

## Notice of Meeting

# Joint Public Protection Committee

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

**Monday 8 December 2025 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 Tom McCann (West Berkshire Council), Iskandar Jefferies (Bracknell Forest Council), Nick Allen (Bracknell Forest Council), Jeremy Cottam (West Berkshire Council), Pauline Jorgensen (Wokingham Borough Council), Stephen Newton (Wokingham Borough Council), Stephen O'Regan (Bracknell Forest Council), Lou Timlin (Wokingham Borough Council) and Howard Woollaston (West Berkshire Council)

## Part I

## Page No.

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 1 | <b>Apologies</b><br>To receive any apologies for absence.   | 1 - 2   |
| 2 | <b>Minutes</b><br>To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 6 October 2025.   | 3 - 8   |
| 3 | <b>Outstanding actions from previous meetings</b><br>To consider any outstanding matters from previous meetings.  | 9 - 10  |
| 4 | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br>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. | 11 - 12 |

**Public Protection Partnership Agenda - Monday 8 December 2025** *(continued)*

- 5 **Notice of Public Speaking and Questions** 13 - 14  
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.
- 6 **Forward Plan** 15 - 18  
To detail future items that the Committee will be considering.
- 7 **Update on the PPP Shared Service Contract** 19 - 26  
The Public Protection Partnership Service was subjected to a peer review which concluded earlier in the year. In line with the negotiations on the recommendations of the review, reports seeking authorisation for Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Councils to enter into a new three authority shared service agreement have been discussed, agreed and given effect at the Executive/Cabinet and Council meetings in all three authorities.  
This report provides an update on the decisions made and progress to date in amending the governance arrangements and Inter Authority Agreements that support and underpin the Service.
- 8 **Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q2 Report for 2025/26** 27 - 72  
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 2025/26.
- 9 **Air Quality Update 2025** 73 - 122  
To inform the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) of the submission and results of the annual air quality reports for Bracknell Forest (BFC), West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Wokingham Borough (WokBC). These reports are for the monitoring data calendar year 2024.  
To inform the JPPC of the proposed consultation on the revocation of the Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area.

**Public Protection Partnership Agenda - Monday 8 December 2025** *(continued)*

- 10 **Update on Fraud and Unfair Trading** 123 - 140  
To provide the Committee with an update on the work of the Public Protection Service in tackling fraud, unfair trading and financial abuse.
- 11 **Workforce Strategy 2026 - 2029** 141 - 178  
To update the Committee on the services workforce planning strategy following review of the existing 2022-2025 strategy.  
To agree the training and development plan that underpins the workforce strategy.

**Contact Officer:**

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

**Email:** [stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk) **Tel:** 01635 519462

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JPPC – 8 December 2025

## **Item 1 – Apologies for absence**

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 6 OCTOBER 2025**

### **COUNCIL CHAMBER COUNCIL OFFICES MARKET STREET NEWBURY**

**Present:** Tom McCann (Chairman), Iskandar Jefferies (Vice-Chairman), Nick Allen and Jeremy Cottam

**Also Present:** Rosalynd Gater (Team Manager - Commercial), George Lawrence (Team Manager - Residential), Sean Murphy (Service Lead - Public Protection), April Peberdy (Service Director - Community Services), Deborah Vincent (Principal Officer), Moira Fraser (Public Protection Partnership), Damian James (Bracknell Forest Council), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Thomas Radbourne (Meeting Host) and Councillor Lou Timlin (Wokingham Borough Council)

**Apologies for absence:** Councillor Cherise Welch and Councillor Howard Woollaston

#### **PART I**

##### **1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the two meetings held on 9 June 2025 were agreed as true and accurate records and signed by the Chairman.

##### **2 Outstanding actions from previous meetings**

It was noted that no actions remained outstanding.

##### **3 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

##### **4 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.

##### **5 Forward Plan**

Councillor Tom McCann introduced the item and outlined his view that the Forward Plan would benefit from greater ownership from Members of the Committee.

It was noted that the Forward Plan already captured the annual cycle of reports and the three yearly review of policies, but Councillor McCann asked Members to review the document and bring forward any suggestions for future items to the next meeting in December 2025. This would be facilitated by Officers. Moira Fraser (Principal Officer) added that Members were open to make contact with officers at any time to discuss items on/for the Forward Plan.

**Action:**

## **JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 6 OCTOBER 2025 - MINUTES**

- The Forward Plan would be circulated to Members with a request that they review the document and bring forward any suggestions for future items to the next meeting in December 2025.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

### **6 Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q1 Report for 2025/26**

Members resolved to suspend standing orders to allow Councillor Lou Timlin, attending as a guest from Wokingham Borough Council, to ask questions on any of the agenda items.

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 7) which provided an update on the quarter one performance of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP), in line with the operating model and business plan.

#### **Finance**

A pressure of around £90k was reported. However, Sean Murphy (Service Lead - Public Protection) clarified that this was in fact closer to £200k as a result of unexpected costs arising from increases in National Insurance contributions and cost of living pressures.

Mitigation measures, mainly holding vacancies, were being taken to bring the budget back to a zero outturn in year.

It was clarified that there had been no response to date from Central Government in relation to a review of statutory fees. The assumption was therefore made that statutory fees would not be increased.

#### **Recruitment**

A number of posts had been recruited to as outlined in the report. This had enabled the Licensing Team to be fully staffed. Some posts did however remain vacant.

#### **Training**

Two trainees had achieved their qualifications and had become full members of the Service. This had enabled two new trainees to start their apprenticeships.

#### **ICT**

The Service was in the process of producing an AI and Digital Strategy and this was scheduled to be brought to Committee in March 2026. Efforts were ongoing to enhance the use of technology in different parts of the Service. This included responses to numerous Freedom of Information requests. Members felt it would be useful to publish responses to Freedom of Information requests so that this information could be accessed by residents.

#### **Peer Review Recommendations**

The revised Shared Service Agreement was scheduled for consideration at Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough Councils during October and November 2025. This would include Wokingham being reintegrated into the governance arrangements at Member level by the date of the next Committee meeting.

#### **Governance**

Consultation was taking place on West Berkshire's Taxi Licensing Policy and Bracknell Forest's Statement of Licensing Policy.

Five complaints had been received by the Service. This equated to 0.18% of the service requests that had been received during the quarter.

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

It was noted that the number of KPIs had increased over time. They were last reviewed in March 2025. The KPIs did however need to be subject to regular review to accommodate changing priorities and changes to public policies. In light of this, Moira Fraser explained that proposals would be brought to the next meeting to improve the way that KPI information was presented to Members that would allow for greater scrutiny of key areas. The full data would continue to be collected as was currently the case and disseminated outside of the agenda packs.

### **Building Safer Communities**

There was a pressure with kennelling provision, with a high demand for spaces and cost pressures. A report was being produced that would outline ways to try and address this.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam queried if many complaints had been received in relation to dangerous dogs. It was explained that currently, Enforcement Officers worked closely with the Police and with residents in investigating reports of dangerous dogs.

Sean Murphy explained that recruitment was planned of a dedicated post to lead on this work. The Service conducted a number of animal welfare duties and the resource would be pulled together into a single team.

Officers described the inspection regime for kennels. There was an initial inspection and this would determine the frequency of future inspections. However, should a complaint be received, then the kennels would be visited.

### **Reducing harm in young people**

Action was being taken to rectify the increase in successful underage sales.

It was reported that the Community Alcohol Partnership had recently received an award for the work delivered with Newbury College to support young people.

### **Safe and Healthy Food Chain**

A new Food Standards Delivery Model had been introduced. The need for additional inspections of premises had been identified.

### **Protection of the Environment**

Feedback was awaited from DEFRA to the annual air quality reports that had been submitted. An update would be provided at December's meeting.

The auditing of private water supplies had been enhanced.

### **Protecting consumers from fraud**

The number of cases of fraud had increased from a year ago.

However, officers had been successful in achieving a number of convictions.

Members were concerned should there be a gap in the provision of victim support, following an officer's recent retirement. Sean Murphy explained that Police and Crime Commissioner funding would enable the recruitment of a full time officer who would cover the PPP.

Councillor McCann gave thanks for the report and the wide range of work that had been undertaken.

### **Action:**

- Proposals would be brought to the next meeting to improve the way that KPI information was presented to Members that would allow for greater scrutiny of key areas.

**RESOLVED that the Committee were informed about:**

- The 2025/26 Q1 data for the Public Protection Service as set out in Appendix A.
- The update on service delivery.

**7 Revenue Budget 2026/27 including proposed Fees and Charges Schedule**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 8) which set out the Public Protection Partnership's (PPP) draft revenue budget for 2026/27, including discretionary fees and charges for 2026/27; which 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 (IAA); and which sought agreement of the figure for 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.

Councillor Tom McCann opened the item by thanking officers for their extensive work on the budget, particularly when there were significant financial pressures to manage.

Councillor McCann highlighted the importance of ownership of the budget at a Member level across the PPP. As part of this he suggested that a discussion be scheduled at the Committee meeting in June 2026 to discuss budget setting across the three local authorities.

Councillor McCann also made reference to the very helpful monthly briefings he received from officers, as Portfolio Holder for this work in West Berkshire, and advised that he would be sharing the notes from these meetings with relevant Members.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) presented the report. This was an annual item which was required to make recommendations to individual councils on the PPP budget by 30 November each year.

A largely standstill budget was recommended. However, after taking into account the in year pressures referred to earlier in the meeting and the need to accommodate these in 2026/27, the base budget was recommended to be increased by approximately 6%.

If the councils considered that the recommended budget was not affordable, then there would be a need for the PPP to revisit its recommendations.

Turning to fees and charges, the proposed hourly rate for 2026/27 was £74 (an increase of £5). The fees and charges would next be presented to the Licensing Committees of Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils. This would be followed by a period of consultation, after which the fees and charges would return to the Licensing Committees prior to heading to Council meetings for approval.

A significant increase was noted for the inspection of animal establishments, the inspection fees for which were set by the City of London's Animal Health Service. However, as previously outlined at this meeting, it was the intention for the PPP to bring animal welfare activity in house and within a single team. The cost of conducting inspections would be recouped from the City of London.

Councillor Nick Allen queried how proposed membership changes could impact on fees and charges. Sean Murphy explained that Wokingham Borough Council were setting their own licensing fees and charges, but discussions were taking place to ensure alignment of fees and charges across the PPP where it was appropriate to do so. He added that the fees being proposed by the PPP were in a similar range to that being proposed in neighbouring authorities.

## **JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 6 OCTOBER 2025 - MINUTES**

Sean Murphy reiterated that the most significant budget pressure came as a result of the statutory fees. These fees should be far higher than was the case as some had not been uplifted in more than 20 years.

### **Actions:**

- A discussion would be scheduled at the Committee meeting in June 2026 to discuss budget setting across the three local authorities.
- Notes from Portfolio Holder briefings would be shared with relevant Members.

### **RESOLVED that the Committee:**

- Had considered the draft revenue budget, including the fees and charges, set out in this report and within Appendix A.
- Would recommend to partner Councils that the contributions set out in column three of the table at 5.24 form the basis of the 2026/27 net revenue budget contributions.
- Would recommend to partner Councils the fees and charges set out in Appendix A.
- Approved the contribution request from Wokingham Borough Council as set out in the table at paragraph 5.24.
- Agreed that the policy position in relation to monies received under the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) (which was approved at the October 2024 JPPC meeting) would remain the policy to be applied to spend/allocate any monies received under the scheme.
- Agreed that the December meeting of this Committee would receive an update report on the outcome of deliberations on the proposed net revenue budget and proposed fees and charges.

## **8 Environmental Health Housing Policy 2025 - 2028**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 9) which provided an update on the work of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) within Environmental Health Sector Housing and which highlighted the high level priorities which the PPP would undertake over the next three years.

Rosalynd Gater (Team Manager – Commercial) presented the report and explained that the Environmental Health Sector Housing Policy was reviewed every three years. It outlined both current areas of work and future priorities. Areas of work included:

- Working to make improvements to housing that was in poor repair and/or in poor condition.
- Responding to reports of damp and mould, in particular over the colder months.
- Licensing of houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).
- Reviewing, with the Fire Authority and Building Control, the safety of cladding in tall buildings.
- Inspecting the quality of residential accommodation that had been converted from commercial buildings.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) added that an aim of this reviewed document was to pull together all housing related activity of the service into a single Policy.

Councillor Tom McCann thanked officers for their ongoing work in this area.

### **RESOLVED that the Committee:**

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 6 OCTOBER 2025 - MINUTES

- Noted the PPP's role in relation to Housing.
- Approved the direction that the PPP were taking in Environmental Health Sector Housing.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.15pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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



## Joint Public Protection Committee Actions Arising from Previous Meetings

Ref	Meeting Item	Action	Officer	Update
1.	<del>09 June 2025 –</del> <b>JPPC Terms of Reference</b>	<del>The pathway for the changes to the terms of reference to be circulated to Members</del>	MF	<del>The timeline was circulated to all Members of the JPPC on the 19 June 2025. The report has been taken through the governance cycles in all three partner authorities, including Executive/Cabinet and Council and the outcome and proposed revised Terms of Reference are set out in this report.</del>
2.	<del>09 June 2025 –</del> <b>Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q4 and Year End Report for 2024/25</b>	<del>Portfolio holders to deliver a report to their Councils to highlight the work done by the Public Protection Partnership.</del>  Q4 year-end report to be brought forward to member Council's Licensing Committees.	<del>TM, IJ, LT</del>  MF	Q4 report was circulated alongside the June BFC LSC agenda.
3.	<b>06 October 2025 – Forward Plan</b>	The Forward Plan would be circulated to Members with a request that they review the document and bring forward any suggestions for future items to the next meeting in December 2025.	MF	
4.	<b>06 October 2025 - Revenue Budget 2026/27 including proposed Fees and Charges Schedule</b>	A discussion would be scheduled at the Committee meeting in June 2026 to discuss budget setting across the three local authorities.  Notes from Portfolio Holder briefings would be shared with relevant Members.	MF  MF	Done

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JPPC – 8 December 2025

## **Item 4 – Declarations of Interest**

Verbal Item

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JPPC – 8 December 2025

## **Item 5 – Public Speaking and Questions**

Verbal Item

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## JPPC Forward Plan March 2026 to March 2027

No.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Comments
JPPC 09 March 2026					
1.		Public Protection Partnership Q3 2025/26 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 3 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/ Moirira Fraser	
2.		Water Safety Partnership	To provide an annual update of the work of the Partnership.	Jon Winstanley	
3.		Young People and Vaping and Update on the Implementation of the Tobacco and Vaping Bill	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	
		Refresh of the Strategic Assessment 2026 - 2029	To refresh the existing document in light of changes to the National Trading Standards Strategic Assessment and the review of local priorities.	George Lawrence	
5.		Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area Revocations Update	To consider the outcome of the consultation and if appropriate seek approval from the JPPC for the revocation of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Crowthorne following the decision of the Committee to consult on it at the December 2025 meeting.	Suzanne McLaughlin	
6.		West Berkshire Air Quality Strategy	To consider a draft strategy and consultation process following the removal of all Air Quality Management Areas in West Berkshire.	Suzanne McLaughlin	
7.		AI and Digital Strategy	To consider how technology can be used to assist officers to streamline their work processes.	Moirira Fraser	

No.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Comments
<b>JPPC 08 June 2026</b>					
8.		Election of the Chairman and Appointment of the Vice-Chairman for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.	To elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.	Verbal Item	
9.		JPPC Terms of Reference	To note the terms of reference of the Committee.	Moira Fraser	
10.		Public Protection Partnership Q4 2025/26 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 4 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/ Moira Fraser	
11.		PPP Enforcement Policy 2026-2029	To consider any updates to the existing policy	George Lawrence	
12.		Business Plan	To update the existing plan.	Sean Murphy	
13.		West Berkshire Air Quality Strategy	To consider the consultation process and adopt a strategy following the removal of all Air Quality Management Areas in West Berkshire.	Suzanne McLaughlin	
14.		Pre-budget Setting Discussion	To consider requests from the partner authorities with regard to the 2027/28 budget and fees and charges.	Sean Murphy	
<b>JPPC 05 October 2026</b>					
15.		Public Protection Partnership Q1 2026/27 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 1 Update and Performance Report including an update on the peer review action plan.	Moira Fraser	
16.		Revenue Budget 2027/28 Including Proposed Fees and Charges Schedule	To set out the draft revenue budget for 2027/2028 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	



No.	Ref No	Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Comments
17.		Enforcement Approach to Sale of Age Restricted Products 2026-2028	To update the existing process	George Lawrence	
<b>JPPC 07 December 2026</b>					
18.		Public Protection Partnership Q2 2026/27 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 2 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser	
19.		Air Quality Reports	To set out the response received from DEFRA	Suzanne McLaughlin	
20.		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	
<b>JPPC 01 March 2027</b>					
21.		Public Protection Partnership Q3 2026/27 Performance Report	To consider the Quarter 3 Update and Performance Report.	Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser	
22.		Water Safety Partnership	To provide an annual update of the work of the Partnership.	Jon Winstanley	
23.		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	
24.		West Berkshire Air Quality Strategy	To consider a draft strategy and consultation process following the removal of all Air Quality Management Areas in West Berkshire.	Suzanne McLaughlin	

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## Update on the PPP Shared Service Contract

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Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	08 December 2025
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Tom McCann
Date JMB agreed report:	17 November 2025
Report Author:	Sean Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC

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### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Public Protection Partnership Service was subjected to a peer review which concluded earlier in the year. In line with the negotiations on the recommendations of the review, reports seeking authorisation for Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Councils to enter into a new three authority shared service agreement have been discussed, agreed and given effect at the Executive/Cabinet and Council meetings in all three authorities.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the decisions made and progress to date in amending the governance arrangements and Inter Authority Agreements that support and underpin the Service.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTES** the decisions taken by the Executive/Cabinet and Councils in the three partner authorities to enter into a new shared service agreement until the 31st March 2029 and that the agreement will include an exit clause based on a minimum of twelve months' notice to give effect to leaving the agreement on the 31st March in any given year.
- 2.2 **NOTES** the decisions that West Berkshire Council continues to be the host authority to avoid significant short-term disruption.
- 2.3 **NOTES** the decisions by the Executives/ Cabinet and Councils in all three authorities to extend the delegation of relevant functions to the Joint Public Protection Committee until 31st March 2029.
- 2.4 **NOTES** the decision that Wokingham Borough Council becomes a full Member of the Joint Public Protection Committee and the associated changes to the Terms of Reference of the Committee as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- 2.5 **NOTES** the decisions that specified officers in each of the partner authorities be authorised to enter into the new Inter Authority Agreement.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	The agreements will be amended within existing budgets and there are no budgetary implications associated with the production of this report.			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<p>This report was drafted within existing resources. Support is being sought from colleagues in the West Berkshire legal team and legal officers in the partner authorities to draft the revised inter authority agreements.</p> <p>West Berkshire will remain the employing and administrative authority under the proposals.</p>			
<b>Legal:</b>	The basis of the existing and new shared service arrangements are delegations of both Executive/Cabinet and Council functions to a Joint Committee and the basis for employment of the staff is Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 which allows a local authority to enter into an agreement with another Council for the placing at the disposal of the latter for the purposes of their functions. This is in line with the existing arrangements.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	A full peer review of the service been conducted to provide assurance and confidence around the quality and level of shared service provided to ensure residents are receiving and will continue to receive a comprehensive public protection service.			
<b>Property:</b>	There are no property implications associated with the report.			
<b>Policy:</b>	There are no direct policy implications arising from this report.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equity Impact Assessment:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		Full EQiA was conducted when shared arrangements/contract was entered into in 2017 and remains valid.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics,		✓		See above.

including employees and service users?				
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		✓		This decision will not have any direct environmental impact.
<b>Health Impact:</b>		✓		This decision will not have any direct health impact
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		✓		There are no digital services impacts associated with this decision. The online iteration of the Constitution will need updating as will the governance pages on the PPP website.
<b>PPP Priorities :</b>				The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities <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> <li>7. Promoting Animal Welfare</li> <li>8. Safety in the Workplace</li> <li>9. Safe and Healthy Food Chain</li> </ol> Business as Usual Activity is supported too.
<b>Data Impact:</b>				The proposal will not have any impact on our data subjects.
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>All Members of all three authorities and all PPP staff were consulted during the peer review.</p> <p>Reports about the future of the shared service have been considered and agreed by the Cabinet/Executive in <a href="#">Bracknell Forest</a>, <a href="#">West Berkshire</a> and <a href="#">Wokingham Borough</a> Councils.</p> <p>Reports about the future of the shared service have been considered and agreed by Full Council in <a href="#">Bracknell Forest</a>, <a href="#">West Berkshire</a> and <a href="#">Wokingham Borough</a> Councils.</p>			
<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	Not to renew the partnership. This was discounted given the efficiencies and greater service resilience resulting from being in the partnership.			

## 4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) is a shared service delivering environmental health, licensing and trading standards functions on behalf of two authorities, Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council. It also currently shares a range of services with Wokingham Borough Council including trading standards, financial investigations, intelligence functions, animal health and welfare and case management work and the technical delivery of air quality monitoring and reporting.
- 4.2 The Service has historically been underpinned by two Inter Authority Agreements (IAAs), one with Bracknell Forest Council and a separate agreement signed in 2022 with Wokingham Borough Council. These agreements are due to expire in January

2027, and it is a requirement that the arrangements be reviewed prior to the end date. A peer review was therefore conducted between October 2024 and January 2025.

- 4.3 The review team concluded that the Service is focussed and effective in providing statutory regulatory services to protect residents. It also concluded that as a shared service it is delivering efficiencies and greater service resilience than individual authorities would be able to achieve. The review made a series of recommendations for all three partner authorities (Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, and Wokingham Borough Councils) to consider including renewing the current agreements. The most significant of these being a recommendation to renew the current arrangements for a further ten years and the second was to include Wokingham Borough Council in the governance arrangements of the partnership at a member level.
- 4.4 Due to the ongoing uncertainties arising from local government reorganisation, during the discussions and negotiations following the peer review it was proposed to extend the current arrangements until March 2029 rather than the ten years proposed by the review team.
- 4.5 A series of decisions were made at Cabinet/Executive in [Bracknell Forest](#), [West Berkshire](#) and [Wokingham Borough](#) Councils and Full Council in [Bracknell Forest](#), [West Berkshire](#) and [Wokingham Borough](#) Councils including:
- to enter into a new shared service agreement until the 31st March 2029 and that the agreement will include an exit clause based on a minimum of twelve months' notice to give effect to leaving the agreement on the 31st March in any given year.
  - West Berkshire Council continuing to be the host authority to avoid significant short-term disruption to the Service.
  - to extend the delegation of relevant Executive and Council functions to the Joint Public Protection Committee until 31st March 2029.
  - Wokingham Borough Council becoming a full Member of the Joint Public Protection Committee and Wokingham Borough Council nominated Councillors Lou Timlin, Stephen Newton and Pauline Jorgensen to be members of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year. Councillor Prue Bray is the nominated substitute.
  - It was also noted at the Bracknell Forest Council meeting on the 26 November 2025 that Councillor Stephen O' Regan would be replacing Councillor Cherise Welch on the JPPC.
  - Amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Committee as set out in Appendix A to this report.
  - Specified officers (Executive Director for Communities in consultation with the Borough Solicitor in Bracknell Forest, Service Lead for Public Protection in conjunction with the Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services in West Berkshire) in each of the partner authorities be authorised to enter into the new Inter Authority Agreement.

- Annual performance reports be considered by appropriate Scrutiny Committees in the partner authorities pending agreement of the relevant Chairman of those Committees.

4.6 Officers are in the process of engaging all three legal teams with a view to finalising the terms of the agreements in line with the resolutions made by each of the partner Councils. This work is expected to be completed very early into 2026.

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## **5. Concluding Observations**

- 5.1 The Peer Review concluded that the PPP has and continues to be “effective in providing statutory regulatory services to protect residents whilst also delivering efficiencies and greater service resilience”. The service has also been “successful in securing significant income from both external and internal partners to protect both residents and local businesses”. The service is “performing well and delivering high quality outcomes for residents and business across the three partner councils”.
- 5.2 Members across all three councils that participated in the peer review survey recognised “the importance of the service and appreciate how it affects the lives of residents whilst also supporting local council priorities.”
- 5.3 The review also established that “There was no desire from any partner to withdraw any services from the partnership and indeed there was a recognition that withdrawal and working independently would increase costs, reduce available expertise and undermine service resilience.”
- 5.4 There are significant efficiencies to be gained from sharing management costs which allow for more resource to be focussed on operational delivery. There are also the non-financial tangible benefits that the Peer Review identified had been delivered including critical mass, flexibility, expertise, focus and non-staffing related cost effectiveness e.g. IT contracts and subscriptions etc.
- 5.5 The proposals to extend the existing arrangements have received universal and unanimous support across all three partner authorities.
- 5.6 The Joint Management Board and the Service Management Team would like to thank the Committee and the Councils for the attention, guidance and oversight that it has afforded this matter.

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## **6. Appendices**

6.1 Appendix A – Revised Terms of Reference

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## **7. Background Papers:**

7.1 Peer Review Report

7.2 Executive/ Cabinet and Council Reports and Minutes in all three partner authorities.

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**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 in all three authorities

**Officer details:**

Name: Sean Murphy  
Job Title: Service Lead: Public Protection  
Tel No: 01635 519840  
E-mail: sean.murphy@westberks.gov.uk



## Part []

### Council Bodies

#### Appendix: Joint Public Protection Committee

##### 1 Preamble

- 1.1 Part 3 (Meeting Procedure Rules) and Part 6 (Council Bodies) set out the rules and procedures that apply to all of the Council's Bodies and Sub-Bodies.
- 1.2 If there is any conflict between the wording of Parts 3 and 6 and this Appendix, this Appendix will prevail.

##### 2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Joint Public Protection Committee ("JPPC") has been established to oversee the strategic leadership of the Joint Public Protection Partnership ("PPP"), comprising Bracknell Forest Council ("BFC"), West Berkshire District Council ("WBDC") and Wokingham Borough Council ("WBC") (together, "the Councils").
- 2.2 WBDC is the host authority for the PPP and, unless otherwise agreed in writing, the WBDC Constitution will apply to all procedures and Meetings of the JPPC

##### 3 Scope of Role

- 3.1 The purpose of the JPPC is to:
  - 3.1.1 set the strategic direction for the PPP; and
  - 3.1.2 review:
    - standards of service delivery and performance.
    - fee income and costs (on a cost recovery basis unless a statutory basis applies).
    - the treatment of trading surpluses or deficits.
    - an action plan for business growth and development

##### 4 Membership

- 4.1 The JPPC shall comprise of **nine** Members, three from each of BFC, WBDC and WBC as follows:
  - 4.1.1 The Executive/Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Protection Services (appointed by the Leader of the respective council).
  - 4.1.2 Two additional Members (appointed by each Council at its respective Annual Meeting or in the event of a vacancy) reflecting the political balance of the individual Council.
- 4.2 At least one officer representing each partner local authority will attend the JPPC to advise Members. Where possible, the **Service Lead**: Public Protection will also attend.

##### 5 Chairman and Vice-Chairman

- 5.1 The JPPC shall appoint one of its Members to be Chairman and one to be Vice Chairman of the JPPC on an annual basis (or in the event of a vacancy) at the first meeting of the Municipal Year.

## 6 Quorum

- 6.1 The quorum of a Meeting shall be **three**.
- 6.2 At least one Executive Member from each Council must be present for the meeting to be quorate.

## 7 Frequency of Meetings

- 7.1 The JPPC will meet a minimum of twice per year (on a six-monthly basis). Additional meetings may take place with the agreement of the Chairman. Meetings will be held at a venue to be agreed with the Chairman.

## 8 Significant Decisions

- 8.1 The JPPC shall refer back to the Councils for decision any proposal that it has agreed in principle seeking to:
  - 8.1.1 admit an additional party or parties to the PPP;
  - 8.1.2 incur expenditure which requires increased contributions by the Councils; or
  - 8.1.3 make significant changes to the fundamental principles or operation of the PPP.

## 9 Forward Plan

- 9.1 The JPPC will take Key Decisions on behalf of the **three** Councils and will give notice of these decisions at least 28 days before they are due to be taken.

## 10 Administration

- 10.1 WBD C will provide administration for the JPPC.

## Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q2 Report for 2025/26

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	08 December 2025
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Tom McCann
Date JMB agreed report:	17 November 2025
Report Author:	Sean Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC

### 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 2025/26.

### 2. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Be **INFORMED** about the 2025/26 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>At the end of Quarter 2 the Service is forecasting that it will come in on budget.</p> <p>Further detail can be found at Section 5 below.</p>
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<p>The current vacancy information and recruitment activity is set out within the body of the report. See Section 6.</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. The only agency resource outside of grant funded work has been in the areas of case management (vacancy / long term absence cover) and food safety inspections.</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 that responsibility.</p>

	<p>The current governance arrangements with Wokingham Borough Council are managed through the Joint Management Board in accordance with the 2022 agreement. This will be revised once the new agreement is in place.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>JMB and the management team meet regularly to consider the risks for the delivery of the service.</p> <p>The current key risks relate to operational and management capacity due to the nature of vacancies across the service and the inability to recruit to critical posts including a strategic manager leading the case management unit, the Principal Officer for Investigations and senior Trading Standards Officer post.</p> <p>Officers are maintaining a high standard of delivery against the food hygiene and food standards programme. However, capacity issues within food hygiene and standards competency, alongside data cleansing, in-year additional inspection numbers (driven by a new delivery model for food standards and increase in number of food businesses opening) has meant that it is likely that the full programme for both areas will not be achieved in 2025/26. There are risks associated with intervention from the Food Standards Agency and these are articulated in paragraph 18.15</p> <p>To mitigate this, the service is continuing the 'grow your own' approach primarily through the apprenticeship route. It is expected there will be additional food standards and hygiene competent officers following qualification in 2026/27. Officers will take a risk-based approach in prioritising those premises that present the greatest risk to consumers.</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 requests and prioritising of risk. This does create additional risk around the perceptions of the level of response which require 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>

	The revised service priorities were approved at the <a href="#">October 2024</a> JPPC meeting. The Strategic Assessment was adopted at the <a href="#">June 2024</a> meeting.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		No implications – no decisions being made
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		No implications - no decisions being made
Environmental Impact:		✓		No implications - no decisions being made
Health Impact:		✓		No implications - no decisions being made
ICT or Digital Services Impact:		✓		None
PPP Priorities:				The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities 1. Building Safer Communities 2. Improved Living Environment 3. Protecting Consumers from Fraud 4. Reducing Harm in Young People 5. Protecting and Informing Consumers 6. Protection of the Environment 7. Promoting Animal Welfare 8. Safety in the Workplace 9. Safe and Healthy Food Chain Business as Usual Activity is supported too.
Data Impact:		✓		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. A whole Team Away Day took place on the 21 October 2025, and a bi-weekly update is circulated to the Team by the Service Lead. This is in addition to the West Berkshire Council Place briefings and Let's Talk sessions and a wider public awareness and engagement programme delivered in line with the Community Engagement Strategy approved by this Committee.
<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.
- 4.2 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. HR, ICT, Property and Legal. The report also provides the Committee with the current financial position and highlights any pressures arising in-year.
- 4.3 The key outturn measures of volume and data for Quarter 2 (July to September) is set out in Appendix A to the report. At the October JPPC meeting Members agreed that the Appendix will be circulated under separate cover to the Committee. Officers are working with the performance team to agree a set of measures to be included in the West Berkshire Corporate reporting process. A limited set of measures will be attached to the December JPPC quarter 2 report. 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. Finance

- 5.1 As at the end of quarter 2 the service is predicting that we will come in on budget. There is a separate report setting out the pressures associated with kennelling costs and potential solutions attached at Appendix E to this report.
- 5.2 The proposed fees and charges were brought to the October JPPC meeting and were then presented to the BFC Licensing and Safety Committee on the 23 October and the WBC Licensing Committee on the 03 November 2025. There is a statutory requirement to consult on the Private Hire Operator, and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle licence fees.
- 5.3 In Bracknell Forest these fees were consulted on between the 29 October 2025 to 26 November 2025. The Council received one response to the consultation from the Bracknell Hackney Carriage Drivers Association objecting to the fees and requesting that the fees for the coming financial year be frozen at the current levels. The remainder of the fees will be consulted on as part of the annual budget setting process starting on the 17 December 2025.

- 5.4 In West Berkshire the statutory consultation took place between the 06 November and the 04 December 2025. As of the 26 November Officers have received two sets of comments from residents. These comments do however relate to fares and not fees. As this agenda will be published before the end of that consultation a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.
- 5.5 If any objections are received during the statutory consultation they will be considered at the January licensing committee meetings in the partner authorities. The remainder of the fees will be agreed during the budget setting cycle of the partner authorities and will come into effect on the 01 April 2026.

## **6. Human Resources**

### **Recruitment**

- 6.1 Since the October 2025 meeting the Service has successfully recruited to the following posts:
- Senior Environmental Health Officer
  - Enforcement Officer Trading Standards
  - Two part time 0.8fte Licensing Applications Officers
  - Temporary Licensing Applications Lead
- 6.2 In terms of recruitment, we are currently recruiting to these posts:
- Senior Trading Standards Officer
  - Animal Health Warden
  - Enforcement Officer 12-month fixed term contract (grant funded)
  - Environmental Control Officer (Private Sector Housing)
  - Environmental Control Officer / Environmental Health Officer (Private sector Housing)
  - Environmental Control Officer – Environmental Quality / Protection
- 6.3 In addition to the above the following posts are now vacant:
- 1 FTE Team Leader in Partnership Team
  - 0.4 FTE Enforcement Officer – Trading Standards
  - 1 FTE Principal Officer Investigations
  - 1 FTE Strategic Manager – Case Management and Governance

### **Training and Development**

- 6.4 The Team are very proud of our two members of the Environmental Health Community Team who have graduated in their MSc's in Environmental Health. They should qualify as Environmental Health Officers in the next twelve months. A further two members of staff have been accepted and have started the MSc programme.
- 6.5 The Level 6 Environmental Health Apprentice is continuing to make good progress with her course. One of our Senior Trading Standards Officers is currently undertaking an ILM course through the apprenticeship programme. Two of our Level

6 Trading Standards Apprentices are entering the final phase of their apprenticeship and four more have entered or will be entering the programme between October 2025 and March 2026. One of our Trainee Regulatory Services Officers has started his Level 6 Food Control training.

- 6.6 The Team are proud of Jim Brindley, a Trainee Regulatory Services Officers who received the Return to Learning Award at the recent West Berkshire Learner Achievement Awards held in early November.
- 6.7 An officer in the intelligence team has recently been accredited and authorised by the National Crime Agency to exercise the powers of a Financial Intelligence Officer.
- 6.8 Two Officers have successfully completed their Private Water Sampling accreditation for sampling, one a 36<sup>th</sup> month renewal and one 18-month update.
- 6.9 A whole team away day took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025. The session focussed on making better use of technology to expedite processes and improve customer experiences with a focus on artificial intelligence. A Service focussed AI strategy will be presented to this Committee in March 2026.
- 6.10 Regulation of Investigatory Powers training for Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Senior Managers took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025. A follow up session for staff to consider the practical application of the September theoretical course took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025.
- 6.11 Conflict Resolution Training for the PPP's Management Team took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025.
- 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. All new members of staff will be required to undertake induction training in both West Berkshire Council and Bracknell Forest Council.
- 6.13 Safeguarding training for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers as well as Private Hire Operators is now being delivered in-house. We are exploring if Disability Awareness training could be delivered as a new income stream.
- 6.14 The new proposed Workforce Strategy and Training and Development Plan appear elsewhere on this agenda.

## **7. ICT Update**

- 7.1 Testing is ongoing in respect of the public facing portal of the Team's cloud based IT system. Some issues were discovered during the testing and officers are working with the provider to address these issues.
- 7.2 The Service will be producing an AI and Digital Strategy which will focus on harnessing emerging technologies to drive innovation, improve service delivery, and enhance operational efficiency across the Service where it is appropriate to do so.
- 7.3 In advance of the Strategy being produced Officers are looking at ways that technology can be used to assist them with streamlining their work processes. A presentation on using AI and digital solutions took place at the October Whole Team Away Day which will help to inform the strategy and signposted staff to opportunities



they could already make use of. In addition the Training and Development Plan has capture the fact that opportunities will be sought to attend training sessions, webinars, or workshops on digital tools, data analytics, and AI to build practical understanding and strategic insight. Officers are in the process of implementing the use of minute taking technology into the service.

## **8. Update on the Peer Review Recommendations**

- 8.1 It was agreed at the June 2025 meeting that regular updates on progress being made with the Peer Review recommendations would be included in this report (See Appendix D)
- 8.2 A separate report on the future of the partnership arrangements is included elsewhere on this agenda. Work is underway on developing a Service Charter to address some of the staffing recommendations.

## **9. Governance, Information Management and Communications**

- 9.1 During Q2 Officers have dealt with six press enquiries, issued seven press releases and published one article on the website.
- 9.2 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. PPP press releases are shared for their distribution, as well as both continuing to share relevant posts on each other's social media platforms. The PPP also provides a weekly contribution to the West Berkshire Council Newsletter which is produced by the internal Communications Team and they have provided regular contributions to Out and About in Bracknell Forest too.
- 9.3 In terms of social media activity Officers have supported a number of relevant national public campaigns including: courier fraud, holiday fraud and ticket scams around summer festivals. The Service has posted 87 posts on social media this quarter.
- 9.4 During Q2 the team dealt with a total of 124 Freedom of Information requests which took around 156 hours to process (just over four weeks of officer time). The number of requests have increased when compared to the same period in 2024/25 where 98 Fols were processed and took significantly longer than the 92 hours to process. Fol responses are now being published online in Bracknell Forest.
- 9.5 The team also processed 56 enquiries from Councillors and the local MPs during quarter 2 (BFC 31 and WBC 25). This represented a significant increase when compared to the 29 that were dealt with in the same period of the previous year.
- 9.6 In terms of complaints, the service received 11 complaints which equates to 0.37% of the 2938 service requests that the team has dealt with in Q2. Of these ten were stage 1 complaints and one was a stage 2 complaint. Of the 11 complaints received (3 in BFC and 8 in WBC) one was upheld in full, seven were not upheld and three were upheld in part. The number of complaints received has increased when compared to the seven that were received in the same period in 2024/25. The service has, however, dealt with an additional 209 SRs this year when compared to 2024/25.

- 9.7 During Q2 we completed the consultation on the Bracknell Forest Council Statement of Licensing Policy. The new Environment Health Housing Policy was agreed at the October JPPC meeting.
- 9.8 The Team also supported 23 public events across Bracknell Forest, and West Berkshire this quarter. This included several Summer of Fun Events across Bracknell Forest and the Lets Talk events being championed by West Berkshire Council. The Team also attended three events with Thames Valley Police to support the Safer Streets and Neighbourhood Events in both partner authorities.

## 10. Building Safer Communities

- 10.1 As part of the team's work supporting the identification and prevention of infectious diseases, the ongoing survey for invasive mosquitoes, led by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), ended in September. To date, no invasive mosquitoes have been identified within the PPP area.
- 10.2 Last quarter, the report identified a pressure on kennelling in terms of both staff capacity and budget. During Quarter 2, the service has seen the highest levels of kennelling needs this year due to an increase in the reporting of stray dogs. In response, officers have begun piloting a programme of short-term fostering for unclaimed dogs who exceed their seven-day statutory limit and that are awaiting transfer to a recognised rescue centre. Initial assessment of the numbers of dogs being reported in quarter 3 would suggest a slow-down and reduction in the number of dogs reported as straying. The team are currently recruiting to the vacant animal health warden role.
- 10.3 The Licensing Team have undertaken 89 inspections of premises licensed under the Licensing and Gambling regime during Q2. Officers have attended three joint operations with the Waste Team, Thames Valley Police and the Immigration Service. The Licensing Team have also licensed one previously unlicensed ice cream van in Q2. In addition one scrap metal collector licence application is being processed.
- 10.4 Officers continue to attend pubwatch in both areas.
- 10.5 Licensing Officers have also carried out inspections of Newbury Racecourse and the Heritage Live event at Englefield Estate.
- 10.6 The following licensing panel/subcommittee meetings have taken place in Q2:

Type of Application	Applicant	Outcome
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>		
New Premises Licence	Popeye's, 45 High Street, Bracknell, Bracknell Forest, RG12 1EA	Granted subject to conditions
New Premise Licence	Feta & Fig Limited, 3 Rectory Row, Bracknell, Bracknell Forest, RG12 7BN	The application was refused.

<b>West Berkshire</b>		
New Premises Licence	Best Buy Foods, 51 London Road, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 1JN	Granted subject to conditions

10.7 During Q3 of 2025/26 to date the following applications have been heard:

<b>Type of Application</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>		
Vary a Premise Licence	The Vault, 19 High Street, Crowthorne, Bracknell, RG45 7AD	Awaited
<b>West Berkshire</b>		
None to date		

<b>Licensing Hearings Data for last three years.</b>			
<b>Authority</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26 to date</b>
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>	3	3 (and a further one was postponed)	4 (2 hearings were also postponed)
<b>West Berkshire</b>	8 (with a further five cancelled or adjourned after agenda publication)	1	2 (1 further hearing was cancelled)

## 11. Improved Living Environment

- 11.1 We reported in quarter 1, that a new project to raise energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector had started. Following a desk top exercise to identify private rented sector property's that were failing the minimum energy efficiency standard (F-G on the EPC), many properties listed previously from the housing condition survey and national EPC database have been removed from the list of non-complaint properties.
- 11.2 For the few that remain, officers are in contact with those landlords to work towards improvement in raising standards, where it is possible to do so. It is expected that the project will be completed by the end of the calendar year, and plans are in place to ensure continuous review of the private rented sector properties' EPC rating due to the continual changes in the property market.
- 11.3 Officers have been involved with yet more hoarding cases. In one instance, the officer had to arrange for over 400 bags of rubbish to be removed from a property's rear garden. Officers also had to take the lead in dealing with a pest infestation and working with colleagues in adult social care to ensure ongoing engagement and funding for the household.

- 11.4 A second hoarder has been without basic sanitary provision as they had their water supply cut off. Working with their social worker, the officer was able to agree some clearance work and reinstate their water supply.
- 11.5 The Service has issued 19 licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Bracknell Forest and three in West Berkshire. Officers have started a programme of compliance checks on those HMO licences issued with specific conditions to ensure all are up to current standards.
- 11.6 The EH Housing Team have received complaints and queries regarding caravan sites across both areas and officers continue to ensure that all sites are compliant with licence conditions.
- 11.7 The Team have worked with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services on certain high rise building issues and are now progressing to work on the 11-18metre high residential buildings. They have also attended joint visits to takeaway premises with residential flats above that have a lack of fire separation.
- 11.8 In terms of service requests (SRs) relating to housing:

	Total request for service housing	Of these number of complaints regarding house condition	Of these number that were Registered Social Landlords
WB April to June 2024	90	71	32 (45%)
WB July to Sept 2024	68	59	21 (36%)
WB Oct to Dec 2024	92	62	31 (50%)
WB Jan to March 2025	84	56	29 (52%)
WB Apr to Jun 2025	61	37	19 (51%)
WB July to Sept 2025	60	33	12 (36%)
BF April to June 2024	78	49	20 (41%)
BF July to Sept 2024	87	55	25 (27%)
BF Oct to Dec 2024	95	69	35 (50%)
BF Jan to March 2025	86	51	29 (57%)
BF Apr to Jun 2025	54	21	7 (33%)
BF July to Sept 2025	74	41	7 (17%)

- 11.9 The majority of the housing condition SRs relate to leaks in the properties and other sources of damp and corresponding mould .The PPP have put in a funding bid to carry out an enhanced damp and mould pilot project that we hope to begin this winter. It will be working with GP surgeries to link the Service with patients who are suffering ill health as a result of damp and mould in their homes, who are not already known to the Team. In this way we hope to extend the PPP's reach and look at damp and mould issues across more properties with a view to improvement of conditions.

## 12. Protecting Consumers from Fraud

- 12.1 The UK's Tobacco Track and Trace system introduced in 2019 helps prevent the illegal trade in tobacco products by making it more difficult for smugglers and counterfeiters to operate. The team continue to collate intelligence received by external and internal partners which will be followed up with visits and the HMRC application downloaded to WBC phones will be used to scan tobacco products to verify whether they have a valid UID (alphanumeric code). Following meetings with tobacco leads in a neighbouring Authority, the team are preparing for test purchases across the PPP.

- 12.2 As is usual during the summer season, the team has seen challenges in staffing across the PPP. However, demand continues, and officers' reaction to those demands ensure that those service requests that present the greatest risks are investigated and resourced.

### **Scams and Fraud Victim Support**

- 12.3 The PPP have been successful in gaining a further three years' funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Partnership Fund, via the Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire's Community Safety Partnerships. Funding from Wokingham is still to be confirmed. The funding is being utilised to deliver fraud and scams victim support most notably to residents who fall short of Adult Social Care thresholds, however require support in signposting to appropriate services to prevent deterioration in capacity and the need for Adult Social Care intervention.
- 12.4 The West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board has set up a task and finish group focusing on preventing the financial exploitation of adults with care and support needs. The Senior Programme and Community Officer sits on this group on behalf of the PPP as lead for fraud and scams victim support in addition to being designated safeguarding officer.
- 12.5 During Q2 the scams team have achieved the following across Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham:
- Dealt with 31 Service Requests in respect of fraud and scams
  - Undertaken two presentations
  - Supported the set-up of one new No Cold Calling Zone

### **Unfair Trading and Fraud**

- 12.6 In terms of losses across the PPP area arising from unfair trading and fraud up to the end of Q2 2025/26:
- The total detriment identified from victims in the PPP area is £957,577 (Bracknell Forest £56,856, Wokingham £204,910 and West Berkshire £539,106). This represents a significant increase on the £604,068 at the same period in 2024/25.
  - The total money saved or recovered is £24,592.
  - The total number of alleged incidents is 105 (14 Bracknell Forest, 46 Wokingham and 45 West Berkshire) which is an increase when compared to the 90 in 2024/25.
  - The average loss is £9,119 per victim. The average loss in Wokingham is £4,454, in Bracknell Forest £4,061 and in West Berkshire £11,980. The average loss has increased compared to the 2024/25 average of £6,711.
- 12.7 It is worth noting that many investigations also identify victims outside the PPP area so the total figure under investigation at any one time is significantly higher.

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

### **Schools Work**

- 13.1 Two vaping presentations were delivered to West Berkshire Secondary schools at the beginning of July. Owing to end of term, summer holidays and the start of the new academic year, these are the only sessions undertaken within Q2. At the beginning of the academic year contact was made with all secondary and primary schools across West Berkshire setting out the offering in respect of alcohol, tobacco, vapes and scam presentations. The response from primary schools requesting vaping health harm awareness sessions for their year 5/6 pupils has been high; 17 primary schools have been or are currently in process of being booked in for the delivery of a presentation over the coming academic year.
- 13.2 Take up from secondary schools has been low to date, however officers are aware that there have been updates to the Department for Education's Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance, which has increased the number and range of teaching resources available on these topics. There are also several free educational performances being commissioned through Public Health funding and the Community Alcohol Partnership focusing on tobacco, vaping and alcohol, that are due to be delivered across West Berkshire in the coming months.

### **Attitudinal Survey**

- 13.3 The attitudinal survey is due to 'go live' across West Berkshire secondary schools after October half term. This year the survey is also including questions on nicotine pouch use in addition to tobacco vapes and alcohol, owing to the national perceived emerging trend of nicotine pouch use amongst children.
- 13.4 This year a shorter survey is also going to be sent to all West Berkshire primary schools for completion by their year 5 and 6 pupils. It is hoped that this information will provide an understanding of when children start to engage in these health harm related behaviours, the drivers for partaking in these types of behaviours and their sources for obtaining these products. Furthermore, it may provide an evidence base for earlier intervention.

### **Tobacco Control Alliance**

- 13.5 The Berkshire West Tobacco Control Alliance meets on a six-weekly basis with representatives from West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham Public Health, Trading Standards, NHS, BOB ICB, pharmacies and local stop smoking service provider. The alliance's Tobacco Control Plan is a 'live' document that is routinely reviewed and amended. Through the alliance it has been agreed that advertising of our local stop smoking service provision will be prevalent on busses travelling between West Berkshire and Reading during October as part of the Stoptober Campaign.
- 13.6 The PPP's Senior Programme and Community Officer also represents West Berkshire at the Southeast Smokefree Alliance. A webpage 'Quit Together Live Better' [South East Smokefree Alliance – Quit Together Live Better](#) has been set up which directs residents who access it to their local stop smoking provision. A large in and out of home stop smoking marketing campaign has also been developed and agreed to 'go live' across the Southeast Regions during Stoptober, this will include

ITVX pause adds and advertising of the Quit Together Live Better website on trains running across the Southeast.

- 13.7 The PPP's Senior Programme and Community Officer leads on the commissioning of West Berkshire Public Health's jointly commissioned Local Stop Smoking Service provision, in addition, ensures the effective spending of the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant Funding. The outreach stop smoking service provision for routine and manual workers funded through the Local Stop Smoking Service and Support Grant funding commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> July. Within Q2 the service achieved 27 people setting a quit date, they have a target of achieving 252 people setting a quit date by 31<sup>st</sup> March. During Q2 they achieved one below their required trajectory, however at this stage, this is not a concern.
- 13.8 A Strategy Document in respect of West Berkshire Public Health's intention to jointly commission an Integrated Healthy Lifestyle Service with Reading Borough Council was completed by the PPP's Senior Programme and Community Officer and presented to and signed off by Procurement Board over the summer. A report will now be completed to go to through West Berkshire Council's internal governance meetings in January. The IHLS will include smoking cessation and weight management and is due to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2026.

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

- 13.9 The CAP's parental supply of alcohol initiative, for which West Berkshire have been chosen as a pilot area has been delayed owing to the CAP's commissioned marketing team having to rework their creative direction following feedback from the CAP coordinators of the pilot areas. It is not yet known when the next meeting of the steering committee will be taking place.
- 13.10 The Responsible Retailer Scheme documents have been sent to graphics to formalise. Once final documents are agreed these will be uploaded onto the PPP website. A communication strategy meeting is due to take place in October to discuss the launch of the scheme across the three partner authorities.

### **Age Restricted Products**

- 13.11 The age restricted products Enforcement officer has been undertaking many inspections in retail and other licensed premises to test compliance with the relevant age restrictions. These have resulted in the highest number of investigations of this type for the service in many years. Although it's disappointing that the percentage of failures it does demonstrate the need to conduct these operations. In response, the team are developing additional communications strategy to highlight awareness and introduce initiatives such as the responsible retailer scheme in an attempt and drive down the failure rate being seen. This is in line with the PPP delivery plan of Prevention, Intelligence and Enforcement (PIE).
- 13.12 There is currently a pool of volunteers aged between 15 and 16 and the team will be looking to recruit new volunteers over the coming months.



13.13 During Q2 the following underage sales activity took place:

Vapes		Lottery		Alcohol		Knives		Tobacco	
Attempts	Sales	Attempts	Sales	Attempts	Sales	Attempts	Sales	Attempts	Sales
11	4	0	0	8	2	12	2	12	2

## 14. Protection of the Environment

- 14.1 Q2 has also been exceptionally busy, with 50 reported incidents to investigate.
- 14.2 Fly tipping continues to be an issue around Bracknell Forest, with one significant fly tip reported in in Allsmoor Lane. Much work has been undertaken with partner agencies to identify road users potentially responsible which resulted in a suspect being interviewed. Following this evidence gathering, officers were able to rule them out. Further work continues with information disclosures on account details found within the waste, which has identified that the waste originated from the London SW15 area A casefile against the waste carrier is now being prepared for legal consideration.
- 14.3 Improving the environment in and around a location in Bracknell Forest has resulted a local housing provider being issued with a warning to stop using part of their land as a waste transfer station. For years, this has been an area fenced off on the grounds of the RSL property and used as a collection point for white goods that have been removed from their properties. In recent months there has been a significant increase in the number of units stored on this site.
- 14.4 Officers identified that there has been no risk assessment or regard to properties overlooking the site, owned and managed by the housing provider. They also did not hold a proper licence as a waste transfer station. Consequently, the association have now sourced a registered local waste company to remove their white goods from their properties and have decided not to store white goods at this site in future.
- 14.5 A six week placement of CCTV saw a very significant reduction in waste being left at Deepdale Community Glass recycling area.
- 14.6 Our Solar Powered CCTV trailer has been in place in Priestwood and it has been reported that this has had a significant impact on the reduction of incidents of ASB (drug dealing) as well as a reduction in fly tipping around the recycling units.
- 14.7 As reported previously, the banning of illegal single-use vapes came into force at the beginning of June. Implementation required training, the creation of penalty notices, new processes, templates and a production and consultation process on the enforcement guidance for the PPP.
- 14.8 Officers have visited the premises where information and shared intelligence suggests that these products were available for sale or stored and could be sold. During the summer, officers undertook 18 visits and issued 6 'notices of intent' to serve compliance notices. To date, all businesses revisited have been found to be compliant.



- 14.9 Q2 has seen a variety of commercial nuisance complaints dealt with including the following:
- Low frequency noise investigation.
  - Noise monitoring of a refrigeration plant which resulted in an Abatement Notice being served.
  - Insect nuisance from a farm investigated.
  - Smoke from site clearance which resulted in an Abatement Notice being served.
  - Mediation instigated to deal with concerns relating to a noise emanating from an entertainment premise.
  - Successful investigation of a noise complaint relating to padel courts and no new complaints relating to outdoor swimming pool.
  - Petroleum storage site odour investigation conducted.
  - Officers identified a cement batching site operating without a Permit, application now received and consultation underway.
- 14.10 **Air Quality** - Appraisals have been received from DEFRA for the Air Quality Annual Status Reports for all 3 LAs (see separate report on this agenda) and progress is being made with drafting of the West Berkshire Council Air Quality Strategy.
- 14.11 **Event Monitoring** – undertaken for noise from five events to check compliance with their relevant Premise Licence conditions and Noise Management Plans. No breaches were found and no substantiated complaints were received.
- 14.12 **Planning Committees** have been attended, and positive feedback was received from the Council's barrister for the work around noise during a high profile planning appeal.

## 15. Protecting and Informing Consumers

- 15.1 In In this quarter the Trading Standards team has triaged/assessed and dealt with 1209 service requests (not including food related service requests) across PPP.
- 15.2 Nationally, counterfeit 'Labubu' dolls and 'Jelly Cat' toys have entered the marketplace, [TikTok Labubu trend exploited by criminals with dangerous fakes - BBC News](#). The service has been alerted by National Trading Standards and Officers visiting convenience stores whilst looking for banned single use vapes, are also assessing these products when displayed for sale as they are commonly sold from the same type of outlet. The team have identified a potential premises selling such products, and are currently following this up.
- 15.3 A port authority has notified the service of non-compliant electrical items entering the UK, destined for addresses within the PPP area. Officers are following this up and providing safety advice as appropriate.
- 15.4 It was reported last quarter, that officers were working with colleagues across other areas and disciplines as part of a faulty gas boiler parts seizure and investigation in Doncaster. The investigation is ongoing.

- 15.5 Other cases of interest involving a batch of plug sockets has come to the attention of the service. This investigation relates to a product that is unsafe and a potential electrocution and/or fire hazard.

## **16. Promoting Animal Welfare**

- 16.1 Officers continue to undertake routine inspections for animal welfare on farms. To date, all inspections are on target with the 2025/26 plan.
- 16.2 Officers visited the Newbury Show in September. The officers identified issues with managing animal licensing and bio-security matters as well as food issues, such as labelling and allergen declaration (for human consumption) across a number of traders attending the event. Advice was given at the time of the event to the traders and officers are meeting with the event organisers as part of the debrief.

## **17. Safety in the Workplace**

- 17.1 The Team has dealt with 48 (19 in BFC and 29 WBC) health and safety at work service requests during Q2 and 37 (16 BFC and 21 WBC) workplace accidents were reported.
- 17.2 Cases of interest include: An ongoing investigation following an incident at a large warehouse where an employee fell from height sustaining injuries.
- 17.3 A member of the public raised concerns about electrical safety at a small independent retail store. An officer subsequently served a health and safety at work improvement notice requiring the employer to have the fixed electrical installation inspected for safety and have all necessary repairs carried out by a competent person.
- 17.4 The Safety Advisory Group have been notified about and considered the documentation provided in respect of 14 events in Bracknell Forest and 26 in West Berkshire taking place during this quarter.

## **18. Safe and Healthy Food Chain**

- 18.1 During quarter 2a total of 36 food related service requests have been handled by the officers responsible for delivering food standards safety work.
- 18.2 The first quarter saw the new food standards model coming into being, and officers have, up until the end of quarter 2, carried out 768 routine interventions and have taken 72 food standards related samples. All of which will inform the next intervention dates. Officers are also working on data cleansing as interventions progress and have uncovered data anomalies leading to around 500 additional interventions required for the year across the PPP. These will be risk assessed and managed with the resources available over time.
- 18.3 During this second quarter of the year, officers have been receiving results back from the sampling projects that took place in the first quarter of the year. In terms of the spirit sampling project 8 out of the 9 spirit samples were reported as satisfactory, with a referral on one.
- 18.4 Checks on undeclared milk as an allergen in cakes and confectionary were all satisfactory from an allergen point of view, however it was disappointing that 8 of

the 9 samples still had labelling non-compliances. Officers therefore referred the labelling concerns to the manufacturers for action to be taken.

- 18.5 It was good to have 100% compliance on nutrition declaration checks on the yoghurts that were sampled, but again unfortunately all samples had labelling non-compliances. This is a real concern that so many are being reported as unsatisfactory and really does show the value of the officer's work, and the need for these sampling projects to be a regular part of Food Standards enforcement.
- 18.6 The sample results from takeaways have also been returned with 8 out of 9 compliant for allergen controls and all were found to be declaring the correct meat species. Officers visited the one premise where the allergen issues had been reported as unsatisfactory and provided in-depth advice and guidance to the business, who's owner was very concerned and took on board all the advice provided.
- 18.7 Whilst addressing all these non-compliances officers have also been out taking samples in July, August and September. July's sampling involved buying cooked ham which has been sent for testing for labelling compliance and that water content was being declared correctly. These results have since been received and once again labelling issues were uncovered and businesses advised.
- 18.8 August sampling involved buying soups to check for salt content. The results are yet to be received. Officers have also been involved in national campaigns for the Food Standards Agency looking at imported soft drinks, tea, spices and dried fruits.
- 18.9 September has meant visits to pizza restaurants to purchase samples of pizza toppings to check for labelling and composition requirements – this was also part of a regional campaign as well as part of work for the Food Standard Agency. Results are awaited.
- 18.10 The investigation into a local convenience store that was found to have sold dangerous vodka is complete and awaiting legal review.
- 18.11 The Service received 31 (8 BFC and 23 WBC) infectious disease notifications during Q2. This is a significant reduction when compared to the 187 during the same period last year. However, since the beginning of June 2025 the UKHSA has stopped reporting *Campylobacter* cases directly to local authorities and therefore the number of infectious disease notifications has reduced. The majority of cases reported now are in respect of *Salmonella* Enteritidis.
- 18.12 As we reach the halfway point of the inspection year for food hygiene premises, in terms of output the Authorised Officers have completed all of the high-risk food inspections due in that period. However, Officers are still facing an issue with the number of unrated food premises. These premises are risk assessed when the registration is received, and inspections are carried out where it is high risk premise.
- 18.13 The Service are not resourced to be able to inspect all new premises when they register and so are working through a backlog. The Service have been using casual Authorised Officers to do this however, due to funding restrictions their contracts will come to an end at the end of December. In terms of numbers the Service deals with, in the region of, 1000 food hygiene inspections per year.

- 18.14 The issue stems in the main from a higher than expected number of food premises opening in this year so far that require inspection (figure up 30% on last year at this date) and the number of authorised officers in the team not being sufficient to meet the numbers of additional food inspections due to backlog that has been historical from Covid when inspections were suspended and officers redirected to the Covid response. In addition, incoming work such as a number of serious work-related accident investigations that are ongoing, and a high level of formal enforcement in food premises where serious risk is found is taking officer time away from inspection work.
- 18.15 The governing body, The Food Standards Agency, who are the regulators for food enforcement, have set out that all premises are required to be inspected by year end (31 March 2026). There is intense scrutiny in the service from the FSA. In previous years the FSA has given dispensations as they were aware of the issues of officers redeployed in Covid. The PPP is already in discussions with the FSA on the food hygiene programme, this can be escalated to targeted audits of the service and directives for achieving compliance with the Code of Practice. The FSA also publish results of audits and the ultimate sanction is that they take the service over from the Local Authority and the authority will then have to fund other bodies for the service to be carried out.
- 18.16 To date, to maximise inspection numbers officer time has been diverted from health and safety enforcement into food for the remainder of this inspection year, and we have increased one part time officer's hours to full time.
- 18.17 Going forward we have an officer who is currently in training as an authorised food officer and they should be qualified in the 2026/27 inspection year which will increase in house capacity for next year.
- 18.18 The specific risk of the food hygiene service not completing the targeted food inspections include unregulated food chain conditions resulting in a range of poor health outcomes extending from minor to loss of life. For example, cross contamination issues leading to food poisoning, pest issues in premises, poor hygiene and or cook/ cool practices, in addition to FSA sanctions.

## **19. Investigations and Case Management**

- 19.1 The Joint Case Management Unit continues to be busy working with new investigations commencing all the time across the PPP. Of these 47 are already in the case management / court system and most of the bigger more complex investigations are or are expected to be crown court disposals.
- 19.2 A significant number are set for trial in 2026 but unfortunately the team have had their first trial listed in 2027. In addition, as anticipated and mentioned in the last report, there has been a big increase in the number of cases submitted for e-cigarette, alcohol, offensive weapons and investigation prosecutions with the new officer dedicated to underage sales. The figure does not include a number of road traffic prosecutions which number 31 active. There is also an appeal against a sentence and confiscation order in the Court of Appeal in London.
- 19.3 The Investigations Team have eight cases going through the court process, four further cases are with Legal Services for a determination. There are also seven larger complex investigations ongoing.

- 19.4 The Accredited Financial Investigators have 21 active cases: eight pertaining to confiscation of assets, 12 money laundering/fraud cases and one money laundering/counterfeit goods case. Of those cases 16 are for the PPP, three are Reading BC cases and two are for Oxfordshire Trading Standards.
- 19.5 In terms of recent cases, a ten week trial in the summer for advanced fee fraud resulted in a 4.5 year immediate custodial sentence. More can be found here: [21 November 2025 - Press Release - Advance fee fraudster sentenced to 4.5 years in prison. - Public Protection Partnership](#) . In addition there have been a number of under age sales cases, examples be found here: [10 October 2025 - Press Release- Retailers and Staff Fined for Selling Age-Restricted Products to Minors - Public Protection Partnership](#). We have also recieved a guilty plea on a counterfeit clothing case relating to sales at a car boot sale and that case will be sentenced in due course and finally a large number of road traffic cases and exaples can be found here: [28 October 2025 - Press Release - Driver fined for breach of weight restrictions - Offences under section 5 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - Public Protection Partnership](#)

## 20. Concluding Observations

- 20.1 The report sets out a significant focus with respect to the priority areas. This is in addition to the large volume of other work undertaken on a day-to-day basis. There will inevitably need to be some re-prioritisation of other workstreams if we are going to continue to focus on the areas of highest risk and demand.
- 20.2 This continues to be an extremely busy period for the service. The work has covered a vast range of priority areas, and the balancing of priorities and risk has been a key focus whilst delivering savings to mitigate pressures. The Service would, as always, like to place on record our gratitude for the support of the partner authorities and for constructive oversight of this Committee.

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## 21. Appendices

- 21.1 Appendix A – Q2 Performance Data
- 21.2 Appendix B – Compliments
- 21.3 Appendix C - Activity by Authority
- 21.4 Appendix D – Update on Peer Review Recommendations
- 21.5 Appendix E – Kennelling Provision Briefing

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## 22. Background Papers:

- 22.1 None

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

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

☐

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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:**

Name: Sean Murphy  
Job Title: Service Lead: Public Protection  
Tel No: 01635 519840  
E-mail: sean.murphy@westberks.gov.uk

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## PPP Headline Performance Data – Q2 of 2025/26

<b>Budget</b> At the end of Quarter 2 the Service is forecasting that it will come in on budget.	<b>Staffing</b> Appointments Since Last Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Environmental Health Officer</li> <li>• Enforcement Officer Trading Standards</li> <li>• Two part time 0.8fte Licensing Applications Officers</li> <li>• Temporary Licensing Applications Lead</li> </ul>
<b>BFC Food Hygiene Inspections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 667 due</li> <li>• 0 Score of 0</li> <li>• 2 Score of 1</li> <li>• 563 Score Of 5</li> <li>• 90% meet the Broadly Compliance standard for Food Hygiene</li> </ul>	<b>WBDC Food Hygiene Inspections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1019 due</li> <li>• 0 Score of 0</li> <li>• 7 Score of 1</li> <li>• 889 Score Of 5</li> <li>• 82% meet the Broadly Compliance standard for Food Hygiene</li> </ul>
<b>BFC Doorstep Crime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 doorstep crime incidents reported</li> <li>• £56,856 paid out by victims</li> <li>• £0 recovered</li> <li>• Average loss per incident £4,061</li> </ul>	<b>WBDC Doorstep Crime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 doorstep crime incidents reported</li> <li>• £539,106 paid out by victims</li> <li>• £10,592 recovered</li> <li>• Average loss per incident £11,980</li> <li>• </li> </ul>
<b>WBC Doorstep Crime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 doorstep crime incidents reported</li> </ul>	<b>Licenses</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £204,910 paid out by victims</li> <li>• £14,500 recovered</li> <li>• Average loss per incident £4,454</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 188/188 Temporary Event Notices responded to within 3 working days</li> <li>• 21 valid renewed drivers licences applications received</li> <li>• 29 valid renewed drivers licences applications received</li> <li>• 2 valid new operator licences applications received</li> <li>• 0 valid renewed operator licences applications received</li> <li>• 5 valid new hackney carriage vehicle licences applications received</li> <li>• 42 valid renewed hackney carriage vehicle licences applications received</li> <li>• 14 valid new private hire vehicle licences applications received</li> <li>• 68 valid renewed private hire vehicle licences applications received</li> </ul>
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Underage Sales Visits						
	Vapes	Alcohol	Tobacco	Fireworks	Knives	Lottery
	Fail/visits	Fail/visits	Fail/visits	Fail/visits	Fail/visits	Fail/visits
BFC	2/5	0/0	2/5	0/0	2/5	0/0
West Berks	2/4	1/2	0/7	0/0	0/5	0/0
Wok	0/2	1/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0

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





## Quarter 2 Selection of Service Compliments

After one of our Environmental Health Officers assisted a resident with a noise complaint:

*"Thank you Jodie and all your colleagues for all your hard work and help with this it us very much appreciated."*

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A selection of thank yous to our Community and Trading Standards Team:

*"This is great news I appreciate all your help and time. It's a great relief also that you spoke neighbours \*\*\* Hopefully we can bring this to an end now, and all are aware of the problem. Thank you so so much."*

*"I'm actually incredibly grateful that you've taken care of that for us. I wouldn't have known where to begin. Thanks for all your help and support."*

*"Thank You as always for being there for me. I've only got PC @@ to contact now. You are by a long way the most helpful person. "*

*"You have gone above & beyond your job for me. You are at the end of the phone too. I really do appreciate all you are doing for me. You are one special lady"*

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Email from client regarding an Abandoned Vehicle that has been removed after being stickered

*"I Just want to say, that the SORN vehicles I mentioned in my report have now been removed from the residential parking spaces.*

*I am assuming this is down to you.*

*If so, thank you. 📁 See it can be done"*

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A thank you after a light nuisance was removed following some conversations with the neighbours:

*"Good afternoon Rachel,*

*Just a quick line to thank you once again for being so supportive to our case regarding our neighbours light, as it has made such a difference now that it doesn't shine onto our property and he has even adjusted it further so it is no longer facing our property."*

---

A thank you from another local authority after one of our Officers provided a Witness Statement to another Trading Standards with their investigations into a solar panel company

*"I wanted to express my thanks for your time, patience and invaluable assistance in this matter, both throughout the investigation and the recent trial. An amazing team effort and glad our victims have got the justice they deserve."*

---

A thank you to one of our officers who assisted a resident with a rogue trader case:

*"I feel I have gained a good friend in you Mark and I will always feel indebted for that call you made to me when I was in a dark place thinking the law and life were failing me and I had no-where else to turn."*

*The relief I experienced from your call made me think someone upstairs was definitely looking after me. "*

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A thank you from a resident after one of our Environmental Health Officers assisted them with a noise nuisance complaint emanating from a local pub:

*"Hi Jodie,  
Trust all goes well. I am pleased to report that the noise issue with the xxxx pub has been resolved. The manager has followed your guidelines and things are fine now."*

*Long may it last. Thank you for your help Jodie, it is most appreciated."*

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A selection of thank you messages from various West Berkshire schools after our officers undertook presentations at the schools

*Hi Laura and Steve*

*"Thank you very much for the sessions yesterday they were very informative."*

*"Thank you. The children absolutely loved the session."*

*"Thank you so much! It was a really great session for them and hopefully makes a difference. Their engagement is thanks to Steve."*

*"Thank you for your email, and for taking the time to deliver such an informative presentation yesterday. It was well received and sparked some valuable discussion among the team. We really appreciate you and Steve making the effort to come in and share your insights."*

*"Thank you so much for running these sessions."*

*Speaking to the class teachers, they believe the children got a lot out of them which is great!"*

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A thank you to one of our Trading Standards Officers who assisted the family of a terminally ill victim who had been scammed by a 'rogue trader':

*"Hi Sean,*

*I wanted to drop you an email to say how impressed and grateful we are for the work Rob did on my late father's Trading Standards (redacted).*

*Honestly, I never expected to see the money we paid to the 'roofer' again, but Rob did a fantastic job at, not only pursuing the case for us, but also securing a successful outcome.*

*It's been a difficult time as my father was already terminally ill when he was scammed and has since died; Rob was sensitive to the situation throughout and looked after my dad's interests impeccably.*

*In a world where we are all too quick to give negative feedback, I feel it's very important to give positive feedback where it's due. Rob went above & beyond with our case and my brother and I are very grateful. As Rob's manager I wanted you to know. "*

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After one of our Environmental Health officers assisted residents with a statutory noise and air pollution complaint

*"Hi Phumzile,*

*I have seen thank you very much for all your help with this myself and the other residents effected are very happy with the outcome.*

*Many thanks"*

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A thanks you from a resident after one of our officers assisted a resident after they complained about a rodent and accumulation problem:

*"Dear Mick,*

*Thank you for the update. I appreciate your diligence in addressing this issue and for contacting the property owner.*

*It's clear you've been very dedicated to resolving this matter."*

---

A thanks you from a resident after one of our officers assisted a resident after they complained about a noise nuisance:

*"Hi Charlie*

*Thanks for your email.*

*Since my last email to you there has only been one instance of the alarm going off and that was during the day and for a relatively short time so it does seem to have improved, thanks.*

*Thanks for your help and for following up, I appreciate it.”*

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A selection of comments received after our Trading Standards Officers supported residents who had been victims of a scam and the perpetrator received a custodial sentence:

*“Great news, once again a massive thank you to you and everyone else that’s been involved in this. “*

*“That’s great news, thanks for letting me know. “*

*“That is awesome news, I’m really happy to hear that. Thanks for the many hours you’ve spent on this and following up on some many victims as well. It’s great to see that justice has been served.”*

*“Thank you for letting me know Robert, Well done to you for persevering and taking justice to win. I am really happy to see the end of it.”*

*“I also thank you and everyone else involved in the prosecution for pursuing the case. Without the support of you, then these people would get away with it.”*

*“Thank you for the update. I’m pleased to hear that the case has reached a conclusion and that {the defendant} has been sentenced. I appreciate all the hard work from yourself and the team throughout this process. I also hope that once he is released, he will not be able to continue scamming people again. I was glad to support the case in any way I could.”*

*“Congratulations on getting this result! I’m sure the others that I met on the day will be very happy to hear this news too with all the work you’ve put into it. “*

*“Thank you for updating me, that’s great news!”*

## 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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## Progress with Peer Review Recommendations

Recommendations are prioritised as:

Priority 1 – the most important, crucial to the future of the Service

Priority 2 – high importance

Priority 3 – important in helping the Service to continue to improve

Governance – Recommendations - Joint Committee Arrangements			
	Recommendation		Progress/Update
1	The governance arrangements for the PPP need to be updated to ensure they meet the needs of the partner authorities. Wokingham should rejoin the partnership as a member of the JPPC for the range of services they currently commission. As a result, they would become a full voting member of the JPPC. This should be in place prior to or as part of any recommissioning of the shared service.	1	The proposals for the future of the service have been agreed at the Bracknell Forest Cabinet meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> October, the Wokingham Executive meeting on the 16 <sup>th</sup> October and the West Berkshire Executive on the 6 <sup>th</sup> November. Reports have also been taken to the respective Council meetings to agree relevant elements of partnership agreements. A summary of activity and update is included on the December 2025 JPPC meeting.
2	Whilst not a member of the JPPC Wokingham should have a standing invitation to all JPPC meetings and have the ability to speak and contribute to any discussion or decisions impacting on the services that they directly commission via PPP, albeit the current contractual arrangements preclude the ability to vote on any issue.	1	Complete
3	Members and senior officers from the three partner authorities should	3	Ongoing

	have opportunities and space to meet informally for updates or briefings or to discuss issues outside of the formal JMB and JPPC meetings in order to build better mutual understanding and positive relationships.		The West Berkshire Council Portfolio holder has requested that a summary of the notes from his briefings with officers be circulated to the Portfolio Holders in the two partner authorities and that they be invited to attend his briefings.
<b>Engagement of other Members, including Scrutiny Functions</b>			
<b>4</b>	Further member engagement through training or member development sessions should be explored for all partner authorities. Members have varying degrees of awareness of the service currently but recognise that it has a major impact on the lives of residents and supports local council priorities. They have a limited awareness of the range of services delivered and of value for money.	<b>2</b>	Officers are seeking opportunities to attend member training and member development sessions to raise awareness of the service.
<b>5</b>	The service should have a regular, at least annual, opportunity for scrutiny at the relevant committees in all partner authorities in addition to scrutiny via the JPPC.	<b>1</b>	A recommendation has been included on the reports on the future of the partnership requesting that the annual report is included on the forward plan of the relevant scrutiny committee in all three authorities.
<b>6</b>	Scrutiny reports should focus on evaluating the services' actions, performance and cost-effectiveness.	<b>1</b>	See above
<b>7</b>	The service annual report should be circulated to all Members.	<b>1</b>	Complete and recirculated with the licensing agendas as was agreed at the June 2025 JPPC meeting.
<b>8</b>	Mechanisms should be used in all partner authorities for regular service updates on key issues.	<b>2</b>	See item 4



Host Authority			
9	The host authority should remain as West Berkshire. The practical challenges and financial costs of changing the host authority would be extremely disruptive and deliver no clear benefits.	1	Complete – agreed at all three Executive/Cabinet meetings
Inputs and Support - Recommendations			
10	The budget setting process for the PPP would benefit from greater clarity for the partners. Understanding amongst Executive members is inconsistent at present.	2	Ongoing - Additional information in the reports and discussions taking place with the portfolio holders.
11	Staff representatives should be brought together to review the key outcomes of the staff survey to help address and develop an action plan to address areas such as service culture, management communications, cross team working, as well as practical issues such as access to offices, office facilities, and IT.	2	First staff workshop took place on the 08 July 2025. Meetings are now being arranged on a quarterly basis.
12	The staff group should be cross cutting with good representations from the partners/services. There should be clear terms of reference and objectives to review the outcomes of the staff survey and identify the most important and most urgent issues to address, there should also be a clear route to inform management decisions and actions.	2	Terms of Reference agreed, reps from all teams invited to attend and outcomes reported to JMB.
13	Managers should be clear on expectations on how flexible/remote working should operate. They should respond to the concerns expressed about lack of presence in offices by staff and managers and the impact that has on service culture and delivery. Development of a “team” or “service” Charter would assist with that – engaging staff and managers on what works best for individuals, for the team, the service, the partner authorities and residents.	2	Duty Manager rota has been set up to improve visibility of managers in the Theale Gateway Office.  The Staff Working Group are being asked to develop a Team Charter which will be presented to the first Whole Team Away Day in 2026.

<b>14</b>	Review and update the service structure in the light of the service changes from 2022 and any new delivery arrangements post 2027. Ensuring that the management and service structure meets the needs of the new service and the partner local authorities and that it is affordable within the agreed service budget.	<b>1</b>	Ongoing
<b>Workforce Strategy</b>			
<b>15</b>	Build on the existing workforce strategy which focuses on a “grow your own” approach, continuing the positive use of apprenticeships to also include a focus on management and leadership development, succession planning and EDI.	<b>2</b>	Complete - The current workforce strategy has been reviewed and included in the December JPPC meeting papers. We currently have 3 x L6 TS apprentices, 1 x L6 EH apprentice, 1 officer undertaking ILM, 2 L6 TS apprentices (Vapes) and 1 additional officer will be starting a L6 TS Apprenticeship in March 2026. Two team members have almost completed their MSc's in Environmental Health. A further two members of staff has started the MSc programme and one officer has started his Level 6 Food Control training.  Training sessions are being arranged for the leadership team including Conflict Resolution Training in November 2025.
<b>16</b>	Consider creating a skills directory to help staff across the service know where expertise or skills can be found and used by others.	<b>3</b>	A competencies matrix has been drafted and has been circulated to all team members for updating.
<b>Staff Recognition</b>			
<b>17</b>	Review how the service currently recognises success and good performance to ensure a consistent approach using feedback from the	<b>3</b>	Officers are reviewing the current corporate proposals in West Berkshire

	staff working group.		and will identify good practice arising from that and will provide feedback through the Employee Representative if any additional suggestions arise from the workshop.
<b>One to Ones and Performance Management</b>			
<b>18</b>	Ensure that expectations about how individual performance management, appraisals and One to Ones are clear to all managers and staff and ensure that they take place with the appropriate frequency.	<b>1</b>	This has been included as a KPI on the performance report. The new framework and methodology have been circulated to all members of the team.
<b>Working Expectations – Flexible and Virtual Working</b>			
<b>19</b>	Continue to support flexibility in working arrangements and the benefits of working remotely and from multiple locations whilst ensuring clarity of expectations on when managers and teams should physically be present and accessible in offices.	<b>2</b>	Duty Manager Rota in place and teams arranging working together sessions across Market Street, Times Square and Theale Gateway offices. Complete
<b>20</b>	Ensure an appropriate level of physical accessible presence to ensure managers are visible, accessible, and so that teams and individuals can build relationships, share knowledge and experience, and support each other.	<b>2</b>	Duty Manager Rota operating in Theale Gateway. Teams are arranging working together sessions across Market Street, Times Square and Theale Gateway offices. Complete
<b>Information Technology</b>			
<b>21</b>	Continue to build on the benefits of a new common IT platform to ensure systems and processes are more consistent and streamlined. To include improving access to management data for managers and staff.	<b>2</b>	Report building is being enhanced and work is underway to make more use of the portal to allow more self service by our customers.
<b>22</b>	Consider the scope for using the new database to link to corporate	<b>3</b>	This will be looked at once the new

	systems to publish performance data on a public facing dashboard.		performance data is embedded. Officers have met with performance team in West Berkshire to identify measures that will be reported up through the corporate cycle.
<b>23</b>	Consider whether there is scope to defer a new procurement exercise for an IT system and if procurement does need to proceed, ensure that the terms are flexible to deal with future local government re-organisation.	<b>2</b>	Contract with current provider has been extended.
<b>Communications and Branding</b>			
<b>24</b>	Ensure adequate resource is available for development and delivery of a service communications strategy and communications programme. Use the strategy to target key stakeholders to increase awareness of service impacts and outcomes.	<b>1</b>	Updated communication and engagement strategy was adopted at the June 2025 meeting. New website launched on the 31 March 2025. While the Policy and Governance Principal Officer continues to work with the communications teams in the partner authorities it needs to be recognised that the only dedicated resource for communication activity was removed from the structure. It is anticipated that the Community Engagement Officers may be able to provide some additional resilience to some of the activity.  Officers are working on reintroducing a bi-monthly newsletter for the taxi trade.
<b>25</b>	Within the branding of Public Protection Partnership ensure that the branding of the individual partner authorities is also clear. The service functions need to be seen as very much part of local authority delivery	<b>3</b>	Complete - The templates include the PPP logo and that of the partner authorities.

	and not something separate.		
<b>Support Services Relationships</b>			
<b>26</b>	Ensure that clear links and referral mechanisms exist for all relevant corporate support functions, including IT, Property, HR and Legal and that appropriate escalation routes are in place to resolve issues.	<b>2</b>	Complete - These are in place
<b>Outputs, Outcomes and Value for Money – Recommendations</b>			
<b>27</b>	Review and update the KPIs used to manage the performance of the service ensuring that the KPIs used for the JMB and JPPC meet the needs of Members. Consideration should be given to the use of a KPI scorecard with clarity over what performance is good or not, on or off target, with comparisons to previous reporting periods and highlighting any trends. For key targets, a traffic light approach should be considered.	<b>1</b>	A revised set of KPIs, MOV were agreed at the June meeting and reported back to the Committee in October 2025. As of Q2 the presentation of this data will be reviewed.
<b>28</b>	Ensure there is a clearer more explicit link between service and corporate priorities for the three partner authorities, highlighted in presentation of KPIs Future iterations of the service plan and future Strategic Assessment should indicate which corporate priorities they help support.	<b>2</b>	The KPIs are linked to the Service's priorities and the individual authorities within the new document.
<b>29</b>	Undertake greater analysis of the customer survey data from residents and local businesses. Build an understanding of what the key messages from the survey feedback are; consider trends; and identify appropriate actions and responses to improve the experience of residents and local businesses.	<b>2</b>	Feedback to the service through customer survey data and the complaints process is used to drive forward service improvement within existing resources.  Officers have been working to cleanse the data on the system and changing practices so that response times can be reported more accurately.
<b>30</b>	Identify mechanisms across the partner local authorities to better understand the needs and priorities of residents to help inform business planning and resource allocation to supplement the current intelligence	<b>2</b>	This will be reviewed later in the year albeit that the new KPIs and MoVs have been linked to the priorities within the

	gathering approaches.		partner authorities.
<b>31</b>	Benchmarking should be explored, for example with the SE regional TS group (Trading Standards South East), use of CIPFA data sets or other statutory returns (e.g. FSA) ideally with a Near Neighbour group if that can be identified. This could include financial and/or performance data. Current available data does not provide useful benchmarking data so this may need to be a longer-term objective.	<b>2</b>	Due to the structure of the service it has proved difficult to find suitable benchmarking groups but officers will continue to explore opportunities to locate this data.
<b>32</b>	Continue to seek opportunities for additional funding to deliver service priorities and better protect residents. Build on the successes of funding from Public Health and National Trading Standards and ensuring that New Burdens funding for significant new duties such as those found in the Renters Rights Acts reaches the Service.	<b>2</b>	The service has continued to build on opportunities to secure additional funding. An example includes the funding from DoH for two additional Level 6 Trading Standards Apprentices for 4 years.
<b>33</b>	Budget contributions from the various partners should be reviewed prior to any recommissioning of the service. The process should be transparent to ensure that the partners are confident that they are achieving value for money.	<b>2</b>	complete
<b>34</b>	The mechanism for agreeing budget and service variations should continue to be incorporated into future partnership agreements.	<b>1</b>	This will be included in the new IAAs.
<b>35</b>	Review the current chargeable hourly rates for services to ensure they are at a level comparable with neighbours and competitors and also consider the scope for differential rates for different functions and hence increase income.	<b>3</b>	Complete - The support services recharges have been reviewed and included in the revised fees.
<b>36</b>	Ensure systems are in place to maximise opportunities for income recovery created by the Renters Rights Bill/Act to drive up standards in the Private Sector Rented housing sector.	<b>2</b>	Complete – EH Housing Policy agreed at the October 2025 meeting

<b>37</b>	The communications strategy should include a focus on maximising the reach and impact of sharing messages on service impacts and outcomes for residents.	<b>2</b>	This work has been concluded, and officers are attending a number of outreach events.
<b>The Future – Recommendations</b>			
<b>38</b>	The service should be recommissioned by the partner local authorities with the full range of services currently being delivered.	<b>1</b>	This work is currently underway and will be completed by December 2025.
<b>39</b>	The recommissioning should ideally be for a 10-year term and should include regular “refresh” reviews to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the partner local authorities as those needs evolve.	<b>2</b>	Complete - Reports have been agreed by the Executive/ Cabinet for an extension to 2029 in light of Central Government announcements around local government reorganisation.
<b>40</b>	The recommissioning would need to be subject to the impact of any local government re-organisation. The practicalities of re-organisation may mean that it may be more pragmatic to extend the current arrangements for a shorter period until the nature of any re-configuration of local authorities becomes clear.	<b>2</b>	See above
<b>41</b>	Consideration should be given to expanding the range of services provided, initially to Wokingham and then for other neighbouring authorities as and if opportunities arise. This will require a clear business case detailing what would be delivered at what cost and what benefits would arise for each potential partner.	<b>3</b>	Opportunities will continue to be explored.

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# Briefing Note – PPP Kennelling Provision

<b>Date Prepared:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<b>Briefing Author:</b>	George Lawrence

## 1 Purpose of the Briefing

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Corporate Board with an update on the challenges faced by the service regarding the kennelling provision for stray dogs.
- 1.2 The main challenges are focussed on
  - (a) The direct cost increase of kennelling provision for the PPP for strays
  - (b) The costs of moving unclaimed dogs onto longer term facilities for rehoming.
  - (c) The options the service is putting in place to mitigate direct and indirect costs.
- 1.3 In addition to the above, challenges arise from the emotive nature of this subject matter where destruction is considered as an option to alleviate space pressure or where temperament checks prevent the ability readily rehome.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The shared service includes the provision of a stray dog collection and kennelling service. The areas currently covered are Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council.
- 2.2 Section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on the Local Authority to provide the provision of a stray dog collection, and where collected, maintain that dog in its care for at least 7 days.
- 2.3 If after 7 days, the dog is unclaimed, or unable to be reunited then a decision needs to be made in terms of what to then do with the dog. The Act allows for the LA to arrange to have the stray rehomed or humanely destroyed. The service has a contractor in place to provide collection and drop off and separate arrangements for kennelling at facility's who are able to take on stray dogs. There is no current dedicated animal warden in place although the post is currently out to advert.
- 2.4 Despite numerous attempts to engage with local kennel providers, the service was limited in who it could use as a kennelling facility, and it does not have any in-house across either of the Council areas within the Partnership.
- 2.5 Up until 2023, the service used a relatively local kennelling service in Slough at a cost of around £20/night. In Dec 2023, this facility, stopped taking larger dogs which meant the need to search further afield. This was extremely challenging, as there was no capacity available locally and many Councils were in the same boat, especially during the banning of XL bully type dogs.

- 2.6 However, we were successful in securing a facility that was shared with other Local Authority's, albeit some distance away in the Chessington area. Moreover, to secure a space the service had to commit to a longer 'letting' bases for each space as with the other LA's and this was initially for 1 kennel space for 1 year at a cost of around 1k per month.
- 2.7 The Slough facility that was no longer able to take larger dogs then closed altogether in 2024. This meant we had to increase capacity to the alternate kennel, and with it came increased costs for both the service and the contractor, and in particular travel distances and monthly costs. At the same time, the service was without a dedicated animal warden, meaning additional burdens on existing staff and additional contractor usage.
- 2.8 The service of stray dog collection is unpredictable, and it is not possible to predict the number of strays at any given time, but figures for this year show that the summer months brought about more pressure than preceding months (Annex B). In August, the service had the situation where more than 4 dogs arrived within 7 days of one another needing kennelling.
- 2.9 There is a cost recovery system in place where a dog can be reunited with its owner. However, for various reasons, this cost recovery is limited including for many reasons the owners are not traceable. Since April, cost recovery has amounted to around £2k compared to the 28k it has cost the service so far in collection and kennelling, excluding officer time (Kennelling 18k and collections 10k).

### **3 Current Status**

#### Kennelling provisions

- 3.1 Since April 2025 the dog warden service has dealt with 100 stray dogs across the West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest areas. 35 of which required kennelling (See Annex B). This has been one of the busier summers, and challenges have exacerbated due to not having in place a dedicated animal warden, summer staff leave (and absence) and external capacity issues in arranging rescue spaces when attempting to rehome unclaimed dogs.
- 3.2 The service now currently has 3 permanent kennelling spaces across 2 locations, with an overflow option for another space if available. Each space is secured on a monthly basis, costing around £1000 per month/space. However, neither facility allows members of the public to attend to reclaim. Also, there is no guarantee that should a space be given up, that it then becomes available later.
- 3.3 Depending on the need for an additional space, the kennelling costs are predicted to be around 36k-48k for this year. To date, this is compared to just over 22k the whole of last year (Annex A).

#### Moving dogs on after 7 days.

- 3.4 The service has over 10 different rehoming centres in its contacts and the means of placing dogs with finders and other members of the public as set out in the Act.
- 3.5 We also have the ability to instruct the kennels to seek rehoming. This comes at a cost with one of the kennels used by the service. However, we recognise that rehoming takes time, and success can be dependent on the age and breed of the dog as well as the rescue centres capacity to take in dogs at that time. The officers' involved in arranging rehoming do so from day 1 of collection, or up to 3 if following a weekend collection.
- 3.6 Moving dog on after 7 days has been the biggest pressure insofar as maintaining the ability to collect and hold stray dogs. The average time to rehome a stray dog this year has been around 14.5 days, 7.5 days over the statutory period.
- 3.7 The Act allows for an Authority to humanely destroy a dog that hasn't been claimed after 7 days. Historically, the service would only seek this option if no rehoming was possible, but this was at a time when Kennelling wasn't so scarce and rehoming a little easier. This year, the service has arranged for one humane destruction due to the temperament being such that rehoming was not an option.

#### Risks and Mitigation

- 3.8 The Local Authority has explored alternative options for moving dogs on.
- 3.9 Some of the cost experienced by the service is being balanced by the vacancy of the animal warden. However, this is not sustainable given the vacancy itself leads to higher costs, increased pressure on existing staff trying to back-fill the role and limited activity in other areas that role plays within the community. An advert is progressing to replace the role.
- 3.10 Despite the challenges, officers currently covering the role have developed a fostering scheme designed to alleviate kennelling pressures after the statutory 7-day period whilst permanent rehoming takes place. This approach isn't without its own considerations that need to be managed. For example, dog movement, incentivisation, officer time, dog temperament checks, repeated straying, damages or risk of injury to either dog or human. However, the service feels it can mitigate those risks with the steps it has put in place, such as officer learning and development, temperament checks, home checks and free food vouchers to potential fosterers and support from its contractor.
- 3.11 The scheme is being finalised and will be rolled out to all PPP to create a directory of dog foster homes we can call on during peak times. Following invite to express interest in the scheme to PPP employees, there are currently 4 potential dog fosterers' being lined up and will assist in refining any issues that might arise. Once proved it is intended member of the wider Council staff groups will also be invited to participate once all processes are in place.
- 3.12 Whilst numbers over the summer have been significantly higher than the months preceding, it is felt that 3 permanent kennels is enough to cope with demand, provided moving dogs on after 7 days is done as quickly as possible.

## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1 Having a permanent AW role in place will alleviate the pressure placed on other staff in attempting to rehome, whilst carrying out their other 'day-job'. This is currently being advertised.
- 4.2 Assuming the rate of kennelling demand remains the same or increases, it can also be assumed that the kennelling costs will not reduce any time soon under current arrangements and there are opportunities for alternate tariffs and very limited supply.
- 4.3 As it stands, holding dogs for a period of 7 days requires at least 3 kennelling spaces being kept available and sometimes more or if demand increases at any given time.
- 4.4 Another alternative might be that the Council seeks its own facility which it could use and to let out spaces to other neighbouring authorities at market rate. This will require investment, proper project management oversight and time.
- 4.5 Dogs for rehoming after 7 days block spaces, and it is this blockage that impacts on service delivery. The service is looking at introducing its own fostering programme to alleviate over stayed dogs beyond 7 days to ensure the 3 kennels remain open for new strays. This brings with it risk, but ones that can be managed.
- 4.6 Should the foster scheme be successful, it might be rolled out to a wider catchment if demand on spaces dictates. However, there remains an obligation on the Council to hold stray up to 7 days.
- 4.7 One other option, where spaces are filled, is the humane destruction of an unclaimed dog after 7 days.

## 5 Appendices

Annex A- Summary of Kennelling costs 2023/24, 2024/25 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to August 2025.

Annex B – Summary of stray dogs collected and kennelled

Annex C – Legal note regarding 7 day boarding requirement

**Annex A – Summary of Kennelling costs 2023/24, 2024/25 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to August 2025.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>April 25 – August 25.</b>
<b>Combined Kennelling costs (£)</b>	17258.00	22480.00	18500.00

**Annex B – Summary of stray dogs collected and kennelled.**

<b>Month (2025)</b>	<b>Dogs Collected (WB)</b>	<b>Dogs Taken to Kennels (WB)</b>	<b>Dogs Collected (BF)</b>	<b>Dogs Taken to Kennels (BF)</b>	<b>Total Kennelled</b>
<b>April</b>	6	1	9	5	6
<b>May</b>	8	3	4	1	4
<b>June</b>	4	2	2	1	3
<b>July</b>	11	5	9	2	7
<b>August</b>	14	7	8	4	11
<b>September</b>	18	4	7	0	4

## **Annex C - Legal note regarding 7 day boarding requirement**

### **Legal Research Note: Requirement for Local Authorities to Keep Stray Dogs for Seven Days**

#### **Legal Standards/Rules**

The legal framework governing the seizure, detention, and disposal of stray dogs is primarily set out in section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Act imposes specific duties on local authorities regarding stray dogs, including their seizure, care, and disposal. Key provisions include:

1. Local authorities must appoint an officer responsible for dealing with stray dogs found in their area.
2. Stray dogs must be detained for seven clear days after seizure or, if a notice is served to the owner, seven clear days after the service of the notice.
3. Local authorities must ensure that detained dogs are properly fed and maintained during the detention period.
4. If the owner of a seized dog is identifiable, the officer must serve a written notice to the owner, stating the seizure, the location of the dog, and the requirement to claim the dog within seven clear days and pay all expenses incurred.
5. If the dog remains unclaimed after the seven-day period, the officer may dispose of the dog by selling it, giving it to a person or establishment that will care for it, or destroying it in a manner that causes minimal pain. However, the dog cannot be sold or given for the purposes of vivisection.

#### **Analysis**

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 establishes a clear legal obligation for local authorities in England and Wales to detain stray dogs for seven clear days. This requirement applies regardless of whether the owner of the dog is identifiable. If the owner is known or can be identified through a collar or other means, the local authority must serve a written notice to the owner, specifying the seizure and the location of the dog, and informing the owner that the dog will be disposed of if not claimed within seven clear days after the notice is served.

During the detention period, the local authority is required to ensure that the dog is properly fed and maintained. Additionally, the officer must maintain a register containing prescribed particulars of the seized dogs, which must be available for public inspection at reasonable times.

If the dog remains unclaimed after the seven-day period, the local authority officer has the discretion to dispose of the dog in one of three ways: (a) selling it or giving it to a person who will care for it; (b) selling it or giving it to an establishment for the reception of stray dogs; or (c) destroying it in a manner that causes as little pain as possible. Importantly, the dog cannot be sold or given for the purposes of vivisection.

The legislation also provides for exceptional circumstances where a detained dog may be destroyed before the expiration of the seven-day period if the officer believes this is necessary to avoid suffering.

## Conclusion

In summary, local authorities in England and Wales are legally required under section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to detain stray dogs for seven clear days. During this period, the dogs must be properly cared for, and a register of seized dogs must be maintained and made available for public inspection. If the owner of a stray dog is identifiable, they must be notified in writing and given seven clear days to claim the dog and pay any associated expenses. If the dog remains unclaimed after the seven-day period, the local authority officer may dispose of the dog in accordance with the options provided under the Act, ensuring that the disposal is humane and does not involve vivisection. In exceptional cases, a dog may be destroyed before the seven-day period to prevent suffering.

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## Air Quality Update 2025

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	08 December 2025
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Tom McCann
Date JMB agreed report:	17 November 2025
Report Author:	Suzanne McLaughlin
Forward Plan Ref:	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), West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Wokingham Borough (WokBC). These reports are for the monitoring data calendar year 2024.
- 1.2 To inform the JPPC of the proposed consultation on the revocation of the Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area.

### 2. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTES** the contents of the Air Quality Annual Status Reports as set out in Appendix **A** for Bracknell Forest , Appendix **C** for West Berkshire Council and Appendix **E** for Wokingham Borough Council.
- 2.2 **NOTES** 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) Appendix **D** West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Appendix **F** for Wokingham Borough Council (WokBC).
- 2.3 **APPROVES** that consultation for the potential revocation of the BFC Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations from DEFRA, in Appendix **G**.
- 2.4 **NOTES** the progress on the measures to improve air quality set out in each report.
- 2.5 **APPROVES** the ongoing and planned future measures to improve air quality set in each report.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment:

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>Work relating to Air Quality monitoring and reporting is funded from the general revenue budget allocated to the Public Protection Service. Several proposals in the action plan 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 up to 2023. Since 2024 this funding stream is no longer available.</p>
<b>Human Resource:</b>	<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>
<b>Legal:</b>	<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, one in Bracknell Forest (Crowthorne High Street) and one in Wokingham Borough (Wokingham Town Centre) 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.</p> <p>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 these are to be regularly reviewed and must be revised no later than every five years.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<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>
<b>Property:</b>	<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.</p>

	<p>Under this heading the Committee in turn identified air quality as a priority for 2021/22.</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 has a target of net carbon zero by 2050.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council's Climate Emergency Strategy was dated September 2025 and has a target of carbon neutrality by 2030.</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 has 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 (AQMA) 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 and in the current Strategic Assessment 2024-2027.</p>
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	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 provided.			
<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	None – The production of the reports is a statutory requirement.			

## 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 Annually DEFRA set a deadline for submission and there are implications of 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 2024-2025 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 withdrawn from elements of the Partnership the PPP continues to undertake air quality work for the local authority under an agreement. The three Annual Status Reports were completed in-house by the deadline of the 30 June 2025. The reports were submitted as follows:

- Bracknell Forest 17 June and resubmitted 26 August
- West Berkshire 20 June and resubmitted 24 July
- Wokingham 17 June

5.3 Due to a clerical error the well written and informative reports for West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest were not accepted first time around as the bias adjustment factor used was incorrect (0.83 instead of 0.84 for WBC and 0.91 instead of 0.84 for BFC). Whilst this was marginal error and did not affect the overall downward trend of the NO<sub>2</sub> and thus the increase of the local air quality, DEFRA required the reports to be resubmitted with the correct bias correction and altered NO<sub>2</sub> values within 1 month and this was achieved.

## 6. Bracknell Forest

6.1 There is one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared across the Borough: The Bracknell Road (B3348) and Crowthorne High Street, known as the Crowthorne AQMA.

6.2 The major source of air quality pollutants in Bracknell Forest is emissions from road transport. In particular, the contribution from 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.

6.3 The levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in 2024 have shown a decreasing trend since 2018.

6.4 There were no exceedances of the ratified, bias corrected, annualised and distance corrected diffusion tubes within the Crowthorne AQMA. 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 2024 sites showed a decrease from the 2023 data. The levels have been reducing in the five years since the lock down year of 2020.

6.5 The Particulate Matter PM<sub>10</sub>, is no longer monitored in the Bracknell. When annualised the last measured data for 2022 was 18.5 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 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which is not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year. The PM<sub>10</sub> level demonstrates a decreasing trend since 2018 when the level was 19.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

6.6 Bracknell Forest produced an Air Quality Action Plan in 2014 which was updated in 2016. In 2024 a new AQAP covering the period 2024 – 2029 was approved. The AQAP outlines local measures to improve pollution levels within the AQMAs and more widely across the borough. The AQAP is integrated with the delivery of the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP 4) to improve local air quality and climate change, through joint working with the Council's Environmental Health, Transport Planning and Planning Divisions.

## **Actions to Improve Air Quality**

- 6.7 Smoothing the traffic flow and reducing journey times and major highway improvements along the A329/A322 corridor have resulted in the reduction of NO<sub>2</sub> levels. Works to reduce the bottleneck on Downshire Way have now been completed as have other works on the A322 roundabouts.
- 6.8 Since the speed humps along the High Street in Crowthorne have been upgraded and replaced with speed cushions to reduce stop start driving the NO<sub>2</sub> levels have dropped from 41.7 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2011 to 16.9 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024.
- 6.9 Further upgrades to traffic signals, complementing capacity and junction improvements along the A322, A329 and A3095 corridors have improved journey times, reduced congestion and had a positive overall impact on air quality.
- 6.10 Electric Vehicle Charge point expansion has seen 38 fast chargers installed across 12 council car parks; rapid chargers added at Great Hollands and Birch Hill; planning is underway for 400+ on-street chargers using LEVI funding; and the Berkshire EV Working Group has been formed.
- 6.11 Sustainable Travel Initiatives have seen the launch of a shuttle bus linking Bracknell rail station with the BID area; a cycle hire scheme introduced for BID employees; and refreshed pedestrian/cycle path markings and new signage installed.
- 6.10 Pedestrian crossing enhancements on Temple Way to provide safer links to the new Blue Mountain development, new schools and community facility. Also at Broad Lane, Cambridge Road and Birch Hill Road to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity.
- 6.11 1212 school pupils have received Bikeability training.
- 6.12 Led Walks and Rides – Sustrans continues to run popular led walks with plans to expand to guided cycle rides.
- 6.13 Nearly 3000 residents and 20 schools/colleges have been involved with the Eco Rewards scheme, with over 145,000 sustainable miles logged.
- 6.14 The Love to Ride online cycling community has expanded and runs challenges, e.g. 2024 Cycle September saw 11 workplaces join in with over 2000 trips recorded of which nearly half were new or occasional riders.
- 6.15 2 staff and 2 community 'Dr Bike' events took place in 2024, which include free bike checks, minor repairs, and maintenance advice.
- 6.16 In September 2024 a cycling festival, in partnership with Trek, Avanti, Sustrans, and The Lexicon, was held to promote cycling in the Borough.
- 6.17 For Walk to School week in May 2024 the council offered free resources to all schools. 19 schools participated in the national walking campaign.
- 6.18 On Clean Air Day (20th June 2024), all schools were invited to sign up to the "Clean Air Pledge". By doing this they were agreeing to distribute educational materials on air quality and anti-idling, and to increase awareness participate in related activities.



- 6.19 In 2025 implementation begins for schemes outlined in the new LTP4 and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- 6.20 Further updates to the EV Strategy and web content refreshed to include guidance on cable gullies and provide clear and relevant local EV information.
- 6.21 Held the second Cycling Festival on 8th June 2025, in partnership with Trek, Avanti, Sustrans, and The Lexicon, to promote cycling.
- 6.22 Clean Air Day on 19th June 2025, all schools received anti-idling packs to support assemblies and awareness.
- 6.23 To investigate new solutions for traffic flow along Crowthorne High Street, in the centre of the Crowthorne AQMA.
- 6.24 Work with the Climate Change Team and Transport Working Group to address issues on our extensive walking and cycling network, including encroaching vegetation, and improve community engagement.

### **Commentary from DEFRA**

- 6.25 DEFRA commented that the resubmitted report had sufficiently rectified the issues previously raised. They accepted the conclusions reached for all sources and pollutants.
- 6.26 DEFRA stated there was good quality discussion on the trends of the results for all pollutants as well as good quality graphs showing the trends over the last 5 years.
- 6.27 DEFRA stated good practice in discussion of the effects of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and good quality discussion on trends of results.
- 6.28 DEFRA stated based on the evidence provided there is justification to revoke the Crowthorne AQMA as compliance achieved for the last 3 years.

## **7. West Berkshire**

- 7.1 The two AQMAs in West Berkshire, Thatcham (on the A4) and Newbury (A339, St John's Roundabout), were revoked in 2024.
- 7.1 The major source of air quality pollutants in West Berkshire is road transport and in particular the contribution from the A339 and A4. The main pollutant is NO<sub>2</sub> in Newbury and Thatcham.
- 7.2 The NO<sub>2</sub> levels in 2024 have showed a decrease on the pre-pandemic levels since 2019 and only 1 of the 23 diffusion tube sites have increased since 2023, and none of the monitoring locations within West Berkshire exceeded the Annual Objective of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The site which increased was 75 Chapel Street, Thatcham, which increased from 18.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023 to 19.1 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024. However, it is still lower than the lockdown year of 2020 which was 19.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The highest recorded concentration was 21.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at the A339 964) Greenham Road Newbury. The 1 Hourly Objective Nitrogen Dioxide was not exceeded in 2024 (permitted level of 18 exceedances of 200µg/m<sup>3</sup> per year).



- 7.3 Over the past five years there has been a general decrease of NO<sub>2</sub>, across the district. Overall the levels in West Berkshire have been reducing over the 5 years up to 2024.

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

- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 Upcoming initiatives are for electric vehicle charging points to be installed (58 on street and 97 car park); continued development of cycle routes; and enhancements to cycle training and bike storage at schools. WBC is pioneering a through-pavement EV charging scheme; the Kerbo Charge system is being expanded district-wide which will enable 5 – 10 times cheaper at home costs compared to public chargers.
- 7.6 The School Streets Schemes near 3 primary schools in Calcot, Thatcham and Tilehurst aim to reduce traffic and encourage walking and cycling, as well as enhancing child safety and creating a healthier environment. These schemes are supported by education programmes and ongoing community engagement.
- 7.7 Bio-Gas Buses operate between Newbury from Reading helping improve air quality. The Government's Single Fare Cap Scheme encourages public transport use.
- 7.8 The West Berkshire Car Club is run by Enterprise cars, as a hire pay as you go scheme.
- 7.9 Work on the reducing HGVs passing through Newbury by using Positive Signage since 2019/20 encouraged freight vehicles to use the A34 bypass.
- 7.10 Further walking, running and cycling groups such as Let's Ride, Run Together and Walking for Health (led walks across West Berkshire) have been set up to provide activities for beginners, mental health groups and other interested parties.
- 7.11 National Cycle Network 422 expansion – A4 Newbury to Thatcham and on to Calcot was completed in 2019 and continues to be popular, particularly since lockdown. This provision of improved cycle way through the area which as the Thatcham AQMA. Further development of A4 cycle route, this has incremental progress and being created as resources allow.
- 7.12 Pedestrian and cyclist directional signage project commenced in 2018/19 and continued throughout 2024 to promote and improve walking and cycling facilities.
- 7.13 WBC is working with stakeholders to provide cycle parking at other destinations, following on from the Active Travel 'Heat Map' consultation. There is investment in cycle parking at schools.
- 7.14 Our social media pages are also very active with air quality hints and tips on anti-idling, monitoring and competitions.
- 7.15 The Kings Road Link Road was complete and opened to traffic in August 2024.

- 7.16 Clean Air Day in June 2025 to increase awareness and promote health, and anti-idling. We have provided all schools with an anti-idling assembly and asked them to share the anti-idling information with the children and their parents/carers who transport them to school.

### **Commentary from DEFRA**

- 7.17 DEFRA commented that the resubmitted report had sufficiently rectified the issues previously raised. They accepted the conclusions reached for all sources and pollutants.
- 7.18 DEFRA commented that WBC is dedicated to maintaining good air quality through reviewal of the monitoring network and removing monitoring sites from areas where poor air quality is no longer expected to be an issue. As well as adhering to their monitoring calendar.
- 7.19 DEFRA commented that WBC have listed clear actions to improve air quality within their jurisdiction clearly stating how they are progressing and if there are any barriers to implementation.
- 7.20 It was commended that clear summaries of extensive measures and monitored concentrations are included.

## **8. Wokingham Borough**

- 8.1 An Annual Mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 28.06 µg/m<sup>3</sup> was recorded by the Wokingham town centre automatic monitoring (CM2) unit in 2024. This shows that within the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, NO<sub>2</sub> levels were not exceeding the Air Quality Objective limit. This is a decrease on the 2019 result (33.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) pre-pandemic year. It has also decreased from 32.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023, which is reduction of 2%.

### **Wokingham AQMA**

- 8.2 The Annual Mean Objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> was not exceeded at any of the monitoring sites within the Borough. The one site within Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, WOK838 Giggling Spring, Shute End, which exceeded in 2019, measured 29.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024, so has decreased from 30.1 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023 and continues to reduce from 41.8 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2019.
- 8.3 The traffic queues at the traffic lights next to WOK838 before moving past WOK857; interestingly, both of these sites have reduced readings in 2024. Furthermore, at WOK838 NO<sub>2</sub> is slightly lower than WOK857 which suggests there may be fewer vehicles queuing at the junction, an increase of greener cars or that people have seen the anti-idling posters at this location and are switching off engines.

### **Twyford**

- 8.4 All the sites within the revoked Twyford Crossroads AQMA were well below the objective 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> including, WOK850, 887, 888 - 19 High Street, which last exceeded in 2019 (42.8µg/m<sup>3</sup>) measured 31.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023 and decreased to 30.4µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024. Two of the sites increased slightly in 2024, WOK 870 – Hunt & Nash Church Street which measured 19.7 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023 and increased to 20.6

µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024; and WOK 871, 875, 876 - 15 London Road, Twyford which increased from 18.8 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023 to 19.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024. All mean concentrations were less than 60µg/m<sup>3</sup> which therefore indicates no exceedances of the 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> objective.

#### **M4 area**

- 8.5 There were no exceedances of the Annual Mean Objective within the revoked AQMA area, and all sites except two NO<sub>2</sub> levels decreased from 2023. The first site which increased was WOK 53 - Dunt Lane, Hurst from 13.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 13.8 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, and the second was WOK 836 - 349 Old Whitely Wood Lane, Whitley from 18.9 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 19.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Twyford AQMA Revocation**

- 8.6 As Twyford's results from the diffusion tubes and continuous monitor continued to measure below 36 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (and have been since 2020), WokBC actioned the revocation of the AQMA, as advised by DEFRA in January 2025.
- 8.7 It is positive to see that after four full years' worth of pandemic/lock down free monitoring that all the NO<sub>2</sub> levels remain below the 2019. Monitoring within and outside this AQMA will continue in 2025.

#### **Actions to improve air quality**

- 8.8 Please see below

- The Freight Management Plan to be produced in 2025, depending on resources.
- The new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) will be going out for public consultation 2025. It was developed in conjunction with a new Local Plan to 2038 which will define the locations of major development in the borough, to be adopted in March 2025.
- Continued promotion of Active Travel through the My Journey platforms.

- 8.9 South Wokingham Distributor Road, the construction is due to commence in 2025. Followed by a review traffic route in town centre and consider if any roads require restricted access, once the SWDR is completed in 2027.

- 8.10 Possible Twyford Railway Station enhancements following consideration of access for vehicles, taxis, cyclists, and pedestrians; integration of public transport.; and car parking and cycling provisions.

- 8.11 Plans for bus stop realignment to improve the access for bus passengers and pedestrians was designed in 2024 with delivery expected in 2025. GWR have produced a feasibility study to improve the forecourt and station however, future delivery is reliant on funding. Local Town and Parish Councils are working together to try and deliver a new cycle hub with secure storage at the station, again, this is funding dependant.

- 8.12 The MyJourney team installed air quality monitors, connected to Yunex digital signs in and around four schools in the Borough for a 12-month period commencing March 2025. The project faced heavy delays due to initial technical issues. This project

aims to provide real-time information and raise awareness of air quality issues for parents, children, and local commuters to impact travel habits and encourage active travel. All four primary schools that have been selected for the NO<sub>2</sub> roadside air quality monitoring project took part in the school Air Quality project. They all are encouraging their pupils and staff to use active travel (walk, wheel or cycle) to get to and from school. The signs work on 15-minute intervals and display either a happy or sad face dependant on the data received from the monitors. The results of this project will be reported in the 2026 ASR.

- 8.13 The launch of EV Charging Strategy. The document outlines the likely demand for EVs and charge points across our borough and the role of the Council in meeting this demand. (This is nearing completion, and a public consultation took place at the end of summer 2024). Further charge points are due to be delivered in 2025/26.
- 8.14 Residential travel planning. The MyJourney Team carries this out annually at one of the four strategic development locations (SDL's); those in the North and South Wokingham SDL's benefit from this; North Wokingham and Finchwood Park were completed in summer 2024.
- 8.15 Improvement of cycle routes to ensure continuous and integrated. The LCWIP prioritises schemes based on funding availability and impact of change. In 2024 a detailed design for Reading Road to Wokingham town centre was completed using Active Travel England funding.

### **Commentary from DEFRA**

- 8.16 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.
- 8.17 DEFRA advised we no longer need to provide details on the revoked AQMA's for Twyford and the M4.
- 8.18 DEFRA stated that WokBC should now consider the revocation of the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA.
- 8.19 They commended the identification of new or changed sources of pollutants. The report includes detailed discussion of the measures the Council are taking to address PM2.5 which they considered robust.
- 8.20 They commended the efforts and commitment towards improving air quality, with the main objective being the new LTP. The detailed discussion on new schemes and policies showcases the commitment towards improving air quality.

## **9. Next Steps**

### **Revocation Crowthorne AQMA**

- 9.1 A local authority can, at any time, revoke an AQMA, and provide the justification for doing so. This is due to a change in interpretation of the guidance in the DEFRA LAQM Technical Guidance (TG22, August 2022) from DEFRA, as originally three consecutive years of data was necessary before revocation could be considered, they now state that as long as levels have remained 10% below the Objective level for 5 years then revocation is justified. Where 2020 and 2021, the pandemic years,

are a continuation of a downward trend and part of many consecutive years of compliance (e.g., where compliance has also been achieved in 2019, prior to COVID-19) the AQMA may be considered for revocation.

- 9.2 A Draft Revocation Report has been produced for Bracknell Forest for the Crowthorne AQMA. This is set out at Appendix **G**, which is to be subjected to consultation. As with consultation carried out for the declaration of the AQMAs, is it required with DEFRA; Environment Agency; National Highways; All local authorities neighbouring the local authority in question; Other public authorities as appropriate; and bodies representing local business interests and other organisations as appropriate, such as internal public health and transport colleagues, and town / parish councils.
- 9.3 No specific time period for consultation nor the method is stated in the Environment Act 1995, but a minimum period of 4 weeks is proposed. The only requirement is to publish the intention to revoke. Following which responses are fed back to decision making body for a determination.
- 9.4 A final Order for approval of intention is then sent to DEFRA and then finally the Revocation Order is made and sealed, which must also be published, which will be on the Bracknell Forest Council and the PPP websites.

#### **Revocation Wokingham Town Centre AQMA**

- 9.5 Once the 2025 monitoring data has been received, and bias corrected, a review can then take place in spring 2026 for the recommendation in the ASR 2026 to propose the revocation of this AQMA.

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

- 9.5 For West Berkshire a review of the AQAP is now not required now that the AQMAs have been revoked. WBC is now required to develop and publish an Air Quality Strategy, to be produced in consultation with the Director of Public Health, in order to set out and progress the steps the local authority will take to improve air quality in their area. This work has commenced with the aim for a pre-consultation report on the draft be brought back to this Committee in March 2026 and then to the July Committee for post-consultation approval.
- 9.6 Progress with implementing actions within the Crowthorne AQAP continues.
- 9.7 The Review of the Wokingham AQAP continues. DEFRA has granted an extension to completing the AQAP to 31/03/2026. This is based on the findings of the ASR 2025 regarding the potential revocation of the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA within the next 12-18 months.

#### **Future Monitoring**

- 9.8 The monitoring programme for 2026 has been confirmed. Advice from DEFRA on the implication of the revocations was requested previously and they state it is recommended that where possible to ensure good air quality monitoring is maintained once the AQMA is removed. To this end the passive diffusion tube network will be continued across the borough / district both within and outside the

current AQMA and locations within the revoked AQMAs as well as other locations where there are known hotspot / congestion locations.

## 10. Other air quality related matters of note

- 10.1 In 2021 PPP was awarded £259,406 from DEFRA for a grant to carry out air quality projects across the 3 local authorities which aim 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 were completed in summer 2024. See Appendix H for the final report to DEFRA which includes the sharing of best practice and lessons learned.
- 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. The funding was to be awarded 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 awarded the grant of £183,000 in February 2024 but then the funding scheme was withdrawn in April 2024. No further grant funding scheme has since been introduced.

## 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 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 and continue to raise the profile of improvements in air quality is good for our resident's health.
- 11.3 The evaluations provided by DEFRA are positive and the Committee is asked to both note the reports and the DEFRA evaluation, endorse the proposals set out in the action plan and approve the consultation set out in this report.
- 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** – 2025 Bracknell Forest ASR Report (available from the PPP website)

**Appendix B** - Bracknell Forest Appraisal Response from DEFRA (available from the PPP

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website)

**Appendix C** – 2025 West Berkshire ASR Report (available from the PPP website)

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

**Appendix E** – 2025 Wokingham Borough ASR Report (available from the PPP website)

**Appendix F** - Wokingham Borough Appraisal Response from DEFRA

**Appendix G** – Crowthorne Draft Revocation Report

**Appendix H** - Final report to DEFRA regarding grant 2020/21

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## Background Papers:

Bracknell Forest Council's LTP4 and supporting documents which can be accessed via the Council's website, at: [Bracknell Forest Local Transport Plan 2025-2037](#)

West Berkshire Council's LTP4 and supporting documents which can be accessed via the Council's website, at: [Local Transport Plan 4 - West Berkshire Council](#)

Defra: National Clean Air Strategy 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

### Officer details:

Name:	Suzanne McLaughlin
Job Title:	Principal Officer
Tel No:	01635 519851
E-mail:	Suzanne.mclaughlin@westberks.gov.uk

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Local Authority:	West Berkshire Council
Reference:	AR25-2816
Date of Issue:	August 2025

## Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

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

**The original report was rejected in July 2025. Following resubmission, the issues have been sufficiently rectified.**

West Berkshire Council currently have no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), having revoked all of their AQMAs within their jurisdiction in 2024 due to 5 years of continuous compliance with the Air Quality Objectives. The Council are currently drafting a new Air Quality Strategy such that good air quality is maintained within the area.

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.

The Council did not undertake any automatic monitoring in 2024. The Council undertook passive diffusion tube monitoring of NO<sub>2</sub> at 23 monitoring locations in 2024. No exceedances of the annual mean objective were recorded at any of these sites during 2024, the highest NO<sub>2</sub> concentration was 21.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at A339 (64) Greenham Road.

A National bias adjustment factor of 0.84 was applied to the 2024 monitoring data. Annualisation was required at two sites 2024, sites Abbeydale Monks Lane Newbury and The Cross Key Inn Pangbourne which reported data captures of 67.9% and 52.8% respectively. Distance correction was not required at any location.

In the report, the Council has detailed extensive measures and plans to continue to address air quality within its jurisdiction. Key completed measures in 2024 include successfully trialling a through-pavement system for charging electric vehicles (EV), allowing residents to charge EVs from their homes easier, and continuation of improvements to the transport network through reduction of HGVs in residential areas and uptick of electric trains and bio gas buses in the area.

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>AR25-2816</b>
Date of Issue:	<b>August 2025</b>

Priorities for the upcoming year include drafting the Air Quality Strategy now that both AQMAs have been revoked and 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.

WBC have highlighted three key measures in yellow in Table 2.2. These measures will be fed into UK-AIR to raise awareness amongst local communities of local authority action to improve air quality. These key measures are:

1. Electric charging points and infrastructure (Council & Private)
2. Health Education & Behaviour change
3. School Streets & Behaviour change

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 2026.

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>AR25-2816</b>
Date of Issue:	<b>August 2025</b>

## Commentary

The report provides some of information specified in the Guidance. The following comments have been addressed, and therefore the report can now be accepted:

- The National Bias adjustment factor has been calculated incorrectly, a version of the calculator from 2024 has been used which produces a factor of 0.83, the latest version of the calculator (version 06/25) produces a factor of 0.84. The latest factor should be applied to 2024 monitoring data.** *This comment has been sufficiently rectified such that the correct bias adjustment factor has been provided.*

The below comments are designed to help inform future reports:

- It would be helpful if the Council provided a screenshot of the National Bias Adjustment Factor Calculation Sheet to show clear proof of calculations.
- The Council have not provided any mention of automatic monitor CM1 Newbury, it would help provide clarity if the council stated why this data could not be reported in this year's ASR.
- The Table of Contents includes mention of multiple tables that are not included within the report. *This comment has been sufficiently addressed; there are no longer references to tables that have been removed from the report*
- It is evident that the Council is dedicated to maintaining good air quality within the area through continuous reviewal of their monitoring network removing monitoring sites from areas where poor air quality is no longer expected to be an issue.
- WBC have listed clear actions to improve air quality within their jurisdiction clearly stating how they are progressing and if there are any barriers to implementation.
- The Council have provided detailed options for the local public to help contribute to good air quality within the area.
- The Council have provided clear summaries of measures and monitored concentrations specific regions within the area which is commended.
- The Council have shown good practice by clearly stating their adherence to the Defra monitoring calendar.

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.**

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Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>AR25-2816</b>
Date of Issue:	<b>August 2025</b>

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

Telephone: 0800 0327 953

Email: LAQMHelpdesk@bureauveritas.com

The [Air Quality Hub](#) is now run by Defra, it is a free online information and knowledge sharing resource for local authority air quality professionals. Please consider onboarding on the Air Quality Hub to access a multitude of air quality resources and be kept up to date with local authority air quality activity and air quality news.

Local Authority:	<b>West Berkshire Council</b>
Reference:	<b>AR25-2816</b>
Date of Issue:	<b>August 2025</b>

## Appraisal Response Comment Form

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

**Comments on appraisal/Further information:**

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Local Authority:	<b>Wokingham Borough Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR25-2616</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2025</b>

## Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

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

WBC currently have three AQMAS within their administrative area. These are:

1. M4 AQMA – declared in 2001 (amended 2004) for exceedances in annual mean and 1-hour mean NO<sub>2</sub> objectives;
2. Twyford Crossroads AQMA – declared in 2015 for exceedances in the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective; and
3. Wokingham Town Centre AQMA - declared in 2015 for exceedances in the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective.

Last year's letter commented on the revocation of AQMA's M4 and Twyford Crossroads AQMA's as they were compliant. These have now been revoked as of January 2025. The only existing AQMA within WBC's jurisdiction is now Wokingham Town Centre AQMA. Passive monitoring in this AQMA was below the objective values. It is acknowledged that WBC intend to revoke this AQMA if concentrations at WOK838 remain below 36 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2025. This is supported as only two full years of compliance are currently recorded at WOK838. The Council should review concentrations at this site, and within the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, in the next ASR.

A detailed description Wokingham Town Centre AQMA has been provided. It details the number of monitoring sites in the area and some discussion about the results. It is commended that WBC have split the discussion into AQMA specific sections. It makes following the report a lot easier for the reader. It is clear to see from the discussion that the overall trend for annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations within this AQMA is downward.

Passive monitoring in WBC's jurisdiction was performed at 36 sites. The highest concentration of annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> was at 30.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at triplicate site WOK850. Automatic monitoring was performed at one site with an annual mean concentration of 28 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Monitored concentrations are below the air quality objective at all sites.

Local Authority:	<b>Wokingham Borough Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR25-2616</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2025</b>

QA/QC procedures have been discussed. Diffusion tubes were supplied by Gradko and prepared using a 20% TEA in water method. The Council have confirmed that monitoring was undertaken in adherence with the 2024 diffusion tube monitoring calendar. Annualisation calculations were required at two sites in 2024 (WOK879, 880, 881 and WOK884, 885, 886). Calculations have been provided. A local bias adjustment factor of 0.88 was calculated using the colocation with the Wokingham Town Centre automatic monitor. This factor was applied to data. No distance correction calculations were required.

The fraction of mortality attributable to particulate pollution for Wokingham has been reported, and compared to neighbouring authorities, as well as regional and national values. The reported value of WBC is 5.3%. This has decreased from 5.9% from last year's report. This value is still above the national England average of 5.5%, however, this has improved in WBCs jurisdiction.

To address PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions within their jurisdiction, a few measures are being taken:

- Implementation of actions into Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (LDFCD) all changes to local road infrastructure must consider the effects on air quality, with the aim of reducing PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions.
- WBC provided advice through communication modes such as social media to inform residents on the effects of commercial burning and bonfires within their jurisdiction. Aimed at educating the public about harmful PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions from these sources.

The progress to improve air quality within their jurisdiction is detailed. WBC have highlighted key objectives for their jurisdiction. The main objective is the new LTP. This mainly focuses on promoting active travel within their jurisdiction and implementation of a new active travel scheme in from 2025. Other key initiatives within WBCs jurisdiction include the "Bikeability" scheme, allowing access to train all children in Primary and Junior schools. Additionally, the Bikeability grant allowed for members of the public to check whether their bikes are roadworthy, further encouraging the public to cycle, rather than using other pollutive means of transport.

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, Wokingham Borough Council should submit an Annual Status Report in 2026.



Local Authority:	<b>Wokingham Borough Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR25-2616</b>
Date of issue	<b>July 2025</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. The ASR has been signed off by the Director of Public Health which is good practice.
2. M4 and Twyford Roads AQMAs have been revoked which is commended. There is still a lot of discussion of these AQMAs throughout the text. Now that they have both been revoked, it is not necessary to go into details of these AQMAs.
3. Consider the revocation of Wokingham Town Centre AQMA.
4. It is commended to see a detailed section on additional works and new or changed sources within WBC.
5. Correct some formatting issues, including subscript errors e.g. PM<sub>2.5</sub> instead of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
6. WBC are making great efforts in improving air quality within their jurisdiction. A detailed discussion on new schemes and policies showcases their commitment towards improving air quality within their jurisdiction is commended.
7. Measures to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions within WBCs jurisdiction are robust.

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)

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Local Authority:	Wokingham Borough Council
Reference:	ASR25-2616
Date of issue	July 2025

## Appraisal Response Comment Form

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

### Comments on appraisal/Further information:



**Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area  
Proposal for Revocation Report  
In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local  
Air Quality Management**

**Date: October 2025**

Information	Bracknell Forest Council Details
Local Authority Officer	Charlie Fielder
Department	Environmental Quality
Address	Public Protection Partnership Theale Library Church Street Theale Berkshire RG7 5BZ
Telephone	01635 503242
E-mail	<a href="mailto:EQteam@westberks.gov.uk">EQteam@westberks.gov.uk</a>
Report Reference Number	BFBC Crowthorne AQMA Revoke 2025
Date	2025 Report prepared by PPP on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council

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## 1 Introduction

This report was produced on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council constitutes the required information under which the Council is to apply for the revocation of the Area Quality Management (AQMA) area known as Crowthorne.

The AQMA revocation report has been developed in recognition of the legal requirement on the local authority to work towards the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and the relevant Regulations made under that part and to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process.

This report will provide the Council with robust evidence as required under the LAQM guidance, LAQM.TG (22) to enable it to revoke the AQMA.

## 2 Local Air Quality Management

### 2.1 Review and Assessment of Air Quality

Under the Environment Act 1995 local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality annually against national air quality objectives. This process sits under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) programme which requires local authorities to report annually to the department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in England are set out in the Air Quality Standard Regulations 2010. The pollutant of concern for this AQMA is for the annual mean objective Nitrogen Dioxide only and the limits are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The National NO<sub>2</sub> Air Quality Objectives

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective: Concentration	Air Quality Objective: Measured as
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	200µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	Annual mean 40µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual mean

## 2.2 Health Impacts

Air pollution is associated with several adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Air Pollution can be harmful to everyone, it mainly affects particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas<sup>1,2</sup>.

Poor Air Quality is also a contributory role in mortality. The mortality burden of air pollution within the UK is equivalent to 29,000 to 43,000 deaths at typical ages<sup>3</sup>, with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million in 2017<sup>4</sup>.

The major source of air quality pollutants in Bracknell Forest is road transport, and the main pollutant of concern is nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). The Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared for exceedances of the Annual Mean NO<sub>2</sub> Objective (Table 1). The Crowthorne AQMA is located in Crowthorne, and includes Part B3348, High Street & part of Sandhurst Road (See Appendix A for the map).

## 2.3 Current Air Quality Management Area Status

In the comments from the June 2025 Annual Status Report (ASR) (data from 2024) for Bracknell Forest BC DEFRA has approved the recommendation made for the revocation of the Crowthorne AQMA as it has recorded annual levels at or below 36.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 3 continuous years.

## 2.4 Requirements for revoking an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

The process for the revoking an AQMA is set out in the DEFRA Local Air Quality Management Policy and Technical Guidance (22). It states that:

---

<sup>1</sup> Public Health England. Air Quality: A Briefing for Directors of Public Health, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Defra. Air quality and social deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Defra. Air quality appraisal: damage cost guidance, January 2023

<sup>4</sup> Public Health England. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report, May 2018

*“3.57 The revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations being lower than 36µg/m<sup>3</sup> (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period.”*

Therefore as Bracknell Forest Council has robust monitoring data for the Crowthorne AQMA, that has recorded annual levels at or below 36.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 3 continuous years it can be revoked.

### **3 AQMA Crowthorne**

#### **3.1 The AQMA**

The Crowthorne AQMA was declared for the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean in 2011 and was designated along part B3348, High Street & part of Sandhurst Road (Map 1).

#### **3.2 The Nitrogen Dioxide Levels**

The nitrogen dioxide levels for the Crowthorne AQMA, have been monitored using diffusion tubes at 5 sites, 2 of which are triplicate (see Appendix A Map 2). The diffusion tubes sites are located as follows:

- 40C - 229 High Street, Crowthorne
- 76C - Dukes Rides, Crowthorne
- 84C - 24/26 Dukes Ride (Playhouse), Crowthorne
- 93C - Prince Alfred Public House, High Street, Crowthorne
- 58x, 58y, 58z C - 2 Firmount, Bracknell Road, Crowthorne
- 91x, 91y, 91z C - The Mount, Bracknell Road, Crowthorne

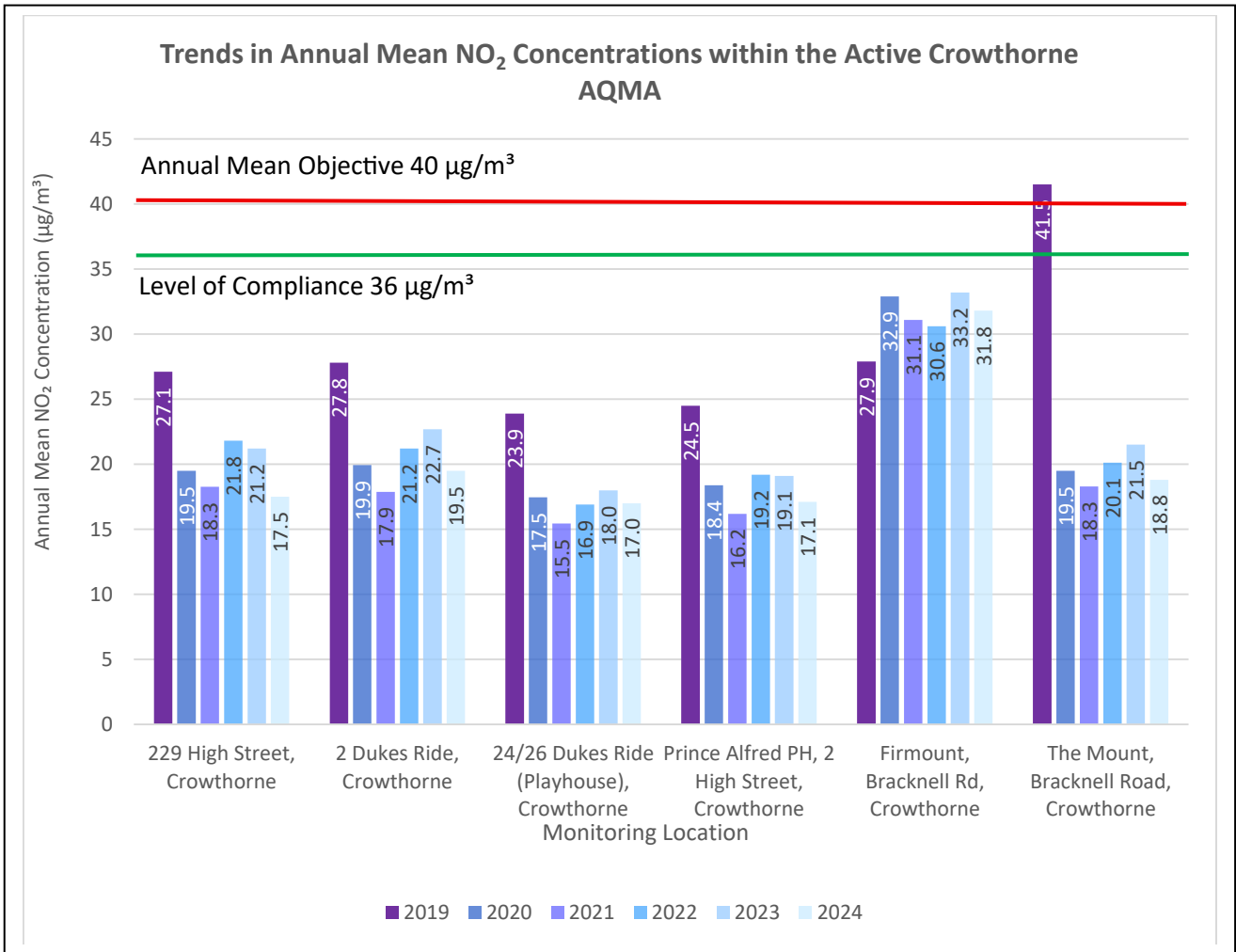
The results have been below 36.0µg/m<sup>3</sup> for the past 5 years, in all 6 of the diffusion tube locations (Map 3). Whilst the NO<sub>2</sub> had started to rise marginally in 2022 and 2023, in 2025 all the levels went below those recorded in 2020, (as shown in Figure 1 below).

A number of factors may attribute to this reduction in NO<sub>2</sub>, including the change in traffic trends during the day, for example peak traffic is typically slightly lower than pre-pandemic, but traffic during the inter-peak hours is higher, consequently there is less congestion and queuing within the AQMA. There has also been an increase in LGVs, making up for a decrease in car traffic.



This is likely partly attributable to increased homeworking, but also increased home deliveries. The residents have been upgrading their cars to hybrids and electric, as more opportunities have been made available to company and private leasing.

3.2.1 Figure 1: Diffusion Tube NO<sub>2</sub> Levels in the Crowthorne AQMA from 2019 to 2024.



### 3.3 Monitoring

Monitoring will continue for NO<sub>2</sub> at the sites using diffusion tubes as advised in LAQM.TG (22) to ensure that the levels remain at 36.0µg/m<sup>3</sup> or below, for the next 3 years.

### 3.4 2025 Monitoring

Throughout 2025 the 6 diffusion tubes site within the AQMA have remained in place. The results from the diffusion tubes will not be known until they have been bias corrected after the end of the full monitoring year. However, they are predicted to be below 36µg/m<sup>3</sup> from analysis and comparison with 2024 data.

#### **4 Ongoing measure to improve the local Air Quality**

In addition to working to reduce and maintain NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations below the annual objective in all areas of the Borough, we will continue to assess planning applications to ensure that future developments and changes to the road networks across the Borough do not lead to an increase in the NO<sub>2</sub> concentration above the annual mean objective of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>. We will also continue to regulate PPC installations to ensure that emission limits are not exceeded and the regulation of smoke control and waste burning to reduce impacts on local air quality. We will continue to provide our Anti-Idling Schools Kit to the local Primary's as well as running Clean Air Day, and other campaigns which help improve our air quality, ([air-quality-school-toolkit-final-version-1-003.pdf \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](#)) .

Bracknell Forest Council has also taken forward a number of direct measures during the current reporting year of 2025 in pursuit of improving local air quality.

- All the Environmental Permits have been inspected in line with the Environment Permitting Regulations.

##### **4.1 Highways and Electric Vehicle chargers**

- BFBC drafted a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) for the Borough in 2024, which sets out our plans, policies and ambitions for the transport network over the next 10 years and beyond, with a core focus on decarbonisation, improving air quality and using our networks more efficiently. This is set to be formally approved and adopted by Council in July 2025.
- Further upgrades to traffic signals, complementing capacity and junction improvements along the A322, A329 and A3095 corridors (all completed within the past 10 years) which have improved journey times, reduced congestion and had a positive overall impact on air quality, as seen in the reductions at the A322 Downshire Way AQMA monitoring station. In turn, this will support the continued growth of Bracknell as an employment centre and further residential growth across the region.
- Installation of 38 fast 22kw Electric Vehicle chargepoints across 12 council owned car parks. A dual 75kw rapid chargepoint was also installed at Great Hollands in late 2023/early 2024. These have been supplemented by a new 50kw and 150kw at Birch Hill (Leppington) to provide local residents without off-street parking with opportunities to charge EVs at local community facilities.

- New stricter planning requirements have been adopted requiring EV chargepoints in all new developments (Building Regs Part-S).
- Work has commenced with guidance from the Energy Saving Trust and Office for Zero Emission Vehicles on a plan for further major roll-out of EV chargepoints in residential areas using LEVI funding. We are going out to market in Summer 2025 with a view to securing a provider to deliver 400+ on-street chargepoints.
- A Berkshire EV working group has been established which was initially set up by BFC and now has a dedicated project manager to coordinate further EV roll-out across Berkshire in particular using LEVI funding.
- Continuing to work with Bracknell BID to encourage more sustainable travel; A new shuttle bus service was launched in 2023 linking Bracknell rail station with the BID area, along with a cycle hire scheme for employees. White lines indicating pedestrian/cycle paths have also been further refreshed and new signage added.
- A new pedestrian crossing has been installed on Temple Way to provide safer links to the new Blue Mountain development and new schools and community facility. New crossings have also been installed on Broad Lane, Cambridge Road and Birch Hill Road. This will encourage more people to walk the shorter distance to the facility instead of driving.

## **4.2 Community Events**

- Bikeability Cycle training was delivered to 1212 school pupils in the Borough, from Learn to Ride courses through to advanced Level 3 courses.
- A free bus service was provided on December weekends in the run up to Christmas for local residents to access the Lexicon shopping centre for the second year running.
- Summer of Fun events – council staff attended 4 of the ‘Summer of Fun’ events around the borough in 2024. We partnered with the public health team and Love to Ride, with the smoothie bike, colouring competitions and gave away prizes, maps, leaflets and walking and cycling promotional items. [Summer activities for families in Bracknell Forest | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://bracknell-forest.gov.uk/summer-activities-for-families-in-bracknell-forest)

- Led Walks and Rides – Sustrans officers funded by Public Health have continued to provide a popular series of led walks in the borough and we have been in discussion with them to broaden this offer to include led cycle rides.

**Figure 4.1: Free Christmas Bus advert**



- Led Walks and Rides – Sustrans officers funded by Public Health have continued to provide a popular series of led walks in the borough and we have been in discussion with them to broaden this offer to include led cycle rides.
- The Eco Rewards scheme (Public Health funded) is continuing to grow with nearly 3000 residents and 20 schools and colleges participating. In 2024 145,401 miles of sustainable journeys were logged on the system, and 193 tonnes of CO2e saved since the project began (compared to taking these trips by car). The scheme was expanded to cover Martins Heron and Winkfield in 2024 using funding from South Western Railways CCIF fund, and there are plans to further extend the scheme to the BID area. [Eco Rewards - Rewarding Green Travel Choices](#).
- Love to Ride platform and challenges – Love to Ride is an online community of people who cycle, for any purpose. People are encouraged to sign-up friends and work colleagues and take part in a number of challenges that run throughout the year. In the 2024 'Cycle September' event, 11 workplaces took part, 2,027 bike trips were recorded and 49% of participants were either new or occasional riders.

- 'Dr Bike' events at these events people bring their own bikes to a mechanic who gives them a basic M.O.T and performs minor fixes, as well as imparting advice and guidance for future maintenance. We delivered 2 staff events in 2024, whilst partners at Sustrans ran 2 community Dr Bike sessions.
- Held a Cycling Festival on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2024, in partnership with Trek, Avanti, Sustrans, and The Lexicon, to promote cycling in the Borough and showcase what we have to offer.

**Figure 4.2: Bracknell Cycling Festival Flyer**



- Walk to School week – we offered free resources to all schools in the borough to help them take part in the national walking promotion which takes place each May. 19 schools took up the offer this year.
- Clean Air Day on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024, (Figure 2.3) all schools in Bracknell Forest have been asked to sign up to the “Clean Air Pledge”. By doing this they are agreeing to send out our literature to all the parents about air quality and anti-idling. Also actively joining in our competitions as well.

**Figure 4.3: Clean Air Day Social Media Post**



## 5 Current Borough Wide Monitoring

In the 2025 Annual Status Report Bracknell Forest confirmed it has 22 diffusion tube sites monitoring NO<sub>2</sub> levels in borough and that they have shown a decreasing trend since the 2020. No diffusion tube sites located within Bracknell Forest exceeded the Annual Mean Objective. No diffusion tube results were recorded above 60µg/m<sup>3</sup>, indicating no exceedances of the 1- hour NO<sub>2</sub> objective.

The highest recording of a diffusion tube in the whole Borough was 31.8 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024 within the Crowthorne AQMA, which meets the Annual Mean NO<sub>2</sub> Objective (40µg/m<sup>3</sup>) was not exceeded.

Bracknell Forest Council will be continuing to monitor the Air Quality across the borough (using diffusion tubes), it may move the locations and add new areas to the monitoring schedule as the local environment changes, such as new housing developments, changes to our road networks and the reduction of NO<sub>2</sub>

across the borough. Bracknell is committed to continuing our work to reduce levels of pollution throughout the borough.

The Council will continue to monitor the Crowthorne AQMA along with many other areas of the borough especially the newly built estates, near roads which have recently been inhabited. The Council will be working toward reducing the concentration of all air pollutants to achieve the Air Quality Objectives as stated in the Environmental Act 2021.

## 6 Bracknell Forest Council Consultation

Bracknell Forest Council will consult with statutory consultees as well as interested parties of the intention to revoke the AQMA. It invited The Highways Agency, Environment Agency, neighbouring authorities, BFBC Planning, BFBC Highways and BFBC Climate Change for feedback by emailing [EQteam@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:EQteam@westberks.gov.uk).

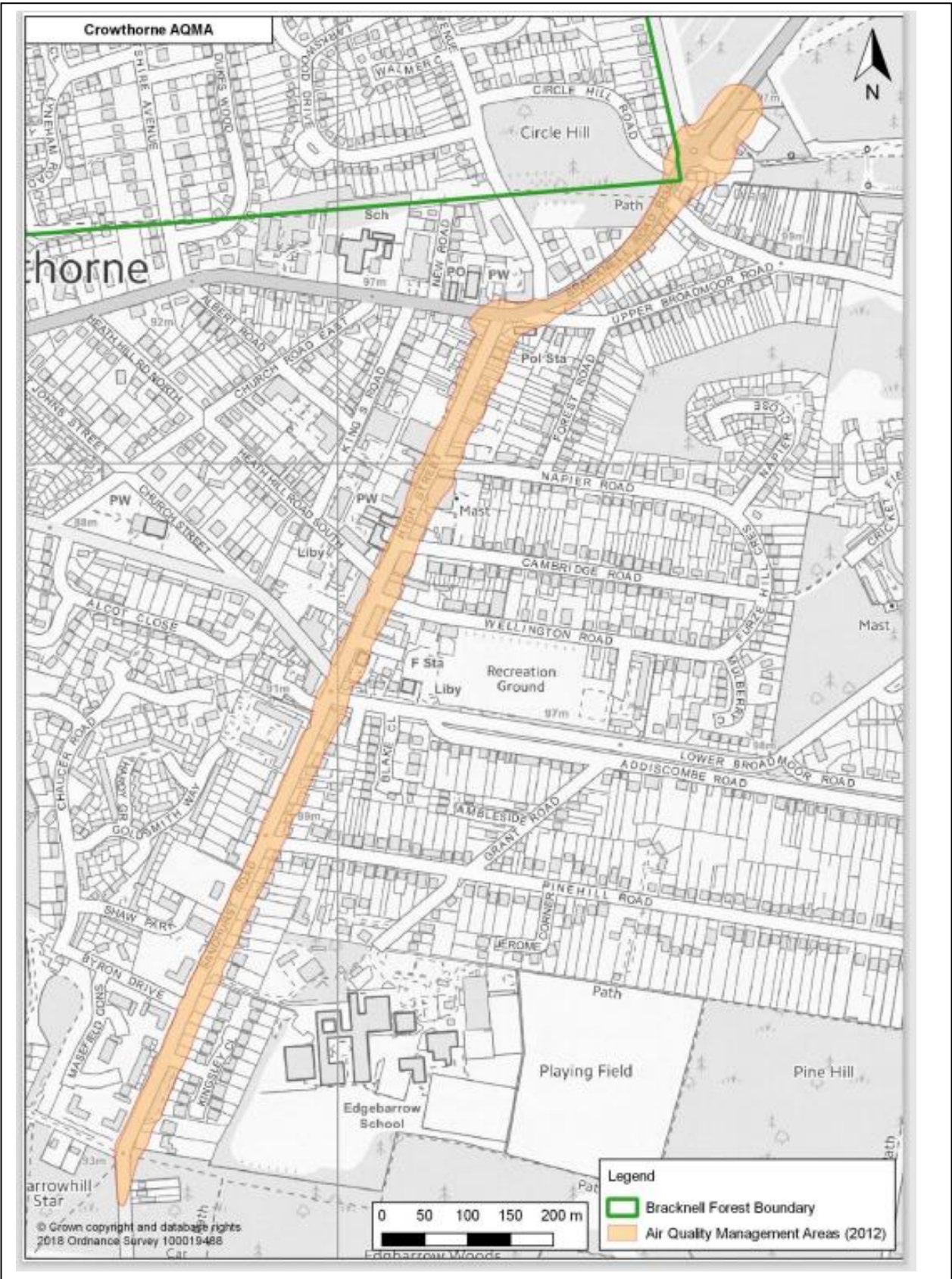
## 7 References and Papers

- **Bracknell Forest Council Annual Status Report (June 2025)**, by Charlie Fielder.  
[Air Quality Monitoring - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://www.airqualitymonitoring.org.uk/public-protection-partnership)
- **Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)s (DEFRA October 2023)**  
[AQMA Details - Defra, UK](https://www.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/aqma/)
- **Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG (22) (August 2022)**. Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.  
[LAQM-TG22-August-22-v1.0.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/laqm-tg22/)



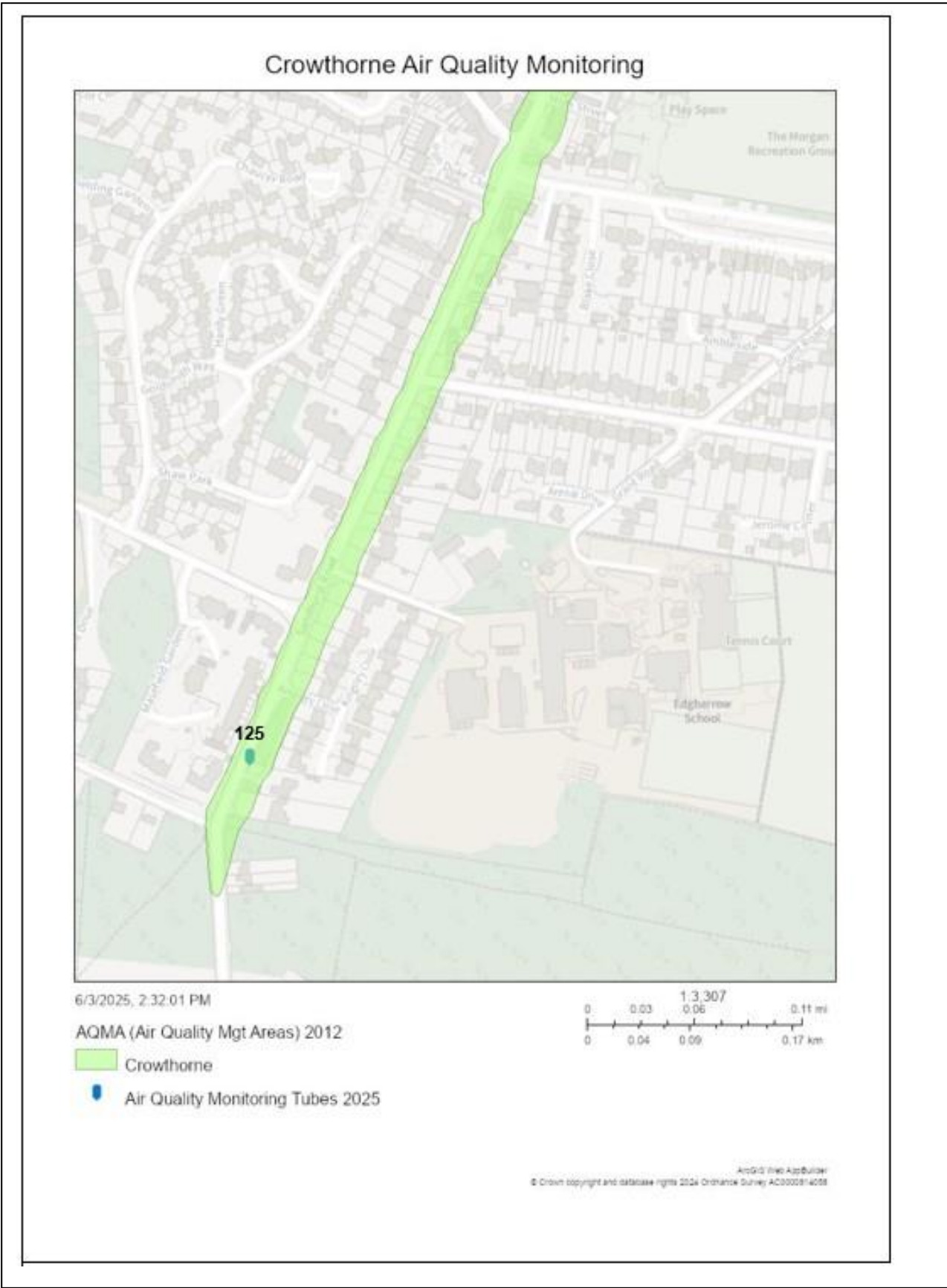
8 Appendix A

Map 1: The Crowthorne AQMA

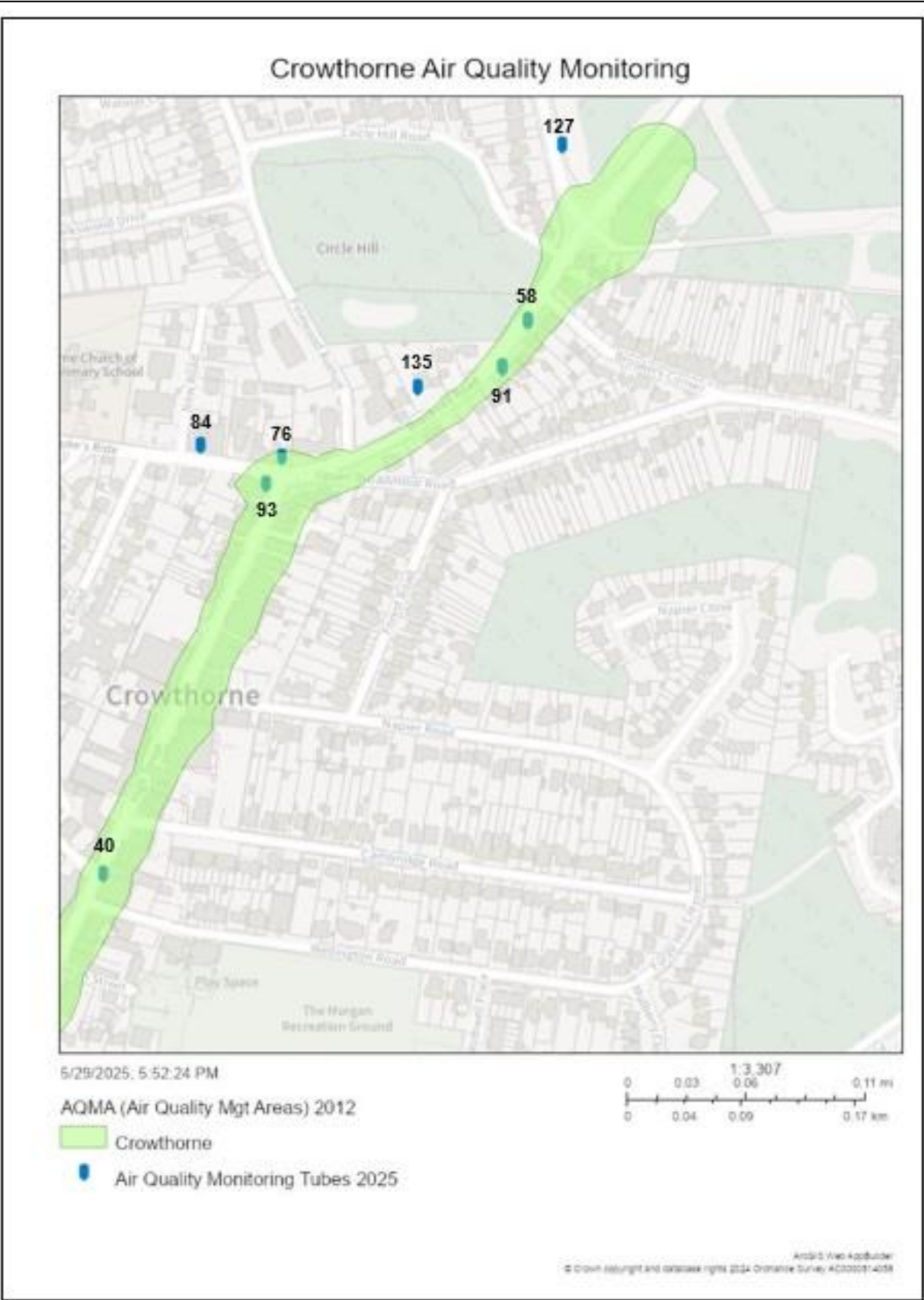




8.1 Map 2: The Crowthorne AQMA (South) diffusion tube monitoring location.



8.2 Map 3: The Crowthorne AQMA (North) diffusion tube monitoring locations



## Appendix B:

### QA/QC for the Diffusion Tubes and Continuous Monitor

#### QA/QC Diffusion Tubes

Bracknell Forest Council uses GRADKO as the supplier used for diffusion tubes and the method of preparation, e.g. 20% TEA in water. The monitoring that has been completed for the past 5 years+ is in adherence with the 2024 DEFRA Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar ([NO2 Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar | LAQM \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/monitoring/diffusion-tubes/2024-dtmc/)).

The Workplace Analysis Scheme for Proficiency (WASP) is an independent analytical performance testing scheme, operated by the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL). WASP formed a key part of the former UK NO<sub>2</sub> Network's QA/QC and remains an important QA/QC exercise for laboratories supplying diffusion tubes to Local Authorities for use in the context of Local Air Quality Management. The laboratory participants analyse four spiked tubes and report the results to HSL. HSL assign a performance score to each laboratory's result, based on their deviation from the known mass of nitrite in the analyte. The Performance criteria are due to be changed, at present the criteria are based on the z-score method, and equates to the following:

**GOOD:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 13% of the assigned value. This equates to a Rolling Performance Index (RPI) of 169 or less.

**ACCEPTABLE:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 13-26% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 169 - 676.

**WARNING:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 26 – 39% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 676 - 1521.

**FAILURE:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory differ by more than 39% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of greater than 1521.

However, from April 2009, the criteria has been based upon the Rolling Performance Index (RPI) statistic and will be tightened to the following:

**GOOD:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 7.5% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 56.25 or less.

**ACCEPTABLE:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory are on average within 15% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of 225 or less.

**UNACCEPTABLE:** Results obtained by the participating laboratory differ by more than 15% of the assigned value. This equates to an RPI of greater than 225.

Bracknell Forest Council use Gradko International for the supply and analysis of the nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes for their non-automatic monitoring programme.

### Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors

The diffusion tube data presented have been corrected for bias using an adjustment factor. Bias represents the overall tendency of the diffusion tubes to under or over-read relative to the reference chemiluminescence analyser. LAQM.TG22 provides guidance with regard to the application of a bias adjustment factor to correct diffusion tube monitoring. Triplicate co-location studies can be used to determine a local bias factor based on the comparison of diffusion tube results with data taken from NO<sub>x</sub>/NO<sub>2</sub> continuous analysers. Alternatively, the national database of diffusion tube co-location surveys provides bias factors for the relevant laboratory and preparation method.

A summary of bias adjustment factors used by Bracknell Forest Council over the past five years is presented in Table B. The site which was used was Downshire Way (Bracknell AQMA). Gradko International Ltd of St Martin's House 77 Wales Street Winchester Hampshire is the supplier and analyst of the nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes. The tubes are analysed by U.V. spectrophotometry. The limit of detection is 20% TEA/Water.

**Table B.1 – Bias Adjustment Factor**

Monitoring Year	Local or National	If National, Version of National Spreadsheet	Adjustment Factor
2024	National	4/25	0.84
2023	Local	-	0.83
2022	Local	-	0.87
2021	Local	-	0.83
2020	National	-	0.81

# **Air Quality Grant 2020/21 – Final Report**

**Grant Determination Number\_31/5410**

**ITA\_7555**

**Project\_28998**

<b>Contact details and project dates</b>	
<b>Local Authority Name</b>	West Berkshire Council
<b>Our Ref: ecm</b>	Suzanne McLaughlin
<b>Key Contact Details: Name, position, email, telephone</b>	Suzanne McLaughlin, Principal Officer Charlie Fielder, Environmental Health Officer
<b>Project Start date</b>	April 2021
<b>Project status</b>	Completed August 2024
<b>Finance</b>	Total Project cost and total spend: £ 259,406

## **Project Summary**

The grant comprised of a joint application, led by West Berkshire working in partnership with Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council, as the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). £259,406 was awarded which equated to 100% of the grant applied for tackling roadside NO2 in all 7 AQMAs across the 3 areas, and area of 448,000 residents.

The 2 main areas of the project were:

- Measuring PM2.5 levels at schools in / near the 7 AQMAs
- Behavioural Change through an Anti Idling Campaign and NO2 Biggest Loser

## **Project Aims**

The aims were:

- To monitor PM2.5 at schools local to the AQMAs to ascertain if they are achieving the 2025 objectives and provide site specific mitigation measures. The results will then help to develop actions to reduce PM.
- To change people and vehicle drivers' perception to idling and reduce traffic emissions and / or exposure to improve public health outcomes.
- To provide specific intervention and education with school children with bumper sticker competition and direct delivery of toolkit.
- To monitor NO2 outside schools to determine effect of interventions on idling.

## **Project Objectives**

The relevant study areas were:

- Communication – through direct work with schools, publicity in direct signage, press and social media
- Behavioural Change – through the communication, signage and direct contact, and vehicle idling data
- Vulnerable groups – PM2.5 and NO2 monitoring data at schools

The relevant emission sources were:

- Cars
- HGVs
- buses.

The pollutants relevant were:

- NO2
- PM2.5.

## **Work undertaken and changes from initial proposal**

Original expected project start date stated in the grant application was April 2021 but grant was not received until May. Overall time delays were from the time taken to carry out the recruitment process of the dedicated Air Quality Officer (AQO); the procurement procedures for PM2.5 monitoring project and contract awarding; and the AQO leaving employment before end of the fixed term and prior to the end of the projects. However this enabled an extension to Behavioural Change contractor to deliver more on the anti-idling project on behalf of the PPP.

The delay in starting the PM2.5 monitoring project was by 1 school term. The monitoring at schools did not occur at the same time, was carried out in tranches. Also due to electricity issues with installation the monitoring in the 3 tranches were not concurrent, but each did ensure term time and holiday time were monitored for comparison.

The NO2 monitoring did not commence until Q4, but the aim was to commence monitoring at the beginning of the calendar year.

There were delays in achieving approval of the signs from the 3 separate authorities so led to delay in progressing to next stage of anti idling project. By end Q10 the final report on the Behavioural Change project concluded that the surveys were inconclusive and that additional interventions would have been useful if the budget had allowed, and further work was recommended. This extension was agreed for 1 additional survey in each LA area to better understand the impact of the anti-idling signage on drivers and whether there is an impact on idling. In addition poor take up of the schools within the AQMA areas resulted in a widening of offer for the school intervention work. Following the extension to anti idling project, ie additional surveys before and after signage put up, showed decrease in idling

Overall the original overall project end date was April 2023 and was extended to April 2024 however the final date August 2024 once the Biggest Loser NO2 results were collated and the winners announced.

### **Review of benefits and challenges of chosen delivery model**

The deliverability time scale was based on advice from a contractor who in the end was not successful in the procurement of the PM2.5 monitoring nor the behavioural change Anti-idling project. Insufficient time was allocated for the recruitment of the AQO and the time taken to deliver the procurement of the PM2.5 monitoring contract and the impact of site set up issues.

### **Effectiveness of project in relation to objectives and milestones**

The projects did cover all areas of communication, dealing with behavioural change and focusing on a vulnerable group, as planned.

The anti-idling project was effective in ensuring the emission sources from all vehicle types as planned were covered.

The PM2.5 monitoring was undertaken at 42 locations from Q4 to Q8.

The NO2 Biggest Loser monitoring at 42 locations was carried out from Q4 to Q12.

### **Delivery or maintenance long term of outcomes**

Key statistics are:

- 42 schools provided with PM2.5 monitoring report and action plan to further investigate the sources
- 8 schools where assemblies attended of which 3 had a workshop
- 140 schools sent the anti-idling toolkit
- 348 entries to the bumper sticker competition, with over 500 sent out
- 42 schools monitored for NO2 with 94% showed reduction following behavioural change campaign
- Results from monitoring PM2.5 and NO2 assisting in LAQM and added in Annual Status Reports for the relevant LA.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

This was achieved in the following ways:

- Updating Members via Joint Public Protection Committee reports
- Members Briefing Bulletins
- Contact with over 140 schools
- Within the 3 authorities updating colleagues via Environment Delivery Project Board (West Berkshire), Active Travel Officer Group (West Berkshire), Air Quality Working Group (Wokingham), Active Travel (Wokingham ), Climate Change Officers Board (Bracknell Forest), Transport (Bracknell Forest), Parking Enforcement team (Bracknell Forest)
- Stakeholder workshop led by the behavioural change consultants with officers from all 3 LAs in Highways, Transport, Environmental Health and Communications teams.

## **Sharing best practice**

This was achieved in the following ways:

- PPP website and social media - eg dispelling myths of engine running
- Air Quality pages on Public Protection Partnership website all updated with resources [Resources - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk).
- Dissemination of the messaging commenced to parish councils/magazines, in Council publications such as WBC Environment Newsletter March 2024 edition
- Resources published on the DEFRA Air Quality Hub sections on Anti-Idling (bumper sticker, competition banner and posters) and Schools/Education (School Toolkit, Engagement Letter to Parents, and Schools Engagement Presentations).
- WSP presented the Anti idling work at Behavioural Science in Public Health Network event in summer 2023 and received plaudits for its attempt at trying something different. The event was attended mainly by local authorities and academics. The attendees were predominantly behaviour change specialists, public health specialists, and researchers.
- Joint Public Protection Committee reports and updates and data in each LA ASR

## **Lessons learned**

The following key lessons were:

- Need to be mindful of the time in dealing with recruitment process
- Need to be mindful of the time in dealing with procurement process
- Difficulty in locations for PM2.5 monitoring on school premises due to power supply accessibility caused the monitoring not take place in 3 exact tranches of 14 school in with even distribution of schools in each LA
- Cost of electricity connections not confirmed in timely manner
- Insufficient budget for a more wide-ranging behavioural campaign for additional interventions



- AQO post was vital to keep the emphasis and focus on the project so when the post vacant existing resources had to cover but in conflict with many other EH work
- Schools intervention take up was very poor, although plenty of notice given
- Remember dealing with 3 LAs colleagues/ communications teams with differing views on eg signage which caused additional delay in being able to order the printing

## **Funding / expenditure**

Overall all the budget was spent, and the final expenditure was in Q14.

The procurement was carried out in line with West Berkshire Council Constitution rules in order to obtain best value for money.

At the beginning of the project the spend was low due to getting the AQO in post and the procurement process for the PM2.5 monitoring project but by the end of Q3 the contract was awarded. By the end of Q4 the contract for the Behavioural Change specialist for the anti idling project was awarded.

Once the AQO post was vacant funding transferred to extend the work carried out by the Behavioural Change contractor to cover the engagement with schools work and more on the communications of this project.

## **Signatory**

**Name of Officer at the local authority:**

Suzanne McLaughlin

**Name of Local Authority:**

West Berkshire Council

**Date:**

06/02/2025

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## Update on Fraud and Unfair Trading

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	8 December 2025
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Tom McCann
Date JMB agreed report:	17 November 2025
Report Author:	Sean Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	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.

### 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 4 Officers supported by financial investigators and intelligence officers. The total cost of the shared trading standards service is £1.36M 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 and wider fair trading agenda 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 2025/26 this grant funding is likely to be around £200K</p> <p>Work to tackle scams also receives grant funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner through each Council's community safety partnership grants. This grant is £45K per annum for three years,</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. The regional support includes investigative support as well as access to regional intelligence capabilities.</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 1 Protocol 1 (Right to enjoyment of possession); Article 6 (right to a fair trial) and Article 8 (right to a family life i.e. free from unlawful intrusion) of the Charter on 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> <p>These matters are monitored through the service strategic and operational risk register resource.</p>
<b>Property:</b>	None
<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> <p>The Committee is invited to consider, comment and advise on strategic direction.</p>

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<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		None – there is no decision to be made
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		None – there is no decision to be made.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	x			The activity of the team will have a positive impact on the environment.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	x			The activity of the team will have a positive impact on the health of our residents.
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		x		None
<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 41% of all crimes. According to the National Crime Agency UK Finance 2025 reports unauthorised fraud losses totalled £722 million in 2024 an increase of two per cent from 2023 and authorised fraud losses accounted for £450.7 million of that sum.
- 4.4 Citizens Advice have recently reported that an estimated 10% of people across South-East of England were caught out by a scam in the past year. Nationally, more than seven million people are estimated to have been deceived by a scam in the past 12 months.
- 4.5 Citizens Advice's research shows more than a quarter (26%) of those across the UK were scammed while online shopping. These types of scams often include fake websites and buying and selling counterfeit or non-existent goods.
- 4.6 The top five scams identified by Citizens Advice are:
- Online shopping scam (26%) - Includes fake websites and counterfeit or non-existent goods,
  - Investment scam (18%) - Like 'get rich quick' schemes and cryptocurrency scams,
  - Other financial scam (18%) - Such as banking, fake loans, card and bank account fraud.
  - A friend or family member 'needs help' scam (16%) - Tricked into thinking someone you care about needs money urgently.
  - Mobile phone network scam (14%) - Includes being scammed into taking out a new contract or paying for a new handset.
- 4.7 A range of organisations are involved in tackling both the perpetrators and impacts associated with this criminal activity. The Public Protection Partnership plays a significant role in tackling fraud carried out in the course of business (or assumed business) activities and 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.
- 4.8 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 the derogatively named '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).

4.9 The consequence of fraud is not only financial. The emotional and psychological impact on victims results in feelings of anger, stress and anxiety often leading to depression and low self-esteem and a profound loss of trust in others. Victims can feel personally violated.

4.10 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/services or indeed their contact.
- 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 for fear of being placed in a care home or for a power of attorney to be put in place.
- They are often not aware they are a 'victim' or indeed will be in denial that they have become a 'victim'. Shame can sometimes be a reason for not reporting the crime.
- Victims are sometimes socially isolated without any friends or family members to encourage them to report the crime and may feel it is too trivial.

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

*'Realisation hit me hard, my heart sunk and I had the most nauseating feeling in the pit of my stomach - this plastic folder in front of me with the enclosed Building Control Certificate and Electrical Certificate, handed personally to me by XXXX that morning of Thursday 24th August, were obviously fraudulent documents. All my fears of employing "the wrong builder" came true at that moment. I came off that call and broke down in tears, that feeling of total disbelief "Is this really happening to me?" I felt anxious, worried and stressed and then that dreadful feeling of how do I tell my partner XXXX and my two sons of this horrendous news and questioned myself how will this affect them? My emotions were all over the show, a mixture of feeling an idiot for not doing thorough research and homework on XXXX prior to employing him (hindsight is a great thing) and a feeling of being cheated, used and abused. I had been most patient and kind to XXXX throughout the build, making him and his two co-workers most welcome in our home, providing them with tea, coffee on their arrival every morning for 20 weeks and providing them with lunches whenever I could. It was a violation of my trust and most hurtful.*

*For two weeks thereafter I was an emotional wreck, I cried every time I walked into the new build, I hated it! I cried myself to sleep at night and had to be comforted by family members and close friends as well as feeling guilty for introducing XXX to my neighbours who had also employed him."*

- 4.12 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 SEROCU and HMRC This work includes 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.
- 4.13 E-Crime has also been identified as one of the cross-cutting themes in the PPP's Strategic Assessment 2024/27. Online trading has seen significant growth in the last three years, driven by factors like increased digitalization, accessible apps, and the influence of the pandemic. 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**

- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 The Public Protection Service's delivery model is based on the 'National Intelligence Model'. Through this model Officers seek to tackle all areas of its work with a combination of preventative actions, intelligence gathering and analysis and enforcement. To this end, the Service has 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.
- 4.16 In addition, the service currently has two Public Protection Community Officers who assist 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**

- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 To this end the PPP has 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. These help the resident, and their family members feel secure in their own home.

- Regular talks and scams presentations are made to local community groups, Adult Social Care Teams/Social workers, care providers and schools.
- Challenging banks under the 'Banking Protocol' to recoup monies for consumers (often successfully) where there may have been some identified failing. Since 2023, a total of £446,730.55 has been recovered for victims within the PPP area.
- The creation of No Cold Calling Zones - [No Cold Calling Zones - PPP](#)
- Provision of scams information and no cold calling door stickers.
- Attending community events including partnering with TVP, banks and other agencies to raise awareness of scams and fraud and attending Lets Talk events.
- 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 the Service does.
- 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 is an official partner of the Team.

4.19 Communication also plays a significant role in preventative measures and the Service's social media channels, resident's newsletter contributions 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. Some of these get picked up by the national media [Victim of Theale rogue trader 'cried for a fortnight' after build - BBC News](#) Examples of these can be found at Appendix A. In addition, Officers conduct regular radio interviews on the scams and fraud work conducted and the PPP's work, in relation to tackling unfair trading and fraud, was 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](#)

4.20 The PPP also participates 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](#)

4.21 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 the Senior Officer Community Protection &

Health. Where an officer believes someone is the victim of financial abuse e.g. so-called 'romance scams' they will work with colleagues and partners to ensure the appropriate support and safeguards are put in place. Significantly, Officers also work with friends and families of victims to put in place measures such as those described in 4.15 above. Likewise, the Service receives referrals from Adult Social Care colleagues and attend safeguarding forums to share ideas and best practice. The service's Public Protection Community Officers and Investigators conduct joint visits with partners to support victims.

- 4.22 The Team also raises awareness of these issues and general unfair trading matters through briefings with police colleagues. At various times officers have presented alongside TVP officers. For many years the PPP has 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 an important role in identifying possible fraudulent activities and unfair trading practices.
- 4.23 The PPP has recently signed up to the Fraud Victims Charter which can be found at **Appendix A** to this report. This again demonstrates the teams commitment to supporting victims for fraud.
- 4.24 Finally, officers 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.

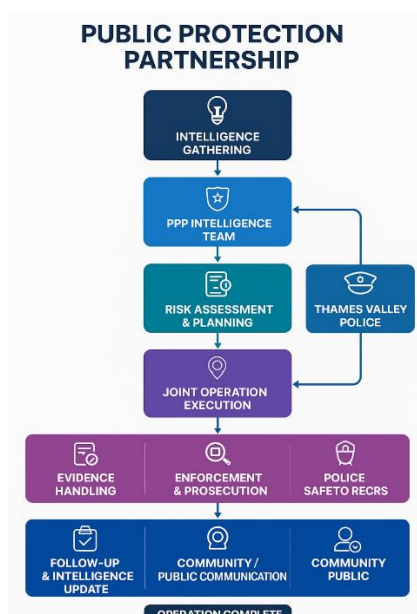
## **The Deployment of Intelligence**

- 4.25 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 by partner agencies such as TVP, Citizens Advice Consumer Line and Action Fraud. The service also receives a significant amount of information through ward members, local MPs and town and parish councils.
- 4.26 It is these reports from residents, businesses, councillors 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 and reviewed daily. They are then considered in the context of the intelligence picture with a view to identifying any emerging trends related to unfair or fraudulent trading activities.
- 4.27 Once an investigation is commenced the intelligence picture is developed using a range of sophisticated techniques and software packages that can connect nominals and assets. Often this involves the analysis of financial data as well the 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. The use of communications data and any surveillance considerations are informed by the [Regulatory of Investigatory Powers Policy](#)
- 4.28 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 data sharing protocols with HMRC, DWP and the National Anti-Fraud Network. The Service also shares 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

- 4.29 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.
- 4.30 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.
- 4.31 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.
- 4.32 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 officers work with a number of police forces and regional crime teams such as South-East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU) to arrest suspects where arrest criteria are met and it is necessary to further the investigation. The illustration below shows how the operations are managed within the service and working with partners:



- 4.33 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. The Service also have the support of a Financial Intelligence Analyst.

- 4.34 Many 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 several officers specially trained and highly skilled officers to take video recorded evidence from both adults and children. Officers engage these measures following review and assessment by the relevant senior manager.
- 4.35 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 the Service has seen several complex investigations built around digital and financial evidence. The PPP also has staff trained in online investigations with access restricted to two officers with digital data expertise who follow the Association of Chief Police Officer's (ACPO) guidance on digital evidence.
- 4.36 Over the period of the PPP's existence, staff 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, serviced accommodation, 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. An example of this is Operation Cara which was a property related fraud that resulted in a conviction for fraudulent trading and forgery and counterfeiting offences following an eight week trial at Reading Crown Court.
- 4.37 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.
- 4.38 Relevant officers have undertaken Disclosure Training, RIPA Training and case file preparation throughout the 2025/26 financial year.
- 4.39 The Strategic Manager - Case Management role (which is currently vacant) 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, the Service also has a specialist disclosure function to ensure its obligations under the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 are fulfilled. The Strategic Manager role is currently being covered in part by the Service Lead – Public Protection along with other staff.

### **Activity Since Last Report**

- 4.40 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

XXXXX 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.

- 4.41 At the time of writing (end October 2025) the total amount paid out by PPP residents on doorstep crime / householder incidents is £957,577. 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  Total Year to date across PPP area 2025 to 2026	Average Loss	Money Recovered	Live Level 2/3 Operations
£957,577	105	£9,119	tba	tba

- 4.42 Examples of unfair trading and fraud cases from 2025 can be found in the links at **Appendix B** to this report.
- 4.43 Looking ahead the PPP is seeking to strengthen its ability to tackle and prevent this type of crime and are exploring working with the Crown Prosecution Service to apply for Serious Crime Prevention Orders in appropriate cases.

## 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, unsolicited doorstep traders and increasingly trader platforms.
- 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, parcel deliveries and the digital switchover.
- 5.3 Fraudsters will exploit peoples lack of knowledge as has been 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 most of these frauds or attempted frauds 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, many 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.

- 5.5 The effects can quite literally lead to the loss of independence, health issues and more reliance on support from family members and the state. The impacts on mental health can be devastating as can be seen from the impact statement 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.
- 5.6 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. The ability to deliver these levels of protection in the way the Service does 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 – Victims Charter

### Appendix B – Selection of Press Releases

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#### Officer details:

Name: Sean Murphy  
Job Title: Service Lead  
Tel No: 01635 519930  
E-mail: [sean.murphy@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:sean.murphy@westberks.gov.uk)

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**NATIONAL  
TRADING  
STANDARDS**

Scams Team

# Fraud and Scams Victim Charter





## Background

The National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team was founded in 2012 to tackle the problem of postal, telephone and doorstep scams. The team works across England and Wales with trading standards and partner agencies to investigate scams and identify and support those who are targeted by them.

Postal, telephone and doorstep scams are often targeted specifically at consumers who may be circumstantially vulnerable. It is estimated that the fraud and scams cost the UK economy £219 billion a year and have devastating effects on those who are targeted.

## Introduction to the Fraud and Scams Victim Charter

The NTS Scams Team's Charter supports victims of fraud and scams. It explains the standard of service victims of these crimes can expect from organisations who sign up to the Charter. It reminds us of how we should treat all victims of crime, but with a focus on fraud and scams.

Research has shown that when people realise they have become a victim of a fraud or scam, their most common feelings were 'anger' at themselves, (46%), 'stupid' (40%) or 'embarrassed' (38%). Victims of fraud and scams are not stupid, naïve, or greedy – they are victims of a crime.

The Charter recognises the impact that fraud and scams can have on victims and requires organisations to have the victims' best interests as their primary consideration. Those who sign this Charter, commit to not blaming or shaming victims but to show empathy, understanding and compassion. They will also take the victims' age, maturity, views, needs and concerns into account.

## Who is a 'victim' under this Charter?

This Charter acknowledges that the definition of a 'victim' is a person who has suffered any type of harm, including physical, mental, or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a fraud or scam.

## Agreeing to be part of the Charter

Upon signing up to this Charter, the organisation will commit to following the principles of the Charter and to the following:

- Appropriate staff must complete the '*Providing Support to Fraud and Scam Victims*' training.
- Appropriate staff must complete the '[Friends Against Scams](#)' training.
- Appropriate staff must watch the '[What is coercive control](#)' video.
- Share your Fraud and Scams Victim Charter status and logo on social media.
- Support the NTS Scams Team No Blame. No Shame. campaign.



Space for  
Organisation  
logo



**NATIONAL  
TRADING  
STANDARDS**  
Scams Team

# Fraud and Scams Victim Charter

**No blame. No shame.**

At *[insert organisation name]* we are signed up to the National Trading Standards Scams Team's Victim Charter. If you have been a victim of fraud or scams, we commit to the following.

- 1. Support and Empathy:** We commit to show empathy, understanding, and compassion to you and ALL victims of fraud and scams, acknowledging the impact of your experiences without judgment.
- 2. Dignity and Respect:** If you need support, you will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. We will encourage an environment where you feel valued and empowered and are able to make decisions about the support you need.
- 3. No Blame and No Shame:** We are committed to creating a space free from victim blaming and shaming. We will focus on help and support rather than judgment or criticism.
- 4. Clear Communication:** We commit to maintain open, clear, simple, and transparent communication, ensuring you are informed about the support available, your rights, and the process involved in getting the help you need.
- 5. Support for your well-being:** We aim to assist with any immediate challenges you face, but we will also consider and plan how best we can work with you in the future.

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## Appendix B

[21 November 2025 - Press Release - Advance fee fraudster sentenced to 4.5 years in prison](#)

[20 October 2025 - Press Release - One in Ten People Scammed in the South-East - Public Protection Partnership](#)

[23 June 2025 - Press Release - Wokingham Trader Given Suspended Sentence and Required to Undertake Unpaid Work - Public Protection Partnership](#)

[10 June 2025 - Press Release - Builder Receives Sentence of 12 Months Imprisonment - Public Protection Partnership](#)

[21 May 2025 - Press Release - Holiday Fraud - Protect Your Hard-Earned Cash - Public Protection Partnership](#)

[13 May 2025 - Press Release - Stop Loan Sharks 19th - 25th May 2025 - Public Protection Partnership](#)

[03 March 2025 - Press Release - Warning as Scammers Pose as Police Officers - Public Protection Partnership](#)

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## Workforce Strategy 2026 - 2029

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Joint Public Protection Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	08 December 2025
<b>Chair of Committee:</b>	Councillor Tom McCann
<b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>	17 November 2025
<b>Report Author:</b>	George Lawrence
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	JPPC

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the committee on the services workforce planning strategy following review of the existing 2022-2025 strategy.
- 1.2 To agree the training and development plan that underpins the workforce strategy.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee:

- 2.1 **APPROVES** the 2026-2029 workforce planning strategy pending any further recommendations made by the committee, and
- 2.2 **APPROVES** the 2026-2029 training and development plan.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

4.

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>There are no new costs associated with the development of these two strategies.</p> <p>Budget impacts are related to establishment changes and are risk managed by the service.</p> <p>Any training costs will be met from within existing budgets and Apprenticeships are funded through the Apprenticeship levy.</p> <p>Two of the trainee roles in Trading Standards are funded until 2029/30 by the Department of Health and Social Care,</p>
<b>Human Resource:</b>	The strategy requires HR (and management) resourcing as part of the retention, recruitment and retirement process.
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no direct legal implications associated with the strategies, but employment law applies.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	There is significant risk posed by not having a competent workforce, These risks are legal, operational and reputational.

	<p>The purpose of this strategy is to ensure those risks are managed effectively.</p> <p>Skills gaps and so called 'single points of failure' also present risks. We will continue to identify such gaps and seek to resolve as we go forward.</p>			
<b>Property:</b>	None			
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>There are no direct policy implications arising from this paper. It is however noted that local Government Re-organisation planning may affect decisions in due course.</p>			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equity Impact Assessment:</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 – the service follows corporate HR requirements.
<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 – the service follows corporate HR requirements.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>				None
<b>Health Impact:</b>				None
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>				None in excess of business as usual
<b>PPP Priorities:</b>				<p>The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities (delete those that are not appropriate)</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>	The service has engaged with human resources and will continue to do so in advancing its policy on recruitment, retention and retirement (succession planning).			
<b>Other Options Considered:</b>	None.			

## 5. Executive Summary

- 5.1 The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) employs almost 100 permanent officers across a variety of professional and technical support roles. 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. The only agency resource outside of grant funded work has been in the areas of case management (vacancy / long term absence cover) and food safety inspections. The PPP also delivers services against a number of other arrangements and grant funded work streams.
- 5.2 The PPP delivers three local government regulatory roles: Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing. These roles are professionally based, broad in remit and ultimately open to legal challenge if not carried out correctly. It is therefore important that the staff remain professionally competent in accordance with the requirements of their professional bodies.
- 5.3 The service is supported by colleagues within areas such as Finance, Legal Services and Customer Services across the three Council's, as well as management oversight in the form of the Joint Management Board (JMB), and Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC). However, the service is reliant on its own workforce in these areas to ensure it delivers in a consistent and continuous manner.
- 5.4 With such a breadth of workforce knowledge, balanced with challenges in recruitment, retention and retirement planning, it is important that the PPP remains vigilant to the workforce market, service needs and service planning to ensure it remains relevant and resilient.
- 5.5 The last strategy was produced in 2023, and whilst mostly relevant, this still requires review. More so, following findings of the peer review into the service. It is for these reasons above that this review has been undertaken.

## 6. Skills Development

- 6.1 The service recognises its workforce is its most valuable asset and resource. It also recognises the need for officers to develop and grow.
- 6.2 Placed together, there is the opportunity to get the best out of its staff, whilst promoting individual talent and growth. This can then be recognised through promotional opportunity, whether that is focussed on specialist roles, or more generic managerial roles. To achieve such training and development in a fair and ordered

way, the PPP training and development plan outlines the approach it needs to take on the practical levels to achieve personal goals and ambitions as well as service requirements.

- 6.3 Furthermore, the organisation recognises the benefits of supporting learning and development for all concerned and has adopted the approach of documenting learning and development needs when staff meet with their line managers during 1:1's and appraisal target setting.
- 6.4 This two-way relationship is considered vitally important in ensuring the service and staff benefit.

## **7. Service Resilience**

- 7.1 The PPP recognises the challenges in recruiting qualified and competent staff across all levels, and in particular management posts. It also recognises that retention challenges exist and that staff will retire. The service has a number of experienced officers who are able to retire, and some officers have notified management that they are planning to do so over the next few years.
- 7.2 As well as working with colleagues within Human Resourcing, the service has committed to growing your own to combat local (and national) recruitment challenges. This has been successful in recent years at level 4 regulatory compliance officer levels and has since moved towards higher level 6 TSO apprenticeships for 6 officers, as well as other externally funded courses such as the Environmental Health Master's degree and Food Safety Officer diploma.
- 7.3 The Peer review carried out in 2024/ 25 recognised that succession planning, at the management level could be improved. Consequently, the new strategy has included the need to put in place steps to address this and in particular at the level of line management. Firstly, it commits to provide the opportunities that will develop confidence in existing officers, such as mentoring. Secondly, to support more formal training in management roles.
- 7.4 Through its prioritisation of functions, the service has a recognised track record of resilience in its operational field functions. This is seen in how it coped with Covid recovery, assisting other departments in enforcement, adapting to changes in legislation, and leading on cross cutting related issues with key stakeholders. The strategy builds on that premise by ensuring we continue to support a healthy mix of professional and technical roles.

## **8. Service Capacity**

- 8.1 As outlined above, the service needs to ensure it has enough capacity to deliver on the breadth of commitments set out in the Inter Authority Agreements, and wider agreements. To do so, the service needs a varied workforce in terms of skills, specialisms and numbers and a need to ensure the budget is there to do so.
- 8.2 Service needs will invariably vary from time to time, but the PPP must consider all competency levels across its workforce, whilst managing existing and future risks. This balance is considered to be at the heart of the strategy. It will ensure it maintains the correct officer capacity and competency in any given role, and at any given time.



- 8.3 The strategy informs its training and development plan, which are the practical steps needed to ensure the workforce remains relevant and resilient throughout the IAA period.

## 9. Concluding Observations

- 9.1 This strategy sets out the ambitions of the service to ensure existing risks are properly managed and that there remains the right resource with appropriate training in place. Moreover, that the workforce is planned in such a way that it is able to contend with future risks.
- 9.2 By having the correct mix of skills, qualifications and capacity, the service will ensure future security in its workforce deliver.
- 9.3 This strategic review is intended to set direction for at least the next three years, but it should not stand still. Any changes in structure, budget, legislation, political will or risk should prompt review to ensure that the direction remains relevant and resilient at any given time.
- 

## 10. Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A – Workforce Planning Strategy
- 10.2 Appendix B – Training and Development Plan
- 

## 11. Background Papers:

- 11.1 None

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

**Wards affected:** All Wards

### Officer details:

Name: George Lawrence  
Job Title: Strategic Manager (Community and Trading Standards)  
Tel No: 01635 519163  
E-mail: george.lawrence@westberks.gov.uk

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# Workforce Planning Strategy 2026 - 2029

December 2025

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



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## 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and summary

The PPP employs almost 100 permanent officers across a variety of professional and technical support roles as well as a number of casual and/or agency staff. It delivers on a number of services outside of the two Inter Authority Agreements that form the core of the PPP.

The changing demands and fluctuating priorities faced by services require considered, careful and measured ways of managing the important resource of its workforce.

The Public Protection Partnership (**PPP**) consists of three local government regulatory roles:

1. Trading Standards,
2. Environmental Health, and
3. Licensing.

These roles are professionally based, broad in remit and ultimately open to legal challenge if not carried out correctly.

There are also a significant number of roles which are in place to support the professional officers for example ensuring the customer interface is maintained and quality of data and information provided.

#### The PPP Workforce Aim

To have a workforce which is qualified, experienced, competent and adaptable with the ability to meet the needs of the community and the Councils.

We recognise the benefit of workforce planning as a method of keeping disruption to a minimum and aim for a dynamic and skilled workforce able to use core skills to minimise issues presented by workforce changes and exterior pressures.

The complexities of the service and the way in which it is delivered mean that the certainty and ability of detailed future planning of the workforce is harder than in some industries, however we will plan generically and aim to build in flexibility wherever possible.

This strategy (and associated documents) draws upon published material from a range of organisations<sup>1</sup> and should provide a solid platform for future decisions about investing in recruitment, skills and abilities which best place the service to deliver against its aims.

---

<sup>1</sup> Health Education England (2016/17), NHS Education for Scotland (2016/17), Institute for Employment Studies (2008)

## **1.2 Current workforce profile**

### **1.2.1 Age**

The service has split of age ranges with some apprentice/school leaver roles through to a number of staff at or near retirement age. Notably, of the currently filled posts, around 13% are already on flexible retirement arrangements, reached retirement age or are able to take retirement within the next 3 years.

### **1.2.2 Working patterns and contract type**

As of September 2025, the majority of employees are on permanent full-time contracts, and there are minimal numbers of casual and/or agency employed at any given time. The total number of posts within the PPP is 97. The occupied number of posts (at the time of writing) is 84, with an FTE across the service equating to 76.45.

Agency staff are employed on a case-by-case basis, and the service only engage agency staff where there is a strong business case (and available budget) to do so. Approval is required at Executive Director level, and it is more likely that grant funding is the rationale for using Agency rather than revenue budget. The service carries out assessment of these positions for compliance with IR35 requirements.

### **1.2.3 Gender**

The proportion of the workforce identifying as Male is 36.5% and 63.5% Female. This differs slightly to that in 2023 (30% male and 70% female). In 2020, the split was 25% and 75% respectively. Therefore an overall increase in the proportion of male staff compared to female staff.

### **1.2.4 Staff location**

The service is split across 3 locations with all new staff being appointed to the central Theale office. (see Appendix A). Theale now dominates in terms of a staff base for all new appointments.

Since the changes in the Wokingham partnership in 2022, all previously Wokingham based staff have relocated to alternative offices across Theale and Bracknell Forest mostly. A small number of trading standard officers are still able to operate out of Wokingham Shute End for practical purposes.

### **1.2.5 Absence**

The size of the PPP means that it is likely that from time to time there will be staff experiencing extended periods of absence from work. although not immune to staff absenteeism, the levels experienced within the last year is below the organisational average. (see Appendix A).

### **1.2.6 Professional Roles**

The recognised professional roles are:

- Lawyers
- Trading Standards Officers

- Accredited Financial Investigators
- Environmental Health Officers
- Licensing Officers

There are officers who are accredited as qualified officers, each requiring between 20-30 hours of Continuing Professional Development per annum.

### 1.3 Current Workforce within Service Delivery Model

The PPP is a model for delivering regulatory services at local authority level. Most councils across the country operate at either city/borough, unitary or county level which means the services are on a far smaller scale or split amongst different providers. By combining them at this level we are able to deliver a 'best value' service which will provide our stakeholders a cheaper, better quality and more comprehensive package.

Partners have recognised the value of the service. At the time of writing, the service arrangements are to be extended up until 2029 following a peer review that established the service was delivering high quality services and had a capability beyond that of any individual partner. It is also worth noting that Central Government devolution plans are in place, resulting in a major re-organisation of Councils across the UK. It is inevitable that this will impact on the PPP once decisions have been made across the partner Council's and beyond. It's more important than ever that the services' workforce is able to pivot and have in place the resilience to ensure it can maintain a level of delivery across all the competencies come what may.

We aim to avoid potential drawbacks of this service model by ensuring our workforce remain competent within their own professional fields at the same time as broadening their abilities to deliver in other areas. They can then provide resilience in the other fields as well as having a useful awareness of the range of activities performed by those services.

The PPP has a range of different provider roles which will affect its workforce planning;

- **Direct service provider** – directly delivering the Regulatory Services functions within the 3 council areas. The workforce will be affected by budget cuts, political changes of priority etc.
- **External service provider** – arrangements with other services and councils to deliver on their behalf e.g. proceeds of crime investigations – Reading BC and Oxfordshire County Council
- **Technical Specialist Contractors** – we currently have a number of specialist contracts services such as Animal Health Inspections, out of hours stray dog collection and management of air quality monitoring units.

PPP recognises the benefit of building in workforce resilience to interior changes and exterior pressures and addresses this in a number of ways including:

- Preserving budget to pay for temporary staff when necessary. E.g. during times of legislative change, emergency issues (e.g. Foot and Mouth outbreak) or lengthy national investigations.
- Having budget to pay staff overtime where necessary to ensure delivery of Service commitments, e.g. attendance at large events such as music festivals, or inspections of food operators.
- Upskilling staff and maintaining a number of generalist staff who can undertake a broad spectrum of tasks.
- Consistent re-evaluation of workflow and resources through our tasking and management resourcing meetings to address workloads and pressures upon the service.

#### 1.4 Current workforce challenges

The main challenges that are currently faced by the service workforce include:

- Financial uncertainties
- Political uncertainties
- Workforce profile and approaches
- Attracting new (professional) members of staff
- Developing professional officer roles
- Maintaining a fair and equitable system of pay

#### 1.5 Strategy for dealing with the workforce challenges

Financial uncertainties - The service is continually evolving, with uncertainty on which teams, professions or officers will be undertaking particular tasks now and in the future and therefore the level of resource required in those areas.

The PPP will work to maintain records of staff and their training to understand the resourcing available at any one point. The use of Strategic Tasking to guide resourcing of teams and priority work areas will give clarity in decision making for all. There is also a need to recognise certain activities may require a specialist officer and that it is acceptable to “buy in” the skill for the short term.

Political uncertainties – There remains uncertainty concerning legislative and economic uncertainties and changes. Local political uncertainties can affect the shaping of the service and include financial constraints

Through the Strategic and Tactical tasking processes the service will ensure that horizon scanning and local/national issues are considered within priority setting. Changes in legislation will be reviewed and staffing impacts and training needs assessed. The service commissions technical specialists for short term projects or investigations but it will always be reviewed against the benefits of supporting internal staff to develop new skills. Linking into internal management and strategy groups will ensure our work is aligned with the Council Plans for each authority.



Workforce Profile – The recruitment of new staff within enforcement roles has attracted more experienced officers, with a number of field officers having possibly already retired from another service (e.g. Police). The workforce is therefore at risk whereby officers decide move towards reducing hours to balance work and retirement choices and/or leaving within a short space of time from recruitment. Staff may also leave if there are more opportunities for career development away from the service

The PPP will develop clear career development paths to ensure new staff into the service are certain of the opportunities to develop and learn from those more experienced staff. The use of mentoring and coaching from those staff who may be near retirement is essential to minimising the risk and improving resilience should those officers move on. We will develop an apprentice scheme with the aim of bringing younger staff into the workforce and “growing our own” in hard to recruit to posts.

Attracting new (Professional) members of Staff – Whilst bringing in valuable knowledge & experience, having an aging and/or stagnated workforce can have negative affect. For example, officers may no longer reflect general society and can be stuck in dated working methodology and ideals

The PPP will ensure we have a workforce who are able to deliver the needs of our communities regardless of the age of the workforce. As a service we need to recognise this issue and ensure we have good information sharing, training and an understanding of our customer needs to manage this. We can gain support from the internal services in each authority to ensure our services are designed for interacting with all sectors of our population using technology to our advantage in delivering this. We also need to support change in a fast moving and ever changing environment.

Developing professional officer Roles – Current recruitment has identified that attracting new staff to the service in the professional fields of Environmental Health and Trading Standards has proved difficult. Factors such as the competitiveness of salaries, location (size of area) and current market availability of qualified professionals. This is something recognised by West Berkshire Council and not unique to the PPP

The PPP will work with the Joint Management Board members and the support services (HR) within the authorities to review the current arrangements and ensure that the uniqueness of the service is recognised. The culture of “growing your own” is already in place with a number of staff having been supported through gaining qualifications within the PPP and a number of apprentice roles in place. As a service we possess a clear career progression path so staff can see the potential opportunities for development. See also succession planning.

Maintaining a fair and equitable system of pay – There remains a need to understand better roles and responsibilities and legacy issues around pay (related to TUPE arrangements)

The PPP needs clear identification of roles and responsibility with clarity and consistency needed on Job Descriptions across the service. The service has a number of job profiles within the service over those that are recognised as professional roles. In order to ensure equity and pay in job delivery, the management should review each role and a review of the job profile to ensure officers and managers are clear on expectations and requirements of their roles. Further, that the pay grade for each role is in line with current evaluation criteria.

## 1.6 The role of professional bodies

The professions within PPP all have their own professional bodies as listed below.

Professions	Organisations
Environmental Health	<b>The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)</b> <a href="https://www.cieh.org/">https://www.cieh.org/</a>
Case Management	<b>The Law Society</b> <a href="https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/">https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/</a> <b>The BAR Council</b> <b>The Chartered Institute of Legal Executive</b> <b>Solicitors Regulation Authority</b>
Licensing	<b>The Institute of Licensing (IoL)</b> <a href="https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/">https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/</a>
Financial Investigators	<b>The National Crime Agency (Proceeds of Crime Centre)</b>
Trading Standards	<b>The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)</b> (and local Southern Branch) <a href="https://www.tradingstandards.uk/">https://www.tradingstandards.uk/</a> <b>The National Trading Standards (NTS)</b> <a href="https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/">https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/</a> <b>Trading Standards South East (TSSE)</b> <a href="https://www.tsse.org.uk/">https://www.tsse.org.uk/</a>

The role of these bodies vary but generally they champion, lobby, assist, organise and promote the work of the professions and oversee competence requirements and regulate.

In order for PPP to operate to its potential, the support and training offered by these (and other) organisations is maximised to ensure our workforce remains competent and that the service remains relevant. To this end, most staff receive regular updates from the bodies and should act upon any 'action points' accordingly. The IoL and TSSE are particularly active in promoting training courses and legal updates covering the full range of tasks undertaken by the service.

By using the support of the bodies we ensure,

- Our professional and 'generalist' workforce maintain their competency
- Operate within regulatory frameworks
- Lead officers continue to keep their high level of expected expertise
- We benefit from the 'horizon scanning' from other organisations across the country which can enable us to restructure or revise ourselves early.

## **1.7 Apprenticeships and Professional Development**

The PPP (through West Berkshire Council - the "Employer") are signed up to the recruitment through the National Apprenticeship Scheme.

PPP have made use of these funds to help with the training of new field officers by using one of the approved courses. Previously, the service employed 4 Regulatory Compliance Officer Level 4 apprenticeship roles. 2 have gone onto further study within PPP. The service has also invested in six L6 TSO apprentices and one L6 EHO.

The training is not stand alone but undertaken whilst performing basic normal work tasks within the service under the control of more experienced officers. The duration varies between 2-4 years depending on previous qualification, or in the case of 2 DHSC funded posts, the time spent learning v's on the job training.

It is anticipated that level 4 training will assist in creating new officers to the professions by giving them foundation level skill and knowledge allowing them to develop further within the regulatory field. These officers can then remain as Regulatory Services staff with the intention of assisting with lower-level work across the 3 services or they can use it as a step in progression towards training as a fully qualified officers within one of the professions and undertaking higher level work. i.e. progression to L6.

The Scheme only pays for the training of the officer, so the service must pay for the officer's salary. If the training and support offered by the scheme proves beneficial and valuable it is hoped that salaries may be found to pay for these posts (possibly from those older officers who retire).

The recognised advantages of the apprenticeship scheme include the ability to grow our own officers to the needs of the service as well as the encouragement for experienced officers to act as mentor's and develop in this area too. The service has also invested in mentoring with existing staff in place supporting learners.

In addition, the service has funded 4 MSc Environmental Health Officer roles since 2023. Two have completed their academic elements and graduated in 2025, and two others enrolled on the two year programme in 2025

## 2. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Staff groupings

Staffing within the service can be defined at a number of levels and may relate to technical knowledge and competency, specific skill sets (e.g. finance, lawyers) or management responsibilities:

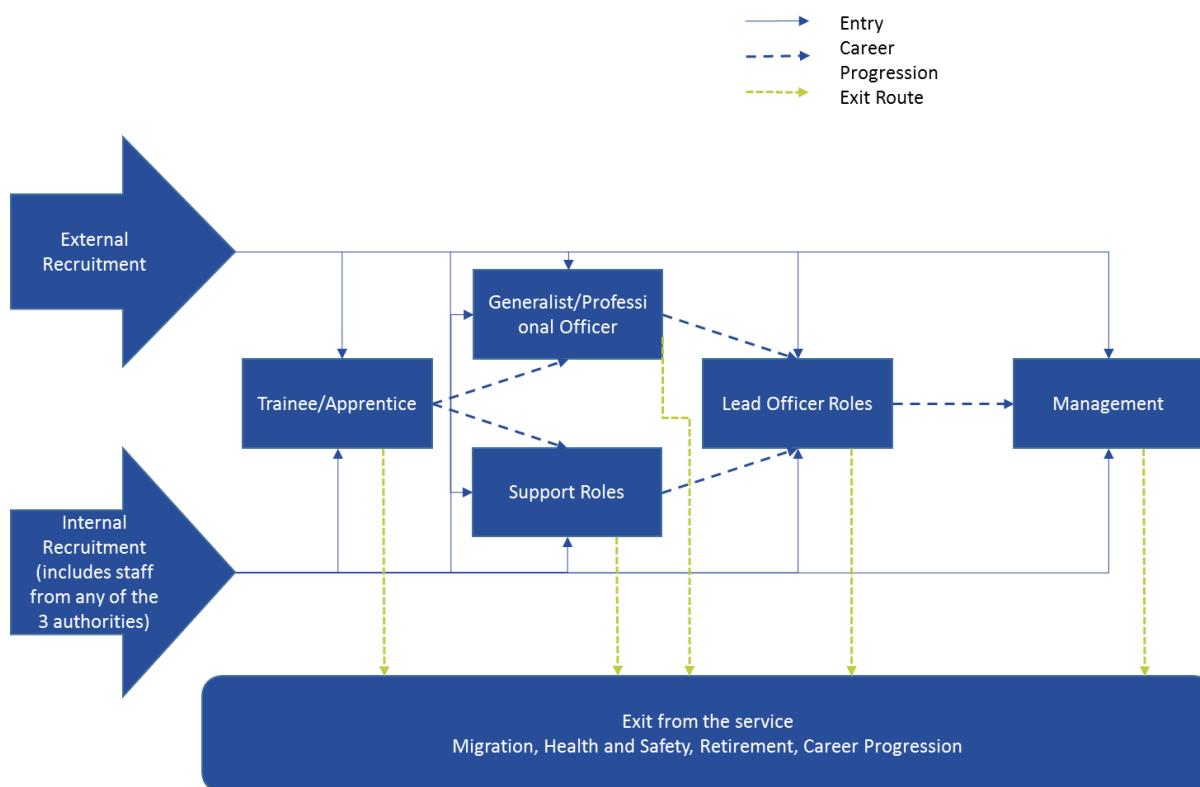
- ***‘Trainees/Apprentices’***  
E.g. Trainee Regulatory Services Officer, L6 TSO/EHO.
- ***‘Operational Support’***  
E.g. Applications, Customer Care, Legal and Finance officers.
- ***‘Generalists’***  
E.g. Trading Standards, Fair Trading Officers, Environmental Control or Licensing Technical Officers who undertake a broad spectrum of tasks
- ***‘Professional’***  
E.g. Trading Standards, Environmental Health or Licensing Officers with more qualifications.
- ***‘Subject Matter Experts’***  
E.g. Lead Officers for Contaminated Land, Food legislation, Financial Investigators, lawyers
- ***‘Cross Cutting’***  
E.g. Intelligence officers, disclosure officers
- ***‘Managers’***  
E.g. Principal, Strategic etc.

These roles (including Entry and Exit points) are outlined in more detail in Appendix A.

### 3. THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM<sup>2</sup>

The diagram below shows the stages and general route through the workforce system within PPP.

Wastage can occur between each stage through promotion to other posts, resignation, retirement or other reason.



### 4. SKILLS RESILIENCE & SUCCESSION PLANNING

We recognise within the Training and Development Plan that there are key areas to focus on within the service (see appendix A). Whilst Professional Competence and Personal Development are important to overall service delivery, we have to recognise that improving our communication with the customer, quality statement writing and other core skills are key as the other areas will fall down if the basics are not right.

#### 4.1 Core Skills

- Communication
- Problem solving
- Investigation techniques
- Interviewing under caution
- Handling complaints
- Managing expectations

<sup>2</sup> Workforce planning guide – Institute for Employment Studies (2008)

- Understanding the PPP operating model

## **4.2 Management and Leadership Skills**

- Managing change
- Performance management
- Project management
- Budget control
- Analysing intelligence products

## **4.3 Technical Skills**

- Conducting financial investigation
- Conducting profession/sector specific enforcement
- Handling communications data

## **4.4 Service Development Skills**

This is set out in the Learning and Development plan. This is a live document as it needs to reflect the management of external and internal factors which are constantly evolving.

## **4.5 Succession Planning**

The service has experienced long standing vacancy at both senior (field) Officer level, and at Principal Officer and Strategic Manager level. The reason for this is speculative but pay disparity compared to other council's (included within PPP following TUPE arrangements) and the increased level of responsibility, commensurate to little pay increase is likely to be a factor.

A more probable influential factor preventing higher responsibility roles being filled is the lack of professional officers generally able to move on within PPP and the restriction qualifications place on officers who would wish to move up the ladder but lack the professional (EHO/TSO) qualification to do so.

As set out earlier, field operational staff comprise of a mixture of EHO/TSO and enforcement & technical officers. Except for Principal Officer, Strategic Manager and Head of Service roles (all of whom are professionally qualified), the combination of field staff comprised of the following;

- 8 Qualified Trading Standards Officers
- 11 Qualified Environmental Health Officers
- 4 Accredited Financial Investigators
- 3 Qualified Lawyers
- 69 other technical/enforcement posts – 52 excluding support roles such as legal, customer services and financial support.

Although the specific data isn't available, this profile has shifted over time with the deletion of posts and conversion from higher graded officers to lower - more specifically enforcement focussed resource.

Consequently, the service recognises the need to develop professional TSO and EHO staff as well as future managers.

The PPP, through its recruitment and JD evaluation process will ensure it maintains a healthy balance of EHO's/TSO's and non-professional/technical officers as too much loss or gain either way will bring about pressures within the service. Moreover, to ensure succession planning to higher line management levels, the service requires a pool of EHO/TSO's who wish to progress. In doing so, it has invested highly in training from within those skills and professional qualifications. Especially taking advantage of the apprenticeship levy available (see 1.7).

However, the service also recognises from its recent staff survey that not all EHO/TSO staff wish to progress further than their existing role, or in areas not within their own specialism. See JPPC paper's March 2025 [West Berkshire Council - Agenda for Joint Public Protection Committee on Monday 24 March 2025, 7.00 pm](#)

The service will continue with the 'grow your own' approach to deal with the lack of qualified skilled managers in the medium to long term. It has already supported additional ILM (Management) qualifications. Since 2023, it has seen 2 officers complete their ILM, placing them in a more confident position as a line managers and ready to potentially progress.

It is also recognised that management need to revisit person specifications to ensure that they do not act as a barrier to those with the relevant skills to perform the managerial roles. Currently there is a significant focus on the need for EH or TS professional qualifications for management roles and without such qualifications.

The management will, through its review of activities carried out within PPP identify single points of failure (SPOF). Where SPOF are identified, develop a training plan and ensure adequate resources are in place to manage this issue. This will be added to the competency framework and reported back to JMB in due course.

Finally, to provide a stepping stone towards management, officers will be actively encouraged to act as mentors. Doing so will provide learning and developmental opportunities, as well as additional job satisfaction.

Finally, the service will be informed further by repeating its staff survey of December 2024. This is supported by the staff feedback forum (a forum created as recommended following the peer review) and will include an opportunity to explore staff's views on psychological safety in the service.

## **5 UNDERSTANDING SERVICE CAPACITY**

### **5.1 Managers**

The Management Team comprises of one Service Lead, three Strategic Managers and eight Principal Officers. There are other managers within the system who are senior officers, with other roles within their team purpose to perform. The 2025 Peer Review recognised that whilst a substantial plan was in place for entry level and professional development, there was a weakness in that the service had a number of

SPOF at management level as well as a lack of succession planning for key management roles – especially that of Service Lead. This will be a priority in the coming period and progress will be subject to ongoing reporting to the Committee.

## **5.2 Professional**

Whilst the service retains a number of professional officers there has been an ongoing issue with recruitment in professional posts. There has also been a shift to part time working, which has reduced capacity. All managers listed above are also Professional Officers who are no longer involved in day-to-day support.

## **5.3 Support**

Support staff can be considered as all non-operational staff. This includes customer delivery, governance, case management and Intel functions. There are also support officers within the licensing team who process and advice on licensing applications.

## **5.4 Subject Matter Experts**

Historically these have been the more technical specialist roles. However, the services has seen many generalists becoming ‘specialists’ due to competency requirements, which in turn reduces resilience (competency and capacity) in general activity and risks even less resilience in those specialist areas when those posts become vacant.

As a service we have not appointed to many of these roles for some time. The most recent being to an Enforcement Officer (Animal Health) which is a specific role and which like many others in the systems, requires specialist knowledge of a discrete area of work. This is often an area where we have lacked resilience and requires careful workforce planning.

## **5.6 Generalist**

This role encompasses a majority of operational enforcement roles, ranging from discreet responsibilities, such as fly-tipping enforcement to general enforcement in all matters linked to licensing enforcement, trading standards and environmental health.

## **5.7 Cross cutting**

These roles have developed as a theme to promote cross cutting issues across PPP. There are a number of roles in their existing format which naturally cross cut the service such as Victim Support Officer. There are also more niche roles which are currently a “bolt on” to existing day to day operational work such as Safeguarding Lead and Training Lead. Cross cutting roles would also include community public health officer functions, assured care and support schemes, responsible retailers, smoking cessation and alcohol reduction with partners (CAP) and modern slavery work.



## **Appendix A - Workforce Profiles, Locations, Workstyle and Absenteeism.**

### **Entry Point for Roles**

#### **Operational Support**

The entry point for most PPP operational support staff is external recruitment. These staff may already be experienced in this type of work or as the service continues to encourage apprenticeships, we hope to train apprentices who can then become permanent staff.

Such is the expansion of the service, that this has created a need for Technical Leads within this group of staff.

#### **Regulatory Service Officer**

The introduction of RSO's is a positive addition to the service in its future planning freeing up qualified staff to undertake more complex work. Level 4 trained staff will have a level of knowledge (and experience) which would enable them to 'hit the ground running' in most aspects of regulatory controls throughout the service. Knowledge and skills will develop through mentorships, senior officer support and shared learning will continue grow as subsequent cohort join.

The service will continually review the need for level 4 qualifications as it continues supporting L6 professional qualifications over the next 2-4 years.,

The service will maintain that;

1. Professional officers will be as comprehensively and broadly qualified as possible – to give the flexibility to rotate between teams & deliver different aspects of service depending on service need.
2. RSO's will be provided with a career pathway that will enable them to remain in their current role or to become qualified officers in one of the professions.
3. Training and opportunities to develop will be fairly offered and balanced with service needs and sustainable.

#### **Professional Generalist**

The operating model for PPP demands high quality professionals capable of acting in a multi-disciplinary way. There are distinct skills required of staff that operate in this capacity and normal entry to this grouping would be as a trainee, if not recruited directly (externally).

Currently the group is made up of staff with professional qualifications or demonstrate expertise in problem solving and communication. The level of independence and delegated authority allowed is directly proportionate to qualification, skills and experience.

Most staff will be affiliated or registered with a professional body and be able to demonstrate a track record of CPD (Continual Professional Development).

### **Technical Specialist**

Working alongside the *Professional Generalist*, the nature and complexity of PPP workloads require some staff to enhance their knowledge in specific areas.

These areas will be determined by the current strategic priorities and entry to this grouping is likely to be internal development.

Currently the group is made up of staff with professional affiliations who have significant experience in a particular function. There will be demonstrable CPD in these areas of specialism throughout the group.

### **Managers**

The current management structure demonstrates a mix of backgrounds. Requirements at this level tend to be around recognised professional and managerial qualifications and experience of managing staff. Future entry will be focussed on internal development of senior professional staff.

## **Exit Point for Roles**

### **Operational Support**

In recent years some staff that have left this group to become trainees and move into the Professional Generalist or Technical Specialist group. There has been some natural wastage but no identifiable trends.

### **Professional Generalist and Technical Specialist**

These two groups suffer from natural wastage in the main and within the next 10 years or so, a significant proportion will reach retirement age. Succession planning is key and we seek to address this by ensuring the service will incorporate the tools available in order to ensure a respectful resignation process. [HR Knowledge transfer form - Appendix D.pdf](#)

### **Managers**

The creation of PPP and subsequent reorganisations have resulted in changes at management level. Recent examples indicate that people leave for promotions, relocation of family and changes in work patterns as a result of shared services.

Table 1: PPP Officer Workstyles

October 2025	Headcount	Office	Home	Community	Mobile Community
<b>total:</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 2: PPP Officer Work location

October 2025	Existing Headcount	Market Street	Theale Gateway	Wokingham Borough Council	Bracknell Forest Council
<b>Total:</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 3: PPP absenteeism Oct 2024 – Oct 2025

October 2024 - 2025	Headcount	Days Lost	Hours Lost
<b>*Total:</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>463.5</b>	<b>3294.96</b>

\*5.8 days lost/person. HR reports directorate (People) as 8.5 days lost/person. 15 July 2025 PC report.pdf

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# **PUBLIC PROTECTION PARTNERSHIP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026 - 2029**

December 2025

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



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) is committed to developing our employees in light of changing demands on the Service as well as new ways of working and learning and technological progression. The Service therefore aims to:

- Help employees to develop their skills and potential.
- Increase personal growth and performance of the team.
- Enhance digital competency and foster innovation through ongoing engagement with emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence.
- Support succession planning by identifying and developing talent to ensure leadership continuity and organisational resilience.
- Provide good quality services and value for money for our residents and the authorities we serve.
- Inform, protect and support residents and legitimate business.

This Training and Development Plan outlines the direction for training and development (T&D) of staff within the PPP and reflects the PPP Workforce Strategy. The Plan recognises that the PPP has responsibility for a significant array of complex areas of law ranging from environmental protection to counterfeiting, fraud and money laundering; private sector housing; food chain protection; health and safety, weights and measures and licensing and many other areas.

Many of these areas are strictly controlled in terms of officer competence requirements whilst others are a matter for the service to determine. The Plan also underpins several of the Service's other key strategic documents including the [Strategic Assessment](#).

The Vision of the Service is to protect our communities using effective communication, intelligence and enforcement by:

- Providing information to people to enable them to make informed decisions and understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Creating an atmosphere where legitimate and compliant businesses can thrive and not have their interests undermined by those who choose not to comply.
- Protecting the health, wellbeing and safety of the communities we serve.
- Responding to emerging issues and needs.

In order to do this the Service strives to:

- Be objective in decision making.
- Act at all times with best of intentions.
- Ensure an approach to service delivery which is professional on every level.
- Invest in our people.
- Stay informed about technological advancements relevant to the sector, with a focus on AI applications in policy, governance, and public service delivery.

- Identify potential successors for key roles and assess current skill gaps through the appraisal process and personal development discussions.

To achieve these aims and to ensure that we have a workforce that is able to deliver the Service's Priorities it is essential to undertake investment in apprentices and trainees and continue to upskill existing staff. We will also seek to apply learning by identifying opportunities to integrate AI or other digital solutions into work processes, policy development, or service improvement initiatives.

While the Business Plan sets out the priorities and visions for the service the Workforce Strategy is designed to ensure that the service has an adequate supply of people with the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver these priorities. The Training and Development Plan is designed to improve the professional skills, knowledge and expertise of individual employees to support the Workforce Strategy.

Training needs will be identified and discussed through the Employee Performance Management or Appraisal Process including at regular one to one meetings with line managers.

## 2. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Training requirements may result from:

- The service, e.g. responding to new corporate or service priorities.
- External sources, e.g. responding to cost-of-living issues or disease outbreaks.
- Professional teams, e.g. dealing with changes in legislation or professional standards.
- Officers e.g. identifying knowledge or skills gaps or organisational weakness.
- New starters, apprentices and ongoing professional development.
- Part of a broader commitment to continuous professional development, digital literacy, and innovation.

All of these are legitimate reasons for requiring training, however, overall, the training should be to allow the Service to deliver against priorities and the needs of residents and businesses in the PPP area.

The Plan aims to ensure that the PPP maximises the organisational capacity, performance and resilience of the Service.

To do this the Service will strive to:

- Develop the right skills to deliver the Service Plan and Service Priorities.
- Deliver for the needs of the whole community.
- Understand and manage risk.
- Understand the importance of effective implementation of good laws whilst minimising burdens on business.



- Understand the role of other council services and partner agencies and where we share common interests and objectives.
- Support employees to do their job well.
- Help employees and managers to identify and meet job related development needs, areas for personal growth and areas for improvement.
- Minimise single points of failure within the service.
- Consider appropriate routes for succession planning.
- Recognise the economic climate the Service is operating in and identify cost effective training methods.
- Evaluate the quality and costs of any training attended.
- Continue to explore opportunities to use Apprenticeship Levy funding through the National Apprenticeship Scheme.
- Make fair and consistent decisions relating to learning and development and to provide equality of opportunity for all employees based on service needs.

In addition to the above sources of training, West Berkshire Council and the PPP require all employees to undertake mandatory training courses and professional bodies may set their own requirements too.

### 3. PROFESSIONAL BODIES LINKED TO THE PPP

Professions	Organisations
Environmental Health	<b>The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)</b> <a href="https://www.cieh.org/">https://www.cieh.org/</a>
Case Management	<b>The Law Society</b> <a href="https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/">https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/</a>
Licensing	<b>The Institute of Licensing (IoL)</b> <a href="https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/">https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/</a>
Trading Standards	<b>The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)</b> (and local Southern Branch) <a href="https://www.tradingstandards.uk/">https://www.tradingstandards.uk/</a> <b>The National Trading Standards (NTS)</b> <a href="https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/">https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/</a> <b>Trading Standards South East (TSSE)</b> <a href="https://www.tsse.org.uk/">https://www.tsse.org.uk/</a>
Food	<b>Food Standards Agency</b> <a href="https://www.food.gov.uk/">https://www.food.gov.uk/</a>
Health and Safety	<b>Health and Safety Executive</b> <a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/">https://www.hse.gov.uk/</a>

## 4. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The PPP has two areas of mandatory training:

1. West Berkshire Council (WBC) mandatory training
2. PPP mandatory training

### West Berkshire Council Mandatory Training

As the host authority, WBC stipulates the mandatory training which all staff and managers must carry out. The list of current requirements is set out here: [Mandatory training courses - Intranet](#) and includes:

Mandatory Training for Staff	Mandatory Training for Managers
Data Protection and Security Essentials (Annual)	Data Protection and Security Essentials (Annual)
Display Screen Equipment (Every three years)	Display Screen Equipment (Every three years)
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Every three years)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Every three years)
Fire Awareness (Every three years)	Fire Awareness (Every three years)
Health and Safety for Staff (Every three years)	Health and Safety for Managers (Every three years)
Stress Awareness for Staff (Every three years)	Stress Awareness for Managers (Every three years)
Worker Protection Act: Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Every three years)	Worker Protection Act: Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Every three years)
Neurodiversity Awareness (Every three years)	Neurodiversity Awareness (Every three years)
Induction to West Berkshire Council (within first 6 months)	Induction to West Berkshire Council (within first 6 months)
Prevent (Every two years)	Prevent (Every two years)

WBC monitor, provide access to and update the mandatory training courses to ensure employees are aware of the council's standards and legal responsibilities for key subjects such as equalities, health and safety, and handling data. The requirement is for all mandatory training to be completed within the first six months of employment. The exception being Data Protection and Security Essentials which should be completed on the first day of employment. All mandatory e-learning is accessed via the [Learning Hub](#).

Line managers will check officers are up to date with their mandatory training during the 6-month and 12-month appraisals. Any out-of-date learning should be addressed or elevated to senior management if there is an issue. All classroom based courses should be booked using [iTrent - Employee Self Service](#); and guidance notes on how to do it can be found [here](#).

## PPP Mandatory Training

The PPP also has several mandatory training areas identified. This training may be covered on whole service training days, via the local authorities within the partnership, by partner organisations, by other professional bodies or by competent staff within the Service. The level of training required may vary based on the role an individual fulfils within the team. This training should be undertaken at least every three years. BFC Induction Training will only be undertaken once but should be completed within the first 6 months of joining the team.

PPP Mandatory Courses
1. Safeguarding
2. Personal Safety
3. Conflict Resolution for Managers
4. Systems Training
5. Bracknell Forest Council Induction
PPP Mandatory Courses for Officers Undertaking Enforcement Work
1. Disclosure Training
2. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (Annual)
3. Human Rights Act
4. Criminal Procedure Investigations Act IO training

## Professional Learning Requirements

Officers who are members of professional bodies e.g. CIEH, CTSI and the SRA will be required to undertake training that will broaden their knowledge, skills and ability to do their job. They will be required to accrue a certain number of hours each year to maintain their membership and will need to log that training based on the requirements of the individual body.

The PPP will develop clear career development paths to ensure new staff into the service are certain of the opportunities to develop and learn from those more experienced staff. This work will also identify pathways for existing employees to allow them to progress from officer roles to senior and principal officer positions based on service need.

## Learned Experience and Mentoring

In addition to training and development delivered in formal settings the service will build on the existing competencies in the team by providing opportunities for on the job learning and mentoring from competent colleagues.

West Berkshire Council is promoting the [70-20-10 approach to learning](#) as a useful framework for empowering staff to develop their skills both formally and informally. The model suggests that individuals obtain 70% of their knowledge from job-related experiences. This is the most beneficial way of learning, because it enables individuals to develop and refine their job-related skills, make decisions and address challenges. This happens through learning on the job, practice and independent research. 20% is obtained from interactions with others, including social interactions with colleagues, mentoring, coaching and feedback. The final 10% is from formal training or educational events.

## 5. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Due to the nature of regulatory services and breadth of the work carried out by our officers, it would be counter-productive and unrealistic to set rigid annual plans for Training and Development. However, it is expected that training planning is documented and fit for purpose, depending on the skills being learned. Personal Development Plans should be developed through the [Employee Performance Management Process](#). A core element of all appraisals and 121s will be to evaluate the performance of an individual and identify training needs and opportunities to support them in this process.

The service has in place various competency frameworks to accommodate this varied learning within its Quality Management System (QMS) structure. It is recognised that training and or development requirements may be identified at any time during the year and because of this reactive position, some elements may become uncoordinated.

We therefore aim for a proactive core for most training and development, but with the acknowledgement that some may be reactive or unforeseen.

Training and Development Planning	
Proactive / Core	Reactive/ Unforeseen
Statutory requirement for legal competencies	Training to deal with emerging issues
Training of apprentices	Exposed areas of weakness
Career advancement (professional examinations etc.) and succession planning.	New areas of work being absorbed into the Service
Mandatory Training	Opportunities for updates
PPP Mandatory Training	New training courses being developed
Continuous Professional Development	Training associated with emerging legislation

As stated above proactive development of an individual's training plan should be developed during the employee performance management process and in accordance with any Continuing Professional Development Requirements of the individual officer.

All professional training undertaken and identified should be set out on Personal Development Plan Forms and logged on the PPP Competencies Matrix which can be found here: I:\Public Protection & Culture\PPP\PPP Training and Development\5. Professional competency matrix.

The Matrix is intended to assist the Service to:

- identify which officers have particular expertise,
- identify learning gaps, and
- identify areas which may be exposed should officers leave the service.

The matrix should be updated after every appraisal and half year review by the officer. The Principal Officer's Group should review the training matrix on a quarterly basis. It is however recognised that training plans also include an unforeseen or reactive element.

## When Training Opportunities Arise

Training providers are continuously designing and promoting training courses which may not have previously been formally identified or requested but would be beneficial to undertake. When such opportunities arise, consideration should be given to:

- is there already sufficient knowledge within the team or do we need more officers to have knowledge of the subject (by checking the competency matrix),
- the quantity of work the officer undertakes within the area,
- availability of funding and if perhaps alternative training methods or providers are available (e.g. from internal sources)

All significant cost courses (exceeding £200) should be considered by the Principal Officer Group<sup>1</sup> (POG) to select the most appropriate officers to receive the training. ([See the Oversight of Training Section of this Document.](#)) Courses costing less than £200 must be agreed with the officers line manager and be included on their Personal Development Plan. All courses (no matter of cost) which may be appropriate for multiple officers should also be directed to the POG for consideration.

## Unforeseen Training Requirements

Sometimes extra training may be required following changes to legislation or emerging issues becoming part of service provisions or because of a significant event e.g. infectious disease outbreak. This type of training is likely to involve a group of officers which will benefit from central coordination to ensure those applicable undertake it. It should therefore be considered by the POG.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development opportunities will be provided where possible based upon budget constraints and service need. The majority of funding for career development will need to come from within existing service budgets. Occasionally alternative sources including external grant funding may arise.

Officers may develop vertically professionally by taking professional based exams organised by the professional institutes (Chartered Institute of Environment Health, Chartered Trading Standards Institute, Institute of Licensing or Legal, Financial and Democratic Services for example).

Alternatively, officers may also wish to develop horizontally by learning new skills which may complement their current skill set or reflect the needs of the service to address emerging

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<sup>1</sup> Principal Officer Group comprises all of the Services Principal officers who meet fortnightly

issues or addressing recruitment gaps. This training may take the form of a secondment or on the job training alongside other colleagues.

Requests for career development should be raised in appraisals or 121s, these will then be considered by the POG (for capacity issues etc.) and forwarded to the Strategic Management Group for authorisation.

## Identified by External Sources

Some training and development may be identified by external sources such as customer satisfaction surveys, complaints to the service or grievances. Addressing these types of systematic failings by an individual, team, or service requires a structured, fair, and constructive approach that focuses on improvement, accountability, and learning.

Where systematic failings are identified, the PPP will take a restorative and developmental approach, ensuring that individuals and teams are supported to improve while maintaining accountability. This includes structured reviews, targeted interventions, and ongoing monitoring to embed learning and drive service excellence.

## Unique Training

Requests which are professionally unique or for a specialist function, e.g. an officer requires Animal Health or Animal Warden training, should be treated in the normal manner, i.e. for courses under £200, the request is made to the line manager, who checks against service need, the competency matrix and available finance before making a determination. Courses costing over £200 will be referred to the POG.

## Possible Multi-Officer Training

If a request for training is received by a line manager, which may affect multiple officers it should be forwarded to the POG for consideration. The POG will be responsible for the co-ordination of training for multiple officers.

## Training for Strategic Managers

Training requirements for senior managers will be overseen by the Service Lead: Public Protection through the appraisal process.

## No Cost Training

On occasion free training can be provided by partner agencies and organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Environment Health (CIEH) or the Local Government Association (LGA) or other departments within the council. Decisions around no-cost training also needs to follow all the principles for costed training i.e. they should be agreed with your line manager and if it involves multiple officers, it should be co-ordinated through the POG.

## TSSE Training

Trading Standards Southeast Training is not free but is already contributed to by PPP. It is a great source for Trading Standards Officers as well as Officers in the Case Management and

Investigations Teams and officers that undertake enforcement work in other teams. TSSE training courses can be booked with line manager agreement. The PPP account with TSSE will be reviewed every quarter by the POG to ensure it is within budget.

## **6. TRAINING ROUTES**

### **6.1 APPRENTICESHIPS**

As set out in the Workforce Strategy, PPP has a strong emphasis on 'growing its own' officers. The opportunity for current staff to undertake an apprenticeship will be based on service need. Officers who wish to undertake an apprenticeship should raise it during their appraisal and complete an expression of interest form which should be submitted to the Principal Officer: Policy and Governance after being signed off by their line manager.

The National Apprentice Scheme now includes professional qualifications in a few specialised areas including Trading Standards and Environment Health but it is recognised that it does not deliver on all specialised training requirements for the professions within PPP. Specialist training courses must therefore continue to be accessed in addition to the apprenticeship route.

### **6.2 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Not all professional development requirements can be met through the apprenticeship route. Where the need to undertake a professional qualifications is identified through the appraisal process [West Berkshire Council's Qualification Training Procedure](#) should be followed. It is important that employees do not make arrangements (such as formally accepting a place on a course) that have a financial commitment attached to them until they receive formal confirmation of the level of financial assistance available from the Council.

As the costs of this training has to be met from the Service's budget any requests for training will need to be considered by the Service Lead: Public Protection. The employee will be required to complete a Qualification Training Application Form which must be signed off by their line manager.

Each application will be considered on its own merits by the Service Lead. Consideration will be given to the relevance of the course to the employee's duties, the needs of the service, the development needs of the employee, the training priorities in the service and the financial constraints of the training budget. It may be necessary to use waiting lists to match demand to budget.

Where training is approved the employee will need to complete a Qualification Training Agreement. The Service will pay the costs of the course. Employees who leave the Council within two years of completing the training course, or who cease the training out of their own choice or through dismissal on disciplinary or capability grounds (except where incapability is due to ill health or disability), will normally be expected to repay a percentage of the Council's contribution.

## 7. OVERSIGHT OF TRAINING

The Principal Officer: Policy and Governance is the Lead Officer for Training and Development within the PPP and will be responsible for arranging group training for annual and emerging events.

The Principal Officers Group (POG) will play a key role in the delivery of this plan given that the officers involved will have a strong understanding of their teams and the roles played by individual officers. The Group is responsible for co-ordinating training and signing off individual training costing more than £200. In addition, the Group will be responsible for reviewing the competency matrix on a quarterly basis to assist with identifying any service gaps. The POG will also be responsible for co-ordinating training requests and opportunities involving multiple officers. T&D will therefore be a standard agenda item in the regular POG meetings.

The Strategic Management Group (SMG) will continue to direct the core direction of Training and Development and ensure delivery through performance management.

The professions within PPP all have their own professional bodies as set out in [Section 3](#). The role of these bodies varies but generally they champion, lobby, assist, organise and promote the work of their professions. These bodies will have specified training requirements associated with the profession. In order for the PPP to operate to its full potential, the support and training offered by these (and other) organisations should be maximised to ensure our workforce remains competent and that the service remains relevant.

## 8. TRAINING RECORDS

A transparent and consistent recording method is crucial for the Service to achieve appropriate, proportionate and good value training. In many circumstances there may also be legal requirements for the Service to demonstrate the competence of its officers, e.g. food, noise, health and safety enforcement.

It is the responsibility of officers to record all training on their Personal Development Plans. Line Managers will review training records as part of the appraisal and one to one process to ensure they are being recorded, and feedback will be provided on any concerns or courses identified. Officers must also ensure that any professional qualifications are logged on the competency matrix and all officers need to ensure that their log on the matrix is kept up to date.

Some of the professional bodies for example The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health requires professional officers to upload their training to ensure they have completed the requisite training hours annually (usually circa 20-30 hours per annum). The extent of these exterior requirements varies upon profession, role and qualifications of the officers involved.

Officers may therefore need to maintain an additional system for recording their CPD for their own professional purposes.



Apprenticeships may also require a separate competency framework or training log which includes formal and on the job training in the various teams within the Service. This activity is usually recorded on the provider's IT platform.

## **9. TRAINING FEEDBACK**

Attending a training session may not be a 'silver bullet' to creating or improving competence. Some courses may not deliver on the subject, be poorly delivered, or pitched at the wrong level for those attending.

Officers should therefore complete a feedback form following their training to record feedback and comments on the training provided. These can be used for reference when committing to future training courses or providers. The completed forms should be stored here I:\Public Protection & Culture\PPP\PPP Training and Development\3.Training Feedback forms and should be referred to by POG when requests for training are being considered.

## **10. SHARING KNOWLEDGE**

Cascading of training within the Service will be beneficial to the Service as a whole. If the Service has paid for officers to receive training, it is expected that a form of cascade training will occur where it is appropriate to do so.

This may occur as:

- A brief feedback in a team meeting.
- Dissemination of notes or a summary of the training to the wider service.
- Highlighting to the team that training notes have been saved in the shared drive (I:\Public Protection & Culture\PPP\PPP Training and Development\6. Training course notes).
- A presentation at a whole team away day.
- Standalone training session where applicable.

Line managers should promote the use of training notes on the shared drive as a way of officers updating themselves in relevant subject areas.

## **11. REVIEW**

As stated within the plan, the nature of regulatory services and the environment in which we operate is very broad and dynamic. This plan should therefore be reviewed by the Joint Public Protection Committee on a regular basis and at least every three years.

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