of the shared service arrangement had commenced. The Peer Review Team had met with the Joint Management Board and would meet with Committee Members.

**Questions**

Councillor Howard Woollaston was very pleased to note the excellent progress being made by the Apprentices and raised the importance of doing all possible to retain them.

Sean Murphy concurred with that statement and added that two of the Level 4 Apprentices had been recruited into permanent roles. Level 4 Apprentices received training across many different areas enabling them to be generalists who could work across the PPP.

Moira Fraser (Principal Officer – Policy and Governance) explained that officers were able to progress through career graded posts as a way of aiding retention.

Sean Murphy added that it was the intention, budget permitting, to recruit more apprentices as part of the ‘grow your own’ ethos set out in the workforce planning strategy.

Where possible, officers were supported to develop themselves and progress within the team.

Councillor Justin Pemberton asked for further detail on the work of the PPP in tackling unfair trading and fraud. Sean Murphy explained that the focus was on prevention,

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 7 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

gathering intelligence and enforcement work. A report on this area of work would be brought to the December 2024 meeting.

A significant amount of resource was put into supporting victims and helping them recoup their money. The sum of money reported as lost totalled £604k across the three local authorities in the first six months of the 2024/25 financial year. Victims were often vulnerable and/or older residents. In response, officers had conducted direct interventions and challenged perpetrators. This work had, to date, recouped £183k. A number of investigations were ongoing in this area and officers worked closely with the Police in gathering intelligence.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam queried the work that took place to ensure that food establishments took the necessary steps to protect customers with food allergies, i.e. nut allergies.

Sean Murphy outlined the comprehensive work undertaken. Inspections included sampling and ensuring adherence to food standard requirements. This was a high area of risk and was therefore a priority area.

Councillor Nick Allen queried if there was an issue across the PPP with establishments presenting a false food standards/safety rating following concerning reports of establishments doing so in other areas of the country. Sean Murphy reported that this would form part of the PPP's inspection regime. It would be an offence, under Trading Standards legislation, to present an incorrect rating.

Councillor Pemberton asked if additional resource needed to be directed to working with unlicensed Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). Sean Murphy explained that a desktop Housing Conditions Survey had recently been conducted and the responses from that were being worked through. Officers worked with HMOs and action had been taken in cases where issues had been identified in licensed HMOs or where unlicensed HMOs were identified. This would continue to be an area of priority moving forward and the Committee would be updated on progress.

### **The Committee noted:**

- The 2024/25 Q1 data for the Public Protection Service.
- The update on service delivery.

## **8 Public Protection Priorities 2025 - 2028 (JPPC4619)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 9) which provided an update on the priority setting process.

The Committee approved the Strategic Assessment for 2024/27 at its previous meeting in June 2024. Discussions had since been held with Members and priority areas had been carefully considered. Government priorities added to these considerations.

A scoring mechanism had been used to assess areas of risk in order to inform priority setting. The MoRiLE methodology was used (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement). The scoring was used to identify the level of harm, its likelihood and from there the capacity/capability to respond. The following priority areas were proposed, many of which were common across the Public Protection Partnership:

- Private Sector Housing
- Food Safety and Standards
- Protecting consumers from unfair trading and fraud
- Community matters
- Protection of young people and communities
- Environmental crime (Bracknell Forest priority)

**The Committee noted:**

- The outcome of the priority setting process with partner Councils.

Decisions on the use of the MoRiLE methodology and the priorities were deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

**9 Revenue Budget 2025/26 including proposed Fees and Charges Schedule (JPPC4620)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 10) which set out the Public Protection Partnership’s draft revenue budget for 2025/26, including discretionary fees and charges for 2025/26.

Sean Murphy repeated that it had been necessary to reprofile some of the income received by the PPP. It was unlikely that this would be recouped.

The Committee’s role with this report was to propose a budget to the individual Councils based on a percentage split. The proposed budget for 2025/26, including the percentage split, was outlined in the below table. The split of approximately 60/40 (West Berkshire/Bracknell Forest) was based on a number of different factors.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>% Split</b>	<b>Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2025/26</b>
Bracknell Forest	39.25%	£1,361,360
West Berkshire	60.75%	£2,107,080
Wokingham	-	£526,310
<b>Total Budget 2024/25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£3,994,750</b>

Mr Murphy clarified that grant funding received from the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme did not form part of the revenue budget. The purpose of the scheme was primarily to seek compensation to be returned to victims and to reiterate that crime should not pay.

A 3% uplift was proposed on discretionary fees for 2025/26, but this could be adjusted prior to the fees being set. A consultation process would be undertaken within Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire in relation to these proposals, and would align with the wider budget consultation process of both local authorities.

Damian James (Assistant Director – Contract Services) referred to Appendix A to the report which identified discretionary fees and statutory fees which were set by Government. The statutory fees had not been increased since 2011.

Councillor Nick Allen queried whether Executive Members on the Committee should write to the Government Minister to lobby for an uplift to these fees.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam (Chairman of West Berkshire Council’s Licensing Committee) advised that he would shortly be proposing a Motion to a West Berkshire Council meeting asking that Central Government be lobbied on this matter. This was a step that could also be taken by Bracknell Forest and indeed local authorities across Berkshire.

Sean Murphy advised that an inflationary calculation had been undertaken which identified a considerable shortfall as a result of no uplift since 2011. An appropriate level of uplift would significantly assist with budgetary pressures.

Councillor Howard Woollaston queried whether economies of scale could be achieved by working with other local authorities. Damian James confirmed that this was being



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explored and active discussions were ongoing with other local authorities. Councillor Justin Pemberton supported this approach.

Sean Murphy confirmed, in response to a query from Councillor Cottam, that registration fees for hairdressers would be charged in both Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire.

Licence fees for taxi drivers took account of the cost of holding training for drivers. This included safeguarding and disability awareness training. This training was a mandatory requirement before a licence was issued.

The potential to hold in-house training was being explored.

### **The Committee noted:**

- That the draft revenue budget, including the fees and charges, had been considered.
- The pressures set out in columns four and five in the table at paragraph 5.27.

Recommendations requiring a decision from the Committee were deferred to the next meeting.

## **10 PPP Nuisance Policy 2024 - 2027 (JPPC4451)**

The Committee considered the Nuisance Policy for 2024-2027 (Agenda Item 11). The purpose of the Policy was to set a framework that would help the PPP ensure the continuation of a consistent and transparent approach to both reactive and proactive work on nuisance issues.

The Policy would form part of the suite of key policies used by the PPP to deliver its services.

Members were asked to consider the consultation comments received on the draft policy and changes proposed as a result.

Rosalynd Gater (Team Manager – Commercial) explained that the Policy reflected the feedback received where appropriate. Its primary aim was to provide greater clarity to residents on the approaches that could be taken in responding to statutory nuisance concerns.

Moira Fraser advised that the consultation was well publicised, with press releases issued, social media posts, information on local authority websites and direct contact with individuals on the Community Panel. Officers were delighted with the level of response, which was higher than for many consultation exercises. This was felt to be due to the level of concern held by residents when it came to noise related issues.

Sean Murphy added that service requests were high in relation to nuisance issues. This was understandable as nuisance concerns could have a significant impact on an individual's health and wellbeing.

### **The Committee noted that:**

- The responses received during the consultation and officers' comments on those responses had been considered.

Recommendations requiring a decision from the Committee were deferred to the next meeting.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.05pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER 2024 COUNCIL CHAMBER COUNCIL OFFICES MARKET STREET NEWBURY

**Present:** Iskandar Jefferies and Justin Pemberton

**Also Present:** Sean Murphy (Service Lead - Public Protection), Moira Fraser (Public Protection Partnership), Damian James (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Councillor Cherise Welch, Councillor Howard Woollaston and Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager)

#### PART I

##### 1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

##### 2 Public Protection Priorities 2024-2027 (JPPC4619)

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 3) which provided an update on the priority setting process and which sought approval of the methodology for setting priorities.

The Committee approved the Strategic Assessment for 2024/27 at its meeting in June 2024. Discussions had since been held with Members, and priority areas had been carefully considered, alongside available resource and continuation of business as usual. Government priorities added to these considerations, as did priorities in the individual local authorities.

A scoring mechanism had been used to assess areas of risk in order to inform priority setting. The MoRiLE methodology was used (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement). The scoring was used to identify the level of harm, its likelihood and from there the capacity/capability to respond. The following priority areas were proposed, many of which were common across the Public Protection Partnership:

- Private Sector Housing
- Food Safety and Standards
- Protecting consumers from unfair trading and fraud
- Community matters
- Protection of young people and communities
- Environmental crime (Bracknell Forest priority)

Services not listed as a priority area were still subject to the MoRiLE methodology and this helped to identify the level of resource given to these areas of work.

Councillor Justin Pemberton supported the approach which had been outlined to Members. He noted that dog fouling was a matter of concern to residents and it remained

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a prevalent issue, he therefore queried the action being taken and whether more could be done to tackle the issue.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) agreed this was a prevalent issue and many enquiries were received on the matter, but it did carry a relatively low risk. Awareness raising was conducted as was enforcement which included targeting problem areas. Work was also ongoing to encourage the emptying of dog waste bins with the organisations responsible for that function.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The outcome of the priority setting process with partner Councils be noted.
- The MoRiLE methodology formed the basis of operational risk.
- Those matters identified as priority areas for the Councils (set out in paragraph 5.10 of the report) be weighted accordingly in risk/priority calculations.

### **3 Revenue Budget 2025/26 including Proposed Fees and Charges Schedule (JPPC4620)**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 4) which set out the Public Protection Partnership's draft revenue budget for 2025/26, including discretionary fees and charges for 2025/26.

The report sought approval of the draft budget, and draft fees and charges schedule prior to submission to Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils as part of their budget setting process in accordance with the Inter-Authority Agreement.

Agreement was also sought of the figure that would form the basis of the recharge to Wokingham Borough Council with respect to the services shared with Wokingham Borough Council under the shared service agreement effective on 1 April 2022.

Approval was also sought of the amendments to the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS).

The Committee's role with this report was to propose a budget to the individual Councils based on a percentage split. The proposed budget for 2025/26, including the percentage split, was outlined in the below table.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>% Split</b>	<b>Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2025/26</b>
Bracknell Forest	39.25%	£1,361,360
West Berkshire	60.75%	£2,107,080
Wokingham	-	£526,310
<b>Total Budget 2024/25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£3,994,750</b>

A 3% uplift was proposed on discretionary fees for 2025/26, but this could be adjusted prior to the fees being set. However, statutory fees had not been increased since 2011 and were therefore well behind inflation.

It was clarified that the grant funding received from ARIS did not form part of the revenue budget. The appendix to the report proposed areas of use for this funding, which included victim support.

Councillor Iskandar Jefferies thanked officers for all their hard work in producing this report. Budgets continued to be under pressure, but officers were commended for maintaining the PPP's services despite the pressures being felt.

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Returning to the statutory fees, Sean Murphy explained that a significant financial gap had been identified in the absence of any inflationary rises since 2011. A Bank of England calculation tool had been used to identify this.

Councillor Justin Pemberton agreed that statutory fees were far behind where they should be and explained that Councillor Jeremy Cottam (Chairman of West Berkshire Council's Licensing Committee) would be bringing a Motion to a meeting of West Berkshire Council to seek agreement to lobby the Government on this matter.

Sean Murphy added that should licensing fees be increased to a similar level as the recent increases agreed for planning fees, then this could result in an increased income of £80-£100k.

Councillor Jefferies agreed it was important to seek to increase fees in line with inflation in future years.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The draft revenue budget, including the fees and charges, had been considered.
- The contributions set out in column three of the table at 5.27 of the report be recommended to partner Councils to form the basis of the 2025/26 net revenue budget contributions.
- The pressures set out in columns four and five in the table at paragraph 5.27 be noted.
- The fees and charges set out in Appendix A be approved.
- The contribution request from Wokingham Borough Council be approved as set out in paragraph 5.27.
- The revised Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme be approved and that funds be allocated in accordance with this policy. It was noted that this funding did not form part of the revenue budget

## **4 PPP Nuisance Policy 2024-2027 (JPPC4451)**

The Committee considered the Nuisance Policy for 2024-2027 (Agenda Item 5). The purpose of the Policy was to set a framework that would help the PPP ensure the continuation of a consistent and transparent approach to both reactive and proactive work on nuisance issues.

The Policy would form part of the suite of key policies used by the PPP to deliver its services.

Members were asked to consider the consultation comments received on the draft policy and changes proposed as a result.

The Committee agreed, at its meeting in June 2024, to consult on the draft Policy. The consultation had taken place and Moira Fraser (Principal Officer – Policy & Governance) reported that 69 responses had been received to the consultation. The responses were outlined in Appendix C to the report and changes had been made to the Policy as a result of these. These changes included greater clarification on the actions that could be taken by the Service in response to noise complaints, nuisance areas that were considered as a private matter, and reference was included to anonymous complaints.

Councillor Iskandar Jefferies had found the report and the responses made to the consultation to be very interesting. He was pleased to note that all respondents to the consultation had been contacted and thanked officers for this very thorough piece of work.

Councillor Justin Pemberton added his thanks to the officers for their work in processing the consultation responses and in producing the report. There had been an increase in

**JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 11 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES**

the consultation response and this showed the level of concern felt by residents over nuisance issues.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The responses received during the consultation and officers' comments on those responses had been considered.
- The Nuisance Policy 2024-2027 be approved.
- Authority would be delegated to the Service Lead – Public Protection, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, to make any minor amendments to the Policy once adopted.

*(The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and closed at 1.25pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....

## Joint Public Protection Committee Actions Arising from Previous Meetings

Ref	Meeting Item	Action	Officer	Update
1.	11 March 2024  <b>Water Safety Partnership Annual Report 2023/24</b>	Jon Winstanley to include any data on 'near misses' in the 2024/25 report.  Jon Winstanley to include any information on work in schools in the 2024/25 report.	JW  JW	Will be included in the 2024/25 report if available.  Will be included in the 2024/25 report
2.	11 March 2024  <b>Young People and Vaping</b>	Future annual reports to include information around failure rates.  Articles or social media posts to be produced about what consumers should be looking out for when purchasing vapes in terms of compliance.	GL  GL	

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JPPC – 16 December 2024

## **Item 5 – Declarations of Interest**

Verbal Item

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## **Item 6 – Public Speaking and Questions**

Verbal Item

There were no questions submitted

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## JPPC Forward Plan March 2025 to March 2026

o.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Comments
<b>JPPC 10 March 2025 – WBC</b>					
1.		Public Protection Partnership Q3 2024/25 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 3 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/ Moira Fraser	
2.		Water Safety Partnership	To provide an annual update of the work of the Partnership.	Jon Winstanley	
3.		Young People and Vaping	Item for information to update Members on the work we are doing to promote smoking and vaping cessation for young people and update Members about any legislative changes.	Theresa Bashford	
4.		Outcome of the PPP Peer Review	To set out the findings of the peer review of the PPS in terms of input, output, delivery, resources, governance, structure and value for money.	Sean Murphy	
5.		Refresh of the Strategic Assessment 2024 - 2027	To refresh the existing document in light of changes to the National Trading Standards Strategic Assessment and the review of local priorities.	George Lawrence	
<b>JPPC 9 June 2025 – BFC</b>					
6.		Election of the Chairman and Appointment of the Vice-Chairman for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.	To elect a Chairman from West Berkshire Council and a Vice-Chairman from Bracknell Forest Council for the 2025/26 Municipal Year, if necessary	Verbal Item	
7.		JPPC Terms of Reference	To note the terms of reference of the Committee.	Moira Fraser	
8.		Public Protection Partnership Q4 2024/25 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 4 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/ Moira Fraser	

o.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Comments
9.		Service Plan 2025/26.	To identify the relevant details of the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) and set out how the PPP intends to operate through the delivery of the Service Plan.	Sean Murphy & Strategic Mgrs	
10.		Communication and Engagement Strategy 2025-2027	To update the existing Strategy and adopt any modifications made to it.	Moira Fraser	
11.		WBC RIPA Powers 2025-2028	To provide Members with an oversight of the measures in place and actions being taken by the Councils including policy and guidance and social media policy	Sean Murphy	
12.		Business Plan 2025 to 2027	To agree any revisions to the Existing Business Plan in light of the outcome of the Peer Review.	Sean Murphy	
<b>JPPC 6 October 2025 – WBC</b>					
13.		Public Protection Partnership Q1 2025/26 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 1 Update and Performance Report.	Moira Fraser	
14.		Revenue Budget 2026/27 Including Proposed Fees and Charges Schedule	To set out the draft revenue budget for 2026/2027 including fees and charges and to seek approval for the draft budget and draft fees and charges schedule prior to submission to Bracknell and West Berkshire Councils in accordance with the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA).	Sean Murphy	
15.		PPP Delivery Plan Update	To set out progress has been made against the PPPs agreed priorities as set out in the Service/Delivery Plan.	Sean Murphy & SMs	
16.		Private Sector Housing Policy 2025 - 2028	To review and where appropriate update the existing Policy.	Rosalynd Gater	

o.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Comments
<b>JPPC 8 December 2025 – BFC</b>					
17.		Public Protection Partnership Q2 2025/26 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 2 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser	
18.		Air Quality Status Reports	To set out the response received from DEFRA	Suzanne McLaughlin	
19.		Tackling Fraud and Unfair Trading	To provide the Committee with an update on the work of the Public Protection Service in tackling fraud and financial abuse.	Theresa Bashford	
20.		Workforce Planning Strategy 2026 - 2027	To update the existing strategy.	George Lawrence	
21.		Training and Development Plan 2026 - 2027	To update the existing Plan.	Moira Fraser	
<b>JPPC 9 March 2026 – WBC</b>					
22.		Public Protection Partnership Q3 2025/26 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 3 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser	
23.		Water Safety Partnership	To provide an annual update of the work of the Partnership.	Jon Winstanley	
24.		Young People and Vaping	Item for information to update Members on the work we are doing to promote smoking and vaping cessation for young people and update Members about any legislative changes.	Theresa Bashford	
25.		Refresh of the Strategic Assessment 2024 - 2027	To refresh the existing document in light of changes to the National Trading Standards Strategic Assessment and the review of local priorities.	George Lawrence	

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## Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q2 Report for 2024/25

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	16 December 2024
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Iskandar Jefferies
Date JMB agreed report:	4 November 2024
Report Author:	Sean Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	N/a

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) in line with the operating model and business plan and provide an update setting out performance during the second quarter of 2024/25.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee:

- 2.1 Be **INFORMED** about the 2024/25 Q2 data for the Public Protection Service set out in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 Be **INFORMED** about the update on service delivery.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>Since the last meeting the service revenue budget has been reprofiled. The outturn is expected to be zero taking account that there is a £90K pressure at Bracknell Forest.</p> <p>Managing the income deficit of £180K has been achieved by holding vacant key vacancies. This is on top of the 6.7FTE reduction to balance the budget post the departure of Wokingham.</p> <p>Further detail can be found at Section 5 below.</p>
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<p>The combination of vacancies and deletions of posts to balance the budget has the risk of increasing pressure on existing staff and there is no doubt in some areas the staff and the service are under significant pressure.</p> <p>In addition, a number of posts have been held for various periods to cover income shortfall and agency / casual staff costs and a further four staff are on maternity leave. We have sought maternity cover unsuccessfully and have moved staff within service to cover gaps and backfill.</p>

	<p>We are constantly reviewing the service to ensure that resource is targeted in high priority areas and areas where there is greater risk of detriment to residents. The Strategic Assessment and Member Priority setting exercise has been used to inform decision making.</p> <p>There is some very limited engagement of agency staff, but this is linked primarily to grant funded areas where there is not the resource to conduct the work.</p> <p>A great deal of effort has gone into re-balancing the service through the delivery of a <a href="#">Workforce Strategy</a> focussed on a 'grow our own' ethos by investing in apprenticeships, post graduate professional qualifications and post-entry training for both new and existing officers. The is starting to bear fruit, with all Level 4 apprentices completing their regulatory compliance officer training, but there is still some way to go until the service can rely on 5 upskilled L6 professional officers (3 EHO and 2 TSO) as a resource as training is midway for those involved. This workforce strategy is underpinned by the <a href="#">Training and Development Plan</a>.</p>
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) charges the Joint Public Protection Committee with the responsibility to oversee service delivery and performance including financial performance. This report discharges this responsibility.</p> <p>The governance arrangements with Wokingham are managed through Joint Management Board as per the current agreement.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>JMB and the management team meet regularly to consider the risks for the delivery of the service. The current key risks relate to operational and management capacity due to the number of vacancies across the service and the financial pressure which affects the ability to cover off those resource gaps. To mitigate the risk, the service has taken several steps. It is currently moving work between teams where capacity impact is less severe. However, finances and the market availability are such that it is not yet able to recruit additional professional officers or agency resource in certain areas. Attempted recruitment to two of the vacant management posts has not been successful due to the lack of applicants.</p> <p>Due to the finite resource, management are taking a risk-based approach in all its activities ranging from routine interventions to criminal investigations. The service is also maintaining its approach as being intelligence led in dealing with reactive request and prioritising on risk. This does create additional risk around perceptions of levels of response which require the management of those expectations.</p>

<b>Property:</b>	None			
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>There are no direct policy implications arising from this paper. It should be noted that the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) places a responsibility on the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) to determine service policies and priorities and to maintain oversight of performance. This report addresses that requirement.</p> <p>The revised service priorities were discussed at the <a href="#">October 2024</a> JPPC meeting. The Strategic Assessment was adopted at the <a href="#">June 2024</a> meeting and will assist with setting new priorities and monitoring progress against them.</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?		✓		No implications
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		No implications
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		✓		
<b>Health Impact:</b>		✓		
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		✓		
<b>PPP Priorities:</b>				<p>The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building Safer Communities</li> <li>2. Improved Living Environment</li> <li>3. Protecting Consumers from Fraud</li> <li>4. Reducing Harm in Young People</li> <li>5. Protecting and Informing Consumers</li> <li>6. Protection of the Environment</li> </ol>

				7. Promoting Animal Welfare 8. Safety in the Workplace 9. Safe and Healthy Food Chain Business as Usual Activity is supported too.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		✓		None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	There is regular engagement with staff as well as senior officer and Member briefings in each of the authorities that form the PPP.			
<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	None. It is a requirement of the IAA to report on the performance of the service.			

## 4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Joint Public Protection Committee is mandated by the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) to keep under review the performance and activity of the Public Protection Service including the financial performance and outputs of the service. Throughout the year the Committee receives updates on aspects of performance and any emerging issues, achievements, and priorities. This report also sets out progress and risks in key strategic areas of the business i.e., Finance, HR, ICT, Property and Legal.
- 4.1 The key outturn measures of volume and data for Quarter 2 (July to September) is set out in Appendix A to the report.
- 4.2 The narrative in this report sets out the steps and interventions that the service performs across all partner authority areas to protect both residents and businesses.

## 5. Finances

- 5.1 Since the last meeting the service work has been undertaken to rebuild the budget in line with updated income projections. This has reduced the income targets by around £180K per year. In reality the Service has been managing some deficit for many years, but it was exacerbated by Covid where licensing income still has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels in real terms despite several increases in discretionary charges.
- 5.2 See pre and post pandemic data set out below:

Licence Type	BFC 2020	BFC 2024	WBC 2020	WBC 2024	Total 2020	Total 2024
Betting Premises	10	9	14	11	24	20
PH Operators	50	39	61	59	111	98
PH Vehicles	189	107	163	181	352	288

- 5.3 We are expected to have zero outturn at the end of the financial year although this includes a legacy £90K pressure for Bracknell Forest. We have had to hold a number of vacancies open for significant lengths of time to achieve this. There are still risks associated with the budget and these largely relate to vacancies / absence in case management and the need to engage locum legal staff.
- 5.4 The budget and fees and charges proposals agreed by JPPC in October have been submitted to the Councils and statutory consultation is underway for those fees and charges that need to be consulted on by law. All other fees will be subject to each council's budget consultation processes. We will advise the Committee at the next meeting whether the proposed budget contributions were acceptable / deliverable by the partner Councils.

## **6. Human Resources**

### **Recruitment**

- 6.1 The Service has, since the October JPPC meeting, been successful in recruiting to:
- Enforcement Officer – Age Restricted Products (1 year fixed term – grant funded) started on the 02 December 2024.
  - 2 x Senior / Environmental Control Officers – (Full Time / Permanent) starting in January 2025.
  - Programme Manager – Health and Community (100% grant funded)
  - Disclosure Officer (fixed term contract – substantially grant funded)
  - Principal Officer – Private Sector Housing – start February 2025
  - A part time Environment Health Officers has been appointed on a fixed term casual contract to undertake food hygiene visits to help clear the current backlog.
  - We have also appointed a solicitor and a barrister on fixed term contracts (12 weeks) who together will make up 1fte to provide resilience in the CMU while the recruitment to the Strategic Manager role continues.
- 6.2 The following posts are currently out to advert:
- Strategic Manager: Case Management Unit (out to advert) – This post has been advertised four times without success. This is now advertised again.
- 6.3 Since the last meeting the following officers have left the Service:
- 0.8FTE Acting Senior Environment Health Officer in the Environmental Quality team
  - 0.6FTE Community Support Officer
  - 1.0FTE Senior Trading Standards Officer (retired)
  - 1.0FTE Licensing Officer
- 6.4 In addition, we have the following vacancies:
- 1 Trading Standards Officers / Financial Investigator

- 6.5 Finally, two trading standards staff have indicated that they wish to reduce hours in Q4. The impact of this will be a further 1fte vacancies by the beginning of the next financial year. There are currently four officers on maternity leave. Unfortunately, despite attempting to do so, we have been unable to recruit maternity cover for environmental health.
- 6.6 The situation with respect to case management is challenging due to being unable to recruit to the vacant manager post.

### **Training and Development**

- 6.7 One officer has completed the CTSI Advanced Practitioner Age Restricted Sales course. We will be looking to bring this knowledge to the fore with the appointment of an age restricted product lead.
- 6.8 A whole team half day took place on the 22 October 2024 which focussed on the the peer review and the role of public protection in 'place making'.
- 6.9 The two team members undertaking their MSC's in Environmental Health are progressing well and have started the final year of their course. The Environmental Health Graduate trainee is continuing to progress well with the practical element of his course and the Level 6 Environment Health Apprentice is making very good progress with her course. The two Level 6 Trading Standards Apprentices are in their final year.
- 6.10 One of the trainee officers has enrolled and started on his one-year Food Premises Inspection Higher Certificate in September, following qualification he will be able to undertake food hygiene inspections of premises.
- 6.11 In-house training sessions on evidence gathering and disclosure requirements are going to be delivered through two sessions early in the new year.
- 6.12 Further safeguarding training is being provided for new staff into the service. This is a mandatory requirement for PPP staff as set out in the Training and Development Plan.

## **7. ICT Update**

- 7.1 The primary focus in this period has been securing access to legacy data as West Berkshire have moved to a new system and Bracknell are in the process of doing so. This is now largely complete.
- 7.2 We have commissioned a new website to be in place by April 2025. It is being designed and built by the digital team at West Berkshire Council.

## **8. Governance**

- 8.1 During Q2 Officers have dealt with four press enquiries, issued 12 press releases and published six articles on the website. The Principal Officer - Policy and Governance continues to work closely with West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough's Communication Teams and liaises with them on a regular basis regarding the PPP's campaigns. We also share PPP press releases for their distribution, as well as both continuing to share relevant posts on each other's social media platforms.

- 8.2 In terms of social media activity Officers have supported a number of relevant national public campaigns including Fire Door Safety Week, promoting messaging from the Animal and Plant Health Agency around the Bluetongue Virus, the Food Standards Agency campaign for students around food hygiene, domestic bird flock registration by 01 October, rental scams and the 'shopashark' campaign.
- 8.3 Officers have also attended the following community events during Q2:
- Sandhurst Summer of Fun (02 August 2024)
  - Great Hollands Summer of Fun (07 August 2024)
  - Binfield Summer of Fun (21 August 2024)
  - Bracknell Summer of Fun (28 August 2024)
  - Thames Valley Police Open Day (07 September 2024)
  - Newbury Show – animal welfare checks and advising livestock exhibitors (21 and 22 September 2024)
- 8.4 During Q2 the team dealt with a total of 98 Freedom of Information requests which took around 92 hours to process. The number of requests increased by 10% when compared to the same period in 2023/24 where 89 Fols were processed. The Fols also took significantly more time to process (around 66 hours in Q2 of 2023/24). This is in part due to the complexity of the requests and the new processes introduced in Bracknell Forest
- 8.5 The team also processed 29 enquiries from Councillors and the local MPs, 20 of those were in West Berkshire and 9 in Bracknell Forest. This represented a small decrease when compared to the 35 that were dealt with in Quarter 2 of the previous year.
- 8.6 In terms of complaints, the service received seven complaints which equates to 0.3% of the 2729 service requests that the team has dealt with. Of the seven complaints received (five in BFC and two in WBC) one was upheld in full, two were upheld in part and the matters were rectified and apologies were issued. Four were not upheld.
- 8.7 We have had 38,261 visits to the PPP website from a total of 17,336 users. The most visited pages during Q2 were: What Are My Rights, Loft Insulation Scams and Taxi Licence pages.
- 8.8 During Q2 we consulted on minor revisions to the Draft West Berkshire Statement of Gambling Policy. The consultation ran between the 18 July 2024 and the 12 September 2024 and we received six responses. A small number of further adjustments were made to the document as a result of the consultation. The revised policy was adopted at the November Council meeting. [November Council meeting](#).
- 8.9 A consultation on the [Nuisance Policy](#) was also undertaken between the 08 July to 26 August 2024 and it received 69 responses. The outcome of the consultation and the revised policy was adopted at the October 2024 JPPC meeting.
- 8.10 The Peer Review of the Service started in early October. It will include three phases: Discovery, Scoping and Planning in October, Delivery in November and December and Reporting in January 2025. The process will be overseen by a Member Reference Group comprising of the cabinet/ executive members from each of the three authorities. The collaborative process will focus on four main areas:



Governance Arrangements, Inputs and Support, Outputs, Outcomes and Value for Money and Options for the Future. The lead has already met with JMB, the Executive Members from all three partner authorities and the PPP management team.

- 8.11 West Berkshire Council's Internal Audit Team is conducting an audit to ensure arrangements for budget setting and oversight, are applied and operated in accordance with the terms of the partnership agreements and budget performance and risks are effectively managed.

## 9. Building Safer Communities

- 9.1 **Event safety and noise monitoring** - There are numerous large scale high profile events that occur across the PPP area. In addition to co-ordinating and Chairing the SAG (Safety Advisory Group), officers in PPP are also involved with events from different enforcement roles such as health and safety, food safety and control of nuisance.
- 9.2 Each event presents unique challenges that required coordination and oversight, this entails close collaboration with event organisers and members of the Safety Advisory Group to uphold standards, address safety concerns, and maintain public health across a series of large-scale gatherings. Events in this quarter that had during performance inspections for health and safety and food safety included Dizze Rascal at Newbury Racecourse, Medicine Festival, the Newbury Agricultural Show and the Retro Festival.
- 9.3 Extensive noise monitoring has also been carried out at a number of events to ensure that the organisers are complying with their controls which are detailed in the Noise Assessment Plans that are required to be submitted in advance of an event. These plans evaluate the event in terms of noise nuisance and detail the controls and monitoring that the event organisers will have in place.
- 9.4 During quarter 2, the service handled 25 stray dogs matters, eight of which were reunited with their owner. Sadly one was put to sleep, and the remaining dogs were successfully rehomed.
- 9.5 The team dealt with 107 pest control enforcement enquiries. In the majority of cases the enquiries were dealt with informally and advice and support was offered to the requesters. However, 11 cases required the issuance of an enforcement notice requiring the land owner to put in place measures to remove and/or prevent pest infestation.
- 9.6 Eleven public health cremation enquiries were received by the team. Two were undertaken by the PPP. Officers were able to locate the next of kin for the other nine, and supported them in funeral arrangements.
- 9.7 In addition, two notices were issued and works in default were carried out on two properties considered to be a public health nuisance due to being filthy and verminous.
- 9.8 The following licensing panel/subcommittee meetings have taken place in Q2:



Type of Application	Applicant	Outcome
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>		
Application to Grant Street Trading Consent	Mr Mustafa Karaduman T/A Bracknell Kebab - Priory Lane Field Car Park	grant the applicant a new Street Trading Consent for an initial period of 1 month
New Premises Licence	The Vault, 19 High Street, Crowthorne, Bracknell, RG45 7AD	grant the application with conditions
<b>West Berkshire</b>		
None		

9.9 Trend data for hearings:

<b>Licensing Hearings Data for last three years.</b>			
Authority	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 To Date
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>	1	3	2
<b>West Berkshire</b>	0 (2 cancelled after agenda publication)	8 (with a further five cancelled or adjourned after agenda publication)	1

9.10 **Operation Albion** – Offensive Weapons Act (OWA) 2019 – business guidance is being drawn up for retailers of corrosive substances and will be issued during face to face visits. Following that plans are underway to conduct some test purchases using underage persons to check compliance, the focus being on garden centres, hardware shops, and pharmacies etc where awareness and compliance may be lower.

9.11 Underage test purchasing of knives will take place this Autumn across all three local authorities.

9.12 **Operation Joseph** – The final part (3) of Operation Joseph is close to completion. National Trading Standards asked PPP to conduct further test purchasing (online) of zero % nicotine disposable vapes. Ten samples are currently with the external test house for testing for the presence of nicotine.

## 10. Improved Living Environment

10.1 **High Rise Residential Building Project** - Housing Officers have regular meetings with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) to co-ordinate the approach and exchange intelligence on high rise residential properties. We have also recently met with RBFRS and Building Control to ensure we are aware of each other's roles in this area. The work we have carried out to date on the Commercial to Residential conversion project feeds into this.

10.2 **Unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)** - The Environmental Health Housing Team continue their work on unlicensed HMOs), to survey the districts and

use intelligence sources to identify possible HMOs. A house, flat, or building converted into self-contained flats is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) if:

- It is occupied by five or more people: Adults and children are counted as people.
- They form two or more households. A household may be either a single person, or several members of the same family all related by blood (up to first cousin distance), or marriage (or equivalent co-habiting arrangement)
- They share basic amenities such as a toilet, bathroom and/or kitchen.
- It is their only or main residence.
- Rent is payable or other consideration e.g. accommodation provided instead of wages.

10.3 The PPP currently licence approximately 240 HMOs. As part of the investigations work Officers ensure, using emergency powers where necessary, that it is safe for the tenants, and then work on getting the property compliant. This can involve an investigation to determine if formal action is required against the landlord or owner. It is very often the most vulnerable people in society that live in these properties.

10.4 There have been two such examples in recent months. Officers visited a suspected HMO that was found on inspection to be structurally and electrically unsafe resulting in imminent risk and they had to prohibit its use. A family who have English as a second language (including a woman over 75 and two children under five years of age) were living in unsatisfactory conditions. Working with the Housing Options Team, Officers were able to get them to safe accommodation whilst ensuring the landlord is resolving the issues with the property.

10.5 In another case a suspected HMO on investigation was an unlicensed HMO. In this case the property was overcrowded, and had extreme mould growth in a bedroom used by a mother and her baby, this room was also minimum size. The property had no fire detection or smoke alarm. Emergency Prohibition notices were prepared due to the imminent risk however the landlord installed smoke detectors immediately. Formal notices have been served regarding the other hazards including prohibiting the mouldy bedroom from being used.

10.6 **Licensed HMOs** - Many of the 240 licensed HMOs are in the process of renewal in this year as the licences are for five years and it was just over five years ago that new legislation came into effect that meant many more properties were included in mandatory licences. Officers are working through these renewals.

10.7 In terms of service requests around housing:

	Total request for service housing	Of these number of complaints regarding house condition	Of these number that were Registered Social Landlords
WB October to December 2023	82	60	34 (57%)
WB January to March 2024	104	80	49 (61%)
WB April to June 2024	90	71	32 (45%)

WB July to Sept 2024	68	59	21 (36%)
BF October to December 2023	92	62	31 (50%)
BF January to March 2024	74	63	30 (48%)
BF April to June 2024	78	49	20 (41%)
WB July to Sept 2024	87	55	25 (27%)

- 10.8 **Caravan Sites** - There have been a number of activities in terms of caravan site licensing. Officers are ensuring that where complaints are made by residents, Officers follow up to see if the conditions on the licences are being adhered to. There is also the normal flow of work relating to enforcement of the licence where there are changes of ownership. Unlicensed caravan sites are being investigated and Officers work with planning on these sites as a site cannot be licenced by the PPP if it does not have planning permission.
- 10.9 **Commercial Noise** - An abatement notice was served for the transfer of vibration from an air conditioning unit through the structure of a building into a residential property. The resident kept a detailed noise log and provided recordings using the Trojan meter. Although the noise was not audible on the recordings, it was witnessed by an Authorised Officer in person who was also able to compare the measurements against the Defra low frequency noise criteria to assist with the determination of statutory nuisance.
- 10.10 The team have intervened in 227 domestic nuisance service requests ranging from noise from music, DIY, alarms, human behaviour, dog barking and other animal noise. The overwhelming majority were dealt with through negotiation and communications with all relevant parties. However, one abatement notice was served to abate noise from a cockerel, and another from a barking dog.
- 10.11 We are dealing with a number of ongoing cases relating to potential damage by pests and in particular rats. Examples include a large scale infestation relating to a flat where the previous resident had passed away. The infestation was affecting neighbouring properties and were found to be linked to the loft of the empty property. In another example notice has been served on a management company regarding an infestation of rats in a bin store where it was alleged that one rat had jumped on a resident. There are a significant number of other ongoing cases.
- 10.12 Of other nuisances, such as bonfires, fumes, odours and light pollution, 63 enquires were handled and dealt with in the same manner.
- 10.13 Other community issues such as high hedges, accumulations and boarding up unsafe premises accounted for 38 service requests.

## 11. Protecting Consumers from Fraud

### Fraud Victim Support

- 11.1 During Q2 the scams team have achieved the following across Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham:

- Through the scams work intervention Officers have managed to recoup £288,600 for residents.
- Officers have delivered six training sessions to local groups and fitted two further call blockers for vulnerable residents.
- Officers delivered three campaigns sessions relating to holiday fraud, the digital switchover and car related scams.

### **Unfair Trading and Fraud**

- 11.2 Successful outcome in court against a supplier of counterfeit clothing. On 11th February 2021, the Public Protection Partnership was informed that multiple pallet loads of potentially counterfeit clothing were at a storage facility in Hampshire. The items were branded with trademarks such as Tommy Hilfiger, G-Star, Ralph Lauren, Diesel and Levi and included T shirts, polo shirts, jeans, trousers, and dresses.
- 11.3 The company director received confiscation orders totalling £267,544.85 at a Crown Court hearing in Reading on 2nd October 2024. The orders were made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. R'Elite Raiments Ltd was fined £28,000 separately and the two defendants were also ordered to pay £28,000 towards prosecution costs.
- 11.4 The PPP have dealt with 87 complaints relating to: rogue trading, scams, misleading pricing, counterfeiting and restricting consumer rights during Q2,

## **12. Reducing Harm in Young People**

### **Schools Work**

- 12.1 Prior to the school summer holidays, five presentations were undertaken within secondary schools across West Berkshire, three regarding alcohol and two regarding vaping. Since the beginning of the school's autumn term, one West Berkshire secondary school has made contact regarding the delivery of vaping presentations. Unfortunately, with the departure at the beginning of September of the of the PPP's Community Support Officer who leads on this piece of work, capacity to deliver this piece of work is currently limited.
- 12.2 Four primary schools within West Berkshire have contacted and requested vaping presentations. Dates have been set to deliver these during Q4.
- 12.3 At the beginning of the Autumn term the PPP's Senior Programme and Community Officer attended the West Berkshire's Secondary School's Senior Pastoral Leads meeting and PSHE/RSHE network meeting to deliver presentations on Nicotine Pouches.

### **Attitudinal Survey**

- 12.4 The school's attitudinal survey took place across West Berkshire secondary schools between April and June 2024. The results were subsequently collated and anonymised, and an outcomes report produced for the beginning of the school terms in September. 4406 pupils took part in the survey across all West Berkshire secondary schools. This is the most responses to the survey received since it commenced. The survey outcomes were delivered at West Berkshire's Health and

Wellbeing Board Steering Group in August and to the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care Service (BOB ICS's) Tobacco Dependency Steering Group at the beginning of October.

### **Tobacco Control Alliance**

- 12.5 The focus of the Berkshire West Tobacco Control Alliance has been the in-year spending of the Local Stop Smoking and Service Support Grant funding. Within West Berkshire, the PPP's Senior Programme and Community Officer has responsibility for the grant and has been working with West Berkshire's Public Health, Category Management and Legal to vary the Community Wellness Outreach provision contract to include targeted Tobacco Dependency Services. Furthermore, service specifications and requests for quotes are being drawn up and circulated for the procurement of insights and evaluation work.
- 12.6 The Public Health Project Officer role to support the effective spending of the grant went out to advert and closed after one week owing to receiving 40 applicants. Following a successful interview process the role has been offered to one of the shortlisted candidates. This role will be line managed by the Senior Programme and Community Officer.
- 12.7 Q2 spending return was submitted to the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) on time.

### **Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP)**

- 12.8 The CAP's Challenge 25 Test Purchasing Operation was completed to July. The purchasing focused on rural and independent retailers across West Berkshire. Of the 28 retailers visited, 20 (71%) sold to the volunteer test purchaser without requesting identification. All retailers were written to advising whether they had passed or failed and providing information, advice and guidance regarding adopting a Challenge 25 policy.
- 12.9 At the beginning of September, the West Berkshire CAP coordinator attended Newbury college's 'fresher's week' to staff a stall dedicated to highlighting the health harms associated with alcohol, tobacco and vapes.
- 12.10 The school's attitudinal survey highlighted parental supply of alcohol to their children as being the main way school pupils are procuring alcohol. One of CAP's regional priorities is parental supply, therefore West Berkshire will work alongside CAP to deliver a campaign addressing this issue.

### **Underage Sales**

- 12.11 Officers have carried out 12 further visits to retailers with underage volunteers to attempt to buy alcohol and vapes resulting in two sales which are now being investigated.
- 12.12 As above Operation ALBION will be focussing on the sale of knives and corrosive substances in the coming months.
- 12.13 A dedicated Enforcement Officer focusing on the sale of age restricted products has been recruited on a fixed term contract. This will provide additional capacity to focus on this important area of work.

## 13. Protection of the Environment

- 13.1 **Mosquito traps** - PPP have been working with the UK Health Security Agency to look for evidence of an invasive species, the Asian Tiger Mosquito, entering the UK. This dengue fever carrying species has gradually been moving north through Europe, but has yet to become established in the UK. It is thought that one means of the mosquito entering the UK is in the cabs and loads of trucks arriving from Europe. Officers have placed traps in several motorway truck stops in Berkshire and have been collecting/replacing the equipment every two weeks and sending it to the UKHSA for analysis. No evidence of the Asian Tiger mosquito has been found in Berkshire.
- 13.2 **Air Quality** - Air Quality Officers are working on the Strategy for West Berkshire Council. This is a requirement following the revocation of the two Air Quality Management Areas to replace the Air Quality Action Plan. The annual returns have been submitted and evaluated by DEFRA and the outcomes appear elsewhere on this agenda. The Air Quality DEFRA grant funded projects are now complete and a final report is required to be sent to DEFRA by the end of March 2025.
- 13.3 **Single-use Plastics**. - Officers continue to look at take-away premises for single use plastic compliance as part of the routine food standards inspections where relevant. Five premises were assessed for single use plastic during the quarter, and all were found to be satisfactory. Officers have also responded to complaints relating to the use of banned single use plastics in the food sector.

## 14. Protecting and Informing Consumers

- 14.1 Operation TOPAZ, which is an OPSS (Office for Product and Safety Standards) initiated project, is near completion. Officers have visited 15 retailers of E-bikes and scooters to assess compliance. No major issues were found and it is thought that the majority of the issues being reported nationally may be found in products purchased on the online platforms.
- 14.2 A new safety project is planned focussed on home produced candles, childrens clothing and toys to establish compliance with safety legislation. The service provides advice to businesses on safety requirements.
- 14.3 Operation Sapphire – is looking into a large number of complaints about vehicle sellers based within PPP. Using the Enterprise Act we are tackling the growing trend of traders attempting to restrict consumer rights in the secondhand car market.
- 14.4 Weights and Measure Inspections. - Officers continue to check equipment in use for trade during routine food inspections. During the quarter, 595 pieces of equipment were found to be correct. 17 pieces of equipment were examined and found to be incorrect. For example, shot measures without the 'inspectors' stamp. These were dealt with by removal at the time of inspection

## 15. Promoting Animal Welfare

- 15.1 During Q2 Trading Standards undertook 33 on farm animal health and welfare checks as well as attending Newbury Show for the entire weekend. In addition four visits were conducted with respect to animal feedingstuffs.



- 15.2 A total of 39 visits were carried out to licensed animal establishments of these 12 were in Bracknell Forest and 27 in West Berkshire..
- 15.3 The Bluetongue control area was recently extended to include Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough. The PPP was also notified of one suspect case that tested negative. More on Bluetongue can be found here: [Bluetongue: news, information and guidance for livestock keepers - GOV.UK](#)

## 16. Safety in the Workplace

- 16.1 The Team has dealt with 54 health and safety at work service requests during Q2 and 33 workplace accidents were reported.
- 16.2 Four prohibition notices have been served under Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974:
- Prohibition of the use of a hydraulic pallet truck at a warehouse in Thatcham that had not been inspected for safety by a competent person.
  - Inadequate procedures for disinfection of equipment at a barber in Sandhurst.
  - Prohibition of inadequately maintained sterilisation equipment at a tattooist in Bracknell.
  - Inadequate ventilation for gas cooking equipment at a café in Newbury.
- 16.3 The issues relating to disinfection and barbers has highlighted an area for further investigation. Barbers and Hairdressers are required to be registered with councils in West Berkshire and Bracknell and to comply with any local bye-laws. There has been a rapid increase in the number of outlets and it is suspected that a number are not registered. The Service intends to focus on this area in Q3 and in particular look at hygiene and sterilisation standards.

## 17. Safe and Healthy Food Chain

- 17.1 Food Hygiene - A number of food hygiene re-rating visits were requested and paid for by the respective businesses following earlier programmed food hygiene inspections. Authorised Officers carry out a rescore visit to these premises after which the Food Hygiene Rating Scores may go up, or down or remain the same dependant on the outcome of the visit. Although the Food Hygiene Rating can change – which is the visible score on the Food Standards Agency site – the risk rating that determines how often the business gets inspected does not change on a rating rescore visit, which means that Officers go back at the original next inspection date and so ensure that any improvements are sustained.
- 17.2 Officers have completed 163 food hygiene inspections during Quarter 2 and have dealt with 205 food hygiene service requests.
- 17.3 Food Hygiene cases of interest include:
- An appeal has been lodged against a notice served under The Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011 which seized a consignment of illegally imported caviar.
  - Voluntary closure of a garage with evidence of rat activity being used in connection with a food business.
- 17.4 The Service received 187 infectious disease notifications during Q2.

- 17.5 **Food Standards** (quality, composition, labelling, claims, allergens etc.): A total of 325 food standards visits have been conducted by trading standards and a total of 37 food samples have been taken in Q2.

## 18. Investigations and Case Management

- 18.1 The Joint Case Management Unit continues to be busy working with new investigations commencing all the time across PPP. The loss of the Strategic Manager has reduced staff capacity with some cases taking longer to progress. This is a challenge with many cases on legal limitations.
- 18.2 The investigations team are currently working on twenty ongoing investigations relating to unfair trading, fraud and counterfeiting. Of these eight are already in the case management / court system and all are expected to be crown court disposals. A number are set for trial in 2024 and 2025. However new trials are now being listed for late 2026.
- 18.3 There has also been a significant increase in doorstep crime / property maintenance and repair fraud and unfair trading. In addition to the ones under investigation a number of the less serious matters have been dealt with through early intervention including face to face meetings, witnessed written warnings and recovery of losses.
- 18.4 The Accredited Financial Investigators have ten active money laundering / confiscation investigations along with six pended cases. Two more are waiting to be allocated. Officers are currently looking at how critical mass can be expanded in this very specialist area of work by working in partnership with a neighbouring authority to fund an additional officer. The team recently recovered over £267K following a contested hearing at Reading Crown Court as per 11.3 above.

## 19. Concluding Observations

- 19.1 As can be seen from the report there has been significant work undertaken with respect to the priority areas. This is addition to the large volume of other work undertaken on a day-to-day basis. It is clear that resource will need to be transferred into priority areas if some targets are not going to be missed. This will inevitably mean some re-prioritisation of other workstreams.
- 19.2 It is also clear that the focus of resource into some areas appears to be increasing demand. This is especially so in the area of property related fraud and unfair trading. The Service will keep this under review and update the Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

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## 20. Appendices

- 20.1 Appendix A – Q2 Performance Data
- 20.2 Appendix B – Compliments
- 20.3 Appendix C – Activity by Authority

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## 21. Background Papers:

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21.1 None

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** All Wards

**Officer details:**

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## Service Requests Data

Table 1: Environmental Health and Licensing for PPP

Public Protection Partnership   Bracknell Forest West Berkshire	2023/24	2024/25			2023/24			2024/25
	PPP	Bracknell	West Berkshire	PPP	Bracknell	West Berkshire	PPP	PPP YTD
	Outturn	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	
Envirocrime	963	278	2	280	227	0	227	
Flytipping	126	26	0	26	22	0	22	
Food Hygiene Related	539	67	90	157	59	85	144	
Health and Safety (including accidents reported)	184	15	29	44	17	31	48	
Housing	656	99	68	167	74	62	136	
Licensing	394	40	66	106	41	52	93	
Other (e.g. other nuisances, cont. Land, private water supplies, burials, enclosed smoking)	251	23	49	72	12	27	39	
Planning	466	68	91	159	55	85	140	
Ukraine Accommodation Check	25	1	4	5	1	6	7	
Anti-Social Behaviour	879	80	133	213	103	139	242	
Dog Warden (stray dog collection only)	57	3	9	12	5	13	18	
Noise - Non-commercial	644	83	132	215	61	145	206	
Noise - Commercial	329	37	74	111	32	86	118	
All Bonfire/Smoke	173	30	22	52	36	23	59	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5683</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>1619</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>1499</b>	

**Table 2: Trading Standards Service Requests (includes) commissioned services.**



	2023/24	2024/25				2023/24				2024/25
	PPP	BFC	West Berks	Wok	PPP	BFC	West Berks	Wok	PPP	PPP YTD
	Outturn	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	Q2	
Animal Health	39	4	5	5	14	2	5	3	10	
Door Step/Scam/No cold calling zones	208	9	26	21	56	8	15	14	37	
Food Standards	144	29	18	28	75	11	6	10	17	
Misleading Description	68	1	7	5	13	5	7	7	17	
Other (e.g. counterfeit goods, under age sales)	230	13	45	33	91	15	39	21	75	
Unsafe goods	82	7	6	6	19	4	6	8	18	
What are my rights? (Business)	25	1	4	1	6	3	3	1	7	
What are my rights? (Consumer)	1019	70	93	90	253	58	77	101	236	
Trading Standards Notifications	2489	124	228	147	499	160	248	199	607	62 Vodafone notifications for WB
Weight Restrictions	410	3	62	19	84	2	68	14	84	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4724</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>1110</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>1118</b>	

**Measures of Volume – No targets as they are cumulative measures of volume**

Measure	2023/24 Outturn		2024/25 Q1		2024/25 Q2		2024/25 Q3		2024/25 Q4		2024/25 Outturn To date	
	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC
Number of Fols Processed*	188	170	47	52	37	55					84	107
Time Taken to Process Fols to nearest hour	129	103	25	44	39	49					64	93
Number of Service Complaints *	6	11	2	9	5	2					7	11
Number of Councillor and MP Enquiries*	36	100	31	29	9	20					40	49
Number of operations conducted based on intelligence relating to age restricted products*	11 in total		23		9							
Number of PPP articles and press releases published on the PPP website	94		10		18						28	
Number of page views on PPP Website	87,123		39,559		38,261						77,820	
Number of PPP Facebook posts	602		232		140						372	
Number of PPP Twitter Tweets	497		0		0						0	
Number of new PPP Twitter followers	37		0		0						0	
Number of Facebook New Followers	162		36		8						44	
Number of caravan site visits (programmed and reactive) *	19	21	0	1	1	0						
Number of food inspections carried out (includes those by alternative enforcement strategy) *	234	246	88	90	61	138						
Number of new food businesses registered*	123	212	34	51	46	50						
Number of HMO licenses issued*	14	8	0	0	0	0						
Number of housing visits carried out (excl Ukraine)*	93	76	50	25	31	13						
Percentage of Food Premises that have scored 0 (Urgent Improvement Necessary) in accordance with FHRS * (shown as denominator and numerator)	0/ 673 (0%)	2/ 1081 (0.18 %)	0/ 688 (0%)	2/ 1066 (0.19%)	0/ 670 (0%)	0/ 1059 (0%)						
Percentage of Food Premises that have scored 1 (Major Improvements Necessary) in accordance with FHRS * (shown as denominator and numerator)	2/ 673 (0.3%)	7/ 1081 (0.6%)	1 /688 (0.1%)	7/ 1066 (0.66%)	3/ 670 (0.15%)	5/ 1059 (0.5%)						

Measure	2023/24 Outturn		2024/25 Q1		2024/25 Q2		2024/25 Q3		2024/25 Q4		2024/25 Outturn To date	
	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC
Percentage of Food Premises that have scored 5 (Very Good) in accordance with FHRS * (shown as denominator and numerator)	559/ 673 (83%)	924/ 1081 (85%)	578/ 688 (84%)	908/ 1066 (85%)	559 /670 (83%)	903/ 1059 (85%)						
Number of Licensing Applications under the Licensing Act 2003 that proceed to a hearing*	1	8	0	1	1	0						
Number of Licensing Applications under the Gambling Act 2005 that proceed to a hearing*	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Number of Other Licensing Applications that proceed to a hearing*	0	0	0	0	1	0						
Number of Hackney Carriage/ Private Hire/ Operator/ Home to School matters that proceed to a hearing*	1	0	0	0	0	0						
SAG Events Processes	90	195	42	66	29	87						

\* will be reported by authority

### Trading Standards Data

	23/24 Outturn	2024/25 Q1			2024/25 Q2			2024/25 Q3			2024/25 Q4			24/25 Outturn
Product	PPP	Wok	BFC	WBC	Wok	BFC	WBC	Wok	BFC	WBC	Wok	BFC	WBC	PPP
	Passes/ Visits	Pass/ Visit	Pass/ Visit	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visit	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits
Alcohol	16/17			1/1	1/2	1/1	7/7							10/11 to date
Tobacco	0/0													0/0 to date
Spray Paint	0/0													0/0 to date
Knives	0/0													0/0 to date
Fireworks	7/7													0/0 to date
Solvents	0/0													0/0 to date
E-Cigs	43/47	2/2	4/4	10/10	3/3	1/2	7/7							27/28 to date
	23/24 Outturn		2024/25 Q 1			2024/25 Q 2			2024/25 Q 3		2024/25 Q 4		23/24 Outturn	
Food Samples Passed/Failed	118 sampling exercises across PPP.  33 Unsatisfactory  Remaining either satisfactory, spoilt or results pending		3 samples (1 from each area) for coffee in June  <b>Results pending</b>			37 samples taken across each of the 3 areas.  Of the 37 food samples taken, these were part of regional food sampling projects and were for meat products (species/fat/protei n), oils and fats (substitution), herbs and spices (mycotoxins), bakery and cereal products (allergens).  Results are pending								

	23/24 Outturn	2024/25 Q1			2024/25 Q2			2024/25 Q3			2024/25 Q4			24/25 Outturn
Product	PPP	Wok	BFC	WBC	Wok	BFC	WBC	Wok	BFC	WBC	Wok	BFC	WBC	PPP
	Passes/ Visits	Pass/ Visit	Pass/ Visit	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visit	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits	Pass/ Visits
No of Counterfeit and Unsafe Good Seized	Counterfeit  Unsafe		Counterfeit = 0  Unsafe = 0			Counterfeit = 480 items seized (clothing from Wokingham car boot)  Unsafe = 17 vapes seized from car boot			Counterfeit  Unsafe		Counterfeit  Unsafe		Counterfeit  Unsafe	
Amount of Money Recovered for Victims	£255,597		£23,050 TS have recovered Wok = £10519.12 Newbury £1000 Awaiting data from Bracknell			£159,890 Bracknell £17,000 Wokingham £45,900 West Berks £96,990								



## Key Performance Indicators Public

Type	Measure	2023/24 Outturn		2024/25 Q1		2024/25 Q2		2024/25 Q3		2024/25 Q4	
		BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC
IAA	75% of service users satisfied with the Public Protection Partnership	94/135 = 70%		26/47 = 54%		32/59 = 54%					
IAA	Management of income to within 5% of budget	£98k shortfall		£196k shortfall		Sean					
Statutory	No of valid TEN's and Late TENS processed	239 rec 2 w drwn 1 invald 3 rejctd 2 rfsd	567 rec 1 w drwn 0 invald 1 rejctd 13 rfsd 7 cx d by applicant	85 received  2 invalid 1 refused	171 received  1 invalid 3 rejected 1 refused 1 withdrawn	44 received  1 invalid	129 received  2 invalid				
Local	Number of licensing applications (New and Variations) processed	35 rcd & granted	192 rcd & granted	10 received  1 in progress	40 received & granted	15 received & granted	32 received  4 in progress				
Local	Number of valid Taxi licensing applications and renewals processed	388 Rcd  11 Wdwn  17 ivld	503 Rcd  6 Wdwn  3 ivld	72 received  18 in progress	103 received  18 in progress	71 received  3 in progress	104 received  1 invalid				

Type	Measure	2023/24 Outturn		2024/25 Q1		2024/25 Q2		2024/25 Q3		2024/25 Q4	
		BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC	BFC	WBC
		6 in prgs 354 vld  353 gtd 1 rfsd	10 in prgs 482 vld  482 gtd 1 rfsd								
Local	No of valid general licensing applications and renewals processed	165 rcd & grtd	212 rcd & grtd	43 received  9 in progress	41 received  6 in progress	64 received  9 awaiting inspection 1 in consultation 4 in progress 1 surrendered	52 received  5 in progress 3 awaiting inspection				
Statutory	% of local authority pollution prevention and control (LAPPC) inspections, that are due, carried out	21/21 100% completed		4/12	3/28	6/12	5/28				
Local	% of inspected food businesses that score at least 3 on the food hygiene rating scale during reporting period	667 /673 (99%)	1059/1081 (98%)	684/688 (99%)	1046/1066 (98%)	662/670 (99%)	1044/1059 (98.5%)				

\* This would not include caravans or HMOs

## Annual Key Performance Indicators Public

	Measure	2023/24 Outturn	2024/25 Outturn	Comments
IAA	Management of budget to within 1% of baseline	£61.96k underspend	Will be reported in Q4	
Statutory	Submit Annual Air Quality Reports to DEFRA by 30 June	All 3 submitted to DeFRA on the 15 June 2023	All 3 reports submitted by 14/6/24	Green
Statutory	Submit to JMB the Annual Food Safety, Food Standards and Feed Service Plan in accordance with the Food Standard Agency Code of Practice	Taken to the 09 September JMB	Will be reported in Q3 Food and Feed Plan signed off at JMB in September 2024	
Local	Four During Performance Inspections carried out on high profile events per annum	Q1 = 3 Q2 = 11 Q3 = 0 Q4 = 0	Q1 = 1 (noise) Q2 = 5 (noise) plus 5 (H&S/Food) Q3 = Q4 =	
Local	% of caravan sites due an inspection inspected within the reporting period	BF 100% WB 100%	Will be reported at year end	
Local	% of food hygiene inspections completed, that are due, as per Food Standards Agency Code of Practice	A premises – 100% (5 premises) B premises – 100% (37 Premises) C premises – 100% (157 premises) D premises - 44% (270 premises)  Unrated – all prioritised and 210 visits done (47%)	Q1 = 205 Food hygiene inspections completed Q2 = 199 Food hygiene inspections completed	
Local	% of food standards inspections completed, that are due, as per	BF High risk – 100% (4)	Will be reported at year end	

	Measure	2023/24 Outturn	2024/25 Outturn	Comments
		Others - 185  <b>WB</b> High risk – 100% (13) Others – 281		
Local	% of food premises rated as 0 or 1 on the FHRS at the start of the year that are broadly compliant (3 score or above) by their next full inspection visit (subject to pending enforcement action) for premises with inspections due in reporting period	<b>WB</b> 4 premises in scope 1 of these ceased trading 3 of these improved Therefore 100% still trading reached score 3 or more  <b>BF</b> 3 premises in scope 1 of these ceased trading 2 improved to BC Therefore all reached score 3 or more	Will be reported at year end	

## Local Indicators for Bracknell Forest Council

Measure of Volume	2023/24 Outturn	2024/25 Q1	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q3	2024/25 Q4	Comments
<b>Fly Tipping / Waste Duty of Care Incidents</b>						
Number of fly tipping / waste 'duty of care' incidents referred to PPP	126	50	27			5 additional reports of littering
Number investigated	112	26	32			
Number of warnings issued	5	3	1			
Number of formal cautions issued	0	1	0			
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued	23	6	3			
Number of Prosecutions	7	0*	1			
<b>Waste Carriers</b>						
Number of vehicles checked for waste carriers licence	65	0	0			
Number of compliant waste carriers	39	0	0			
Number of non-compliant waste carriers	3	0	0			
<b>Abandoned Vehicles</b>						
Number of abandoned vehicles reported and actioned	931*	236	278			Of which 161 not deemed abandoned **
Number of abandoned vehicles traced	168	123	238			
Number of abandoned vehicles removed from highway	25	5	2			4 referred to other agency
Number of vehicles gone	N/a	31	29			

\*\* in order for a vehicle to be abandoned it usually has to be the following: out of road tax, remained in the same place for in excess of 28 days, no obvious owner, flat tyres, vandalised, insecure, contains waste, burnt out. If a DVLA trace shows the vehicle has a local keeper then it cannot be considered as abandoned.

## Local Indicators for West Berkshire Council

Measure of Volume	2023/24 Outturn	2024/25 Q1	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q3	2024/25 Q4	2024/25 Outturn to date	Comments
<b>Weight Restrictions</b>							
Number of observations made	273 59 WB, 5 BFC, 15 Wok	41 28 WB, 6 BFC, 7 Wok	61 48 WB, 2 BFC, 11 Wok				
Number of breaches of restrictions observed	269 76 WB, 0 BFC, 7 Wok	30 27 WB, 1 BFC, 2 Wok	43 39 WB, 1 BFC, 3 Wok				
Number of warnings issued	7	0	0				
Number of Prosecutions concluded	83	12	22				

## **Quarter 2 Selection of Service Compliments**

After one of our officers arranged a safeguarding course as part of the Assured Care and Support Scheme.

“Thanks Pip

The safeguarding course was very informative. So glad I picked up the leaflet for the scheme as I said on the course when we had to introduce ourselves.

I chose to do this as I want to be able to be the best I can and it also gives you more confidence knowing that you have all the legal stuff that is required.

I also said how helpful you have been. Thanks again.”

---

A thank you from a resident after one of our housing officers assisted them with a maintenance issue:

“Good afternoon Pradip

Some goods news this afternoon regarding the problem with mum’s shower.

An engineer attended mum’s flat this afternoon and replaced the broken shower with an easy to use electric replacement.

Myself and my sister Ann, would like to thank you sincerely for your help and involvement with this matter.”

---

This thank you was received after one of our Trading Standards Officers provided them with information that they needed to set up their wedding event planning business:

“Thank you so much Glenda, this is super helpful! “

---

This message was received by one of our Trading Standards Officers who offered support to a resident who was sold a car which was faulty and the trader was refusing to allow the short term right to reject for a full refund:

“I cannot thank you and appreciate enough for your amazing support.”

---

A thank you to one of our Environmental Health Officers who assisted a resident who had been disturbed by the sounding alarm from a business in Bracknell for over six months.

“Hello Phumzile,

As discussed, the last couple of weeks have been great - I've had no broken sleep and not heard the internal or external alarms go off once. I am even feeling better - probably because I'm not being woken up! I'm really grateful to you and Kate for following this up with XXX. It's only been a few weeks so I will continue to monitor but I will let you know if the external alarm keeps ringing again.

Thank you again for all your help and your follow-up call.”

---

A thank you to our Fraud Victim Support Officer from a colleague in the West Berkshire Council Deputyship Team after he assisted a resident with recovering £28,201 for her.

“Hi Malcolm

.....I just want to take the opportunity to remark on what an amazing job you have done for XX; not only securing these two latest refunds, but all your hard work and dogged determination in securing previous settlements for substantial sums in the past as well.

It is through your tireless championing of her cause that has resulted in XX now having the funds that will allow for the kitchen work that she so very much needs.

Thank you Malcolm, you are a star!”

---

A thank you to one of our Trading Standards Officers from a Used Car Dealer

“Hello Honor

Thanks to your guidance we have successfully resolved this today, both for the customer and for our business.

Much appreciated.”

---

A thank you from a resident after one of our Trading Standards Officers used remedies under The Consumer Rights Act 2015 to recover over £2300 for this resident:

“Dear Honor,

I hope you are well.

I'm sure that you have seen the email from XX , advising the refund has been made.

Just wanted to confirm that I have had the accurate amount of money returned to my bank account.

There is absolutely no doubt that your support has been pivotal and the sole reason for resolution, as well as justice achieving this outcome.

I cannot stress the level of gratitude I have for your support in this matter, after the horrendously stressful year and everything XX put me through.

It is my humble opinion that you are a real life angel and I wish you the very best in all of your future endeavours”

---

A thank you sent to one of our Environment Health Officers who had dealt with a noise compliant from a resident coming from a construction site:



“Hi Jodie,

Thank you very much for the information. I appreciate you taking the time to help me understand the situation. I really appreciate it. Currently, the construction work is proceeding more quietly within the appropriate time frame. You have helped a lot!

Thank you so much!”

---

A thank you from a resident after one of our Trading Standards Officers followed up on intelligence that they had provided on potentially illicit vapes being sold:

“Thank you so much. Puts my mind at ease.”

---

A thank you after our Victim Support Officer gave a presentation at an event:

“I am writing this to say a massive thank you for your presentation this morning.

It was very clear and well linked to real life scenarios and therefore relevant and relatable to the audience. Having the 'light' practical elements helped to illustrate the points you were making and to enable those listening to cope with the scary reality of scamming.

Thank you so much for your time this morning but also for the work in general that you do. It is so reassuring to know there is something that is being done to protect and support us and our vulnerable loved ones. I really hope that this can continue and in particular that you are able to continue to have opportunities for face to face meetings. In this day and age of information being disseminated online or virtually, I cannot stress the importance, value and inclusivity of having a live person presenting and reacting to the audience.

I will definitely be passing on your contact details to those at risk, or victims, of scams.”

---

A thank you from a resident who participated in our electric blanket and portable heater testing scheme:

“I recently took my electric blanket to Newbury Fire Station for a safety check. I was told that as it was over twenty years old it was deemed unsafe to use. The officer cut through the electric cable, with my consent, to ensure it was not used again (which I wouldn't) and told me I would receive a replacement. This arrived yesterday and is now on the bed. I am writing to say how grateful I am that this service exists as I had no idea that a blanket over twenty years old and in working order is not classed as safe. Thank you very much. I am very grateful for the advice and the replacement safe blanket.”

---

A thank you from a resident who was assisted by one of our Environmental Health Officers with a persistent alarm going off:

“Good afternoon Charlie,

Thanks to you, we've had some blissful nights sleep :) cannot thank you enough. “

---

From a resident who had reported an expired FHRS Rating Sticker which was quickly dealt with by one of our Environmental Health Officers:

“Thank you for the update and for all the work you do to keep us safe.”

---



A shared service provided by  
Bracknell Forest Council and  
West Berkshire Council



## Appendix C Activity Undertaken by Authority

	BFC	WBC	WOK
Abandoned vehicles	•		
Air quality management	•	•	•
Animal warden	•	•	
Alcohol licensing and controls	•	•	
Assured Care and Support		•	•
Health and Safety at Work	•	•	
Health promotion		•	•
Animal welfare licensing	•	•	
Animal Health and Welfare on farms	•	•	•
Buy with Confidence	•		
Case Management	•	•	•
Contaminated land	•	•	
Communicable diseases	•	•	
Community education		•	
Community mediation	•	•	•
Consumer advice	•	•	•
Consumer credit	•	•	•
Criminal Litigation (non road traffic)	•	RTA	•
Doorstep crime	•	•	•
Environmental nuisance protection	•	•	
Explosives storage	•	•	
Fair trading	•	•	•
Financial investigations	•	•	•
Fraud and counterfeiting	•	•	•
Food Safety and Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	•	•	
Food Standards and Feed Standards	•	•	•
Fly Tipping and Enviro Crime	•		
Gambling	•	•	
Industrial pollution	•	•	
Licensing (alcohol and regulated activity)	•	•	
Metrology	•	•	
Money laundering and Confiscation (POCA)	•	•	•
Overloaded vehicles and weight restrictions	•	•	•
Offensive weapons controls	•	•	•
Pest and vermin enforcement	•	•	
Petroleum storage	•	•	
Planning advice	•	•	
Primary Authority	•		
Private sector housing	•	•	
Product safety	•	•	•
Private water supplies	•	•	
Public health funerals	•	•	
Scams and on-line fraud	•	•	•
Scrap metal dealers	•	•	
Smoking cessation oversight		•	
Street trading	•	•	
Taxi and private hire licensing	•	•	
Underage sales	•	•	•
Unfair trading	•	•	•
Workplace accidents	•	•	

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## Air Quality Status Reports 2024

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Joint Public Protection Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	16 December 2024
<b>Chair of Committee:</b>	Councillor Iskandar Jefferies
<b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>	2 December 2024
<b>Report Author:</b>	Suzanne McLaughlin
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	JPPC

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) of the submission and results of the annual air quality reports for Bracknell Forest (BFC) and West Berkshire Councils (WBC). These reports are for the monitoring data and action planning update for the calendar year 2023.
- 1.2 To inform the JPPC that the annual air quality report for Wokingham Borough Council has also been submitted and the results received and passed on to Wokingham Borough Council in accordance with the shared service arrangements effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

### 2. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Is informed about the contents of the two Air Quality Annual Status Reports as set out in [Appendix A for Bracknell Forest Council](#) and [Appendix C for West Berkshire Council](#).
- 2.2 Is informed about the feedback from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the reports as set out in Appendix B for Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) and Appendix D West Berkshire Council (WBC).
- 2.3 Is informed about the progress on the measures to improve air quality set out in each report.
- 2.4 Approves the ongoing and planned future measures to improve air quality set in each report.
- 2.5 Is informed that the Air Quality Status Report produced by the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council has been submitted to DEFRA, the feedback received, and both have been passed on to the authority for processing under their governance arrangements.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment:

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	Work relating to Air Quality monitoring and reporting is funded from the general revenue budget allocated to the Public

	<p>Protection Service. Several proposals in the action plans continue to require additional funding to implement whilst others are relatively low cost and are covered from the PPP revenue budget.</p> <p>Grant funding from DEFRA has been available and PPP have applied annually. In addition, West Berkshire Council (on behalf of the Partnership) was awarded £259,406 in March 2021 by DEFRA to fund a project focused on behavioural change for the residents who drive in the three boroughs by launching an anti-idling campaign as well as PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring in / near the Air Quality Management Areas. This funding has now come to an end.</p>
<p><b>Human Resource:</b></p>	<p>Staff who undertake this work are a shared resource with Wokingham BC under the new IAA with Wokingham.</p> <p>One benefit of the shared service is the ability to have staff that specialise in areas such as this and the service is fortunate to have several officers with significant expertise on environmental matters generally and air quality specifically.</p> <p>The 2021/22 Grant from DEFRA has meant that the authority was able to appoint an Air Quality Officer on a fixed term contract until September 2023 to support the anti-idling campaign. The post holder left WBC in April 2023 and since then the work has been undertaken within PPP and recharged to the grant.</p>
<p><b>Legal:</b></p>	<p>Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are legally required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary.</p> <p>Where an AQMA is designated, of which there is one in Bracknell Forest (in Crowthorne), local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place. Where the pollutant levels no longer exceed the Objectives then the AQMA should be revoked. Where a Local Authority no longer has any AQMA then an Air Quality Strategy is to be produced. Where a Local Authority still has an AQMA the AQAP is to be regularly reviewed and must be revised no later than every five years.</p>
<p><b>Risk Management:</b></p>	<p>This is a legal requirement under the Environment Act 2005. Failure to comply with our statutory obligations could present the risk of challenge to the PPP partner authorities.</p>
<p><b>Property:</b></p>	<p>There are no direct property implications arising from this report.</p>

<b>Policy:</b>	<p>The Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) identified Environmental Protection as one of the five Strategic Priorities for the Joint Public Protection Committee. The 2024-2027 Strategic Assessments includes Protection of the Environment as one of the key priorities for the Service over the next three years.</p> <p>West Berkshire has declared a climate emergency. They have embedded Air Quality improvements into their Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plans.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Council's Climate Change Strategy was completed and published in January 2021 and have a target of net carbon zero by 2050.</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		No specific groups are affected by the contents of the proposals as there are no decisions being made. Air quality can be particularly harmful to the young, elderly, pregnant and those suffering ill health. Consideration to all these matters is given in this report and appendices and / or the national clean air strategy.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		No specific groups are affected by the contents of the proposals as there are no decisions being made. Air quality can be particularly harmful to the young, elderly, pregnant and those suffering ill health. Consideration to all these matters is given in this report and appendices and / or the national clean air strategy.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	x			<p>Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are legally required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated, local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place.</p> <p>These reports are therefore designed to have a positive impact on the environment.</p>

<b>Health Impact:</b>	X		<p>The Air Quality Objectives have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.</p> <p>Although there has been a reduction in air pollution since the 1970s, poor air quality is still the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. It shortens lives and reduces quality of life, particularly amongst the most vulnerable, the young and old, and those living with health conditions.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring and where appropriate the creation of action plans is designed to improve the quality of lives of our residents.</p>
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		x	<p>None</p> <p>The Air Quality Status Reports are published on the PPP website.</p>
<b>PPP Priorities:</b>	x		<p>The Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) identified Protecting and Improving Health as one of the five overarching themes with Environmental Protection one of the Strategic priorities for the Joint Public Protection Committee. Under this heading the Committee in turn identified improved air quality as a priority for 2021-2024. Going forward Air Quality, within the area of the Protection of the Environment, is a targeted priority in the Strategic Assessment 2024-2027.</p>
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X	None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>Each local authority within PPP is required to submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) each year and a template is provide.</p>		
<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	<p>None – The production of the reports is a statutory requirement.</p>		

## 4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 Local authorities are required to submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) each year and a template is provided. The overall aim of this document is to report on progress in achieving reductions in concentrations of emissions relating to relevant pollutants below air quality objective levels. It is also where local authorities identify new or changing sources of emissions.



4.2 On completion, local authorities should submit their report to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) for consideration, who will provide comments back in a timely manner and to which the local authorities are expected to have regard.

4.3 The core requirements of the ASR:

- To report progress on the implementation of measures in the local air quality action plan and other measures and their impact in reducing concentrations below air quality objectives.
- To provide a summary of monitoring/modelling data (either locally retrieved and/or from the national network) to assess the air quality situation in the area and the likelihood of air quality breaches, and to provide the necessary evidence base for the impact of air quality measures.
- To report on significant new developments that might affect local air quality.
- To encourage joint working with other agencies, such as Public Health, and the Highway Authorities.
- To present information in a public-facing executive summary for the lay reader so that the local public can more easily engage with local air quality issues and measures taken to improve it.

4.4 DEFRA set a deadline each year for submission of these reports and there are implications for late submission in respect of whether air quality grant bids will be favourably received. The Service has again completed and submitted the reports for all three authorities within the appropriate timescales.

4.5 The PPP understands the importance of DEFRA approving the reports as the data is used by third parties in planning applications, as well as in-house decisions by Highways and Transport Planning colleagues. In addition, the increased significance is recognised as identified actions are now intrinsically linked with Climate Emergency Plans and Environmental Strategies.

## 5. Report Submission

5.1 Air quality monitoring and improvement contributes to a number of principal priorities of the PPP, and continues to be identified as such in 2023-24 with synergies directly with climate change and environmental protection. In Summer 2019 all PPP local authorities made commitments with respect to climate change, and air quality continues to be regularly in the news, alongside, the cross cutting climate change theme.

5.2 Although Wokingham Borough Council has opted to withdraw from the Partnership the PPP continues to undertake air quality work for the local authority under a new agreement. The three Annual Status Reports were completed in-house by the deadline of the 30 June 2024. The reports were submitted as follows:

- Bracknell Forest      14 June 2024
- West Berkshire      14 June 2024
- Wokingham      14 June 2024

## 6. Impact of the Covid Pandemic and beyond on Air Quality

- 6.1 Members were previously informed that, as was to be expected, the Covid pandemic did have an impact on air quality due to reduced traffic movements. A management decision was taken during the various lockdowns and restrictions in 2020 and 2021 to continue monitoring air quality. The 2021 levels of nitrogen dioxide generally increased compared to 2020. This was due to the increase in traffic levels. However the Nitrogen Dioxide levels were lower in both years when compared to 2019 with a significant reduction during the periods of the national lockdowns. In 2022 the levels showed a very minor increase.
- 6.2 The traffic flows for 2023 were still lower than the pre-pandemic year 2019. Comparing 2019 and 2023 the monthly trends in traffic, the pattern is broadly the same. Of the five years 2019 to 2023, as expected, the pollution and traffic levels are the lowest in 2020.
- 6.3 A summary for each area can be found in the Executive Summary at the beginning of the individual reports.

## 7. Bracknell Forest

- 7.1 There is now one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared across the Borough known as "Area 2: The Bracknell Road (B3348) and Crowthorne High Street, Crowthorne AQMA".
- 7.2 AQMA "Area 1: The Bagshot Road (A322) Horse and Groom Roundabout Downshire Way AQMA" (Bracknell AQMA) was revoked on 14 March 2024 following a reduction in pollutant levels, as brought to JPPC in December 2023, and after consultation, approved at the March 2024 JPPC.
- 7.3 The major source of air quality pollutants in Bracknell Forest is emissions from road transport. In particular, the contribution from the A322 in Bracknell, the B3348/High Street and Sandhurst Road Crowthorne have been identified as significant. The main pollutant of concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and to a lesser extent the increased levels of particulate matter.
- 7.4 The levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in 2023 have shown a decreasing trend since 2019. The annualised continuous monitored NO<sub>2</sub> Annual Mean in 2023 of 29.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at Downshire Way did not exceed the Air Quality Objective level of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This is a reduction from 33.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2019.
- 7.5 There were no exceedances of the 1-hour Objectives of 200 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (not to be exceeded 18 times / year) in 2023.
- 7.6 There were no exceedances of the ratified, bias corrected, annualised and distance corrected diffusion tubes within the Bracknell and Crowthorne AQMAs. There were no locations greater than 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup> which further indicates that there are unlikely to be any exceedance of the 1-hour Objective. All of the 2023 sites showed a decrease from the 2019 data. There were nine sites with marginal increased levels and 17 decreased. The fluctuation and gradual reducing trend is to be expected in 2023 due to hybrid working and increase in cleaner vehicles.

7.7 The Particulate Matter PM<sub>10</sub>, which is monitored in the Bracknell AQMA (when annualised) measured 17.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and did not exceed the Annual Mean Objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The results also showed no exceedances of the 24-hour Annual Mean Objective of 50µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which is not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year. This is a reduction on the 2022 figures demonstrating a decreasing trend since 2018 when the level was 19.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

7.8 Bracknell Forest Council produced an Air Quality Action Plan in 2014 which was updated in 2016. The Plan outlined local measures to improve pollution levels within the them two AQMAs and more widely across the borough. The action plan is integrated with the delivery of the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP) to improve local air quality and climate change, through joint working with the Council's Environmental Health, Transport Planning and Planning Divisions. Following the revocation of the Bracknell AQMA the Action Plan for Crowthorne 2024-2029 has been reviewed, updated and following consultation was approved by the March 2024 JPPC.

### **Actions to Improve Air Quality**

7.9 Reducing queuing traffic, smoothing the traffic flow, reducing journey times and major highway improvements along the A329/A322 Bracknell corridor have resulted in a 41.5% reduction in 2023 NO<sub>2</sub> levels when compared to 2011. Works to reduce the bottleneck on Downshire Way have now been completed as have other works on the A322 roundabouts. These road improvements have led to improved air quality along the A322 in 2022 and this trend was carried forward in to 2023.

7.10 The speed humps along the High Street in Crowthorne have been upgraded and replaced with speed cushions to reduce stop start driving. As a result the NO<sub>2</sub> levels have dropped from 41.7µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2011 to 21.5µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023.

### **Commentary from DEFRA**

7.11 DEFRA have confirmed that the report 'is well structured, detailed and provides the information specified in the Guidance' and 'On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached in the report are accepted for all sources and pollutants.' They also noted good quality discussion regarding trends of the results shown in good quality graphs; good quality discussion about the Quality Assurance /Quality Control procedure; and good quality discussion about additional air quality work undertaken by Bracknell Forest Council.

7.12 DEFRA noted a small number of grammatical and formatting errors within the report and these have been rectified in the final report as published.

7.13 DEFRA acknowledged that the Bracknell AQMA had been revoked in March 2024 and noted that a new Air Quality Action Plan for Crowthorne had been published in 2024.

7.14 DEFRA agreed with the plans to wait until compliance (concentrations recorded as below 10% the Air Quality Objective) has been achieved in 2022, 2023 and 2024 before considering if this AQMA can be considered for revocation.

## 8. West Berkshire

- 8.1 The two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared across West Berkshire Council in Thatcham (on the A4) and Newbury (A339, St John's Roundabout) were both revoked on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 following a reduction in pollutant levels, as brought to the JPPC meeting in December 2023, and after consultation approved at the JPPC in March 2024.
- 8.2 The major source of air quality pollutants in West Berkshire are road transport and in particular the contribution from the A339 and A4. The main pollutant is NO<sub>2</sub> in Newbury and Thatcham. However, the decreases seen is likely due to changes in traffic patterns with peak hours dispersing creating better flows and less congestion, as well as cleaner vehicles and more hybrid working.
- 8.3 The NO<sub>2</sub> levels in 2023 have shown a decrease on the pre-pandemic levels since 2019 and only 12 of the 34 monitoring sites have increased since 2022, and none of the monitoring locations within West Berkshire exceeded the Annual Objective of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> with the maximum being at 1 Winchester Court (26.7µg/m<sup>3</sup>). The 1 Hourly Objective Nitrogen Dioxide was not exceeded in 2023 (permitted level of 18 exceedances of 200µg/m<sup>3</sup> per year).
- 8.4 Over the past five years there has been a general decrease of NO<sub>2</sub>, at a number of sites both within, close too and away from the previous AQMA's. Overall, the levels in West Berkshire have been reducing over the five years up to 2023.

### Actions to Improve Air Quality

- 8.5 The Service continues to work with the Development Control team to review the air quality impact of planning applications and has completed all Pollution Prevention and Control inspections as required for the control of emission to air from industrial processes for the 2023/24 financial year.
- 8.6 There are a considerable number of initiatives that have been and continue to be implemented to support this area of work, including installation of electric vehicle charging points (by 2023 there were 58), ongoing development of the cycle routes infrastructure, improvements to the cycle lesson provision and bike storage facilities at schools, reduced bus fares and enhanced services.
- 8.7 Promoting alternative and active travel to schools and the implementation of the School Street Scheme has been successful near Calcot Infant and Junior Schools and Francis Baily Primary School.

### Commentary from DEFRA

- 8.8 DEFRA commented that the 'report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance.' They accepted the conclusions reached for all sources and pollutants. They also noted that details had been included regarding PM2.5, good quality graphs and trends, and justification of the bias adjustment factor.
- 8.9 DEFRA identified a small number of errors, and these have been rectified in the final report as published.

8.10 DEFRA acknowledged that the Thatcham and Newbury AQMAs had been revoked and now the priority is to draft the Air Quality Strategy and continuing work with Transport Policy and Highways Teams in particular.

## **9. Next Steps**

### **Air Quality Action Plans and Air Quality Strategy**

9.11 The Air Quality Action Plan for the Crowthorne AQMA 2024-2029 has been published. PPP need to work with Bracknell Forest Council teams most notably Highways, Transport and Active Travel to implement / progress the actions. Updates are to be provided to DEFRA in the next ASR.

9.12 The West Berkshire Council Air Quality Strategy development has commenced. This document needs to work alongside other Strategies and Plans and is to be produced in consultation with the Director of Public Health. It must set out the steps and progress that has been made by the local authority to improve air quality in their area. Updates are to be provided to DEFRA in the next ASR.

### **Future Monitoring**

9.13 The monitoring programme for 2025 has been confirmed. A passive diffusion tube network will be continued across the borough / district both within the current AQMA and outside the AQMA as well as other locations where there are known hotspot / congestion locations.

## **10. Other air quality related matters of note**

10.1 As mentioned previously the PPP service was awarded £259,000 from DEFRA for a grant to carry out air quality projects which were designed to change the behaviour of those 448,000 residents who drive in the three boroughs by launching an anti-idling campaign as well as monitoring PM<sub>2.5</sub> near schools within /near the AQMAs. These projects are all now completed, and a Final Report is due to be submitted to DEFRA by March 2025.

10.2 PPP made a further grant application, on behalf of the 3 Local Authorities, as part of the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Applications 2023/24 programme in September 2023 for a focus on PM<sub>2.5</sub> from domestic burning in order to improve public awareness in local communities about the risks of air pollution and projects that deal with Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). We were successful in our application and awarded the £183k funding in February 2024, but then notified in April 2024 that the funds for 2023/24 were not to be funded. We await any update on any future funding opportunities following the Government Spending Review process.

## **11. Concluding Observations**

11.1 The improvements to Air Quality across the three local authority areas is to be welcomed. There are many factors that have contributed to this, but it is clear that the range of interventions made by each Council has contributed to this improvement.

11.2 Air Quality continues to be high profile area of work and the links with the sources of pollutants and health impacts becoming more apparent during and after the Covid

pandemic. The authorities must continue to not only monitor the levels of pollutants but ensure that we continue to progress actions set out within the action plan or further actions in the Air Quality Strategy. It is also important to continue to raise the profile of improvements in air quality to support the good health of our residents.

11.3 The evaluations provided by DEFRA are positive and the Committee is asked to both note the reports and the DEFRA evaluations.

11.4 The duty on local authorities to both assess and improve air quality is not just a legal requirement but a public demand. The effects on health of poor air quality are indisputable and Councils have been given a range of tools to tackle the causes.

11.5 In simple terms the causes are known but the solutions are wide ranging. The proposals set out in the plans seek to address several approaches ranging from raising awareness, changing human behaviour and matters of infrastructure.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A** – 2024 Bracknell ASR [Air Quality Monitoring - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)

**Appendix B** - Bracknell Appraisal Response from DEFRA

**Appendix C** – 2024 West Berkshire ASR [Air Quality Monitoring - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)

**Appendix D** – West Berkshire Appraisal Response from DEFRA

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## Background Papers:

Bracknell Forest Council's LTP3 and supporting documents which can be accessed via the Council's website, at: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planningpolicy/transport-policy>

West Berkshire Council's LTP3 and supporting documents which can be accessed via the Council's website, at: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/ltp>

Defra: National Clean Air Strategy 2019  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

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Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

**Officer details:**

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Job Title: Principal Officer

Tel No: 01635 519851

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Local Authority:	<b>Bracknell Forest Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2139</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2024</b>

## **Annual Status Report Appraisal Report**

The Annual Status Report sets out new information on air quality obtained by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) as part of the Review & Assessment process required under the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) and subsequent Regulations.

BFC currently has one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which is 'AQMA Crowthorne' which was first declared in February 2011 for exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean Air Quality Objective (AQO). BFC has previously had an AQMA (AQMA Bracknell) which was declared in May 2013 for exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean AQO which was revoked in March 2024. There have been no exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean AQO recorded inside the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA since 2020 but we agree with BFC's plans to wait until compliance (concentrations recorded as being 10% below the relevant AQO) has been achieved inside this AQMA in 2022, 2023, and 2024 before considering plans to revoke the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA. BFC has also produced and published a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in 2024 to replace the old AQAP which was published in 2014.

BFC undertook automatic monitoring at one site, and non-automatic NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tube monitoring at twenty-six sites in 2023. No changes to the monitoring network were made by BFC between 2022 and 2023. In 2023, no exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean AQO were recorded. In 2023, the highest NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentration was recorded at monitoring site 58xC-58yC-58zC located on Bracknell Road in Crowthorne inside the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA (this is a triplicate monitoring site) which recorded a concentration of 33.2µg/m<sup>3</sup> (representative exposure) which is an increase of 2.6µg/m<sup>3</sup> over the concentration of 30.6µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the same monitoring site in 2022. This monitoring site also recorded the largest increase in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations between 2022 and 2023 out of all the monitoring sites used by BFC.

The highest NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations recorded outside of a AQMA is at monitoring site 86xB-86yB-86zB located on the A322 (Downshire Way) in Bracknell which recorded a concentration of 30.3µg/m<sup>3</sup> (representative exposure) in 2023 which is a decrease of 2.3µg/m<sup>3</sup> over the concentration of 32.6µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the same monitoring site in 2022. The general trend in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations is mixed with some monitoring sites recording an increase in concentrations between 2022 and 2023, and others recording a decrease in concentrations over the same time scale. The average change in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations between 2022 and 2023 is a decrease of 0.7µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The largest decrease in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations recorded between 2022 and 2023 was recorded at monitoring site

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99B located on the A322 (Bagshot Road) in Bracknell located outside of the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA which recorded a concentration of 19.5µg/m<sup>3</sup> (representative exposure) in 2023 which is a decrease of 3.8µg/m<sup>3</sup> over the concentration of 23.3µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the same monitoring site in 2022. No other exceedances of any other relevant AQOs were recorded in 2023.

QA/QC procedures have been applied, with a local bias adjustment factor. BFC uses Gradko International for the supply and analysis of the NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tubes, which are prepared with 20% Triethanolamine / De-ionised water. This factor was used as it was considered to be more representative of BFC's administrative area, and that there was a good data capture (99%) from the automatic analyser within the (now revoked) 'AQMA Bracknell' AQMA so the monitoring results coming from the automatic analyser were considered to be of a high quality. No annualisation or distance corrections was required at any monitoring site in 2023. A PM<sub>2.5</sub> annual mean concentration was estimated using the recorded PM<sub>10</sub> annual mean concentration at the one automatic monitoring site (in the absence of actual PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring) using Chapter 7 Section 1 of the Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22)<sup>1</sup>. Using this method, an estimated PM<sub>2.5</sub> annual mean concentration of 11.3µg/m<sup>3</sup> was calculated for the automatic monitoring site which would be below the PM<sub>2.5</sub> annual mean AQO.

The ASR discusses what measures within the AQAP were completed within the reporting year of 2023 which range from the installation of 38 fast 22 kilo-watt electric vehicle charge points across 12 council-owned car parks, to the installation of a new pedestrian crossing on Temple Way to provide safer links to the new Blue Mountain development and new schools and community facility. The ASR also discusses what measures BFC expected to be completed over the course of the next reporting year which range from the production of a new local transport plan for the Borough to set the plans, policies and ambitions for the transport network over the 10 years and beyond, to investigate other ways of improving traffic flow along Crowthorne High Street following delays caused by objections to plans aimed at improving this location in the centre of the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached in the report are accepted for all sources and pollutants, on the proviso that the grammatical and formatting errors in the report are corrected prior to publication on the council's website. ASRs are public facing documents that serve to keep local communities informed of the steps being taken by their

<sup>1</sup> Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22), August 2022. Available at: <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/LAQM-TG22-August-22-v1.0.pdf>

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local authority to improve air quality, and as such it is important that they are accessible and easy to read. Following the completion of this report, Bracknell Forest Council should submit an Annual Status Report in 2025.

Local Authority:	<b>Bracknell Forest Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2139</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2024</b>

## Commentary

The report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance.

The following comments are designed to help inform future reports:

1. BFC has provided good quality discussion on the effects of PM<sub>2.5</sub> within their administrative area. This is good practice and is encouraged for future reports.
2. There is good quality discussion on the trends of the results recorded for all pollutants which includes good quality graphs showing the trends in results recorded over the last 5 years. This is encouraged for future reports.
3. There is good quality discussion about the QA/QC procedure used for both the automatic and non-automatic monitors which includes justification for using the locally calculated bias adjustment factor instead of the national bias adjustment factor. Contained within Appendix C is good quality discussion about additional air quality work undertaken by BFC in 2023. This is encouraged for future reports.
4. The 'Web Link to AQAP' column in Table 2.2 should be updated to reflect that a new AQAP for the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA has been published by BFC.
5. Table 2.2 states that there has been 3 years of compliance with the relevant AQOs for the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA. This is incorrect as there have been 4 years of compliance with the relevant AQOs from 2020 to 2023. The number of years of compliance with the relevant AQOs should be calculated correctly for future reports.
6. The names of all tables should be checked to ensure that they match the names of the tables contained within the excel template.
7. Column 'In AQMA? Which AQMA?' in Table A.0.2 should be fully completed, even if a monitoring location is not located within an AQMA.
8. The text contained within the 'New or Changed Sources Identified Within Bracknell Forest During 2023' section in Appendix C should be updated for the reporting year of 2023 as it still references the 2022 reporting year.
9. The title of Figure D.10 should be updated to accurately reflect what the figure is showing. The figure is showing the AQMAs within BFC's administrative area, but the title suggests that it is showing the locations of the non-automatic monitoring sites.
10. The boundaries of the AQMA drawn in Figure D.0.6 should be checked to ensure that it is correct as it doesn't match the boundary of the AQMA captured in the portal.

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Local Authority:	<b>Bracknell Forest Council</b>
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Date of issue	<b>July 2024</b>

This commentary is not designed to deal with every aspect of the report. It highlights a number of issues that should help the local authority either in completing the Annual Status Report adequately (if required) or in carrying out future Review & Assessment work.

**Issues specifically related to this appraisal can be followed up by returning the attached comment form to Defra, Welsh Government, Scottish Government or DOE.**

For any other queries please contact the Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk:

Telephone: 0800 0327 953

Email: [LAQMHelpdesk@bureauveritas.com](mailto:LAQMHelpdesk@bureauveritas.com)

Local Authority:	<b>Bracknell Forest Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2139</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2024</b>

## Notice for 2024

### Changes to the Local Air Quality Management Framework

Through the Environment Act 2021 and Local Air Quality Management Statutory Policy Guidance 2022, the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework has been considerably strengthened. This page highlights some of the changes for delivery to help you prioritise action for improved air quality:

#### 1. Strengthened Criteria for Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs)

The requirements and guidance around AQAPs have been strengthened under the Environment Act 2021 and the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022. Action plans must include:

- an assessment of source apportionment,
- provide the population living within the AQMA (where the data is available),
- specify the concentration emission reductions required,
- set out the measures being taken to secure the achievement and maintenance of air quality standards and objectives,
- specify clear timescales for the implementation of measures,
- specify the date air quality objectives are expected to be achieved,
- include quantification of the impacts of the proposed measures,
- detail how delivery partners will work together to implement the AQAP,
- set out a plan to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan,

Actions plans must be finalised within 18 months of an AQMA being declared and reviewed every five years thereafter.

#### 2. Escalation Process for Reporting

Government is committed to increasing transparency by requiring timely and accurate publication of Annual Status Reports (ASRs) and AQAPs by local authorities, as set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. These documents are public-facing and serve to keep local communities informed of the steps being taken by their local authority to improve air quality.

To ensure ASRs and AQAPs are delivered on time, Defra introduced a reminder and warning letter system for Local Authorities. This system was set out in the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 and started to apply from 30 June 2023.

If reporting requirements continue to be missed, the matter can be escalated to a Section 85 Secretary of State direction to the relevant Local Authority Chief Executive specifying action. You are advised to ensure all statutory reporting duties for LAQM are met on time.

#### 3. Public Bodies Required to Contribute to Action Plans

Local Authority:	<b>Bracknell Forest Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2139</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2024</b>

The Environment Act 2021 amended the Environment Act 1995 to increase the number of public bodies that have a duty to co-operate with Local Authorities for LAQM. Air quality partners are certain other public bodies that a Local Authority identifies as having responsibility for a source of emissions contributing to an exceedance of local air quality objectives. This could be a neighbouring authority, National Highways, or the Environment Agency. Once identified, there is a statutory requirement for such public bodies to engage and to contribute actions they will take to secure achievement of the local air quality objective and to maintain achievement thereafter.

All tiers of local Government are also now required by law to collaborate to address exceedances of Air Quality Objectives. County councils, the Mayor of London and combined authorities have similar duties to air quality partners. The difference is that, when requested, they must contribute to an action plan being prepared by a Local Authority, regardless of whether the local authority has identified them as being responsible for a source of emissions.

Under the legislation, you may choose to request the support of another public body in the development of an AQAP and the same may be requested of your organisation.

Please refer to the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 for more information. Should you require further assistance, please contact the LAQM Helpdesk: <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/featured/england-exc-london-policy-guidance/>

Web: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/helpdesks.html>

FAQs: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/>

Tel: 0800 032 7953

Email: [laqmhlpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com](mailto:laqmhlpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com)

The Air Quality Hub also provides free online information and is a knowledge sharing resource for local authority air quality professionals: <https://www.airqualityhub.co.uk/>

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Local Authority:	<b>Bracknell Forest Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2139</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2024</b>

## **Appraisal Response Comment Form**

Contact Name:	
Contact Telephone number:	
Contact email address:	UKLAQMAppraisals@aecom.com

### **Comments on appraisal/Further information:**



Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2134</b>
Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

## Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

The Annual Status Report sets out new information on air quality obtained by West Berkshire Council as part of the Review & Assessment process required under the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) and subsequent Regulations.

West Berkshire Council have revoked both AQMAs within their jurisdiction as compliance was achieved continuously within the last 5 years:

- Newbury AQMA: declared in 2009 for exceedance of the annual mean and Air Quality Objective (AQO) for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>); and,
- Thatcham AQMA: declared in 2011 for exceedance of the annual mean AQO for NO<sub>2</sub>.

The revocation orders were submitted to DEFRA in 2024.

West Berkshire Council undertook automatic (continuous) monitoring at one site during 2023 (CM1 Newbury). Both the 1-hour mean objective and the annual mean objective were not exceeded in 2023 with an annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 26.7 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

The Council undertook passive diffusion tube monitoring of NO<sub>2</sub> at 35 monitoring locations, including one triplicate site, which is co-located with the automatic monitor. No exceedances of the annual mean objective were recorded at any of these sites during 2023 with the highest NO<sub>2</sub> concentration being 26.7 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

QA/QC procedures have been applied appropriately and accurately to the 2023 monitoring data. Both national and local bias adjustment factors have been considered, with justification provided around the choice to apply the local factor. Annualisation was required at three sites of the passive monitoring locations during 2023 and distance correction was not required at any location. All calculations were clearly outlined and justified.

In the report, the Council has detailed extensive measures and plans to continue to address air quality within its jurisdiction. Key completed measures in 2023 include: on A339 Bear Lane (Sainsbury's roundabout) improvement works to improve traffic flow have been completed and cycle parking – improvements to existing facilities and introduction of new ones began and continued in schools during 2023.

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Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

Priorities for the upcoming year include drafting the Air Quality Strategy now that both AQMAs have been revoked, continuing to work within the unitary authority with Transport Policy and Highways Teams as there are some localised areas of congestion at peak times which require managing and investment, where improvements are needed to increase capacity at key junctions or effectively manage traffic flow and continue the School Streets projects and the promotion of alternative travel to school.

From 2023 those authorities who have not had to designate AQMAs and produce AQAPs should draw up a local Air Quality Strategy. The objective of a local Air Quality Strategy is to encourage prevention and reduction of polluting activities in preference to only taking steps to reduce air pollution once exceedances have been identified.

Local Air Quality Strategies will not have a set format and authorities will be able to draw on content within their ASRs and local transport plans to produce them. As long as the strategy addresses air quality assessments and policy responsibilities under the LAQM regime, it can be combined with the authority's other relevant plans and strategies if it is logical to do so.

Defra will monitor whether Local Authorities have or are developing a local Air Quality Strategy through the ASR appraisal process.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached in the report are **accepted** for all sources and pollutants. Following the completion of this report, West Berkshire Council should submit an Annual Status Report in 2025.

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2134</b>
Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

## Commentary

The report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance.

The following comments are designed to help inform future reports:

1. There are a couple of inconsistencies throughout the report:
  - a. Table A.0.4 reports a data capture of 40.4% for the monitoring location “3 Howard Road”, however, Table C.0.5 reports a data capture of 50%. Please correct the false data capture before publishing the ASR.
  - b. Table A.0.3 reports a data capture of 82.5%, however, in the chapter “Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factor” the data capture is reported as 99%. Please correct the false data capture before publishing the ASR.
  - c. In the chapter “Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustmen Factor” it is reported that a bias adjustment factor of 0.85 was used, however, in Table B.0.1 a bias adjustment factor of 0.83 is specified. Please correct the bias adjustment factor before publishing the ASR.
2. The information in Table A.0.1 does not match the column headings. This should be corrected before publishing the ASR.
3. The data capture for the monitoring period and in 2023 is usually the same if monitoring was undertaken from January through to December. The data captures in Tables A.0.3, A.0.4 and A.0.5 differ between the data capture for the monitoring period and in 2023. Please check whether this is correct before publishing the ASR.
4. In the chapter “Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factor” the national bias adjustment factor is reported as 0.87, however, the national bias adjustment factor is 0.81. While the national bias adjustment factor was not used, this should be corrected before publishing the ASR. Furthermore, it is recommended to include a screenshot of the National Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factor Spreadsheet as the live version is updated regularly.
5. Table A.0.2 lists the diffusion tube monitoring location “Continuous Monitor 1, Continuous Monitor 2, Continuous Monitor 3” which is assumed to be co-located with the continuous monitor. However, in the relevant column of Table A.0.2 this monitoring location is not marked to be co-located. Please check whether this is correct before publishing the ASR.

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
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Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

6. For Table A.0.4 it is assumed that “N/A” is missing for the monitoring location “Station Road” in the column “2022” as it is assumed that this was the monitoring location that was added in 2023. Please check whether this is correct before publishing the ASR.
7. The text on page ii in paragraph 2 refers once to 2022 when talking about the hourly NO<sub>2</sub> objective. This should be corrected to 2023 before publishing the ASR.
8. The x-axis of Figure 3.2 is not very legible due to the cramped labels. For future reports it is recommended to show this figure on a horizontally oriented page within the report.
9. It is commented that the Council have included comparisons of the local fraction of mortality attributable to PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions to the regional and national average in the most recent ASR.
10. It is commented that the Council have included an in-depth discussion about the local and national bias adjustment factor, including differences and justifications why the local bias adjustment factor was used in the most recent ASR.
11. It is commented that the Council have confirmed that they follow the Defra calendar for deploying the diffusion tubes in the most recent ASR.
12. It is commented that the Council have included a list of site IDs and report IDs to match the figures and tables to all figures in the most recent ASR.
13. It is commented that the Council have included graphs showing the monitoring results of locations outside the AQMAs as well in the most recent ASR.

This commentary is not designed to deal with every aspect of the report. It highlights a number of issues that should help the local authority either in completing the Annual Status Report adequately (if required) or in carrying out future Review & Assessment work.

**Issues specifically related to this appraisal can be followed up by returning the attached comment form to Defra, Welsh Government, Scottish Government or DOE.**

For any other queries please contact the Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk:  
 Telephone: 0800 0327 953  
 Email: LAQMhelpdesk@bureauveritas.com

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2134</b>
Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

## Notice for 2024

### Changes to the Local Air Quality Management Framework

Through the Environment Act 2021 and Local Air Quality Management Statutory Policy Guidance 2022, the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework has been considerably strengthened. This page highlights some of the changes for delivery to help you prioritise action for improved air quality:

#### 1. Strengthened Criteria for Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs)

The requirements and guidance around AQAPs have been strengthened under the Environment Act 2021 and the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022. Action plans must include:

- an assessment of source apportionment,
- provide the population living within the AQMA (where the data is available),
- specify the concentration emission reductions required,
- set out the measures being taken to secure the achievement and maintenance of air quality standards and objectives,
- specify clear timescales for the implementation of measures,
- specify the date air quality objectives are expected to be achieved,
- include quantification of the impacts of the proposed measures,
- detail how delivery partners will work together to implement the AQAP,
- set out a plan to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan,

Actions plans must be finalised within 18 months of an AQMA being declared and reviewed every five years thereafter.

#### 2. Escalation Process for Reporting

Government is committed to increasing transparency by requiring timely and accurate publication of Annual Status Reports (ASRs) and AQAPs by local authorities, as set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. These documents are public-facing and serve to keep local communities informed of the steps being taken by their local authority to improve air quality.

To ensure ASRs and AQAPs are delivered on time, Defra introduced a reminder and warning letter system for Local Authorities. This system was set out in the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 and started to apply from 30 June 2023.

If reporting requirements continue to be missed, the matter can be escalated to a Section 85 Secretary of State direction to the relevant Local Authority Chief Executive specifying action. You are advised to ensure all statutory reporting duties for LAQM are met on time.

#### 3. Public Bodies Required to Contribute to Action Plans

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2134</b>
Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

The Environment Act 2021 amended the Environment Act 1995 to increase the number of public bodies that have a duty to co-operate with Local Authorities for LAQM. Air quality partners are certain other public bodies that a Local Authority identifies as having responsibility for a source of emissions contributing to an exceedance of local air quality objectives. This could be a neighbouring authority, National Highways, or the Environment Agency. Once identified, there is a statutory requirement for such public bodies to engage and to contribute actions they will take to secure achievement of the local air quality objective and to maintain achievement thereafter.

All tiers of local Government are also now required by law to collaborate to address exceedances of Air Quality Objectives. County councils, the Mayor of London and combined authorities have similar duties to air quality partners. The difference is that, when requested, they must contribute to an action plan being prepared by a Local Authority, regardless of whether the local authority has identified them as being responsible for a source of emissions.

Under the legislation, you may choose to request the support of another public body in the development of an AQAP and the same may be requested of your organisation.

Please refer to the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 for more information. Should you require further assistance, please contact the LAQM Helpdesk: <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/featured/england-exc-london-policy-guidance/>

Web: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/helpdesks.html>

FAQs: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/>

Tel: 0800 032 7953

Email: [laqmhlpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com](mailto:laqmhlpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com)

The Air Quality Hub also provides free online information and is a knowledge sharing resource for local authority air quality professionals: <https://www.airqualityhub.co.uk/>

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Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2134</b>
Date of issue	<b>June 2024</b>

## **Appraisal Response Comment Form**

Contact Name:	
Contact Telephone number:	
Contact email address:	UKLAQMAppraisals@aecom.com

### **Comments on appraisal/Further information:**

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## Update on Fraud and Unfair Trading

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Joint Public Protection Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	16 December 2024
<b>Chair of Committee:</b>	Councillor Iskandar Jefferies
<b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>	2 December 2024
<b>Report Author:</b>	Sean Murphy
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	JPPC

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the work of the Public Protection Service in tackling fraud, unfair trading and financial abuse.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee:

- 2.1 **IS INFORMED** about the contents of this report.
- 2.2 **APPROVES** the approach being taken to tackling fraud, unfair trading and financial abuse.
- 2.3 **AGREES** to receive a further update in December 2025.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>The funding for these functions primarily comes from the service revenue allocations from Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham. The specialist investigation team consists of five Officers supported by financial investigators and intelligence officers. The total cost of the shared trading standards service is £1.45M. This includes the investigations team but also all other trading standards activity from food standards to animal health and weights and measures to product safety, age restricted products etc.</p> <p>In addition, Level 2 and Level 3 investigations are generally supported via grant funding from Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and managed by the National Trading Standards Board and Trading Standards South-East. In 2024/25 this grant funding will exceed £150K.</p> <p>Work to tackle scams also receives grant funding from various community safety partnership grants and has some input from the proceeds of crime asset recovery grant.</p>

	<p>(The current community safety partnership grant funding is due to cease in 2025 however it is hoped that the funding will be extended again across all three Local Authority areas going forward).</p> <p>With revenue funding under pressure this area of work will need to be considered and prioritised in the context of overall demand.</p>
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<p>This work has previously and continues to be delivered through specialist resource employed by the service on a permanent basis.</p> <p>PPP is also supported by regional and national investigative resource and occasionally additional agency resource is bought through deployed grant funding.</p>
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>The Councils have a significant range of statutory responsibilities that are discharged through the shared service. These relate to unfair trading, consumer rights and counterfeiting amongst other matters. These matters are delegated to the Committee and operationally through the Inter-Authority Agreements of 2017 and 2022.</p> <p>The Councils can also institute legal proceedings if they are in the interests of residents in their area or in the case of many trading standards matters for offences committed anywhere in England or Wales.</p> <p>There is a large volume of legislation and associated statutory codes that govern investigations including the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996, Data Protection Act 2018, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2002 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016.</p> <p>The Councils must have regard to the Human Rights Act 1988 and, in particular, Article 6 (right to a fair trial) and Article 8 (right to privacy) of the Charter in Human Rights.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>Failure to comply with the framework set out in the legal section above could lead to defendants being acquitted and the Councils facing judicial challenge together with the risk of reputation, damages and other sanctions.</p>
<b>Property:</b>	<p>None</p>
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>The Joint Public Protection Committee is charged with oversight of the delivery of the Public Protection Service. This report sets out the programme of delivery in a significant area of the Service's work.</p>

	The Committee is invited to consider, comment and advise on strategic direction.			
	<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		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	X			
<b>Health Impact:</b>	X			
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		x		
<b>PPP Priorities:</b>				The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities (delete those that are not appropriate) 1. Building Safer Communities 2. Protecting Consumers from Fraud 3. Protecting and Informing Consumers Business as Usual Activity is supported too.
<b>Data Impact:</b>				None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	PPP Officers, Joint Management Board and the Case Management Unit have been consulted.			
<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	None			

## 4. Background and Update Report

- 4.1 At the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) meeting held in October 2023 Members received a report on the approach taken by the Public Protection Service to tackle fraud and unfair trading in all its forms. The Committee resolved to receive an annual update report on this important area of work. This report updates on recent activity. It also contains some of the background set out in the previous report for the benefit of new Members on the Committee.
- 4.2 At its meeting in June 2024 the Committee considered the Strategic Assessment for the service. Between that meeting and the meeting in October 2024 all three partner councils were consulted on the proposed priority areas and it was determined at the October 2024 meeting that tackling the harm caused by fraud and unfair trading was to be a high priority for the service.
- 4.3 To put it in context, fraud is one of the most common crimes in England and Wales, accounting for more than 40% of all crimes. According to the National Crime Agency UK Finance 2024 report criminals stole £1.17 billion through unauthorised and authorised fraud in 2023 alone. There are an estimated 3.5 million incidents a year perpetrated on those 16 years and older.
- 4.4 A range of organisations are involved in tackling both the perpetrators and impacts. The Public Protection Partnership plays a significant role in tackling fraud carried out in the course of business (or assumed business) activities or in the area of fraud commonly referred to as 'scams'. There are significant links and often a fine line between fraud and the statutory duty to enforce 'unfair trading legislation' as well as links to other acquisitive crime such as money laundering and dealing in counterfeit goods which is of itself considered a 'lifestyle crime' in law.
- 4.5 As fraudulent activity is often complex and has a high degree of sophistication it is often difficult for victims to identify that they are in fact victims of a fraud let alone how to protect themselves. Data shows that around a third of victims become repeat victims. People in vulnerable circumstances may be put on so-called 'suckers lists' that are used and shared by fraudsters and can lead to people being repeatedly targeted. As a service we see many instances where victims are repeatedly targeted, often by 'Organised Crime Groups' (OCG's).
- 4.6 The consequence of fraud is not only financial. The emotional and psychological impact on victims results in increased isolation, diminished confidence and impacts on health and well-being including thoughts of self-harm. The reasons for this are many but include:
- Victims may be or may feel heavily reliant on the trader/perpetrator and do not want to lose their support and services.
  - They may have been psychologically groomed into thinking they are making good, reasonable choices and making reasoned, empowered decisions.
  - They may be anxious about being deemed to be incapable of managing their affairs because they have become a victim – this is also a reason for under-reporting as they may have a fear of being removed from their home or the need for a power of attorney to be put in place etc.

- They are not aware they are a 'victim' or indeed find it hard to come to terms themselves that they have become a 'victim'. Embarrassment can sometimes be a reason for not reporting the crime.
- Victims are socially isolated with an absence of family or friends to encourage reporting and may feel it is too trivial.

4.7 The following extract from a victim impact statement from a PPP case sets this out clearly:

*'It's a horrific moment when you realise you have been tricked out of a chunk of life savings. My wife was naturally upset. Upset with the situation, upset with the financial loss and upset with me for convincing her to give XXXX a chance after initial concerns.'*

*'Emotionally it was a tough time for a while. We had a garden completely destroyed. Many tonnes of soil and rubble left on the drive and a hole in our savings.'*

*'Trust and embarrassment became a personal issue. Firstly, its humiliating to share with your neighbours who have known about the excitement that I had stupidly paid several thousand with little security. There is a leap of faith when sourcing services such as this'*

Quotes from other statements include:

*'I felt extremely stressed out. He put so much pressure on us to keep paying him more money. I would feel physically sick and be shaking and sweating'*

And.....

*'This has destroyed me, torn me apart and made me feel ashamed of who I am. Unworthy of being someone who could have something nice. Unable to trust. I am told there is no cure, the medication only reduces the extremes of the phases of the illness, the illness is incurable'*

4.8 As stated above tackling fraud and unfair trading has been identified as one of the Key Priorities for the Public Protection Service in the Strategic Assessment 2024 - 27. The document highlights working with partners. In the case of fraud and unfair trading the Service will continue to work with partners such as Thames Valley Police and the South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit. This work will include victim support and enforcement / intervention. Officers will continue to seek grant funding to support Level 2 / Level 3 fraud and unfair trading investigations and carry out operations to identify and tackle intellectual property crimes. The Service will also continue to undertake active media campaigns to raise awareness of fraud and the work we are undertaking to prevent it.

4.9 E-Crime has also been identified as one of the cross-cutting themes in the PPP's Strategic Assessment 2024/27. On-line trading has seen a significant increase in recent years, and this was accelerated by Covid and restrictions on high street trading creating more choice and convenience. The internet whilst being a vehicle for choice

and information is all too often a vehicle for fraud, unfair trading, environmental crime and licensing breaches. The PPP looks for opportunities to tackle consumer and business detriment caused by e-crime across all its themes, priorities and projects.

### **PPP Resource with respect to Tackle Fraud and Unfair Trading**

- 4.10 Fraud can range from a crude to a highly sophisticated activity. To tackle fraud the response must be equally sophisticated, and a range of tools and expertise needs to be deployed.
- 4.11 The Public Protection Service delivery model is based on the 'National Intelligence Model'. Through this model we seek to tackle all areas of our work with a combination of preventative actions, intelligence gathering and analysis and enforcement. To this end, we have a strategic assessment and control strategy supported by a tactical tasking process with the service delivered through a number of specialist teams; trading standards, investigations team specialising in acquisitive crime, financial investigators and the case management and intelligence functions.
- 4.12 In addition, the service currently has a Fraud Victim Support Officer who assists victims of scams and their families with a range of preventative interventions and community engagement activities. This is supported by the PPP communications function and officers from trading standards forming a dedicated fraud awareness function.

### **Prevention**

- 4.13 Preventing residents and businesses becoming the victims of crimes including fraud and unfair trading is a key priority for the service. The PPP recognises that awareness and information is key in protecting residents from scams and fraud and it is important to educate consumers to be fraud aware.
- 4.14 To this end we have a range of interventions in place including:
- Investigation of scams complaints and the provision of advice.
  - Practical interventions including the installation of free telephone call blockers and video doorbells. These are actively promoted and a number of blockers are currently available for supply on a loan basis and installation at no cost to the resident. Wellbeing surveys conducted before and after installation and these simple devices have been shown to make significant improvements to wellbeing and the resident feeling secure in their own home.
  - Regular talks and scams presentations are made to local community groups.
  - Challenging banks under the 'Banking Protocol' to recoup monies for consumers (often successfully) where there may have been some identified failing. Since this work began a total of £812,450 has been recovered for victims within the PPP area.
  - Training of bank staff focusing on signs to look out for when a customer may be at risk of financial abuse.
  - No Cold Calling Zones - [No Cold Calling Zones - PPP](#)

- Provision of scams information and no cold calling door stickers.
- Attending events including partnering with TVP, banks and other agencies to raise awareness of scams and fraud.
- Ongoing programme of work with Citizens Advice – West Berkshire.
- Attendance and contribution to multi-agency meetings to help combat fraud (regular MAFF meetings with Thames Valley Police)
- Networking with the Adult Social Care teams to raise awareness of what we do.
- Promoting the national trading standards initiative known as Friends against Scams: <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>
- Promoting the work of the National Illegal Money lending team. The PPP recently became an official partner of the Team.

4.15 Communication also plays a significant role in preventative measures and our social media channels and website are actively used to highlight enforcement actions and to issue warnings to create a deterrent. Press releases are issued directly to the local media which are often recognised and published more widely. Examples of these can be found at Appendix A. In addition, we conduct regular radio interviews on the scams and fraud work conducted and our work, in relation to tackling unfair trading and fraud, was recently featured in an episode of SAS Catching the Criminals on BBC. This can be found here. [BBC iPlayer - SAS: Catching the Criminals - Series 1: Episode 12](#)

4.16 We also participate in National Trading Standards Scams projects which includes the Friends Against Scams work and supporting victims identified through national and international enforcement measures. More on these projects can be found here: [National Trading Standards Scams Team - National Trading Standards](#)

4.17 All staff within the Public Protection Service are required to have safeguarding training including the identification of financial and other forms of abuse and the service has a designated safeguarding lead - currently our Senior Programme and Community Officer. Where an officer believes someone is the victim of financial abuse e.g. so-called 'romance scams' we will work with colleagues and partners to ensure the appropriate support and safeguards are put in place. Significantly, we also work with friends and families of victims to put in place measures ourselves such as those described in 4.14 above. Likewise, we receive referrals from social care colleagues and attend safeguarding forums to share ideas and best practice. The services Fraud Victim Support Officer and Investigators conduct joint visits with partners to support victims.

4.18 We also raise awareness of these issues and general unfair trading matters through briefings with police colleagues. At various times we have presented alongside TVP officers. For many years we have also been involved in delivering the training for all PCSO's participating in the TVP training programme at Sulhamstead in recognition that it is often the neighbourhood teams on the ground that can play a big role in identifying possible fraudulent activities and unfair trading practices.

- 4.19 This year we have conducted a number of proactive checks 'Rogue Trader days' to check on trading activity across the PPP area. Through these we have identified crimes in progress as well as been able to make interventions saving residents from further loss by taking over the negotiation of any debt. This pro-active approach is welcomed by residents as well as local traders who are concerned that the reputation of certain trading sectors is being damaged by 'rogue traders' thus affecting their legitimate business and operation.
- 4.20 Finally we work with colleagues from community safety teams and partnerships from all three Local Authorities to deliver against common objectives and attend meetings such as the Wokingham PTSG (Priority Setting Tasking Group), and in some cases access funding to support victims.

### **The Deployment of Intelligence**

- 4.21 Credible intelligence is critical to tackling fraud and unfair trading. The biggest source of intelligence by far are members of the public who report matters directly to us or to our partner agencies such as TVP, Citizens Advice Consumer Line and Action Fraud. These reports are accessed through the data sharing agreements we have in place.
- 4.22 It is these reports from residents, businesses and consumers that are often the trigger for an investigation. Every referral and notification from the national Citizens Advice Consumer Line and those directly entering the service (via email, telephone and web forms) are monitored on a daily basis. They are then considered in the context of the intelligence picture with a view to identifying any emerging issues related to unfair or fraudulent trading activities. Every two weeks there is a tactical tasking process where the PPP's Intelligence Team raises areas of concern. Through this process the next steps are identified which can include advice and/or warnings to residents and businesses, appeals for further intelligence or reports and where deemed necessary the allocation of investigative resource, whether that be a cross service or multi-agency approach.
- 4.23 Once an investigation is commenced the intelligence picture is developed using a range of sophisticated techniques and software packages that are able to connect nominals and assets. Often this involves the analysis of financial data as well the occasional use of communication data both of which can be obtained within a system of strict regulatory and (in the case of financial information) judicial oversight.
- 4.24 Finally, the service has a range of data sharing protocols which give us access to vital information. This includes access to material held on the Police National Database (PND) and the Police National Computer (PNC) and also data sharing protocols with HMRC, DWP and the National Anti-Fraud Network. We also share an intelligence database with all other trading standards services, regional trading standards enforcement teams and the National Intelligence, Scams and eCrime units of National Trading Standards.

### **Enforcement - Level 1/2/3 Fraud and Unfair Trading**

- 4.25 At any one time the service is investigating a significant volume of unfair trading and acquisitive crime matters including counterfeiting, fraud, money laundering and the sale of illicit goods. These are investigated by trading standards and the specialist



investigation team comprised of Trading Standards Officers and Investigators who are solely dedicated to the most complex matters.

- 4.26 Where there is evidence of offences inside and outside of the PPP area grant funding is sought from the National Trading Standards Board to progress these investigations. Funding and other practical support mechanisms (including allocated staff) are also available from Tri Region Investigation Team which covers the South-East, London and the East of England. Financial support includes support for investigation work, expert witnesses, forensics and legal costs.
- 4.27 Day-to-day the service operates a Rapid Response Protocol with respect to Doorstep Crime incidents and officers will attend blue light events as soon as notification is received that a crime is in progress.
- 4.28 The Service will also work closely with other partners including TVP other trading standards services and regional crime units. Investigations often require warrants to be executed at home addresses and arrests to be made and we work with a number of police forces and regional crime teams such as South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROUCU) to arrest suspects where arrest criteria are met and it is necessary to further the investigation.
- 4.29 The Service has four staff accredited by the National Crime Agency to conduct and supervise investigations under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 into money laundering and where appropriate to conduct confiscation proceedings to recover the proceeds of crime. This includes the ability to restrain assets whilst proceedings are on-going or in the event of a conviction. Judicial oversight of this work is undertaken by the Judiciary at Reading Crown Court. We also have the support of a Financial Intelligence Analyst.
- 4.30 A number of the victims Officers encounter have vulnerabilities that make them eligible for so called 'special measures'. This includes video recorded evidence in the main. The service has a number of officers specially trained and highly skilled officers to take video recorded evidence from both adults and children. We engage these measures following review and assessment by the relevant senior manager.
- 4.31 The service engages a wide variety of expertise whilst investigating matters. These can include expert witnesses e.g. chartered surveyors, vehicle examiners etc, along with computer and phone forensics experts, forensic accountants, handwriting and other forensic experts. Digital data can be critical and in the modern era we have seen several complex investigations built around digital and financial evidence. We also have staff trained in online investigations with access restricted to two officers with digital data expertise who follow the ACPO guidance on digital evidence.
- 4.32 Over the period of the PPP's existence, we have investigated a large range of complex fraud and unfair trading matters relating to a range of trading activities including second hand car sales, doorstep crime, advanced fee fraud, solar energy, locksmiths, plumbing, timeshare re-sale and the sale of puppies. The scale of these investigations has included levels of detriment ranging from hundreds or thousands of pounds to multi-million-pound frauds and money laundering cases.
- 4.33 The Joint Case Management Unit supports the enforcement functions. Every investigation with a degree of complexity is allocated a lawyer from the unit from the outset. It may also be allocated to an Accredited Financial Investigator if appropriate.

The unit provides a variety of roles which includes advising on the application of the law throughout the lifetime of the investigation, checking procedural applications such as warrants, considering intelligence data applications and ultimately considering case files and disclosure related matters. The team work closely with West Berkshire Legal Services on West Berkshire cases.

4.34 The Case Management Unit Manager also oversees the conduct of financial investigations and along with the Service Lead is able to authorise the making of judicial applications under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. Finally, we also have a specialist disclosure function to ensure our obligations under the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 are fulfilled.

### Activity Since Last Report

4.35 In the last twelve months the Service has investigated or is investigating over twenty cases relating to property related fraud and unfair trading. A number of these are now in the court system and a number are still under investigation. In addition, there are ten cases being investigated with respect to money laundering and confiscation. Confiscation with respect to these types of cases is focussed on recovering money for the victims. The total amount of detriment under investigation by the service runs to several million.

4.36 At the time of writing (end November 2024) the total amount paid out by PPP residents on doorstep crime / householder incidents is £946K. The losses to all victims including those out of area is significantly higher. The following table gives more detail:

Identified Loss	Total Number of Incidents	Average Loss	Money Recovered	Live Level 2/3 Operations
£946,195	131	£7,222	£221,600	19

4.37 Examples of unfair trading and fraud cases from 2024 can be found in the links at **Appendix A** to this report.

## 5. Concluding observations

5.1 A so-called scam is a fraud and it is one of the biggest crime issues of our time. Although fraud and unfair trading is as old as time it has become more sophisticated and many consumers are subject to frequent attempts to defraud them through all mediums, phishing emails, scam telephone calls and unsolicited doorstep traders.

5.2 There has been a huge growth in e-crime. This is probably the largest emerging threat. The perpetrator does not need to be physically present, the risk of being caught is reduced. Multiple people can be targeted at the same time, and the scam can be changed at the push of a button to exploit changing circumstances. Something that

has been seen time and again, recently with the winter fuel payments and the digital switchover.

- 5.3 Fraudsters will exploit peoples lack of knowledge as we have seen in green energy scams, some will exploit people’s trust pretending to be family members in need of money or catfishing on social media. These can be professional and convincing and the vast majority of these frauds or attempted frauds still remain unreported.
- 5.4 We are all capable of falling victim to fraud and unfair trading – everyone has moments of vulnerability where they are caught off-guard. Sadly, the majority of actual victims of fraud and unfair trading are often amongst the most vulnerable in our communities. For those most vulnerable, the effects of becoming a victim can be life-changing – losing large sums of money can impact on their financial security, there may be a loss of confidence and an on-going fear of further targeting. The effects can quite literally lead to the loss of independence, health issues and more reliance on support from family and the state. The impacts on mental health can be devastating as can be seen from the impact statements above. Alternatively early intervention and focus on preventative measures can be change the course of peoples lives and the need for costly interventions such as care costs further down the line.
- 5.5 This report sets out some of the steps the Public Protection Service is taking to protect residents and legitimate businesses. This work is delivered across Bracknell, West Berkshire and Wokingham under the various shared service arrangements. Our ability to deliver these levels of protection in the way we do is enhanced by those very arrangements and deliver on the original business case which includes pooling resources and developing expertise. That expertise is recognised both regionally and nationally.

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix A – Example press and social media releases as part of our ‘Scams and Fraud Communication Strategy

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#### Officer details:

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## APPENDIX A

28th February 2024 - Press Release - Public Protection Partnership in conjunction with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service save West Berkshire Residents £19,250

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/28th-february-2024-press-release-public-protection-partnership-in-conjunction-with-royal-berkshire-fire-and-rescue-service-save-west-berkshire-residents-19-250/>

3 March 2024 – Crypto Currency Warning

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/13-march-2024-crypto-currency-warning/>

24 April 2024 - Press Release – Roofer Found Guilty of Fraud

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/press-release-24-april-2024-roofer-found-guilty-of-fraud/>

10 May - WhatsApp Groups Targeted by Criminals

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/10-may-whatsapp-groups-targeted-by-criminals/>

13 May 2024 - Press Release – Builders Sentenced for Unfair Trading

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/press-release-13-may-2024-builders-sentenced-for-unfair-trading/>

22 May 2024 - Press Release - Company Sentenced for Unfair Trading

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/22-may-2024-press-release-company-sentenced-for-unfair-trading/>

20 June 2024 - Press Release - Unlicensed Dog Breeder Convicted of Fraud

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/20-june-2024-unlicensed-dog-breeder-convicted-of-fraud/>

11 July 2024 - Press Release - Public Protection Partnership are awarded Accredited Partner Status by England Illegal Money Lending Team

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/11-july-2024-press-release-public-protection-partnership-are-awarded-accredited-partner-status-by-england-illegal-money-lending-team/>

17 July 2024 – Student Housing Rental Scams

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/17-july-2024-student-housing-rental-scams/>

22 July 2024 – Housing Rental Scams

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/22-july-2024-housing-rental-scams/>

12 August 2024 - Press Release – The Digital Switchover

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/12-august-2024-press-release-the-digital-switchover/>

16 August 2024 - Press Release - Retailers and shoppers urged to 'Shop a Shark' and report postcard ads for loans

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/16-august-2024-press-release-retailers-and-shoppers-urged-to-shop-a-shark-and-report-postcard-ads-for-loans/>

16 August 2024 - Article - Winter Fuel Payment Scams

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/16-august-2024-article-winter-fuel-payment-scams/>

08 October 2024 - Press Release - Fashion wholesaler ordered to pay £267,500 in Proceeds of Crime Case

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/08-october-2024-press-release-fashion-wholesaler-ordered-to-pay-267-500-in-proceeds-of-crime-case/>

11 October 2024 - Press Release – Warning About Property Maintenance and Repair Fraud After Adverse Weather

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/11-october-2024-press-release-warning-about-property-maintenance-and-repair-fraud-after-adverse-weather/>

18 October 2024 - Press Release - Scam Awareness Week 21-27 October 2024

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/18-october-2024-press-release-scam-awareness-week-21-27-october-2024/>

24 October 2024 - Press Release – Be On Your Guard Against Car Parking Scams

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news-articles/24-october-2024-press-release-be-on-your-guard-against-car-parking-scams/>