

## Notice of Meeting

# Joint Public Protection Committee

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

**Monday 9 March 2026 at 7.00pm**

Venue: Council Chamber Council Offices Market Street  
Newbury, RG14 5LD

**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)

| <b>Part I</b> |   | <b>Page No.</b> |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| 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 8 December 2025.  | 3 - 6           |
| 3             | <b>Outstanding actions from previous meetings</b><br>To consider any outstanding matters from previous meetings.  | 7 - 8           |
| 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. | 9 - 10          |

**Public Protection Partnership Agenda - Monday 9 March 2026** *(continued)*

- 5 **Notice of Public Speaking and Questions** 11 - 12  
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** 13 - 16  
To detail future items that the Committee will be considering.
- 7 **Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q3 Report for 2025/26** 17 - 50  
To inform the Committee of the performance of the Public Protection Partnership in line with the operating model and business plan, and provide an update setting out performance during the third quarter of 2025/26.
- 8 **PPP AI and Digital Strategy 2026 - 2029** 51 - 66  
To set out the proposed strategy that the Shared Service will implement to harness emerging technologies to drive innovation, improve service delivery, and enhance operational efficiency across the Service where it is appropriate to do so.
- 9 **Air Quality Update 2026** 67 - 82  
To inform the Joint Public Protection Committee of the submission and results of the annual air quality report for Bracknell Forest Council. This report is for the monitoring data calendar year 2024.
- 10 **Renters' Rights Act** 83 - 156  
The Renters Rights Act 2025 came into force in October 2025. This report sets out the basis of the new legislation, its potential resource impact and a range of recommendations for policy approval to implement the various aspects of the legislation specifically with reference to enforcement and debt recovery where penalties are not paid.

## Items for Information

- 11 **Water Safety Partnership Annual Report (Review of 2025)** 157 - 170  
As agreed by West Berkshire Council's Executive on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021, an annual report would be presented to the JPPC detailing the activities of the Bracknell and West Berkshire Water Safety Partnership.

**Contact Officer:**

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

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JPPC – 9 March 2026

## **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 8 DECEMBER 2025**

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

**Present:** Tom McCann (Chairman), Iskandar Jefferies (Vice-Chairman), Nick Allen, Stephen Newton, Lou Timlin and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** Rosalynd Gater (Team Manager - Commercial), George Lawrence (Team Manager - Residential), Sean Murphy (Service Lead - Public Protection), April Peberdy (Service Director - Community Services), Moira Fraser (Public Protection Partnership), Damian James (Bracknell Forest Council), Councillor Paul Bidwell (Present as Substitute for Councillor Stephen O'Regan) and Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager)

**Apologies for absence:** Councillor Stephen O'Regan

#### **PART I**

##### **1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record 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.

It was confirmed that residents of Wokingham were eligible to submit questions at future meetings.

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

The Chairman invited Members to consider the Forward Plan. It was confirmed that a budget discussion item had been scheduled for the June 2026 meeting, ensuring sufficient lead-in time for all three authorities. Officers advised that the Air Quality Report from DEFRA, relating to Bracknell Forest, had not been received and would therefore need to be added to the Forward Plan for the March 2026 meeting.

Members were encouraged to bring forward any further items they wished to see included on the Forward Plan.

##### **Action:**

- The Air Quality Report from DEFRA for Bracknell Forest would be added to the March 2026 meeting.

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

## **6 Update on the PPP Shared Service Contract**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 7). The Public Protection Partnership Service was subjected to a Peer Review which concluded earlier in the year (2025). 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 had been discussed, agreed and given effect at the Executive/Cabinet and Council meetings in all three authorities.

The report provided an update on the decisions made and progress to date in amending the governance arrangements and Inter Authority Agreements that supported and underpinned the Service.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) referred back to the meeting held in June 2025, where Officers were instructed to take forward the recommendations of the Peer Review to set up a new agreement between the local authorities, including Wokingham Borough Council.

Officers noted that the recommendations from the Peer Review had been approved by the Executives and Cabinets of West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham, and subsequently by their Full Councils. Work was underway with Legal Teams across the three authorities to finalise a new agreement, to run until 31 March 2029, with completion anticipated early in 2026.

Members expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by officers to secure agreement across all three authorities.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee noted:

- 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 would 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.
- That West Berkshire Council continued to be the host authority to avoid significant short-term disruption.
- 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.
- 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.
- That specified officers in each of the partner authorities be authorised to enter into the new Inter Authority Agreement.

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

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 8) which provided an update on the performance of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) in line with the operating model and business plan, and which provided an update setting out performance during the second quarter of 2025/26.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) advised that despite the financial challenges, the service was expected to end the year on budget. Officers had held certain posts open to maintain financial stability and had prioritised resource in high-risk

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 8 DECEMBER 2025 - MINUTES

areas, including food safety. Recruitment successes were reported across Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing.

Updates were provided on training initiatives, ICT developments, FOI volumes, and ongoing efforts to refine performance data presentation. Members were invited to give feedback on the emerging KPI format. The outcomes of statutory consultations on fees and charges were also presented, with objections received to taxi and private hire fees in Bracknell Forest but none in West Berkshire.

**RESOLVED that** the Committee had been informed about:

- The 2025/26 Q2 data for the Public Protection Service.
- The update on service delivery.

### 8 **Air Quality Update 2025**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 9) which advised of the submission and results of the annual air quality reports for Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham Councils. The reports were for the monitoring data calendar year 2024. The report also informed the Committee of the proposed consultation on the revocation of the Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Rosalynd Gater (Team Manager – Commercial) presented the report. The Committee noted that pollutant levels continued to reduce across all three authorities, with the number of AQMAs having fallen from six to two. DEFRA had approved the revocation of the Crowthorne AQMA, subject to the required public consultation. Officers confirmed that while continuous monitoring would cease in the revoked area, diffusion-tube monitoring would continue across all districts.

Members raised questions regarding school participation and behaviour-change initiatives, and officers agreed to provide a written response.

The Committee considered the recommendations and agreed to commence consultation on the proposed revocation.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The content of the Air Quality Annual Status Reports be noted for Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council.
- The feedback from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) be noted on the reports.
- That consultation on the potential revocation of the Crowthorne AQMA be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations from DEFRA.
- The progress on the measures to improve air quality be noted.
- The ongoing and planned future measures to improve air quality be approved.

**Action:**

- Officers to conduct the statutory consultation and report the outcomes to the March 2026 JPPC meeting.

### 9 **Update on Fraud and Unfair Trading**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 10) which provided an update on the work of the Public Protection Service in tackling fraud, unfair trading and financial abuse.

Sean Murphy (Service Lead – Public Protection) presented the annual report. The Committee noted that fraud remained a significant and evolving area of harm, with confirmed resident losses across the three authorities totalling £957,000 since April 2025.

**JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 8 DECEMBER 2025 - MINUTES**

Officers continued to pursue both preventative and enforcement-led approaches, including engagement with vulnerable residents, proactive media communications, and close partnership working with Thames Valley Police and regional enforcement bodies.

A recent advanced-fee lettings fraud case had resulted in a 4.5-year custodial sentence. Officers emphasised the importance of victim reporting and Member engagement in raising awareness. Members discussed the potential for additional communications activity in community spaces during the Christmas period.

**Action:**

- Officers to explore opportunities for expanded public-awareness activity, including libraries, community hubs and high-footfall areas.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The Committee were informed about the contents of the report.
- The approach being taken to tackle fraud, unfair trading and financial abuse be approved.

**10 Workforce Strategy 2026 - 2029**

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 11) which provided an update on the Workforce Strategy following the review of the existing 2022-2025 Strategy. The report sought approval of the Training and Development Plan that underpinned the Workforce Strategy.

George Lawrence (Team Manager - Residential) presented the report. The Committee heard that the Service continued to benefit from its “grow-your-own” approach, with a number of apprentices and postgraduate trainees successfully qualifying during the year. The strategy set out formalised structures for training, role progression, succession planning and mentoring across the service.

Members suggested the addition of measurable milestones and annual tracking. Officers confirmed that updates would be incorporated into future reports, alongside a more detailed timeline to be added to the next quarterly update.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The Workforce Strategy 2026-2029 be approved together with the Training and Development Plan 2026-29.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.14pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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

## Joint Public Protection Committee Actions Arising from Previous Meetings

| Ref           | Meeting Item   | Action   | Officer       | Update  |
|---------------|--|--|---------------|---|
| 1.            | <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 March 2026. | MF            | Ongoing – circulated to Members on the 10.12.2025   |
| <del>2.</del> | <del><b>08 December 2025 – Forward Plan</b></del>            | <del>The Air Quality Report from DeFRA for Bracknell Forest would be added to the March 2026 meeting.</del>  | <del>MF</del> | <del>Done</del>   |
| 3.            | <b>08 December 2025 – Air Quality Update</b>                 | Written response to Members about school participation and behaviour change initiatives relating to air quality.   | RG            |   |
| 4.            | <b>08 December 2025 – Air Quality Update</b>                 | Officers to conduct the statutory consultation on the revocation of the Crowthorne AQMA and report the outcomes to the March 2026 JPPC meeting.                                    | SMc           | Due to technical issues uploading the consultation onto the BFC website the consultation was delayed and the outcomes will therefore be brought to the June 2026 meeting.   |
| 5.            | <b>08 December 2025 - Update on Fraud and Unfair Trading</b> | Officers to explore opportunities for expanded public-awareness activity, including libraries, community hubs and high-footfall areas.   | All           | Officers have provided a number of articles for residents newsletters and ongoing post using social media channels. Officers regularly attend Let's Chat events in West Berkshire and have made presentations to relevant community groups in Bracknell Forest and Wokingham during Q3. |

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

Verbal Item

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

Verbal Item

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## JPPC Forward Plan June 2026 to June 2027

| No.                              | Ref No | Item  | Purpose  | Lead Officer                       | Comments             |
|----------------------------------|--------|---|--|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>JPPC 8 June 2026 - BFC</b>    |        |   |  |                                    |                      |
| 1.                               |        | 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                        |                      |
| 2.                               |        | JPPC Terms of Reference   | To note the terms of reference of the Committee at the first meeting of the Municipal year.  | Moira Fraser                       | For Information only |
| 3.                               |        | Refresh of the Strategic Assessment 2024 - 2027   | To refresh the existing document.  | George Lawrence                    |                      |
| 4.                               |        | Public Protection Partnership Q4 2025/26 Performance Report                                   | To consider the Quarter 4 Update and Performance Report.   | Sean Murphy/<br>Moira Fraser       |                      |
| 5.                               |        | PPP Enforcement Policy 2026-2029  | To consider any updates to the existing policy   | George Lawrence/Ro<br>salynd Gater |                      |
| 6.                               |        | Pre-budget Setting Discussion   | To consider requests from the partner authorities with regard to the 2027/28 budget and fees and charges.  | Tom McCann                         | Verbal Item          |
| 7.                               |        | 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                 |                      |
| <b>JPPC 5 October 2026 – Wok</b> |        |   |  |                                    |                      |
| 8.                               |        | 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                       |                      |

| No.                                      | Ref No | Item  | Purpose   | Lead Officer             | Comments |
|--|--------|---|---|--------------------------|----------|
| 9.                                       |        | 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              |          |
| 10.                                      |        | Enforcement Approach to Sale of Age Restricted Products 2026-2028                       | To update the existing process  | George Lawrence          |          |
| 11.                                      |        | 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         |          |
| 12.                                      |        | 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       |          |
| <b>JPPC 7 December 2026 – West Berks</b> |        |   |   |                          |          |
| 13.                                      |        | Public Protection Partnership Q2 2026/27 Performance Report                             | To consider the Quarter 2 Update and Performance Report.  | Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser |          |
| 14.                                      |        | Air Quality Reports   | To set out the response received from DEFRA   | Suzanne McLaughlin       |          |
| 15.                                      |        | 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 1 March 2027 – BFC</b>           |        |   |   |                          |          |
| 16.                                      |        | Public Protection Partnership Q3 2026/27 Performance Report                             | To consider the Quarter 3 Update and Performance Report.  | Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser |          |

| No. | Ref No | Item                                | Purpose  | Lead Officer       | Comments |
|-----|--------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|----------|
| 17. |        | Water Safety Partnership            | To provide an annual update of the work of the Partnership.  | Jon Winstanley     |          |
| 18. |        | 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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## Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q3 Report for 2025/26

|                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b> | Joint Public Protection Committee |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>            | 9 March 2026                      |
| <b>Chair of Committee:</b>           | Councillor Tom McCann             |
| <b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>       | 23 February 2026                  |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                | Sean Murphy                       |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>             | 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 third quarter of 2025/26.

### 2. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Be **INFORMED** about the 2025/26 Q3 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>      | At the end of Quarter 3 the Service is forecasting that it will come in on budget subject to a small number of risk items related to vacancies.<br><br>Further detail can be found at Section 5 below.  |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | The current vacancy information and recruitment activity is set out within the body of the report. See Section 6.<br><br>There is some extremely 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 where specialist Criminal Disclosure resource is engaged. |
| <b>Legal:</b>          | 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. This has been   |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
|                                | <p>extended to Wokingham following the resolutions by all three Councils in the latter part of 2025.</p>  |
| <p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> | <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 specialist operational 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 to balance the budget in year.</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 the new delivery model for food standards and an 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.</p> <p>To mitigate issues around recruitment 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> |
| <p><b>Property:</b></p>        | <p>None</p>   |
| <p><b>Policy:</b></p>          | <p>There are no direct policy implications arising from this paper. It should be noted that the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) places a responsibility on the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) to determine service policies and priorities and to maintain oversight of performance. This report addresses that requirement.</p> <p>The revised service priorities were approved at the <a href="#">October 2024</a> JPPC meeting. The current Strategic Assessment was adopted at the June 2024 meeting.</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?               |          | ✓       |          | No implications – no decisions being made   |
| <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 - no decisions being made   |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   |          | ✓       |          | No implications - no decisions being made   |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  |          | ✓       |          | No implications - no decisions being made   |
| <b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>   |          | ✓       |          | None  |
| <b>PPP Priorities:</b>   |          |         |          | The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities <ul 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> </ul> Business as Usual Activity is supported too. |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>  |          | ✓       |          | None  |

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | There is regular engagement with staff as well as senior officer and Member briefings in each of the authorities that form the PPP. An online team briefing took place on the 03 December 2025 and a whole team briefing has been arranged for the 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2026. |
| <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 3 (October to December) is set out in Appendix A to the report. At the December 2025 JPPC meeting Members agreed a limited set of measures to be attached to the quarterly reports. The full set of measures will continue to be collected by officers and will be circulated to members under separate cover. 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 three the service is predicting a zero outturn. This has been achieved by continuing to hold posts vacant and due to an increase in income in specialist areas such as financial investigations (where we have undertaken work for partners). This has balanced an in-year deficit of around £200K made up of the National Insurance increase, higher than expected cost of living increase and a decline in licensing income. This has been a serious challenge with posts being held vacant creating pressures within the service management team and for the Service Lead who has found himself managing a number of operational staff directly.
- 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. The statutory fees were consulted on, and the outcomes of that consultation were fed back to the two licensing committees. The fees were then recommended for approval to both budget council meetings.
- 5.3 We have successfully secured a further £75K to support ongoing investigations as well as £73K S31 grant for the implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025.

## 6. Human Resources

### Recruitment

6.1 Since the December 2025 meeting the Service has successfully recruited to the following posts:

- A fixed term paralegal post in the Case Management Unit
- A part time Applications Officer in the Licensing Applications Team
- An Environmental Control Officer in the Housing Team
- A fixed term Underage Sales Enforcement Officer (grant funded)
- An Animal Health Warden Officer.
- An internal move of an ECO into the vacancy in EQ

6.2 In terms of recruitment, we are currently recruiting to these posts:

- A Senior Trading Standards Officer

6.3 In addition to the above the following posts are now vacant:

- Case Management Unit Strategic Manager (partially income funded)
- Principal Officer Investigations (partially grant funded)
- Team Leader in Partnership Team
- Senior Programme and Community Officer (grant funded)
- Housing Enforcement Officer
- Environmental Control Officer in TS and Community team
- Community Engagement Officer (crime prevention and victim support) (grant funded)

### Training and Development

6.4 Two members of the PPP Team are enrolled and working towards their registration as Environmental Health Officers having successfully completed MSc's in Environment Health. They are now moving across the range of PPP areas to ensure they receive the experience needed for their portfolios.

6.5 A further two officers enrolled on the MsC programme in October 2025, and will expect to be in the same position in 2027.

6.6 Licensing Officers attended joint training with Thames Valley Police on Metal Crime Development. The training covered potential criminality surrounding the scrap metal industry.

6.7 The second of our Senior Trading Standards Officers has passed her Management ILM level 4 course.

6.8 One of our Level 6 Environmental Health Apprentice has completed her apprenticeship and one Level 6 Trading Standards Apprentices is entering the final phase of her apprenticeship. 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.

- 6.9 Conflict Resolution Training for the PPP's Management Team took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and Personal Safety Training was provided to all employees on the 21 January 2026. Stop Loans Sharks training was also attended by 32 Officers on the 29 January 2026.
- 6.10 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.
- 6.11 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.
- 6.12 The team is continuing to work closely with the Housing Needs teams at both Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire to ensure we are prepared for incoming tenancy changes and new enforcement powers from 1 May 2026 brought in by Renters Rights Act 2025.

## **7. ICT Update**

- 7.1 A draft Artificial Intelligence Strategy is to be found elsewhere on this agenda.
- 7.2 In Q3 we trialled the use of AI in respect of our law database and found it to be a significant service enhancing tool. We are now looking at options around how longer term adoption could be funded.

## **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). The majority of the actions have been concluded.

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

- 9.1 During Q3 Officers dealt with nine press enquiries, issued 19 press releases and published seven articles 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 also regularly provide articles to Bracknell Forest and Wokingham for their residents' newsletters too.
- 9.3 In terms of social media activity Officers have supported a number of relevant national public campaigns including: Scam Awareness Week, Stoptober, Fake Toys Real Harms and Shop Safely Online.

- 9.4 During Q3 the team dealt with a total of 134 Freedom of Information requests which took around 115 hours to process (54 in Bracknell Forest, 73 in West Berkshire and 7 for Wokingham Borough). The number of requests have almost doubled when compared to the same period in 2024/25 where 77 Fols were processed albeit that they took slightly less than the 128.25 hours in 2024/25 to process.
- 9.5 The team also processed 50 enquiries from Councillors and the local MPs during quarter 3 (BFC 32 and WBC 18, Wok 0). This represented a significant increase when compared to the 28 that were dealt with in the same period of the previous year.
- 9.6 In terms of complaints, the service received four complaints which equates to 0.16% of the 2540 service requests that the team has dealt with in Q3. Of these two were stage 1 complaints, one was a stage 2 complaint and one was an informal complaint. Of the four complaints received (1 in BFC and 3 in WBC) two were upheld in full and apologies were issued and two were not upheld, this included the stage 2 complaint. The number of complaints received has decreased when compared to the six that were received in the same period in 2024/25.
- 9.7 During Q3 the Service completed consultations on the statutory fees in both West Berkshire Council and Bracknell Forest Council. A new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy was adopted in West Berkshire albeit that work is still being undertaken on implementation dates and Bracknell Forest Council's Statement of Licensing Policy was reviewed and adopted during Q3 too.
- 9.8 The Team also supported seven public events across Bracknell Forest, and West Berkshire this quarter.

## **10. Building Safer Communities**

- 10.1 The Communities Team received three public health funeral requests in Q3 and two of these funerals were completed in accordance with procedure and national guidance.
- 10.2 The Team received 122 requests regarding domestic noise nuisance, of these only seven cases remain open. Using soft skills and dialogue, many were dealt with in a collaborative manner finding a constructive resolution.
- 10.3 Pest control enforcement continues to keep the service busy and can be difficult and emotionally charged. Officers dealing with this area of work received 54 pest cases in quarter three, of which 13 remain open.
- 10.4 Other nuisance cases pertaining to odour, bonfires, light, and fumes have also been successfully managed by the officers. Only one of these cases remains open.
- 10.5 As part of the PPP collaborative working approach, members of the Community Team, Licencing Team, West Berks Waste Team, and TVP undertook an exercise to check Taxi's compliance and waste carrier and scrap metal licences. Three vehicles were found that did not have scrap metal licences and a fixed penalty notice was issued for not having the correct waste licence. A number of driving offences were also identified. On a positive note, four of the vehicles stopped were taxis and all were correctly licensed and insured.

- 10.6 Last quarter, the report identified a pressure on kennelling in terms of capacity and budget. Officers are pleased to report that alternative arrangements for kennelling have been obtained, significantly reducing this budget pressure. Officers remain committed to rehoming stray and continue to work with charities and rescue centres to have dogs rehomed either on day eight or shortly thereafter.
- 10.7 The Licensing Team have undertaken 61 inspections of premises licensed under the Licensing and Gambling regime, two private Hire Operator inspections and one unlicensed Scrap Metal dealer have been undertaken during Q3. Officers have attended three joint operations with TVP, DVSA and Immigration. The Licensing Team have also revoked five Hackney and Private Hire Driver's licenses and suspended one Private Hire vehicle licence. There are currently four prosecutions being carried out (one for a dog breeder and three for Private Hire drivers). Licensing Officers are also recovering unpaid licence premises fees following receipt of information from the Finance Team.
- 10.8 Officers continue to attend pubwatch in both areas.
- 10.9 The following licensing panel/subcommittee meetings have taken place in Q3:

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

- 10.10 During Q4 of 2025/26 to date the following applications have been heard:

| Type of Application         | Applicant  | Outcome |
|-----------------------------|--|---------|
| <b>Bracknell Forest</b>     |  |         |
| None to date                |  |         |
| <b>West Berkshire</b>       |  |         |
| Review of a Premise Licence | The Gun, 142 Andover Road, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 6NE | TBC     |

| <b>Licensing Hearings Data for last three years.</b> |   |                                     |                                     |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Authority  | 2023/24   | 2024/25                             | 2025/26 to date                     |
| <b>Bracknell Forest</b>                              | 3   | 3 (and a further one was postponed) | 5 (2 hearings were also postponed)  |
| <b>West Berkshire</b>                                | 8 (with a further five cancelled or adjourned after agenda publication) | 1                                   | 3 (1 further hearing was cancelled) |

## 11. Improved Living Environment

- 11.1 Over quarter three, the team completed 185 abandoned vehicle cases, for which they are responsible for enforcing within the Bracknell Forest area. Of these, six cars were removed by contractors. This is a good result, improving the local environment and giving residents back their parking spaces.
- 11.2 A Councillor led complaint prompted officers to work with tenants, utility suppliers, and the landlord to address a large-scale rat infestation in Bracknell. This resulted in significant changes to waste management arrangements, extensive drainage surveys and remedial works.
- 11.3 Working collaboratively, a new project to raise living standards in the private rented sector covering issues such as Energy Performance Certificates, safety of furnished lets, Minimum Energy Efficiency standards and ensuring business are complying with the Tenants Fees Act is underway. The project will see joint inspections and business advice being provided where appropriate. Following a desk top exercise to identify private rented sector properties that are failing the minimum standard, many have been removed from the list as they are no longer of non-compliance interest, but for the few that remain, officers are in contact with those landlords to work towards improvement. It is expected that the project will be completed by the end of the financial year.
- 11.4 The Service has issued 19 licenses for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Bracknell Forest and one in West Berkshire. Officers have started a programme of compliance checks on those HMO licenses issued with specific conditions to ensure all are up to current standards.
- 11.5 The team are continuing to follow up reports of properties that may be in use as houses in multiple occupation operating without a licence.
- 11.6 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.
- 11.7 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%)  |
| WB Oct to Dec 2025    | 72                                | 61  | 21 (34%)  |
| 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%)   |
| BF Oct to Dec 2025    | 122                               | 44  | 20 (45%)  |

- 11.8 The majority of the housing condition SRs relate to mould, leaks (both external and internal) and cold due to boilers not working or lack of insulation. Awaab's law was introduced at the end of October 2025 which requires social housing providers to respond to and rectify issues relating to damp and mould and urgent repair issues within specified timescales. Failure to comply allows the tenant to complain to the Ombudsman for investigation. Other hazards will be brought under this regime in due course. Registered social landlords are setting up procedures to be able to comply. It is likely that when their complaints procedures have improved that requests for our assistance will decrease.
- 11.9 There are also service requests relating to the procedural arrangements in the Electrical Safety regulations which were extended to social landlords from 1 November 2025. Landlords are required to notify local authorities of remedial action taken when the electrical installation is deemed unsatisfactory. This is at the point where work has been carried out to rectify the issue. We are also notified by letting agents where landlords or tenants have failed to allow timely compliance with the regulations.

## 12. Protecting Consumers from Fraud

- 12.1 Work by the teams dealing with scams and fraud have assessed and dealt with 38 fraud and scams related service requests.
- 12.2 As part of the awareness raising, officers have undertaken the following across Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham:
- four face to face presentations.
  - Delivered four seasonal campaigns including, Black Friday and Cyber Monday Scams, the Christmas Market Trader booking scam, 12 Scams of Christmas and supported National Adult Safeguarding Week and the Citizens Advice Annual Scams campaign.
  - Fitted four call blockers and undertaken a survey of our callblockers in circulation to ensure they are working correctly and are still needed. Unused units have been collected and wiped ready for re-use.
  - Dealt with one COMPASS matter referred to the service by the National Trading Standards Scams Team where a vulnerable resident was referred to the PPP.
  - Dealt with one [No Cold Calling Zone](#) (NCCZ) request.
- 12.3 The team have also been responding to intelligence received from other agencies alleging that local businesses are selling illicit tobacco. An operation was set up, and at the first premises visited the detection dog indicated and found two false/hidden cupboards full of cigarettes (7000) and hand rolling tobacco which was seized. An investigation is ongoing.
- 12.4 Fake Labubu dolls continue to be found in local retailers where they have been seized. Some of these have been sent for testing where they were found to contain banned chemicals. Investigations are ongoing.

12.5 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 West Berkshire Council 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 in the process of carrying out test purchases across the PPP.

### 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 Q3 2025/26:

- The total detriment identified from victims in the PPP area is £959,709 (Bracknell Forest £106,801, Wokingham Borough £279,945, and West Berkshire £572,963). This represents a decrease on the £1,074,422 at the same period in 2024/25.
- The total money saved or recovered is £95,462.
- The total number of alleged incidents is 154 (31 Bracknell Forest, 65 Wokingham Borough and 58 West Berkshire) which is similar to the 153 cases reported up until the end of Q3 in the previous year.
- The average loss is £6,232 per victim. The average loss in Wokingham is £4,306, in Bracknell Forest £3,445 and in West Berkshire £9,879. The average loss has decreased compared to the 2024/25 when the average loss was £7,022.

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

13.1 Following information received about toy safety, samples have been taken at some local convenience stores where they lacked the mandatory safety labelling, these have also been sent to the Public Analyst for testing. The service will act on the results once received.

13.2 The Age Restricted Products Enforcement officer has been undertaking many inspections in retail and other licensed premises to assess compliance with the relevant age restrictions. These have resulted in the highest number of investigations of this type in many years. In response to the considerable number of sales, the team are developing additional communications strategy and initiatives such as the responsible retailer scheme to try and bring down the failure rate. This is in line with the PPP delivery plan of Prevention, Intelligence and Enforcement (PIE). The scheme has now been launched, and the new UAS officer is in post.

13.3 During Q3 the following underage sales activity took place:

| Vapes    |       | Lottery  |       | Alcohol  |       | Knives   |       | Tobacco  |       |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Attempts | Sales |
| 6        | 1     | 0        | 0     | 8        | 2     | 11       | 2     | 0        | 0     |

## 14. Protection of the Environment

- 14.1 The Environmental Quality Team have been informed that a new cement batching plant was installed, and they have started the consultation on the requisite Environmental Permit.
- 14.2 This quarter there has been an increase in noise complaints relating to refurbishment of premises with new / additional refrigeration plant installed without planning permission.
- 14.3 **Single Use Vapes** - Trading Standards Team have been inspecting businesses for compliance with the single use vape ban. Those found in possession of single use vapes have been issued with Compliance notices. On revisits to date, all businesses have come into compliance. In addition, those not complying with the vape 'take back' scheme have been reported to Office for Product Safety and Standards for action.
- 14.4 **Air Quality** -. The Annual Status reports for all three partner authorities were all accepted by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Agreement was received from DEFRA to proceed with the consultation to revoke the Crowthorne Air Quality Management, and this is the subject of a separate report on this agenda. The consultation started before the end of Q3. The revised air quality monitoring programme across the three authorities was finalised to commence in January.
- 14.5 **Event Monitoring** – No proactive monitoring was required to take place during this quarter. Events for summer 2026 are being advertised and being checked.
- 14.6 **Planning Committees** - during Q3 officers have been involvement in one planning appeal (West Berkshire) and have attended multiple Planning Committee meetings as well as advising on some 141 planning applications.

### **Flytipping in Bracknell Forest.**

- 14.7 During Quarter 3, the service dealt with 37 separate flytipping and/or litter reports for investigating.
- 14.8 There has been a recent increase in the types of commercial waste being dumped, most notably construction material from the roofing industry as well as several tonnes of clay soil. Officers have increased surveillance and attention in those areas and investigations are ongoing.
- 14.9 More widely, mobile and fixed CCTV has been installed in the areas identified as areas fly tipping is recurring and has been successful in capturing offenders. This technology includes the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and is helpful in the evidential gathering process. However, the weather has presented challenges in deployment of the mobile unit due to soft ground. Investigations are ongoing, and officers continue to work with colleagues within Parks and Countryside.
- 14.10 From a number of investigations taking place, it is becoming apparent that a high proportion of the larger waste fly tipping cases being investigated originate from outside of the Bracknell Forest area. For example, there has been a series of waste (containers) being dumped as well as a significant deposit of roofing material and appliances. The investigating officer is working with colleagues from other authorities as part of their work to identify those offenders.

- 14.11 In addition to collaborative working with internal and external enforcement colleagues, the service continues to work with TVP intelligence team and the Roads Policing Team in an effort to locate offending vehicles transporting waste.
- 14.12 There are also local offenders using local sites for fly tipping, and where these have been identified, these have resulted in fixed penalty notices being issued. More serious offences are awaiting legal proceedings and the officer leading on this area of work will be putting in place a bid to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for additional funding to support additional CCTV purchases.

## **15. Protecting and Informing Consumers**

- 15.1 In this quarter the Trading Standards service has triaged/assessed and dealt with 1146 service requests (not including food related service requests) across the three Local Authorities.

## **16. Promoting Animal Welfare**

- 16.1 The service has successfully recruited an Animal Health Warden, who has now started. This will complement the animal health and welfare team delivering on animal welfare related functions, such as managing stray dogs, microchipping enforcement, ensuring a community support presence and in due course, the routine inspection of dog boarding establishments.
- 16.2 The Animal Health and Welfare Team continue to carry out routine inspections to livestock premises along with responding to alleged welfare complaints.
- 16.3 Animal feed officers have been out sampling dog chews from retailers / manufactures across the PPP area. This was part of a National Trading Standards Sampling project looking for the presence of Salmonella and labelling compliance. Results are expected from the Agriculture Analyst in Q4.
- 16.4 Following a spate of suspected bird flu deaths in wild swans along the Kennet and Avon canal, officers have put in place posters along the canal advising people on what to do should they find a dead swan. This has been in collaboration with emergency planning colleagues, the waste team, public health colleagues and the Kennet and Avon trust. Officers remain vigilant to any reports that may come in for this national issue. The avian flu lockdown rules for kept birds remains in place. Regular information from the Animal and Plant Health Agency is also shared on the Public Protection partnership's Facebook pages.

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

- 17.1 The service has dealt with 43 (16 in BFC and 27 WBC) health and safety at work service requests during Q3 and 40 (17 BFC and 23 WBC) workplace accidents were reported.
- 17.2 Cases of interest include: Investigation of a reported accident where a kitchen worker sustained scalding to their hand and arm. Complaints included injury to a supermarket worker allegedly caused by glass from a broken bottle and an allegation of unsafe removal of asbestos containing materials from a sports club building.

- 17.3 The Safety Advisory Group have been notified about and considered the documentation provided in respect of 35 events in Bracknell Forest and 64 in West Berkshire taking place during this quarter.
- 17.4 Events for which safety management plans were reviewed and events monitored included firework displays, remembrance events, winter fairs, and Christmas events and in particular Lapland UK which attracts visitors from across the country. Event safety management plans were also reviewed for events taking place in early 2026 such as “Get Fit 2026, new year new you” initiatives which include canoeing events, marathons, and other activities encouraging participation in sports.

## 18. Safe and Healthy Food Chain

- 18.1 **Private Water Supplies** - Three new supplies have been confirmed in 2025 with all the Risk Assessments completed and seven re-risk assessments conducted. The single dwelling supply project continues to update our records. In Q3 the 2025 annual return to the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) was started. Detailed work with a very large supply continues following a temporary supply set up due to reservoir failures.
- 18.2 During this third quarter of the year, officers have been receiving results back from the sampling projects that took place in the second quarter.
- 18.3 August sampling involved buying soups to check for salt content. These results have all been returned, and although pleasing to find that there were no concerns with excess salt content, all nine failed due to labelling non-compliances. Fortunately, nothing too serious but it did mean additional work for officers having to refer the results onto the Primary Authority Trading Standards for the various manufacturers.
- 18.4 Two out of the three imported food results have also been returned, with one failure on labelling. The local authority responsible for the importer has been informed.
- 18.5 For September, officers were out and about sampling pizza toppings for both a regional and Food Standards Agency lead campaign. The results are now being returned but unfortunately so far, the majority have been reported back as unsatisfactory for labelling and composition purposes. This seems to have been the case across the region, and a co-ordinated response is planned.
- 18.6 October saw officers on the lookout for chocolate covered products, which were sent to our Public Analyst to check that the chocolate is really chocolate and in most cases it was. However, all had unsatisfactory labelling. Once again no serious issues were uncovered but officers spent valuable time referring these unsatisfactory labelling reports back to the relevant local authorities responsible for the labelling.
- 18.7 The last project of the year was once again focusing on allergen controls, and meat species in takeaways. This project has been conducted twice before. To ensure businesses are aware of their responsibilities the work started off with an education campaign with business guidance being sent to all relevant local food outlets. This was followed up by officers, posing as customers requesting for particularly described meals and free from certain allergens. The results should be back for the quarter 4 report.

- 18.8 This is a significant concern, as once again a large number of samples have been assessed as unsatisfactory. It really highlights the importance of the work the PPP officers conduct, and reinforces the need for qualified, experienced officers to be undertaking sampling across the region.
- 18.9 Finally, the investigation into a local convenience store that was found to have sold dangerous vodka has been in court. The owner pleaded guilty and received a £9,000 fine. <https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/local-news/shopkeeper-fined-selling-fake-vodka-4206768>
- 18.10 The Service received 26 (17 BFC and 9 WBC) infectious disease notifications during Q3. This is a significant reduction when compared to the 158 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 significantly. Ten confirmed cases of Salmonella species were reported during this period with the remainder of reported cases being smaller numbers of other infectious diseases.
- 18.11 The service has dealt with 141 food hygiene service requests during Q3.
- 18.12 As we reach the three-quarter point of the inspection year for food hygiene premises, in terms of output the Authorised Officers have completed all 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 conducted where it is a high-risk premises.
- 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 at the end of March 2026. In terms of numbers the Service deals with, in the region of 1000 food hygiene inspections per year.
- 18.14 The governing body, The Food Standards Agency (FSA) , 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. PPP have submitted an action plan to the FSA detailing the steps to take to get the food hygiene inspections back on track. It includes works onto the 2026/27 inspection year.
- 18.15 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 79 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. There are a number of Crown court trials in 2026 starting with a four week trial in June, a six week trial in September and multiple trials of several days in October and November.
- 19.2 A significant number of matters are set for trial in 2026 (as set out above) but we are now starting to see listings for the latter part of 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 road traffic prosecutions of which there are 28 cases active.
- 19.3 The Accredited Financial Investigators have 28 active investigations: 24 pertaining to money laundering and three active confiscation proceedings in the Crown Court and one with the Court of Appeal. Of those cases 20 are for the PPP, four are Reading BC cases and three are for Oxfordshire Trading Standards.

## 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 – Q3 Performance Data
- 21.2 Appendix B – Compliments
- 21.3 Appendix C - Activity by Authority
- 21.4 Appendix D – Update on Peer Review Recommendations

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## 22. Background Papers:

- 22.1 None

### Subject to Call-In:

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Yes:  No:

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

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council.

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position.

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

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** All Wards

**Officer details:**

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Job Title: Service Lead: Public Protection  
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## PPP Headline Performance Data – Q3 of 2025/26

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Budget</b><br/>At the end of Quarter 3 the Service is forecasting that it will come in on budget.</p>  | <p><b>Staffing</b><br/>Appointments Since Last Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed Term Paralegal to support CMU Team</li> <li>• EH Housing Officer</li> <li>• One part time 0.8fte Licensing Applications Officers</li> <li>• ECO Internal Appointment</li> <li>• UAS Officer Fixed Term</li> <li>• Animal Health Welfare Officer</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>BFC Food Hygiene Inspections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 667 due</li> <li>• 0 Score of 0</li> <li>• 1 Score of 1</li> <li>• 569 Score Of 5</li> <li>• 91% meet the Broadly Compliance standard for Food Hygiene</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <p><b>WBDC Food Hygiene Inspections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1020 due</li> <li>• 0 Score of 0</li> <li>• 7 Score of 1</li> <li>• 884 Score Of 5</li> <li>• 80% meet the Broadly Compliance standard for Food Hygiene</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>BFC Doorstep Crime</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 doorstep crime incidents reported</li> <li>• £106,801 paid out by victims</li> <li>• £25,290 recovered</li> <li>• Average loss per incident £3,445</li> </ul>                       | <p><b>WBDC Doorstep Crime</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 58 doorstep crime incidents reported</li> <li>• £572,963 paid out by victims</li> <li>• £41,142 recovered</li> <li>• Average loss per incident £9,879</li> </ul>   |

**WBC Doorstep Crime**

- 65 doorstep crime incidents reported
- £279,945 paid out by victims
- £29,030 recovered
- Average loss per incident £4,306

**Licenses**

- 267/267 Temporary Event Notices responded to within 3 working days
- 17 valid renewed drivers licences applications received
- 27 valid renewed drivers licences applications received
- 3 valid new operator licences applications received
- 4 valid renewed operator licences applications received
- 8 valid new hackney carriage vehicle licences applications received
- 30 valid renewed hackney carriage vehicle licences applications received
- 6 valid new private hire vehicle licences applications received
- 63 valid renewed private hire vehicle licences applications received

**Underage Sales Visits**

|            | Vapes       | Alcohol     | Tobacco     | Fireworks   | Knives      | Lottery     |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|            | Fail/visits | Fail/visits | Fail/visits | Fail/visits | Fail/visits | Fail/visits |
| BFC        | 0/1         | 1/4         |             | 0/9         | 1/3         | 2/17        |
| West Berks | 1/1         | 1/3         |             | 0/10        | 1/5         | 3/19        |
| Wok        | 0/5         |             |             | 0/7         | 0/3         | 0/15        |

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



### Quarter 3 Selection of Service Compliments

After one of our Trading Standards Officers assisted a resident with a used car service request:

*"Hi Honor*

*Just a small thank you from me. David collected the vehicle, refunded me immediately and was amicable. Your support meant a lot and being so prompt.*

*Thank you once again."*

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A thank you after one of our officers assisted a resident with a long-standing Private Water Supply matter:

*"Thank you, Elizabeth I feel so, supported by you!"*

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A thank you after one of our EQ Officers assisted a business with an issue that had arisen with a neighbouring business:

*"Hi Charlie*

*Thank you for the new year greetings.*

*Thank you too for following up the XXX shop waste issue. It sounds like you have been very proactive in bringing about a resolution. I'm sure the nearby business owners will all be very grateful."*

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A thank you after one of our EQ Officers assisted a resident with noise emanating from a nearby business:

*"Hello Charlie,*

*Thank you so much for your help with this issue. There has been a dramatic improvement in the noise from the xxx shops front door. You can still hear them using the metal side door and it being slammed between 8-10 times per day. Genuinely I am so thankful for your help with this. My children or myself have not been woken up over the weekend by the door. It is just such a shame that the only way to have the issue addressed was to escalate this to you, but at least thankfully the noise has reduced dramatically."*

---

A thank you to one of our Environmental Health Officers who assisted a resident with a complaint about noisy drilling works late at night:

*“Hi Erica,*

*Thank you for looking into this so quickly and sharing these details. It’s very helpful to understand what’s going on and the impact we will face over the coming days.*

*I really appreciate the time you have given to look into this and resolve with the street works team. “*

---

A thank you after one of our Environmental Health Officers assisted a landlord with a management agency issue:

*“Dear Honor,*

*We really cannot express how grateful we are for all your help in resolving this matter.*

*As you know, we first tried to end this contract back in 2023, and we had more or less given up after running into so many barriers and being unable to find anyone - regulator or otherwise - who was willing or able to take the issue forward.*

*To now have a clear way out is an outstanding result for us. We genuinely believed we were stuck with XXXX and their poor service until the current tenants eventually moved on.*

*You have been exceptional throughout this process, and your support has made a meaningful difference to us.*

*If there is someone within your management team to whom I can pass on our thanks formally, I would be very happy to do so - your efforts deserve to be recognised, both for our case and, I suspect, for the wider community as well.*

*Once again, please accept our heartfelt thanks.”*

---

A thank you after one of our Environmental Health Officers who assisted a family who had purchased a second hand car. In addition the trader was receptive to the Officer’s unannounced visit and advice regarding the Consumer Rights Act 2015

*“Hi Honor*

*I just wanted to say a huge thank you to you for all your support for helping reach a positive conclusion getting a refund for my daughter's first car.*

*Until I spoke to you, we really did think we were facing a complete loss of both the car and all her savings she had spent on it.*

*I am extremely grateful for all the support and advice you provided throughout the process. We really appreciate it, so again I just want to say a huge thank you, you are a credit to the Trading Standards team!"*

---

A thank you from a restaurant after a food hygiene inspection that was posted on our Facebook page:

*"Thank you for the inspection and guidance. We appreciate your support in maintaining high standards."*

---

A thank you from a resident who was able to receive a refund after one of our Trading Standards Officers followed up a complaint with a store about a breach under the Hallmarking Act 1973.

*"Thank you, as it happens, I went back there yesterday afternoon, not knowing you had been. The lady in charge recognised me and gave me my money back. Thank you again."*

---

A thank you after an Environmental Health Officers recovered almost £9k for a family who had purchased a second hand car.

*"Good afternoon Honor,*

*I just wanted to say a huge thank you for your support in our issue with XXXX. I'm sure without your weight behind our case we would have got nowhere."*

---

A thank you after one of our EQ Officers assisted a resident with a query about road noise.

*"Dear Erica,*

*Thank you for your clear and prompt response to my enquiry regarding traffic noise on XXXX .*

*I appreciate you taking the time to explain the position under the Environmental Protection Act and for directing me to the Highways Department for further consideration. I have now contacted them as suggested.*

*I am also grateful that you have forwarded my air quality concerns to your colleague."*

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## 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 |
| <b>1</b>  | 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. | <b>1</b> | Complete        |
| <b>2</b>  | 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.   | <b>1</b> | Complete        |
| <b>3</b>  | Members and senior officers from the three partner authorities should 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.  | <b>3</b> | Ongoing         |

| <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.<br><br>Member Development Session in West Berkshire took place the 03 Feb 2026.<br><br>A presentation on the work of the team was also given at the Licensing and Safety Committee in Bracknell Forest Council on the 11 February 2026. |
| <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> | Complete - A recommendation to this effect was included on the reports on the future of the partnership   |
| <b>6</b>   | Scrutiny reports should focus on evaluating the services' actions, performance and cost-effectiveness.  | <b>1</b> | Complete 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  |
| <b>Host Authority</b>  |   |          |   |
| <b>9</b>   | 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.  | <b>1</b> | Complete – agreed at all three Executive/ Cabinet meetings  |

| <b>Inputs and Support - Recommendations</b> |  |          |  |
|---|--|----------|--|
| <b>10</b>                                   | The budget setting process for the PPP would benefit from greater clarity for the partners. Understanding amongst Executive members is inconsistent at present.  | <b>2</b> | Complete – Discussion item on budget added to the June meeting cycle   |
| <b>11</b>                                   | 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.  | <b>2</b> | First staff workshop took place on the 08 July 2025. Meetings are now being arranged on a quarterly basis.   |
| <b>12</b>                                   | 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.   | <b>2</b> | Terms of Reference agreed, reps from all teams invited to attend and outcomes reported to JMB.   |
| <b>13</b>                                   | 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. | <b>2</b> | Duty Manager rota has been set up to improve visibility of managers in the Theale Gateway Office.<br><br>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 – set out in the Workforce Strategy and Training and Development Plan agreed at the December 2025 meeting  |
| <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 staff working group.   | <b>3</b> | Officers are reviewing the current corporate proposals in West Berkshire 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.<br><br>Complete   |

|                                    |  |   |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 20                                 | 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.               | 2 | Duty Manager Rota operating in Theale Gateway. Teams are arranging working together sessions across Market Street, Times Square and Theale Gateway offices.<br><br>Complete   |
| <b>Information Technology</b>      |  |   |   |
| 21                                 | 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.                                | 2 | Complete - Report building is being enhanced and work is underway to make more use of the portal to allow more self service by our customers.   |
| 22                                 | Consider the scope for using the new database to link to corporate systems to publish performance data on a public facing dashboard.   | 3 | Complete - Revised set of measures to be included in agenda papers agreed at the December 2025 meeting.   |
| 23                                 | 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.                   | 2 | Complete - Contract with current provider has been extended.  |
| <b>Communications and Branding</b> |  |   |   |
| 24                                 | 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. | 1 | Updated communication and engagement strategy was adopted at the June 2025 meeting. 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 support to the Principal Officer Policy and Governance. |

|  |   |          |  |
|--|---|----------|--|
|  |   |          | 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 and not something separate.  | <b>3</b> | Complete - The templates include the PPP logo and that of the partner authorities.   |
| <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> | Complete   |
| <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.<br><br>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 gathering approaches.   | <b>2</b> | To be reviewed as part of the work on the updates to the Strategic Assessment. KPIs and MoVs linked to the priorities in the three 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> | Complete – Now Business as Usual  |
| <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> | Complete  |
| <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.   |

## PPP AI and Digital Strategy 2026 - 2029

|                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b> | Joint Public Protection Committee |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>            | 9 March 2026                      |
| <b>Chair of Committee:</b>           | Councillor Tom McCann             |
| <b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>       | 23 February 2026                  |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                | Moira Fraser                      |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>             | JPPC                              |

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To set out the proposed strategy that the Shared Service will implement to harness emerging technologies to drive innovation, improve service delivery, and enhance operational efficiency across the Service where it is appropriate to do so.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee:

- 2.1 **APPROVES** the Artificial Intelligence and Digital Strategy 2026 - 2029 subject to any changes agreed at the meeting.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication            | Commentary   |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b>      | This strategy has been developed within existing budgets.<br><br>Where funding is required for the introduction of new technology or systems it will be met from within existing budgets or applications for transformation or grant funding will be submitted as appropriate.   |
| <b>Human Resource:</b> | AI and improved digital technology will change how work is done across the Service, and its introduction will require skills development, and responsible use. Clear communication, ethical safeguards, and strong employee engagement will be essential to support staff through change to protect their wellbeing and maintain trust. Updated policies, proactive workforce planning, and a focus on digital capability will help ensure the organisation remains resilient and attractive to talent as AI adoption grows. |
| <b>Legal:</b>          | Where an AI system is using or collecting personal data, it will fall within the scope of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018).  |

|  |  |                |                 |   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|---|
| <b>Risk Management:</b>                        | <p>There are a number of Risks Associated with AI Usage and the Strategy attempts to set out how these risks will be mitigated. Risks include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Bias and Discrimination</b><br/>AI systems can unintentionally reproduce or amplify biases.</li> <li><b>2. Lack of Transparency (“Black Box” Risk)</b><br/>Many AI models do not provide clear explanations for how they reach decisions, making oversight, accountability, and challenge processes more difficult.</li> <li><b>3. Data Privacy and Security</b><br/>AI relies on large volumes of data, increasing the risk of data breaches, inappropriate access, or misuse of personal information.</li> <li><b>4. Inaccurate or Unreliable Outputs</b><br/>AI tools may produce incorrect, outdated, or fabricated information (“hallucinations”). If not properly checked, these errors can undermine trust or lead to poor decisions.</li> <li><b>5. Over-reliance on Automation</b><br/>Heavy dependence on AI can erode human skills, reduce situational awareness, or lead to inappropriate automation of decisions that require human judgement.</li> <li><b>6. Workforce Impact and Resistance</b><br/>AI introduction can create uncertainty, job-change anxiety, or fears of replacement, potentially affecting morale, engagement, and wellbeing.</li> <li><b>7. Ethical and Legal Compliance Risks</b><br/>Incorrect or irresponsible use of AI may breach regulations (e.g., data protection), ethical expectations, or sector-specific standards.</li> <li><b>8. Reputational Risk</b><br/>High-profile misuse or AI-driven errors can negatively affect public trust and organisational credibility.</li> </ol> |                |                 |   |
| <b>Property:</b>                               | There are no property implications arising from this report.   |                |                 |   |
| <b>Policy:</b>                                 | This Policy will be aligned with the PPP’s Workforce Strategy and Training and Development Plan and the West Berkshire Council Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) – Policy and Guidance. It will also take into consideration West Berkshire Council’s IT, Information Management and Data Protection Policies as well as the AI Policies of the partner authorities.  |                |                 |   |
|  | <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 |  | ✓              |                 | AI systems can unintentionally reproduce or amplify biases. |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?  |  |   | All decisions, policies and documents produced using AI will have human oversight. Staff will be required to check outputs and if the AI result looks wrong, staff should question and correct it.  |
| <b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? |  | ✓ | See above   |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   |  | ✓ | <p>The Service acknowledges the environmental impact of AI, particularly its high energy consumption, and is committed to ensuring AI adoption aligns with the climate change strategies of the partner authorities.</p> <p>Wherever possible the Service will select energy-efficient AI tools, use low-energy computing processes where possible, to minimise the carbon footprint and demonstrate responsible technology use.</p> <p>The use of technology may result in a reduction in travel movements for officers.</p> |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  |  | ✓ | <p>Adopting an AI Strategy can affect employee health by increasing stress, uncertainty and cognitive load, while potentially intensifying workloads and digital fatigue; however, strong communication, ethical controls, training and human-centred design can mitigate these risks, and when implemented responsibly. AI and digital technology can also reduce repetitive tasks and support a healthier, more balanced working environment.</p>   |
| <b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>   |  |   | As set out in the strategy.   |
| <b>PPP Priorities:</b>   |  |   | <p>The Strategy will underpin all the PPP's priorities as well as business as usual activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building Safer Communities</li> <li>▪ Improved Living Environment</li> <li>▪ Protecting Consumers from Fraud</li> <li>▪ Reducing Harm in Young People</li> <li>▪ Protection of the Environment</li> </ul>  |

|                                     |  |  |  |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
|                                     |  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protecting &amp; Informing Consumers</li> <li>▪ Promoting Animal Welfare</li> <li>▪ Safety in the Workplace</li> <li>▪ Safer Food Chain</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Data Impact:</b>                 |  |  |  | All data processed and held by the PPP is kept safely and securely within our IT systems. We do not disclose any data to a third party without telling the party or unless legally required to do so. This includes data that we use to communicate and engage with residents, businesses and stakeholders. All data accessed as part of consultation work is managed in accordance with our privacy statement. |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b> | <p>The Joint Management Board (JMB) will be consulted on the Plan.</p> <p>The Strategy has been sent to the IT Teams in the partner authorities for consideration and comment.</p> |  |  |   |
| <b>Other Options Considered:</b>    | Not to have a strategy in place. This was discounted as the JPPC have requested that a policy be drafted for adoption.   |  |  |   |

## 4. Background

- 4.1 This AI Strategy has been developed at the request of the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) and sets out a three-year framework for how the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) will responsibly adopt Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies to enhance service delivery. The strategy supports the PPP's core mission of protecting residents, supporting legitimate businesses, and delivering safe, healthy neighbourhoods by enabling smarter working, improved data use, and more accessible, digital-first public services.
- 4.2 The document outlines guiding principles for ethical, transparent and resident focused use of AI, including strong governance, fairness, inclusivity, environmental responsibility and workforce empowerment. It recognises both the opportunities and risks associated with AI, particularly in public protection settings where decisions can directly affect safety, wellbeing and rights of our residents and legitimate businesses. To mitigate these risks, the strategy emphasises human oversight, robust data governance, transparency in AI-generated content and full compliance with legal and policy obligations including the Human Rights Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 2018 and associated regulations.
- 4.3 Bracknell Forest Council adopted an AI Strategy in 2024 and has existing governance arrangements in place for overseeing this area of work. The Strategy proposes making use of these governance arrangements whilst the corporate strategy in West Berkshire is finalised. Procurement of technology will however be undertaken in conjunction with West Berkshire Council's IT Team.
- 4.4 The strategy highlights current and emerging technologies already in use or under consideration such as Microsoft Copilot, LexisNexis Protégé, mobile inspection tools,

and planned digital applications to streamline fieldwork and reporting. It outlines the Service's commitment to innovation where it offers measurable public benefit. It also sets out the ongoing need for staff training and development to ensure officers can use AI safely, confidently and effectively.

- 4.5 Given the rapid pace of technological change, the strategy is intended as a living document, subject to continuous review, with an annual review to be undertaken by the Joint Management Board to ensure that it remain fit for purpose and regulatory complaint. Members will be advised of any amendments through the quarterly performance reports. The strategy will be brought back to the March 2029 JPPC meeting for a full review.

## 5. Concluding Observations

- 5.1 Artificial Intelligence has emerged as one of the most influential issues of our time. It presents both opportunity for efficiency and time saving but also a threat if used inappropriately. Many organisations are grappling with this challenge. The key is to have a clear framework, governance structure and policy position and a robust approach to implementation and oversight without stifling innovation.
- 5.2 The Strategy has been drafted at the request of the JPPC. Officers have sought input from colleagues in the partner authorities. It will be a living document subject to ongoing review given the ever-changing nature of IT and available technology. Regular updates will be presented to the Committee through service update reports.
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## 6. Appendices

Appendix A – PPP AI And Digital Strategy 2026 - 2029

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### 7. Background Papers:

7.1 None

#### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

**Wards affected:** All Wards

#### Officer details:

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# PPP AI AND DIGITAL STRATEGY 2026 - 2029



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 a shared service delivering environmental health, licensing and trading standards on behalf of two authorities (Partners), Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council. It also 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.

The PPP is committed to protecting and supporting residents and legitimate business through the successful use of information and intelligence, delivering safe and healthy neighbourhoods through high-quality, efficient, and responsive services that safeguard our communities and uphold public trust.

In an era of rapid technological advancement, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital innovation present transformative opportunities to enhance how we operate, make decisions, and engage with the public.

This strategy sets out our vision for harnessing AI and digital technologies to enhance productivity, improve service delivery and support sustainable development. By embracing innovation, we aim to:

- Improve service delivery through automation and smarter ways of working. This could for example apply to the production of minutes, reports or presentations using AI technology or making use of digital technology to complete documentation during routine inspections.
- Enhance decision-making and priority setting by improving data analysis by helping the Service to utilise more effectively the large amounts of data that is collected already.
- Empower our workforce with tools that reduce administrative burden and enable staff to focus on complex, high-value tasks.
- Engage communities effectively by providing accessible, digital-first services that meet diverse needs. This could also include the production of documents or respond to queries from customers in their chosen language.

This strategy is intended as a permissive framework, enabling innovation rather than imposing restrictions, guiding the adoption and prioritisation of diverse AI tools and digital innovation and applications over the next three years.

Central to this approach is the commitment to aligning AI initiatives with the partner councils' broader objectives, including climate change commitments, ethical governance, and workforce development, while keeping residents firmly at the heart of our decision making.

Our approach to artificial intelligence and digital tools is firmly rooted in supporting and enhancing the work of the Service. These technologies will be used to streamline processes, reduce administrative burdens, and provide better insights, enhancing safety, enabling

colleagues to focus on the professional judgement, relationships and decision-making that only people can deliver.

By embedding AI and digital solutions as complementary tools, we aim to empower our workforce, improve service quality, and create more capacity while ensuring that human oversight, accountability and expertise remain at the heart of everything we do.

## 2. SCOPE

This strategy applies to all users of the PPP's IT systems and equipment, including full time, part time, casual and agency staff. It covers any AI tools and digital technology used for council work, whether on council provided devices or personal devices used for council work or research.

## 3. VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Digital tools will be used to improve efficiency, collaborative working with partners, accuracy and responsiveness across all our service areas. Technology should support, not replace, professional judgement. Digital solutions are designed to assist officers in their work by improving access to information, reducing manual administration and supporting informed decision-making. Professional expertise, statutory responsibilities and human oversight will always remain central. Technology should remove barriers, not create them, for our service users and must support equitable access for all communities.

All digital systems must comply with data protection legislation and partner authority policies and data must be, safely stored and shared only where lawful and necessary to protect the public. Systems should enable appropriate data sharing, with partner authorities and external partners to facilitate joined-up working.

The performance of certain investigatory functions within the PPP may require the surveillance of individuals. Where digital technology is used to undertake these functions it must be done in accordance with the [West Berkshire Council Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 \(RIPA\) – Policy and Guidance](#). Digital technology, including operational tools such as body-worn cameras, should be deployed where it strengthens our ability to protect residents, our staff, businesses and the environment. These technologies must support efficient investigations, enhance officer safety, and improve the quality and reliability of the evidence we collect. Storage, retention and sharing of this data must be lawful, controlled and proportionate, ensuring the protection of privacy rights and evidential integrity.

Investments in technology should demonstrate clear public benefit, long-term sustainability and cost-effectiveness. We will prioritise solutions that reduce duplication, integrate with existing systems and deliver measurable improvements. The Partnership will embrace digital innovation where it is safe, appropriate and aligned with our regulatory duties. New tools will be assessed for risks, equalities impacts, operational implications and legal compliance before implementation.

AI has the potential to free officers from some repetitive and mundane tasks, free up time for more meaningful aspects of work, can make work safer and more accessible, and improve services delivered to the public but its use is not without risks which need to be factored into any decisions about the appropriateness of its use.

This strategy aims to ensure that the use of Artificial Intelligence within the Public Protection Partnership is ethical, transparent, and centred on the needs of residents, staff, members, partner organisations and the businesses that we serve. It brings together our commitments around responsible innovation, legal compliance, and workforce empowerment, and is grounded in five core principles.

### **1. Accountability and Oversight**

The PPP will uphold strong governance and transparent decision-making for all AI systems. Clear lines of accountability and consistent human oversight will remain fundamental to ensure that AI supports rather than replaces professional judgement.

AI must be used ethically and in compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations, and partner organisational policies. Colleagues must not use AI to generate content that is discriminatory, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate. Where there is uncertainty about whether AI is suitable in a particular context, staff should seek guidance from their line manager, partner authority IT, legal or information management teams or the Service Lead for Public Protection as necessary.

### **2. Fairness, Transparency and Inclusivity**

Where an AI system is using or collecting personal data, it will fall within the scope of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). Users must be aware of how AI-generated outputs might impact people, as these tools can inherit social biases.

AI tools are not for example designed to recognise gender or ethnicity, so these factors should be considered when using generated content. West Berkshire Council's IT Service will, as the host authority, be consulted on any AI technology procured. Any use of AI must comply with West Berkshire Council's [ICT Policy](#), [Digital Strategy](#), [Data Protection Policies and Guidance](#) and [Access to Information Policy](#).

Content, including text and images, produced by AI tools should be identified and disclosed as containing GenAI-generated information to maintain transparency.

An example of the suggested text that could be used: *Note: this image/document contains content generated by Artificial Intelligence/ All AI generated content has been reviewed by the Council for accuracy and edited/revised where necessary*

### **3. Environmental Responsibility**

The Service will prioritise environmentally sustainable AI solutions that minimise energy demand and carbon impact. Procurement and deployment decisions will be aligned with the

partner council's climate change commitments, ensuring that AI adoption supports long-term environmental goals as well as service improvement.

#### **4. Resident and Stakeholder Engagement**

Residents, partners, and stakeholders' perspectives will remain central to how AI is used, ensuring that decisions are grounded in community needs, expectations, and lived experiences.

#### **5. Workforce Empowerment and Skills Development**

AI will be used to empower and support the PPP's workforce, enhancing professional capability rather than replacing roles or undermining autonomy. Continuous training and development will be provided to build an AI-literate workforce capable of using technology responsibly and confidently.

### **4. RISKS AND CHALLENGES OF USING AI IN PUBLIC PROTECTION**

While AI has the potential to improve services, it also brings important risks that must be carefully managed especially when used in areas that directly affect residents' safety, wellbeing and rights. The PPP is committed to understanding these risks and addressing them through responsible, transparent and ethical AI practices.

#### **1. Automated Decision-Making and Impacts on Residents**

When AI is involved in decisions that affect people particularly vulnerable residents any mistake or bias can have serious real-world consequences. Incorrect assessments, flawed predictions or inaccurate prioritisation could lead to inappropriate support, delays in services or unfair outcomes. Human oversight will therefore remain essential.

#### **2. Inaccuracy and Bias**

AI systems can generate incorrect or unreliable information. They can also reproduce or amplify biases found in the data they are trained on. This creates a risk of unfair or discriminatory outcomes, which is unacceptable in public services. Careful monitoring, testing and human review are necessary to ensure accuracy and fairness.

#### **3. Lack of Transparency**

Some AI tools operate in ways that are not easy to explain, making it difficult for staff or residents to understand how decisions or conclusions were reached. This lack of transparency can undermine trust and make it harder to challenge or review decisions. Public services must be able to explain how AI influences outcomes and maintain clear accountability.

#### **4. Data Privacy and Security**

AI often relies on large amounts of data, which in public protection may include sensitive personal information. This raises important questions about how data is stored, who can access it and how it is protected from misuse or breaches. Strong data governance and compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act are essential.

## **5. Impact on Service Quality and the Workforce**

If not introduced carefully, AI could negatively affect service quality and staff wellbeing. Poorly implemented systems might increase workloads, reduce professional autonomy or create job insecurity. Staff must be supported with clear communication, good training and safeguards to ensure AI enhances rather than undermines their roles.

## **6. Ethical and Environmental Considerations**

AI technology raises wider ethical and environmental concerns. Large-scale computing uses significant energy, contributing to environmental impact. There are also concerns about intellectual property, copyright, and the labour practices involved in developing AI systems. These issues must be recognised and considered when adopting any AI tool.

## **5. AI AND DIGITAL TOOLS**

The Service is currently using or seeking to start using a number of AI Tools and Digital Technologies. These will be kept under constant review and 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.

### **Microsoft Co-Pilot**

The Service already makes wide use of this technology which can help with a wide range of tasks including writing, rewriting and editing draft emails, reports and strategies using different tones which are audience appropriate and also for summarising long documents.

It can be used for information retrieval to extract key information from documents and email threads. It can be used to analyse datasets and highlight trends, build charts, graphs, and pivot tables and create formulas or automate calculations. Officers can use it to create slide decks and rewrite or simplify slide content, draft or refine policies, strategies and assist with report writing. It can and is also used to generate drafts of press releases, magazine articles and resident's newsletter items.

It does not however replace professional judgement or decision-making, must always be fact checked and care should be taken when creating confidential or restricted content.

### **LEXISNEXIS AI TECHNOLOGY**

The Service has been trialling the use of LexisNexis Protégé which is designed to help legal teams work more efficiently while maintaining high professional standards. It can be used to draft legal documents, summarise information and carry out research albeit that all work is always reviewed and finalised by our Officers.

## **TABLETS AND TECHNOLOGY**

The Service is submitting a business case to seek provision of additional tablets and mobile printers in order to allow teams including the Licensing Service to be able to access our cloud based systems remotely to be able to check information, complete forms and issue documentation while out and about in the community.

## **THE HOUSING APPLICATION**

The Service has submitted a business case for a housing app to be used on existing mobile phones. It is a property inspection collection form. Inspectors complete the information on the app on their phone when they visit a property and are able to add in relevant photographs etc to produce a report with accurate property details on a room-by-room basis. The app uses AI summaries to speed up production of schedule of works that can be sent to landlords.

If a hazard is identified during the inspection the dashboard categorises all relevant findings to facilitate scoring by the inspector. This will speed up the report production, ensure records contain up to date information and save officer time. It also enables officers to report easily on the number of category 1 and 2 hazards found. This should result in improved information storage and more efficient inspection and hazard assessments.

## **BODY WORN CAMERAS**

The Service is also trialing use of a body worn camera. Enforcement officers are increasingly using body-worn cameras (BWCs) as a digital tool to enhance staff safety, reduce aggressive behaviour, and capture high-quality, real-time evidence during regulatory investigations. By acting as a visible deterrent and providing accurate, robust footage, BWCs support more efficient documentation of incidents and strengthen the evidential basis for enforcement action.

Their use is governed by strict data protection and privacy requirements, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, ensuring footage is handled securely, stored on encrypted systems, and retained only for defined periods. Officers deploy BWCs during site visits, inspections, and interactions with individuals suspected of offences, following best-practice guidance to inform the public when recording. As with policing BWCs have become an essential digital asset, supporting safer working environments and more effective regulatory compliance.

## **AI MINUTE**

West Berkshire Council has been rolling out the use of AI Minute which provides a secure and efficient way to capture, transcribe and summarise meeting discussions, helping officers focus fully on the conversation rather than on taking notes. The PPP will start to trial the use of this technology for internal meetings and potentially to assist with interviews in investigations where it is appropriate to do so.

The tool uses advanced speech-to-text technology and large language models to produce accurate, structured minutes and action logs, significantly reducing the time spent on administrative follow-up. Early government testing has shown that Minute can save around an hour of admin for every hour-long meeting, freeing staff to concentrate on higher-value work and improving the consistency and quality of official records

## 6. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

To deliver the Service's priorities effectively, we must ensure that our workforce has the right skills, confidence and capability. This includes continuing to invest in the development of our existing staff, so they are equipped to meet new and emerging demands.

As part of this commitment, the [Training and Development Plan](#) sets out the need to actively explore opportunities to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other digital tools into our daily work. This may include improvements to processes, policy development, decision-making or wider service transformation.

The Service will therefore continue to strengthen digital skills and encourage a culture of innovation. This includes ongoing engagement with emerging technologies such as AI to ensure staff can use these tools safely, responsibly and in ways that improve outcomes for our residents and communities.

## 7. GOVERNANCE

Corporate governance and oversight are vital in an AI Strategy because they provide the structure, accountability and safeguards needed to deploy AI responsibly. Strong governance ensures that decisions about AI are transparent, risk-aware and aligned with organisational priorities, public expectations and regulatory requirements. It creates clear roles and responsibilities, ensuring that AI tools support ethical standards, data protection duties, equality obligations and service integrity. Effective oversight also helps monitor performance, manage risks such as bias or misuse, and ensure that AI systems remain accurate, secure and fit for purpose throughout their lifecycle. Ultimately, governance ensures that AI delivers real value to staff and citizens while maintaining trust, fairness and accountability.

Bracknell Forest Council adopted its [AI Strategy in 2024](#) which includes the governance arrangements for this area of work. The PPP will make use of these governance arrangements while the corporate approach in West Berkshire (as the host authority for the PPP) is being developed. Any procurement of technology will however be undertaken in conjunction with the West Berkshire Council IT Team.

AI implementation will be governed by Bracknell Forest Council's Information Management Group (IMG), chaired by the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and including the Caldicott Guardian and Data Protection Officer (DPO). This group, will oversee all ethical, legal, and security aspects of AI deployment. The IMG will regularly monitor and review AI applications to ensure compliance with data protection standards.

## 8. POLICY REVIEW

The pace of development and application of AI tools and digital technology is such that this strategy will be in a constant state of development. Therefore, this policy needs to be treated as a living document. It will however be subjected to an annual review by the Joint Management Board. The strategy will be subjected to a formal review by Members of the Joint Public Protection Committee at the March 2029 meeting.

## Air Quality Update 2026

|                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b> | Joint Public Protection Committee |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>            | 9 March 2026                      |
| <b>Chair of Committee:</b>           | Councillor Tom McCann             |
| <b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>       | 23 February 2026                  |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                | Suzanne McLaughlin                |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>             | JPPC                              |

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) of the submission and results of the annual air quality report for Bracknell Forest (BFC). This report is for the monitoring data calendar year 2024.

### 2. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTES** the contents of the Air Quality Annual Status Report as set out in Appendix **A** for Bracknell Forest.
- 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).

### 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 (AQMAs) if</p>   |

|  |  |                |                 |   |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|---|
|  | <p>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 AQMAs should be revoked.</p> <p>Where a Local Authority no longer has any AQMAs 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 |  | 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 |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?   |   |   |  | 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 |   |  | Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are legally required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated, local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place.<br><br>These reports are therefore designed to have a positive impact on the environment.  |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>   | x |   |  | The Air Quality Objectives have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.<br><br>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.<br><br>Ongoing monitoring and where appropriate the creation of action plans is designed to improve the quality of lives of our residents. |
| <b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>  |   | x |  | None<br><br>The Air Quality Status Reports are published on the PPP website.  |
| <b>PPP Priorities:</b>  | x |   |  | 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. |
| <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 The Annual Status Report was completed in-house by the deadline of the 30 June 2025. The report was submitted on 17 June and re-submitted on 26 August. The appraisal report was received on the 11 December.
- 5.3 Due to a clerical error the well written and informative reports for Bracknell Forest was not accepted first time around as the bias adjustment factor used was incorrect (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 there was good quality discussion on the effects of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
- 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.
- 6.29 DEFRA acknowledged good practice in identifying the reliability of the laboratory used for the analysis of the monitoring.

## **7. Next Steps**

### **Revocation Crowthorne AQMA**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Further to the update at the December 2025 meeting the consultation of the Revocation Report for the Crowthorne AQMA commenced on 11 December for 6 weeks. The responses will be fed back to the June meeting for a determination of the revocation.

### **Future Monitoring**

- 7.3 The monitoring programme for 2026 has commenced. 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 is continuing 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.

## 8. Concluding Observations

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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](#)

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

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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](#)

Defra: National Clean Air Strategy 2019

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

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

Report is to not only

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**Officer details:**

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| Reference:       | <b>ASR25-2930</b>               |
| Date of Issue:   | <b>November 2025</b>            |

## Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

The Annual Status Report sets out new information on air quality obtained by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) Council 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 2025 ASR was rejected in July 2025 due to issues with bias adjustment. The issues highlighted were then only partially addressed in September and the ASR could once again not be accepted. These issues have now been resolved.

BFC currently has one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which is 'AQMA Crowthorne'; this was first declared in February 2011 for exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean Air Quality Objective (AQO). BFC previously had a second AQMA (AQMA Bracknell) which was declared in May 2013 for exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean AQO, but this was revoked in March 2024. There have been no exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean AQO recorded inside the remaining 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA since 2020, with compliance (concentrations recorded as being 10% below the relevant AQO) having been achieved inside this AQMA in 2022, 2023, and 2024. Therefore, BFC has requested permission to revoke the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA. Based on the evidence provided the revocation appears to be appropriate, however ideally more evidence would be presented to support this decision. This could be included as an appendix to an ASR.

BFC did not undertake any automatic monitoring in 2024 but did conduct non-automatic NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tube monitoring at twenty-two sites in 2024. Four non-automatic NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tube monitoring sites were decommissioned between 2023 and 2024 as they were continuously below the objective compliance level. In 2024, no exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean AQO were recorded. In 2024, the highest correctly bias adjusted NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentration was 31.8µg/m<sup>3</sup>, recorded at monitoring site 58xC-58yC-58zC located on Bracknell Road in Crowthorne inside the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA (this is a triplicate monitoring site), a decrease of 1.4µg/m<sup>3</sup> over the concentration of 33.2µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the same monitoring site in 2023.

The highest correctly bias adjusted NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations recorded outside of the AQMA was at monitoring site 86xB, 86yB, 86zB located on the A322 (Downshire Way) in Bracknell, which recorded a concentration of 27.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024, which is a decrease of 3.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> over the concentration of 30.3µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the same monitoring site in 2023. The general trend in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations is mixed, with some monitoring sites recording an increase in concentrations between 2023 and 2024, and others recording a decrease in

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concentrations over the same time scale. The average change in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations between 2023 and 2024 is a decrease of 2.1 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The largest decrease in NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentrations recorded between 2023 and 2024 was recorded at monitoring site 117 located at the Blue Smoke House, The Ring, Bracknell located outside of the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA which recorded a concentration of 15.7 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2024, which is a decrease of 3.7µg/m<sup>3</sup> over the concentration of 19.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded at the same monitoring site in 2023.

QA/QC procedures have been applied, however with no automatic monitoring in the area, a local bias adjustment factor could not be calculated. BFC uses Gradko International for the supply and analysis of the NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tubes, which are prepared with 20% Triethanolamine / De-ionised water. No annualisation or distance correction was required at any monitoring site in 2024. The correct national bias adjustment factor of 0.84 has been used in this ASR.

In the absence of any PM<sub>10</sub> or PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring, Defra background maps are the best tool for estimating PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in the area. The latest PM<sub>2.5</sub> data available (2024) from DEFRA show that Bracknell Forest Council has a maximum level of 8.06 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (co-ordinates x 487500 y167500), and the average level of 7.22µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

The ASR discusses what measures within the AQAP were completed within the reporting year of 2024, which includes the addition of 3 new rapid chargepoints at Great Hollands and Birch Hill. The ASR also discusses what measures BFC expect to be completed over the course of the next reporting year, which includes investigating the feasibility of EV chargepoints for staff to use at Time Square, and finger signs due to be installed to improve directional information for pedestrians and cyclists in and around Crowthorne.

The ASR also discusses BFC's involvement in the Air PT scheme, this is an example of good practice and the reporting of the results shows the reliability of the lab.

BFC have highlighted three key measures in yellow in Table 2.3 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. Education, Health Promotion, Behaviour Change Projects, and Environmental Action Days
2. Anti-Idling Education/ Enforcement
3. Increase in EV chargers

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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, BFC should submit an Annual Status Report in 2026.

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## Commentary

The report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance. The following comments are designed to help inform future reports:

1. BFC has provided good quality discussion on the effects of PM<sub>2.5</sub> within their administrative area and measures being implemented to reduce concentrations. This is good practice and is encouraged for future reports.
2. There is good quality discussion on the trends of the results recorded for all pollutants which includes good quality graphs showing the trends in results recorded over the last 5 years. This is encouraged for future reports.
3. BFC has highlighted that the 'AQMA Crowthorne' AQMA has achieved compliance with the relevant AQO's for the past three years, and they have proposed within the ASR revoking this AQMA in 2025 with Defra's consent. Based on the evidence provided, there appears to be justification for revoking the AQMA, however ideally more evidence would be provided.
4. BFC's involvement in and reporting of the AIR PT scheme is an example of good practice. This showcases the reliability of the lab being used.
5. One minor formatting issue is the table numbering in Appendix A. The first table is numbered as 2 and the next table is numbered as 4. Table number should begin from 1. Table numbering in Appendix C also begins at 2.

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

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.

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## Appraisal Response Comment Form

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

**Comments on appraisal/Further information:**

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## Renters’ Rights Act

|                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b> | Joint Public Protection Committee |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>            | 9 March 2026                      |
| <b>Chair of Committee:</b>           | Councillor Tom McCann             |
| <b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>       | 23 February 2026                  |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                | Rosalynd Gater                    |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>             | JPPC                              |

### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The Renters Rights Act 2025 came into force in October 2025. This report sets out the basis of the new legislation, its potential resource impact and a range of recommendations for policy approval to implement the various aspects of the legislation specifically with reference to enforcement and debt recovery where penalties are not paid.

### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTES** the principles of the Housing Enforcement Policy for Renters’ Rights Act.
- 2.2 **NOTES** that the model Civil Penalty Policy Procedure that has been drafted for use across England in connection with the Renters’ Rights Act 2025 will be used by Public Protection Partnership (NB the use of Civil Penalties in relation to Housing Legislation has already been agreed at JPPC in October 2022).
- 2.3 **APPROVES** the use of the model Civil Penalty Policy Procedure.
- 2.4 **DELEGATES** to the Service Lead - Public Protection Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holders/ Cabinet Members from all three partner authorities of the Committee the authority to update the service enforcement policy to give effect to the enforcement elements of the Renters Rights Act 2025.
- 2.5 **APPROVES** the proposed changes to the Environmental Health Housing Policy 2025 – 2028 regarding the precedence of the model Housing Enforcement Policy over the approach described in the EH Housing Policy 2025 – 2028.
- 2.6 **APPROVES** that authority be delegated to the Joint Management Board to adopt the national Dept Recovery Policy for use by the Public Protection Partnership Team.

### 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication       | Commentary  |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Financial:</b> | There has been a commitment by government to fund the implementation of the Act. To this end the Service via the partner Councils have been allocated a total of £78K this financial year. This will be used to support implementation both in the Public |

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|  | Protection Service but also we are working closely with our colleagues in the local authority housing functions who will also need training and other support.   |                |  |
|  | Going forward there is a commitment to further funding in 2027/28 and ultimately the delivery of the new measures will be funded by the hypothecation of part of the annual fee to support enforcement. Any monies raised from the issue of penalty notices will also be hypothecated for housing work,  |                |  |
| <b>Human Resource:</b>   | The resource impact is not known at this stage. There are a number of factors that determine impact including levels of public awareness, compliance levels and impact of hitherto discretionary areas not previously enforced by the service including illegal evictions. As the impact becomes clearer the service will undertake to inform the Committee including any disparity between funding and resource needs and the potential to re-prioritise from other parts of the service. |                |  |
| <b>Legal:</b>  | The enforcement of the Renters Rights Act 2025 is a statutory requirement and will affect both environmental health and trading standards in terms of resource. Steps are taking place to ensure officers have the right level of competence and they are granted authority in line with their training and competence.  |                |  |
| <b>Risk Management:</b>  | There is a high level of public policy interest around this area of work. The failure to effectively enforce provisions could lead to legal challenge.   |                |  |
| <b>Property:</b>   | None   |                |  |
| <b>Policy:</b>   | The Committee has determined that all aspects of housing enforcement is one of its priorities. The new legislation requires a policy framework and the Inter-Authority Agreement delegates the approval and oversight of that framework to the Committee.  |                |  |
|  | <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? |  |                | Landlords cannot discriminate against tenants based on any of the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.)<br>This includes during advertising, selecting tenants, setting terms, and handling complaints or disputes. |

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|  |   |  | <p>If a tenant is subject to discrimination, a tenant can use the Equality Act to defend against a possession claim (eviction) if they believe it's based on discrimination. Tenants can also file a counterclaim against the landlord in such cases, potentially leading to a separate claim for compensation.</p> <p>The Renters' Rights Bill is also introducing a new landlord Ombudsman which aims to provide a fair and impartial resolution service for disputes including any Equality Act issues.</p>   |
| <b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? |   |  | See above  |
| <b>Environmental Impact:</b>   | X |  | <p>The Renters' Rights Act is expected to have a positive environmental impact by driving improvements in the energy efficiency and overall condition of privately rented homes. Government plans linked to the Act include raising housing standards, tackling damp and mould, and introducing future rules that require landlords to fix serious hazards more quickly and make properties more energy efficient, helping reduce carbon emissions and lowering energy consumption.</p>  |
| <b>Health Impact:</b>  |   |  | <p>The Renters' Rights Act is expected to improve tenants' health by reducing exposure to poor housing conditions that contribute to physical and mental health problems.</p> <p>Many renters currently face issues such as damp, mould, unsafe conditions, and instability, all of which negatively affect wellbeing.</p> <p>Measures linked to the Act include plans to raise housing standards, tackle hazards more quickly, and improve energy efficiency in rented homes, helping create warmer, safer, and healthier living environments.</p> <p>A potential risk however is that the changes may increase the legal and financial risks to landlords which may lead to increases in the</p> |

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|  |  |  | price of rented properties, which could cause more financial pressures to renters, and possibly price some people out of the market, which may lead to physical and mental health and wellbeing impacts to the less well-off segments of the population.  |
| <b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b> |  |  | Any amended policies will be added to the Key Policy page on the PPP website  |
| <b>PPP Priorities:</b>                 |  |  | The report will impact on the following PPP Priorities (delete those that are not appropriate) <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>                    |  |  | Any data collected will be dealt with in accordance with the PPP's privacy statement.   |
| <b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>    | Colleagues in the Housing and Public Health Teams will be consulted on the report. |  |   |
| <b>Other Options Considered:</b>       | None – This is new legislation that the authorities must take into account.        |  |   |

## 4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Renters' Rights Act 2025 (RRA) received Royal Assent and became law in October 2025, bringing with it major changes to the private rented sector in England, including new rights and responsibilities for landlords, letting agents and tenants, and new enforcement powers for the Local Authority Environmental Health Housing and Trading Standards Officers employed within the shared Public Protection Service.
- 4.2 At Appendix 1 there is a summary of the changes coming into force under the Renters Rights Act along with information on the implications for staff within the shared service and those in the local authority Housing Teams.

## 5. Implications

- 5.1 The planning for the implementation of the Act has been ongoing for the past year led by Service on behalf of the partner Councils. Since the Act has received Royal Assent and there has been published a timeline for implementation and detailed guidance has been produced. This has allowed implementation to be more focused, although we are still awaiting further guidance to be available.
- 5.2 The Service is working closely with the LA Housing Teams as, although for the tenancy changes most will be enforced by PPP officers (and some will be directly with the

Housing Ombudsman) the LA housing teams may be the main route in for intelligence on breaches through their work involving homelessness. There is also further work to be done with the PPP Case Management Unit, the LA Legal teams and West Berkshire Finance.

- 5.3 Externally, implementation and training of LA officers is being co-ordinated by Operation Jigsaw (a small group of Environmental Health and Trading Standards who are funded by MHCLG) and they are also the communication lines between the LAs and MHCLG. There is also an organisation called Justice For Tenants who are a charitable organisation with the remit of assisting LA with the enforcement of the Act through the use of Civil Penalties.

## 6. Timeline

6.1 The known timeline for implementation of the provisions of the Act is as follows:

- December 2025 – the new enforcement powers given to Housing enforcement officers came into force.
- 1 May 2026 – the tenancy section of the Act comes into force.
- Late 2026/early 2027 – the Landlord Database and Housing Ombudsman
- Future (no date given) – Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's law for private rented sector.

## 7. Policy Decisions for JPPC

- 7.1 At the time of writing a national set of model policies are being drafted for adoption by enforcement authorities to facilitate transparent enforcement under Act. Unfortunately, some of these are not available as yet for inclusion in this report and for Member approval in the March JPPC. An added complication is that the next JPPC due in June 2026 will be after the implementation date of the Act. The Public Protection Service is in a position, in this report, to detail what the changes will be to policy and attach the policy that we have to date.
- 7.2 One of the main changes brought about by the Act is the introduction of a statutory duty to enforce tenancy legislation this was previously a power to enforce e.g. the Protection from Evictions Act 1977. This, along with the introduction of many Civil Penalties in the Act for breaches and offences, changes the landscape of tenancy enforcement. As a result, the policies that LA have in place presently need to be updated with this in mind. Three main policy areas will need to be introduced. In Bracknell and West Berkshire this will be through JPPC.
- 7.3 **Enforcement Policy** - the existing enforcement policy for PPP is based on the principles of the Regulators Code and the Code for Crown Prosecutors.
- 7.4 As the Regulators Code heavily features a progressive approach to enforcement with information actions as a base, and the new RRA directing that for the breaches and offences listed a Civil Penalty notice should be served, this will not be in line with most LA Environmental Health Enforcement Policies, including ours. The view of the legislators is that, in this Act there are the consolidation of rights of tenants from landlords who are not following the law, and so the minimum deterrent is a civil penalty breach.

- 7.5 In practice we will need to have a separate policy in place for offences under the RRA. As all local authorities are in this position the Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers are drafting an enforcement policy that can be adopted by LAs across England. This will give consistency and will ensure that landlords are aware of the enforcement policy especially where they operate cross-border in different LA areas thus creating clear expectations and a fairer more transparent system.
- 7.6 This model policy has not been drafted at the point of writing the JPPC papers for March 2026.
- 7.7 **Civil Penalty Policy and Process** – the charitable organisation Justice for Tenants (JFT) has been involved with the policy and process for issuing Civil Penalties in England for the last few years. The Service have already entered into a legal agreement with JFT to enable us to use their services. At present more than half of the LAs across England have entered into this agreement. The policy that JFT have drafted (which was released to LAs on 22nd January 2026) (Appendix 2) takes account of all of the legal and tribunal rulings with regard to issue of Civil Penalties for housing. By following the policy, the LAs are ensuring that they are following the correct process which will ensure that the landlords are getting a fair and consistent approach that follows the legislation and case law set. JFT have also produced a web-based tool for ensuring that the drafting and process of determining the Civil Penalty is covered and correct, along with the correct templates for service. There is a discount of 15% for prompt payment written into the Civil Penalty policy.
- 7.8 By adopting the JFT policy and process we are future proofing ourselves where there are appeals to the Civil Penalty and reducing the time the process will take, and the legal time taken for appeals.
- 7.9 Civil Penalties for Housing offences have existed prior to Renters' Rights Act, and at the Joint Public Protection Committee October 2022, the Committee approved the direction that the PPP are taking in Environmental Health Housing with regards to the use of Civil Penalty Notices.
- 7.10 **Environmental Health Housing Policy 2025 – 2028** – the work of the team and the direction was set out in the Environmental Health Housing Policy 2025 – 2028 which was approved by this Committee at the October 2025 meeting. The policy details the general approach to enforcement of Housing matters and is in line with the wider shared service Enforcement Policy which follows the Regulators Code. Due to the changes detailed above that we will need to amend the approved policy to align with the new requirements.
- 7.11 The main changes are detailed in the table at the front of the amended policy. The amended policy is presented at Appendix 3.
- 7.12 **Debt Recovery Policy** – MHCLG see the increased work in LAs brought about by the Renters' Rights Act to be supported by the use of Civil Penalties. This highlights the importance of debt collection and the ACEHOs are presently drafting a model Debt Collection Policy that can be adopted across LAs in England. At the time of writing this has not yet been released. At present debt collection sits in the legal departments of Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire and shared service will start communications as to the implications of the RRA. Justice for Tenants also have a legal team who deal with debt collection and that is a route to consider.

## 8. New Burdens Funding

- 8.1 New Burdens funding has been received and will also be available in 2026/27 for the implementation and ongoing work involved with RRA. A plan has been drafted of spend required by the shared service and the LA Housing teams for this financial year, with consideration as to spend required within other LA departments such as legal teams. The implementation spend is mainly for officer training, equipment to increase efficiency and equipment required for increased enforcement, and process and procedure drafting.
- 8.2 MHCLG see the increased work and enforcement work being funded by civil penalties and hypothecation from the Landlord Registration Database when it is implemented as landlords will be required to pay for entry to the database. The amount is unknown at the time of writing; however, the housing enforcement teams will be expected to ensure that the landlord database is audited for accuracy.

## 9. Communication

- 9.1 MHCLG are leading on the roll out of communication on the RRA, they are using the GOV.UK website and will carry out National publicity campaigns to landlords and to tenants.
- 9.2 They and their delivery arm i.e. Jigsaw have been running webinars and updates for LAs to assist in the implementation and awareness of all of the changes coming through.
- 9.3 The Shared Service are leading on the local communications plan which will include to Members, other departments (legal, finance) external bodies e.g. CAB; and to landlords, managing agents, tenants and residents.

## 10. Concluding Observations

- 10.1 For the government this is regarded as a flagship piece of the legislation aimed at rebalancing the relationship between landlord and tenant e.g. ending Section 21 evictions as well as improving housing standards e.g. the extension of Awaab's law to the entire rented sector.
- 10.2 For local authorities it is the biggest step change in duties around the regulation of the rented sector in decades. There are new powers, new duties and increased emphasis on the importance of housing standards and tenants and landlords' rights. It is important that have a framework in place to deliver against our new duties, and we will continue to inform the Committee on developments and progress in this respect.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Renters' Rights Act 2025 Summary

Appendix 2 – JFT Model Policy - Civil penalties under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** All Wards

**Officer details:**

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## Renters' Rights Act 2025 Summary

The **Renters' Rights Act (RRA)** received Royal Assent and became law in October 2025, bringing major changes to the private rented sector in England, including new rights and responsibilities for landlords, letting agents and tenants, and new enforcement powers for the Local Authority Environmental Health (EH) Housing Officers PPP to ensure compliance.

Below is a summary of the changes coming into force under the Renters Rights Act along with information on the implications to the Environmental Health Housing Team in PPP and the LA Housing Teams.

### Timeline

The timeline for implementation of the provisions of the Act is as follows:

- December 2025 – the new enforcement powers given to Housing enforcement officers came into force.
- 1 May 2026 – the tenancy section of the Act comes into force.
- Late 2026/early 2027 – the Landlord Database and Housing Ombudsman.
- Future (no date given) – Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's law for private rented sector.

### Workflow and Workload

**Implementation** – PPP are leading on the implementation of the RRA and working together with the LA Housing Teams at Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire. In preparation PPP also undertook a reorganisation to relocate a Senior Trading Standards Officer into the EH Housing Team as the RRA will involve both EH and Trading Standards (TS) collaborative work and the new enforcement powers are based on existing TS powers. The main enforcement for tenancy issues (which are coming into force on 1 May 2026) will fall to PPP EH Housing enforcement team. However, many of the reactive complaints may well come into the Councils via the LA housing teams routes, for example, if people are presenting as homeless due to an eviction. Work is ongoing on the process of the collaboration between the departments and on training of the officers for the new legislation.

The second part of the Act to come into force is the Landlord Database, this will be a public database, the maintenance and auditing of this database will rest with PPP, whilst the database itself is being designed and hosted nationally. All landlords will have to register and upload supporting documents such as gas safety certificates and electrical certificates, there will be a fee, paid annually, for the registration. Part of the fee will come to the Local Authority for the auditing work required. Failure to register will be an offence, for which a Civil Penalty will be payable.

## Estimated Numbers of Landlords in Bracknell and West Berkshire LA areas:

|  | Bracknell     | West Berkshire |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Number of Residential Properties (2021 figure)                   | 52,060        | 66,658         |
| Number of Private Rented Sector properties                       | 8,164 (15.7%) | 11,398 (17.1%) |
| For comparison - Number of Registered Social Landlord properties | 8,164 (15.7%) | 9,332 (14%)    |

### Enforcement

New enforcement powers under the Renters Rights Act came into force in December 2025. This increased the investigatory powers held by LA EH Housing Officers to enable investigations required as part of the Act to be undertaken more effectively and efficiently, this included the removal of the 24 hour notice that we currently have to give to Landlords before inspecting a property where enforcement actions are needed.

Civil Penalty Notices form the basis of enforcement under the Act, and there is a duty to enforce (NB it is mandatory that LAs investigate and take enforcement actions for offences and breaches under this Act)

PPP are currently reviewing the Authorisation of Officers so actions can be taken under the Act and have been reviewing training and competency of officers (both in process and with practical training to upskill and ensure that the new legislation, the new enforcement powers, and Civil Penalty processes are known).

It should also be noted that the burden of proof for some of the offences is beyond all reasonable doubt (Criminal burden of proof) and for some it is on the balance of probability (Civil burden of proof)

The following breaches are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £7,000:

- Failure to give a written statement of terms and any other prescribed information under section 16D of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to let a property for a fixed term under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to end a tenancy by service of a notice to quit under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to end a tenancy orally or requiring that it is ended orally under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Serving an eviction notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Relying on a ground where the landlord does not reasonably believe that the landlord is/will be able to obtain possession under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.

- Failure to give an existing tenant prescribed information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act 2025 in the prescribed form and timeframe under paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Discrimination relating to children in the lettings process under section 33 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Discrimination relating to benefits in the lettings process under section 34 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Failure to specify proposed rent within a written advertisement or offer under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Inviting, encouraging or accepting any offer of rent greater than the stated rate under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

The following breaches are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £40,000:

- Breach of duty under Regulation 3, 3B, 3C, and 3D of The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

The following offences are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £40,000:

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier under section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.
- Continuation of conduct subject to a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) after the 28-day period (or, if appealed, after conclusion of the appeal) where the final notice has not been withdrawn under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Conduct giving rise to liability under s.16I, where within the preceding five years the landlord has either (i) had a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) imposed for different conduct and the final notice has not been withdrawn, or (ii) been convicted under s.16J for different conduct under section 16(J) of the Housing Act 1988.
- Relying on a ground knowing the landlord would not be able to obtain possession or being reckless as to whether they would under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988.
- Breach of restrictions relating to reletting (s16(E)(2) Housing Act 1988) or remarketing (s16(E)(3) Housing Act 1988) a property within restricted period after using Grounds 1 or 1A of Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988.
- Breach of a banning order under section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice under section 30 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Contravention of an overcrowding notice under section 139 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to obtain a selective licence under section 95 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to obtain an HMO licence under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of HMOs under section 234 of the Housing Act 2004.

- Failure to comply with HMO licence conditions under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with selective licence conditions under section 95 of the Housing Act 2004.

### **Reporting to MHCLG**

LAs will be required to report activity to MHCLG. Work is still ongoing on the reporting format and methods but this will have time implications for LAs and will also have implications on our recording of data and the systems that we use.

PPP are currently looking at the returns and the database (Idox) reporting capacity. Idox have been asked by a number of EH departments for changes to ensure that the necessary reports can be done.

### **Key reforms – DUTY to enforce, (rather than the existing power to enforce) coming into force on 1 May 2026**

The RRA makes it a DUTY for LAs to enforce, this is a change from existing tenancy legislation which gives the LA the power to enforce.

#### *LA Implications*

This change in wording means that LAs no longer have any discretion in enforcement of tenancy legislation, and it is widely believed that failure of the LA to investigate and exercise its duty under the Act could result in formal complaints and judicial review.

As with all new legislation those who will be enforcing it, and those who will act on behalf of the tenants and the landlords will be carefully monitoring what happens when the legislation comes into force and we expect that test cases will be taken and decisions made will be under scrutiny while precedents are set.

It is still very much an unknown as to the workload implications of the reforms coming in, however, the duty to enforce is one reason that the workload will increase in relation to tenancy issues, the second reason is the new raft of offences brought in by the act for both tenancy issues and duties for landlords.

### **Key reform – Enforcement Powers for officers authorised under the RRA in place as of 27th December 2025**

Government guidance confirms that these powers are designed to help enforce existing housing legislation more effectively, not just the new duties arriving in 2026. They apply across a wide range of statutes, including: Housing Act 2004, Housing Act 1988, Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

- Power to require documents and information from landlords and agents relating to any private tenancy they have been responsible for in the previous 12 months (this can be requested without needing to suspect a specific offence, and the compliance time is short. Examples would be tenancy agreements, safety certificates, rent records, deposit information and communication logs.
- Power to enter business premises – including letting agent offices, property management companies and landlord business addresses to inspect, copy or seize documents relevant to an investigation. Entry is possible without a warrant in many circumstances, provided the premises are not used as a dwelling.

- Power to seize and retain evidence and examine physical or digital evidence when investigating breaches of housing law. Such as: Tenancy files, Digital records (emails, databases, rent ledgers), Safety certificates, marketing materials, internal communications showing knowledge of non-compliance. This aligns housing enforcement with investigatory powers long available in trading standards and environmental health.
- Power to require explanations and co-operation: the act introduces new powers to compel individuals to explain documents or information provided to the authority. This includes landlords, letting agents, employees of property businesses and contractors involved in property management.

### *Implications for PPP*

These powers significantly expand PPP ability to detect, investigate and enforce breaches of private rented sector (PRS) legislation. PPP can now uncover breaches without relying on tenant complaints so opening housing enforcement up to proactive interventions. The new power to enter business premises will assist with investigations and gathering of evidence. This stronger enforcement should improve safety, security and rights for tenants, and create a level playing field for those Landlords who are doing the right thing.

The new powers will also result in a raised workload which MHCLG are indicating will be self-funding with the Civil Penalties put in place by the Act. This will mean more Housing Enforcement Officers are required, which, in a field that is low in competent qualified officers at the present time presents a risk. In PPP we have recently lost two competent officers (1/3 of total), recruitment has brought in one officer who is going to be enrolled on the Housing Enforcement apprenticeship and we are currently seeking approval to go out to advert for a qualified officer. As it is uncertain how the workload will rise, and what the income will look like, an evaluation of growth posts has not been carried out.

### **Key reform Ending Section 21 'no-fault' evictions – coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- Landlords will no longer be able use Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 to evict tenants.
- Reformed possession grounds will be fairer for both parties:
- Landlords will only be able to evict tenants when they have a specific, legally valid reason, otherwise known as a 'possession' ground'.
- Possession grounds will be extended to make it easier for landlords to evict tenants when they want to sell the property, move into the property or move in members of their family.
- The changes will also make it easier to evict tenants who commit anti-social behaviour.

### *LA Implications*

The duty to enforce here, rather than the existing power to enforce will result in increased workload for the LAs. But it will also mean better protection from unlawful evictions for tenants. Over the years there has been a reduction in Tenancy Relations Officers across all LAs, this enforcement of unlawful evictions will be carried out by PPP Housing Enforcement Officers, however there will also be a time implication for the LA Housing officers as many of these cases will be reported to the homelessness

team initially. PPP and the LA Housing Teams are working on the process and procedures needed for this.

### **Key reform - All tenancies becoming periodic - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- There will be no more fixed term tenancies.
- Most new and existing tenancies in the private rented sector will become assured periodic tenancies, or 'rolling tenancies'.
- This means renters will be able to stay in their property until they end the tenancy or until a landlord serves a valid notice to end it or obtains a court/possession order.
- Renters will be able to end the tenancy at any point by giving two months' notice.

#### *LA Implications*

Again, this will result in increased workload for the LA, and we will be investigating where tenants report this to us. Enforcement will be carried out by PPP Housing Enforcement Officers, however there may also be a time implication for the LA Housing officers as many of these cases will be reported to them initially

### **Key reform - Limits on rent increases (once per year) - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- Landlords will have to follow the new legal process for increasing the rent.
- This will include providing the tenant with notice, detailing the proposed rent increase at least two months before that increase is due to take effect.
- Tenants will be able to appeal excessive above-market rents which are purely designed to force them out.
- Provides stronger protections against so called 'backdoor evictions'.

#### *LA Implications*

It will be an independent tribunal that will make a judgement on whether the rent increases are excessive. LAs will signpost to the tribunal.

### **Key reform - Discrimination against renters who have children or receive benefits will be illegal - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- The landlord will not be able to do anything to make a tenant less likely to rent a property (or prevent them from renting it) because they have children or receive benefits.
- This includes withholding information about a property (including its availability), preventing them from viewing it, and refusing to grant a tenancy.

#### *LA Implications*

This will result in increased workload for the LA, and we will be investigating where tenants report this to us. Enforcement will be carried out by PPP Trading Standards/PPP Housing Enforcement Officers, however there may also be a time implication for the LA Housing officers as many of these cases will be reported to them initially.

As issue will be how to prove if there is no overt evidence as landlord still has rights to choose.

### **Key reform - Rental bidding will be banned - Coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- The landlord will have to include a specific price on any written property advertisement, and will not be able to ask for, encourage or accept an offer that is higher.

#### *LA Implications*

This will result in increased workload for the LA, and we will be investigating where tenants report this to us. Enforcement will be carried out by PPP Trading Standards/PPP Housing Enforcement Officers, however there may also be a time implication for the LA Housing officers as many of these cases will be reported to them initially.

### **Key reform - Requiring large amounts of rent in advance will be banned - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- The landlord will only be able to require up to one month's rent in the period between all parties signing the tenancy and the tenancy starting.
- The landlord will not be able to accept any payment of rent before this period.
- Once the tenancy's begun, the landlord will not be able to require any payment of rent before it's due.

#### *LA Implications*

This will result in increased workload for the LA, and we will be investigating where tenants report this to us. Enforcement will be carried out by PPP Trading Standards/PPP Housing Enforcement Officers, there is an amendment to the Tenants Fees Act. However there may also be a time implication for the LA Housing officers as many of these cases will be reported to them initially.

### **Key reform - Landlords must consider tenant requests to rent with a pet: - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- The landlord will have to consider and respond to a tenant's request within a set timeframe and will have to provide valid reasons if they choose to refuse it.

#### *LA Implications*

It will be an independent tribunal that will make a judgement on whether the request for a pet has been considered correctly. LAs will signpost to the tribunal.

This may also result in an increase of nuisance complaints coming through to EH Communities team as there may be an increase in dog barking and fowling complaints.

### **Key reform – New requirements for tenancies - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

Landlords will need to make sure they've understood the new rules for tenancy agreements:

They will need to make sure that they have given their tenant written information about the terms of their tenancy.

- Tenancies that started before 1st May 2026 – these will not need to be changed or reissued. Instead, what landlords will need to do is send their tenants a government-produced information sheet before 31st May 2026. The information sheet will be published on the Gov.UK website in March 2026.
- Tenancies that start on or after 1st May 2026 – the landlord will need to provide tenants with certain information about the tenancy in writing. This can be in the tenancy agreement. In January 2026, Gov.UK are publishing details on what information must be included to give landlords sufficient time to prepare the tenancy agreement template.
- If the current tenancy is based entirely on a verbal agreement, the landlord will need to give the tenant a written record of specific terms of the agreement. This is instead of providing the information sheet.

#### *LA Implications*

Again, this will result in increased workload for the LA, and we will be investigating where tenants report this to us, or where we find that the information has not been given in the prescribed way. Enforcement will be carried out by PPP Housing Enforcement Officers, however there may also be a time implication for the LA Housing officers as many of these cases will be reported to them initially. PPP and the LA Housing Teams are working on the process and procedures needed for this.

#### **Key reform – Strengthening of rent repayment orders and extension of the rent repayment order system to some of the new offences in the Act - coming into force on 1 May 2026**

- Increasing the maximum penalty to two years' rent (double what is now) and ensuring repeat offenders have to repay the maximum amount.

#### *LA Implications*

This is taken by the tenant against the landlord and is heard at housing tribunal, the money goes back to the tenant. Where the tenant is in receipt of housing benefit/universal credit that LA can take it on their behalf and recoup the money that they have paid. This will have implications for the LA Housing Teams should they decide to take this role.

#### **Key reform – Landlord database - coming into force end 2026**

- This will be a National Database that will be centrally hosted and LA will have access to the back office.
- All landlords will have to upload information to the database regarding their properties and including certification and agreements.
- The landlords will be charged a fee, part of which will go to the LA.

#### *LA Implications*

This will have major implications for the PPP EH Housing Team as it is expected that we will audit this database in order to ensure that landlords have registered (this we will do reactivity in the first instance) and to ensure that the information uploaded is correct, e.g. gas safety certificates will be uploaded, we will be auditing to ensure that it is a valid gas safety certificate. It is unknown what fee will be paid and what % of the fee will come to LA for this work, but it will be this fee that will be used to ensure we

have officers to audit the database. Currently we have in the region of 20,000 private rented sector properties across PPP area which will each need to be registered.

On the other hand, this will also support local authorities as we will have a better idea of the landlords in the area and will help to target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Failure to register will be an offence with a Civil Penalty.

**Key reform – Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman that will provide binding resolutions for tenants’ complaints about their landlord - coming into force at end 2026**

- This will bring tenant-landlord complaint resolution on par with established redress practices for tenants in social housing and consumers of property agent services.

*LA Implications*

None.

**Key reform – that are introduced by Renters Rights’ Act but have no implementation date**

**Decent Homes Standard and Application of Awaab’s Law in private rented sector**

- Apply the **Decent Homes Standard** to the private rented sector to give renters safer, homes. The Decent Homes Standard covers issues such as repair, living standards e.g. kitchens must be under 20 years old as well as protections from cold homes through insulation etc. This will be PPP enforced but will need secondary legislation and so not expected to come into force for some time.
- Apply ‘**Awaab’s Law**’ to the sector - this is setting clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards. It will be similar to the legislation just enacted for Registered Social Landlords. This will need secondary legislation to enact and so not expected to come into force for some time. It is unknown who will enforce (RSL is with the Housing Ombudsman).

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# Civil penalties under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation

This policy applies once the Council has made a decision to commence civil penalty proceedings.

In this policy, the term 'landlord' should be read as including letting agents, managing agents, licensors, property owners, corporate landlords, directors of corporate landlords, registered providers of social housing and any other person involved in the letting or management of accommodation.

In this policy, the term 'corporate landlord' should be read as referring to a body corporate that meets the definition of 'landlord' above.

In this policy, the terms 'House in Multiple Occupation' or 'HMO' are defined by the Housing Act 2004.

The following breaches are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £7,000:

- Failure to give a written statement of terms and any other prescribed information under section 16D of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to let a property for a fixed term under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to end a tenancy by service of a notice to quit under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to end a tenancy orally or requiring that it is ended orally under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Serving an eviction notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Relying on a ground where the landlord does not reasonably believe that the landlord is/will be able to obtain possession under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Failure to give an existing tenant prescribed information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act 2025 in the prescribed form and timeframe under paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Discrimination relating to children in the lettings process under section 33 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Discrimination relating to benefits in the lettings process under section 34 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Failure to specify proposed rent within a written advertisement or offer under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Inviting, encouraging or accepting any offer of rent greater than the stated rate under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

The following breaches are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £40,000:

- Breach of duty under Regulation 3, 3B, 3C, and 3D of The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

The following offences are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £40,000:

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier under section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.
- Continuation of conduct subject to a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) after the 28-day period (or, if appealed, after conclusion of the appeal) where the final notice has not been withdrawn under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Conduct giving rise to liability under s.16I, where within the preceding five years the landlord has either (i) had a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) imposed for different conduct and the final notice has not been withdrawn, or (ii) been convicted under s.16J for different conduct under section 16(J) of the Housing Act 1988.
- Relying on a ground knowing the landlord would not be able to obtain possession or being reckless as to whether they would under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988.
- Breach of restrictions relating to reletting (s16(E)(2) Housing Act 1988) or remarketing (s16(E)(3) Housing Act 1988) a property within restricted period after using Grounds 1 or 1A of Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988.
- Breach of a banning order under section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice under section 30 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Contravention of an overcrowding notice under section 139 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to obtain a selective licence under section 95 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to obtain an HMO licence under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of HMOs under section 234 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with HMO licence conditions under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with selective licence conditions under section 95 of the Housing Act 2004.

If a landlord has committed multiple breaches or offences, a separate civil penalty can, and usually will, be imposed for each breach and offence. In each case, the level of any civil penalty imposed will be determined in accordance with this policy.

If multiple landlords have committed the same breach or offence at the same property, a separate civil penalty can, and usually will, be imposed on each offender. In each case, the level of civil penalty imposed on each offender will be in accordance with this policy.

This policy outlines the Council's methodology and mechanism for assessing and setting the level of a civil penalty at all stages where a civil penalty is under consideration, including the preparation of a notice of intent, and where a final decision has been made to impose a civil penalty.

When applying the civil penalties matrix, interim calculations at individual stages may result in figures that exceed the statutory maximum. Where the final amount reached following application of all relevant steps exceeds the statutory maximum, the civil penalty will be reduced to the applicable statutory maximum.

The Council considers the need for transparency and consistency to be of primary importance to ensure fairness in the discharge of its functions. The general objective of this policy is, therefore, to promote both transparency and consistency in the imposition of financial penalties so that those

involved in the letting or management of accommodation (a) know how the Council will generally penalise relevant breaches and offences and (b) are assured that, generally, like cases will be penalised similarly, and different cases penalised differently.

The Council recognises that, despite its best efforts, landlords may operate unlawfully for a significant period without detection, and that only a proportion of those committing relevant breaches and offences will be identified. Accordingly, the Council seeks to ensure that civil penalties are set at a level that makes it clear to the landlord concerned and to others that operating unlawfully as a landlord is financially disadvantageous when compared to operating lawfully.

The Council has a duty to act fairly, transparently and consistently when assessing civil penalties. To maintain fairness between all landlords, the Council will not give weight to claims advanced as factors that might reduce the amount of a civil penalty unless those claims are supported by evidence that the Council reasonably considers to be relevant, reliable, credible, and sufficient in scope and detail to enable proper assessment of the claim, having regard to the nature of the claim, the information ordinarily available to the landlord, and the need for consistent and fair decision-making. Allowing inadequately evidenced assertions to influence outcomes would risk rewarding those who provide incomplete or misleading information and would create an unfair advantage over landlords who provide a full and properly evidenced account. Accordingly, the Council expects landlords against whom a civil penalty is being considered to provide all documents and records that would ordinarily exist if their account were accurate. Where such evidence is not provided, and no explanation that the Council considers adequate is given, the Council may draw an adverse inference.

Where claims are advanced without sufficient supporting evidence, the Council may request specified supporting material before determining whether to issue a final notice or whether any mitigation has been sufficiently evidenced so as to justify a lower civil penalty.

The further objectives of using financial penalties in particular as a means of enforcing the above breaches and offences are explained below.

## Statutory Guidance

The Government has issued statutory guidance entitled “Civil penalties under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation”. The Council has regard to this guidance in the exercise of their functions in respect of civil penalties.

The Council has considered the following factors in developing this civil penalty policy to help ensure that the civil penalty is set at an appropriate level.

**Severity of the breach or offence.** The more serious the breach or offence, the higher the penalty should be.

**Culpability and track record of the offender.** A higher penalty will be appropriate where the offender has a history of failing to comply with their obligations and/or their actions were deliberate and/or they knew, or ought to have known, that they were in breach of their legal responsibilities.

**The harm caused to the tenant.** This is a very important factor when determining the level of penalty. The greater the actual harm or the potential for harm, principally to the tenant but also potentially the local community, the higher the penalty should be.

**Punishment of the offender.** The penalty should, in a way that is fair, both punish the offender and demonstrate the consequences of not complying with their responsibilities.

**Deter the offender from repeating breaches or offences.** The ultimate goal is to prevent any further offending and help ensure that the offender fully complies with all of their legal responsibilities in future. The level of the penalty should therefore be set at a level that it is likely to have a very significant deterrent effect.

**Deter others from committing similar breaches or offences.** While the fact that someone has received a civil penalty may not be in the public domain, the civil penalty policy itself will be and local authorities should consider how their formal enforcement activity can be effectively publicised.

An important part of deterrence is the realisation on the part of landlords that the local housing authority is proactive in levying civil penalties where the need to do so exists and the civil penalty will be set at a high enough level such that operating lawfully will be the sensible financial choice.

**Remove any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the breach or offence.** The principle here is that it should not be in the offender's financial interest to commit a breach or offence rather than comply, for example that the penalty for breaching licensing conditions in respect of occupancy of a property is less than the additional rent received as a result of the over-crowding. The absence of any financial benefit to the landlord does not mean though that the penalty should be reduced.

## Civil Penalties Matrix

In determining the level of a civil penalty, officers will have regard to the matrix set out below. The matrix consists of the following sequential steps:

1. Determining the starting point based on the seriousness of the breach or offence.
2. Adjustment for factors relating to the type of landlord; size and type of portfolio controlled, owned or managed; experience of the landlord ("Landlord Type")
3. Mitigating and aggravating factors the Council deems significant including, but not limited to, factors relating to the track record and culpability of the landlord and the actual or potential harm to the occupants.
4. Financial considerations.
5. Applying the totality principle.

### Starting point based of seriousness of the breach or offence

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has provided statutory guidance that prescribes starting points for all breaches and offences based on the seriousness of the breach or offence. The exception to this prescription is for breaches of licensing conditions under sections 72(3) and 95(2) of the Housing Act 2004, where the Council has determined its own starting levels based on the seriousness of the specific licence condition or type of licence condition that has not be complied with.

## **Adjustment for factors relating to the type of landlord; size and type of portfolio controlled, owned or managed; experience of the landlord (“Landlord Type”)**

While all landlords are expected to comply fully with their legal obligations, the Council considers that a higher standard of professionalism and regulatory awareness is reasonably expected of landlords who operate at greater scale, who have greater experience, or who are involved in more complex forms of letting. Where such landlords fail to comply with their obligations, this will ordinarily justify a higher civil penalty.

In particular, a higher degree of professionalism is expected of landlords who:

- Control, own, or manage a significant portfolio of properties;
- Have significant experience in the letting or management of property;
- Are or have been involved in the letting or management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs);
- Are corporate landlords; or
- Are or have been directors of corporate landlords.

An upward adjustment of 20% of the applicable starting point will be applied where the landlord meets any one or more of the following criteria:

- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed six or more properties. These properties need not have been held concurrently or at the time civil penalty proceedings are brought.
- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed three or more properties that operated as HMOs, whether or not concurrently.
- The landlord is, or has previously been, a director of a corporate landlord.
- The landlord is a corporate landlord.
- The landlord has, in the Council’s assessment and by reference to the available evidence, significant experience in the letting or management of property.

A downward adjustment of 20% of the applicable starting point will be applied only where all of the following criteria are met:

- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed no more than two properties.
- The landlord has controlled, owned, or managed no more than one property that has operated as an HMO, at any point in time.
- The landlord has, in the Council’s assessment and by reference to the available evidence, very limited experience in the letting or management of property.

## **Mitigating and aggravating factors the Council deems significant including, but not limited to, factors relating to the track record and culpability of the landlord and the actual or potential harm to the occupants**

To promote fairness and consistency in the administration of civil penalties, the Council will apply a structured and consistent framework when determining the extent to which mitigating and aggravating factors affect the quantum of any civil penalty.

### **General approach**

Each breach or offence may have offence-specific mitigating and/or aggravating factors, which will be considered alongside the generic factors set out below.

Where multiple civil penalties are issued under this policy against the same landlord at the same time, and except where expressly stated otherwise, mitigating and aggravating factors will be considered and applied separately to each civil penalty when determining the quantum of each penalty.

### **Mitigating factors**

The Council may reduce the level of a civil penalty by up to 20% of the applicable starting point to reflect the presence of mitigating factors.

Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this policy in respect of mitigating factors and apply a reduction in excess of 20%. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors.

Within the framework of this policy, the Council has not sought to provide an exhaustive list of mitigating factors, recognising that a wide range of circumstances may potentially give rise to mitigation. However, the following generic mitigating factors will be considered in respect of each breach or offence:

### **Steps taken to remedy the basis of the breach or offence**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Promptly remedying all elements of the breach or offence after receiving communication from the Council.
- Promptly remedying all the significant elements of the breach or offence leaving only less significant elements of the breach or offence.

### **A high level of cooperation**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Proactive provision of significant information the Council reasonably considers relevant beyond that required by statutory notice.

### **Acceptance of liability**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Accepting liability before or within the period for representations.

Where a landlord relies on a reasonable excuse defence or otherwise contests liability, this mitigating factor will not usually apply.

### **Health circumstances**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- A serious health condition or medical incident experienced by the landlord during, or in the period immediately preceding, the breach or offence, where there is clear and reliable evidence that the condition had a direct and material impact on the landlord's ability to comply with the relevant legal obligation. Examples may include, but are not limited to, a

heart attack, stroke, cancer diagnosis, or other acute or serious medical event causing significant incapacity or impairment.

**Diminished culpability (limited responsibility)**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- A joint landlord who has evidenced that compliance arrangements for the subject property were directed and controlled by another joint landlord, and not by them.
- A landlord who became involved only after an unforeseen change in circumstances (such as the death of the previous landlord) and who committed the breach or offence only for a limited period while putting their affairs in order.

The instruction of a managing or letting agent, or reliance on an agent's actions or omissions, will not of itself constitute diminished culpability.

**Aggravating factors**

The Council may increase the level of a civil penalty by up to 20% of the applicable starting point to reflect the presence of aggravating factors.

Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this policy in respect of aggravating factors and apply an increase in excess of 20%. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple aggravating factors.

The following generic aggravating factors will be considered in respect of each breach or offence:

**Previous history of non-compliance.**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Previous successful prosecutions (including relevant spent convictions), previous civil penalties, previous rent repayment orders, previous works in default, previous simple cautions.

Concurrent investigations or proceedings relating to other civil penalties, prosecutions, or rent repayment orders will not be treated as previous non-compliance.

**Non-cooperation with the Council.**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Failure to comply with notices issued under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 235 of the Housing Act 2004, or section 114 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Failing to provide a substantive response to a letter of alleged offence.
- Failing to attend previously agreed meetings.

Where the Council has prosecuted, or is pursuing a prosecution, in respect of the same act or omission involving failure to provide legally required information (including failure to comply with a statutory notice), that conduct will not also be treated as an aggravating factor for the purposes of setting the civil penalty, in order to avoid double counting.

Where multiple civil penalties are imposed against the same landlord at the same time, this aggravating factor will be applied only to the civil penalty with the highest starting point, unless there is a clear and reasoned basis for applying it differently.

**Deliberate intent or negligence when committing the offence.**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Knowledge that the breach or offence was occurring.
- Continuation of offending after communication from the Council.
- Premeditation or planning, including steps taken to prevent detection or effective investigation.
- Providing false or misleading information to the Council.
- Applying pressure to occupants to deter cooperation with the Council.

**The number of occupants affected.**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- 3-5 occupants affected.

**Duration of non-compliance.**

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- The offence or breach occurred over a 3–6 month period.

**Vulnerability of occupants**

Non-exhaustive examples include children and young adults, persons vulnerable by reason of age, disability or sensory impairment, persons with drug or alcohol dependency, victims of domestic abuse, children in care, persons with complex health needs, persons who do not speak English as a first language, victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation, refugees, asylum seekers, and pregnant women.

## **Financial considerations**

The Council will review the quantum of the civil penalty and consider whether it is sufficient to act as an effective deterrent to future non-compliance. Where the Council has evidence that it considers to be sufficiently reliable regarding rental income and/or asset value from the landlord's, it may determine that an increase in the level of the penalty is appropriate in order to achieve effective deterrence.

It is essential that, as an absolute minimum, landlords do not financially benefit from their offending behaviour.

Financial circumstances will ordinarily be considered after any written representations have been received and as part of the determination of any final notice.

Where a landlord seeks to rely on a strained or limited financial position as a basis for reducing the level of a civil penalty, that position must be supported by appropriate and verifiable evidence sufficient to enable the Council to assess the landlord's financial position consistently, objectively, and transparently. Unsupported assertions, partial disclosure, or selective provision of information will not be given weight.

At a minimum, and where such information exists, the following should be provided as part of any written representations:

- The last three full tax years full self-assessment tax returns filed with HMRC, including all additional and supplemental pages;
- The last three full tax years' SA302 documents & tax year overviews;
- The last three months' payslips;
- The last three years P60 certificates;
- The last twelve months' Universal Credit payment statements;
- A list of all property assets owned or jointly owned (not limited to rental properties), together with corresponding Land Registry title documents;
- A list of all property assets owned, or held on a long lease, by any corporate entity in which the landlord has a beneficial interest, together with corresponding Land Registry documentation;
- The most recent annual mortgage statement for each property, or the last twelve months' mortgage statements where the mortgage has been in place for less than twelve months;
- Valuation statements for all ISAs held;
- Statements from any cryptoasset exchange accounts showing balances and valuations;
- A list of all shareholdings;
- Recent bank statements for any account holding a balance in excess of £5,000;
- Recent statements for all secured and unsecured loans;
- Bankruptcy orders and official notifications of bankruptcy.

Where the Council is not satisfied that it has been provided with sufficiently reliable, complete, and accurate information to assess the landlord's financial position, the Council may draw the inference that the landlord is able to pay the civil penalty as imposed.

A claimed inability to pay will not, of itself, outweigh the need to ensure effective deterrence or to remove any financial benefit obtained as a result of the breach or offence.

## **The totality principle**

The Council will have regard to the totality principle to ensure that the overall outcome of its enforcement action is just and proportionate. In exceptional cases, and having regard to the particular circumstances of the case, the Council may take account of totality at an earlier stage by deciding not to pursue a civil penalty in respect of a specific breach or offence where doing so would render the overall outcome disproportionate.

In general, however, the application of the totality principle will form the final step in the Council's decision-making process, undertaken after any written representations have been considered and before final notices are issued, once the level of each individual civil penalty has been assessed in accordance with this policy.

As a final step before issuing final notices, the Council will consider whether multiple civil penalties being imposed under this policy against the same landlord at the same time result in an aggregate amount that is just and proportionate. Where the Council concludes that the aggregate amount would not be just and proportionate, it will consider whether a proportionate reduction of the penalties is appropriate.

The totality principle does not operate across different legal persons who are separately liable in law, nor does it operate across civil penalties imposed at different times. In general, it applies only to

multiple civil penalties imposed under this policy on the same person at the same time. Where, however, legislation provides that an officer of a body corporate, or a person concerned in its management, may be separately liable in relation to the same conduct as the body corporate, and that officer also holds a shareholding interest in the body corporate, the Council will, where civil penalties are imposed at the same time on both the body corporate and the officer arising from that same conduct, consider whether the combined outcome results in punitive duplication and is therefore not just and proportionate.

Where a reduction is applied under the totality principle, the Council will ordinarily do so by applying a uniform percentage reduction across all relevant civil penalties being issued at the same time, being those civil penalties that form part of the same totality assessment. Where, however, the application of the totality principle is required to address punitive duplication arising from a shared economic interest between a body corporate and an officer, the Council may apply a differential adjustment to ensure that the overall outcome is just and proportionate.

This approach reflects the statutory guidance on the application of the totality principle and is intended to promote consistency, transparency, and proportionality, while avoiding arbitrary or selective adjustment of individual penalties.

In accordance with the statutory guidance, any rent repayment orders made in respect of the same breach or offence will be disregarded for the purposes of assessing the totality of civil penalties under this policy.

## Offences and breaches where a civil penalty may be levied and relevant considerations as to the level of that penalty

### Protection from Eviction Act 1977 offences

#### Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier - section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £35,000        | £40,000                                | £28,000                           | £35,000                     | £42,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Violence or threats of violence.
- Disposal of possessions or threats to dispose of possessions.
- Breach or evasion of an injunction or undertaking.
- Loss of home.

## Housing Act 1988 breaches and offences

### Failure to give a written statement of terms and any other prescribed information - section 16D of the Housing Act 1988

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £4,000         | £7,000                                 | £3,200                            | £4,000                      | £4,800                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- Provision of some of the required terms and prescribed information within the required period.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

### Attempting to let a property for a fixed term - section 16E(1)(a) of the Housing Act 1988

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £4,000         | £7,000                                 | £3,200                            | £4,000                      | £4,800                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

### Attempting to end a tenancy by service of a notice to quit - section 16E(1)(b) of the Housing Act 1988

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £6,000         | £7,000                                 | £4,800                            | £6,000                      | £7,200                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit.

### Attempting to end a tenancy orally or requiring that it is ended orally - section 16E(1)(c) of the Housing Act 1988

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £6,000         | £7,000                                 | £4,800                            | £6,000                      | £7,200                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit.

**Serving a possession notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process - section 16E(1)(d) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £6,000         | £7,000                                 | £4,800                            | £6,000                      | £7,200                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit.

**Relying on a ground where the person does not reasonably believe that the landlord is, will, or may be able to obtain possession on that ground and the tenant(s) surrendered the tenancy within the period of four months beginning with the date of the contravention, without an order for possession of the dwelling-house being made - section 16E(1)(e) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £6,000         | £7,000                                 | £4,800                            | £6,000                      | £7,200                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used - section 16E(1)(f) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £3,000         | £7,000                                 | £2,400                            | £3,000                      | £3,600                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Failure to give an existing tenant prescribed information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act 2025 in the prescribed form and timeframe - paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £4,000         | £7,000                                 | £3,200                            | £4,000                      | £4,800                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- Provision of some of the required prescribed information within the required period.
- Provision of prescribed information but not in the prescribed form.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Continuation of conduct subject to a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) after the 28-day period (or, if appealed, after conclusion of the appeal) where the final notice has not been withdrawn — section 16J(3) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point  | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment     | No Landlord Type adjustment           | Landlord Type upward adjustment       |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Double the starting level for the two constituent breaches added together | £40,000                                | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the constituent breaches |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Conduct giving rise to liability under s.16I, where within the preceding five years the person has either (i) had a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) imposed for different conduct and the final notice has not been withdrawn, or (ii) been convicted under s.16J for different conduct – section 16(J)(4) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point  | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment     | No Landlord Type adjustment           | Landlord Type upward adjustment       |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Double the starting level for the two constituent breaches added together | £40,000                                | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the constituent breaches |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- Dependent on the most recent conduct giving rise to liability to a civil penalty under section 16I of the Housing Act 1988.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Dependent on the most recent conduct giving rise to liability to a civil penalty under section 16I of the Housing Act 1988.

**Relying on a ground where the person knows that the landlord would not be able to obtain an order for possession on that ground, or being reckless as to whether the landlord would be able to do so and the tenant(s) surrendered the tenancy within the period of four months beginning with the date the ground was relied on, without an order for possession of the dwelling-house being made – section 16J(1) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £30,000        | £40,000                                | £24,000                           | £30,000                     | £36,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Breach of restrictions relating to reletting (s16(E)(2) Housing Act 1988) or remarketing (s16(E)(3) Housing Act 1988) a property within restricted period after using Grounds 1 or 1A of Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 - section 16J(2) of the Housing Act 1988**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £25,000        | £40,000                                | £20,000                           | £25,000                     | £30,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

## **Housing and Planning Act 2016 offences**

**Breach of a banning order - section 21(1) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £35,000        | £40,000                                | £28,000                           | £35,000                     | £42,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- A single, isolated incident.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Concealment or evasion.

## **Renters Rights Act 2025 breaches**

**Discrimination relating to children in the lettings process – section 33(1) of the Renters’ Rights Act 2025**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £6,000         | £7,000                                 | £4,800                            | £6,000                      | £7,200                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Discrimination relating to benefits in the lettings process – section 34(1) of the Renters’ Rights Act 2025**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £6,000         | £7,000                                 | £4,800                            | £6,000                      | £7,200                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Failure to specify proposed rent within a written advertisement or offer – section 56(2) of the Renters’ Rights Act 2025**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £3,000         | £7,000                                 | £2,400                            | £3,000                      | £3,600                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

**Inviting, encouraging or accepting any offer of rent greater than the stated rate – section 56(3) of the Renters’ Rights Act 2025**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £4,000         | £7,000                                 | £3,200                            | £4,000                      | £4,800                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

## **The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 breach of duties**

***Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (3)(b), (3)(d), (3)(e). Regulation 3D: (a), (b), (c), (f)***

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £5,000         | £40,000                                | £4,000                            | £5,000                      | £6,000                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The report or record evidences that the electrical installations were compliant at all points.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record.

**Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c), (3)(a), (3)(c), (3)(ca), (5)(b), (5)(c). Regulation 3B: (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c). Regulation 3C: (1), (2)(a). Regulation 3D: (d), (e)**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £12,500        | £40,000                                | £10,000                           | £12,500                     | £15,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The report or record evidences that the electrical installations were compliant at all points.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record.

**Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (4), (5a), (6). Regulation 3C: (2)(b), (4)**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £20,000        | £40,000                                | £16,000                           | £20,000                     | £24,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record.

## Housing Act 2004 offences

**Failure to comply with an improvement notice - section 30(1) of the Housing Act 2004**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £25,000        | £40,000                                | £20,000                           | £25,000                     | £30,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of hazard(s) that are present once the deadline for compliance has passed.
- Whether the property is unoccupied once the deadline for compliance has passed.
- Access to the property was prevented by the actions or refusal of the occupant(s) and a landlord can evidence that they took steps to obtain access to the property for the purpose of carrying out the required works, but those steps fell short of establishing a reasonable excuse for non-compliance.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of hazard(s) that are present once the deadline for compliance has passed.

**Failure to comply with an overcrowding notice - section 139(7) of the Housing Act 2004**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £20,000        | £40,000                                | £16,000                           | £20,000                     | £24,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The level of overcrowding present.

**Failure to obtain a selective licence - section 95(1) of the Housing Act 2004**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £12,000        | £40,000                                | £9,600                            | £12,000                     | £14,400                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The landlord has knowledge or experience of licensing requirements.

**Failure to obtain an HMO licence - section 72(1) of the Housing Act 2004**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £17,000        | £40,000                                | £13,600                           | £17,000                     | £20,400                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The landlord has knowledge or experience of licensing requirements.
- The condition of the unlicensed property.

**Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO - section 72(2) of the Housing Act 2004**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £20,000        | £40,000                                | £16,000                           | £20,000                     | £24,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- There are suitable amenity and space provisions in the HMO.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The level of over-occupation present.

**Failure to Comply with The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation [England] Regulations 2006 and The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 – section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004**

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 impose duties on the persons managing HMOs in respect of:

- Providing information to occupiers [Regulation 3]
- Taking safety measures, including fire safety measures [Regulation 4]
- Maintaining the water supply and drainage [Regulation 5]
- Supplying and maintaining gas and electricity, including having these services/appliances regularly inspected [Regulation 6]
- Maintaining common parts [Regulation 7]
- Maintaining living accommodation [Regulation 8]
- Providing sufficient waste disposal facilities [Regulation 9]

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 impose duties on the persons managing HMOs as defined by Section 257 Housing Act 2004 in respect of:

- Providing information to occupiers [regulation 4]
- Taking safety measures, including fire safety measures [regulation 5]
- Maintaining the water supply and drainage [regulation 6]
- Supplying and maintaining gas and electricity, including having these services/appliances regularly inspected [regulation 7]
- Maintaining common parts [regulation 8]
- Maintaining living accommodation [regulation 9]
- Providing sufficient waste disposal facilities [regulation 10]

Where there are multiple breaches of a single Management Regulation at a single HMO, a single civil penalty will be imposed which will cover all the breaches of that Management Regulation.

Where multiple Management Regulations have been breached at a single HMO, a separate civil penalty will be imposed for each Management Regulation that has been breached.

| Name of Management Regulation                      | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|--|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty of manager to provide information to occupier | £3,000         | £40,000                                | £2,400                            | £3,000                      | £3,600                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation
- The landlord has refused to provide any outstanding contact information more than 48 hours after it has been requested by an occupant or on behalf of an occupant.

| Name of Management Regulation           | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|---|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty of manager to take safety measures | £20,000        | £40,000                                | £16,000                           | £20,000                     | £24,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

| Name of Management Regulation                         | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|---|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty of manager to maintain water supply and drainage | £10,000        | £40,000                                | £8,000                            | £10,000                     | £12,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

| Name of Management Regulation                              | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|--|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty of manager to supply and maintain gas and electricity | £12,000        | £40,000                                | £9,600                            | £12,000                     | £14,400                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

| Name of Management Regulation   | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|---|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty of manager to maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances | £7,000         | £40,000                                | £5,600                            | £7,000                      | £8,400                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

| Name of Management Regulation                    | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|--|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty of manager to maintain living accommodation | £7,000         | £40,000                                | £5,600                            | £7,000                      | £8,400                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

| Name of Management Regulation             | Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|---|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Duty to provide waste disposal facilities | £7,000         | £40,000                                | £5,600                            | £7,000                      | £8,400                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation
- The lack of sufficient refuse and/or litter containers either inside and/or outside the property has been previously reported
- The refuse and/or litter that requires disposal includes hazardous materials

#### **Breach of licence conditions – Section 72(3) Housing Act 2004**

All granted HMO licences impose a set of conditions on the licence holder. It is important that the licence holder of a licensed property complies with all imposed conditions, but the Council recognises that a failure to comply with certain licence conditions is likely to have a much bigger impact on the safety and comfort of residents than others.

The starting levels for each different type of licence condition breach is set out below based on the seriousness of the offence. Where a licence condition could be interpreted to fall within two different potential starting levels, the higher starting level will be chosen.

Where multiple licence conditions have been breached at a single property, a separate civil penalty will be imposed for each licence condition that has been breached.

#### ***Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:***

- ***Signage or the provision of information for tenants***
- ***Provision of written terms of occupancy for tenants***
- ***Procedures regarding complaints***
- ***Procedures regarding vetting of incoming tenants***
- ***Compliance with deposit protection legislation***
- ***The recording and provision of information regarding rent payments***
- ***Procedures relating to rent collection***
- ***The provision of information regarding occupancy of the property***
- ***The provision of information regarding change of managers or licence holder details***
- ***The provision of information related to changes in the property***
- ***Requirements relating to the sale of the property***
- ***Attending training courses***
- ***Requirements to hold insurance***
- ***The provision of insurance documentation***
- ***The provision of or obtaining of suitable references***

- ***The provision of keys and alarm codes***
- ***Security provisions for access to the property***
- ***The provision of suitable means for occupiers to regulate temperature***
- ***Carrying out items on a schedule of works not otherwise mentioned in the HMO licence conditions section of this policy, relating to non-compliance with items on a schedule of works***

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £4,000         | £40,000                                | £3,200                            | £4,000                      | £4,800                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

***Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:***

- ***Procedures and actions regarding Inspections***
- ***Procedures regarding Repair issues***
- ***Maintenance and use of common parts (including gardens, outbuildings and property exterior) and living areas***
- ***Safeguarding occupiers and minimising disruption during works***
- ***The provision of information regarding alterations and construction works***
- ***Procedures regarding emergency issues***
- ***Waste and waste receptacles, pests, minor repairs, alterations or decoration.***
- ***Giving written notice prior to entry***
- ***Allowing access for inspections***
- ***Minimising risk of water contamination***
- ***The compliance of furnishings or furniture with fire safety regulations***
- ***Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to provision of mechanical extraction or electrical sockets***

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £7,000         | £40,000                                | £5,600                            | £7,000                      | £8,400                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

***Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:***

- ***The provision of documentation regarding energy performance certificates, fire detection and prevention, emergency lighting, carbon monoxide detection, fire risk assessments, gas installations, electric installations and appliances***
- ***Notification of legal proceedings, contraventions and other relevant information that may affect a fit and proper person status***
- ***Procedures and actions regarding ASB***
- ***Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to the provision of personal hygiene facilities, kitchen facilities or heating***

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £12,500        | £40,000                                | £10,000                           | £12,500                     | £15,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

**Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:**

- **Minimum floor areas**
- **Occupancy rates**
- **Occupancy of rooms or areas that are not to be used as sleeping accommodation**
- **Limits on number of households allowed to occupy the property or part of the property**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £20,000        | £40,000                                | £16,000                           | £20,000                     | £24,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

**Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:**

- **The condition or existence of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, emergency lighting, gas installations, electric installations and appliances, fire detection or other fire safety features or requirements**
- **The provision and maintenance of safe means of escape, including requirements to keep escape routes and exits free from obstruction**
- **Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to fire safety or the provision of a Carbon Monoxide detector**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £25,000        | £40,000                                | £20,000                           | £25,000                     | £30,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

#### **Breach of licence conditions – Section 95(2) Housing Act 2004**

All granted selective licences impose a set of conditions on the licence holder. It is important that the licence holder of a licensed property complies with all imposed conditions, but the Council recognises that a failure to comply with certain licence conditions is likely to have a much bigger impact on the safety and comfort of residents than others.

The starting levels for each different type of licence condition breach is set out below based on the seriousness of the offence. Where a licence condition could be interpreted to fall within two different potential starting levels, the higher starting level will be chosen.

Where multiple licence conditions have been breached at a single property, a separate civil penalty will be imposed for each licence condition that has been breached.

**Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:**

- **Signage or the provision of information for tenants**
- **Provision of written terms of occupancy for tenants**
- **Procedures regarding complaints**
- **Procedures regarding vetting of incoming tenants**
- **Compliance with deposit protection legislation**
- **The recording and provision of information regarding rent payments**
- **Procedures relating to rent collection**
- **The provision of information regarding occupancy of the property**
- **The provision of information regarding change of managers or licence holder details**
- **The provision of information related to changes in the property**
- **Requirements relating to the sale of the property**
- **Attending training courses**
- **Requirements to hold insurance**
- **The provision of insurance documentation**
- **The provision of keys and alarm codes**
- **Security provisions for access to the property**
- **The provision of suitable means for occupiers to regulate temperature**
- **Carrying out items on a schedule of works not otherwise mentioned in the selective licence conditions section of this policy, relating to non-compliance with items on a schedule of works**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £3,000         | £40,000                                | £2,400                            | £3,000                      | £3,600                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

**Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:**

- **Procedures and actions regarding Inspections**
- **Procedures regarding Repair issues**
- **Maintenance and use of common parts (including gardens, outbuildings and property exterior) and living areas**
- **Safeguarding occupiers and minimising disruption during works**
- **The provision of information regarding alterations and construction works,**
- **Procedures regarding emergency issues**
- **Waste and waste receptacles, pests, minor repairs, alterations or decoration.**
- **Giving written notice prior to entry**
- **Allowing access for inspections**
- **Minimising risk of water contamination**

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £5,250         | £40,000                                | £4,200                            | £5,250                      | £6,300                          |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

**Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:**

- ***The provision of documentation regarding energy performance certificates, fire detection and prevention, emergency lighting, carbon monoxide detection, fire risk assessments, gas installations, electric installations and appliances***
- ***Notification of legal proceedings, contraventions and other relevant information that may affect a fit and proper person status***
- ***Procedures and actions regarding ASB***
- ***Minimum floor areas***
- ***Occupancy rates***
- ***Occupancy of rooms that are not to be used as sleeping accommodation***
- ***Limits on number of households allowed to occupy the property or part of the property***

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £9,375         | £40,000                                | £7,500                            | £9,375                      | £11,250                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

**Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:**

- ***The condition or existence of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, emergency lighting, gas installations, electric installations and appliances, fire detection or other fire safety features or requirements***
- ***The provision and maintenance of safe means of escape, including requirements to keep escape routes and exits free from obstruction***

| Starting point | Statutory maximum civil penalty amount | Landlord Type downward adjustment | No Landlord Type adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £15,000        | £40,000                                | £12,000                           | £15,000                     | £18,000                         |

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

## **Process for imposing a civil penalty and the right to make written representations**

**Notice of intent**

Before imposing a civil penalty on a landlord, the Council will give the landlord a notice of intent. The notice of intent will set out:

- The amount of the proposed civil penalty
- The reasons for proposing to impose the civil penalty
- Information about their right to make written representations

### **Right to make written representations**

A landlord who is given a notice of intent may make written representations to the Council about the proposal to impose a civil penalty. Any representations must be made within a period of 28 days beginning with the day after the date on which the notice of intent was given.

### **Decision after the representations period**

After the end of the period for representations the Council will:

- Decide whether to impose a civil penalty on the landlord; and
- If it decides to impose a civil penalty, decide the amount of the penalty. This amount can be higher or lower than the amount stated in the notice of intent.

A landlord's rectification of the identified breach or offence during the representations period will rarely, of itself, lead the Council to conclude that the imposition of a civil penalty is inappropriate. However, compliance at that stage will usually be relevant to the assessment of mitigating factors that may reduce the level of any civil penalty imposed.

Similarly, an admission of liability will rarely, of itself, lead the Council to conclude that the imposition of a civil penalty is inappropriate. An admission of liability will, however, usually be relevant to the assessment of mitigating factors that may reduce the level of any civil penalty imposed.

### **Final notice**

If, following the receipt of written representations and/or the expiry of the time period to make written representations, the Council decides to impose a civil penalty on the landlord, it will give the landlord a final notice imposing that penalty.

The final notice will set out:

- The amount of the civil penalty
- The reasons for imposing the penalty
- Information about how to pay the penalty
- The period for payment of the penalty
- Information about rights of appeal
- The consequences of failure to comply with the notice

## **Discount for prompt payment**

Where a civil penalty imposed by a final notice is paid in full within the period specified in that notice (normally 28 days beginning with the day after the final notice is given), the Council will apply a discount of 15% to the amount of the civil penalty.

The availability of the discount is conditional upon full payment being received within the specified period. The discount period will not be extended or suspended by the bringing of an appeal. A landlord who chooses to appeal may still benefit from the discount by paying the civil penalty in full within the specified period; however, where payment is not made within that period, the discount will not apply.

### *Illustrative example of the application of the discount*

The landlord of an HMO property fails to obtain a licence. They only operate two HMO properties and there are no other relevant factors or aggravating features. The starting point for the offence under the Council's civil penalties matrix is £17,000.

Following the issue of a notice of intent proposing a civil penalty of £17,000, the landlord makes written representations. Having considered those representations, the Council determines to impose a civil penalty of £16,000, as set out in the final notice.

If the landlord pays the civil penalty in full within the payment period specified in the final notice, a 15% prompt payment discount is applied, resulting in a discounted payment of £13,600.

## **Appeals**

A landlord who is given a final notice may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) against the decision to impose a civil penalty and/or the amount of the civil penalty. Any appeal must be made within 28 days beginning with the day after the date on which the final notice was given.

Where an appeal is brought, the final notice is suspended until the appeal is finally determined or withdrawn.

An appeal to the First-tier Tribunal is by way of a re-hearing of the Council's decision. In determining an appeal, the Tribunal may have regard to matters of which the Council was unaware at the time the decision to impose the civil penalty was made.

The Tribunal may dismiss an appeal if it is satisfied that the appeal is frivolous, vexatious, an abuse of process, or has no reasonable prospect of success.

The First-tier Tribunal may invite the parties to consider mediation or another form of alternative dispute resolution. The Council will not generally agree to mediation in relation to the level of a civil penalty, as civil penalties are determined by reference to this Policy to promote fair, consistent, and proportionate outcomes. Agreeing reductions outside the Policy framework would risk undermining consistency and the Council's enforcement objectives.

On determination of an appeal, the Tribunal may:

- Confirm the civil penalty
- Vary the amount of the civil penalty (whether by increase or reduction)
- Cancel the civil penalty

Where the Tribunal varies a civil penalty by increasing its amount, it may do so only up to the applicable statutory maximum for the relevant breach or offence (£7,000 or £40,000, as applicable).

A party to the appeal may apply for permission to appeal the decision of the First-tier Tribunal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HOUSING POLICY 2025 - 2028



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



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Version dated 23 1 2026 and presented to JPPC March 2026  
 Amendments made

| Reference  | Amendment  | Reason   |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Scope of the Environmental Health Housing Policy | Addition of enforcement of the Renters’ Rights Act 2025  | Renters’ Rights Act 2005 has now received Royal Assent |
| 5 Securing Compliance                              | AMENDMENT – Please take note that with the introduction of the Renters Rights Act 2025 PPP has implemented a separate enforcement policy for Environmental Health Housing Enforcement and that policy takes precedence over the written content in this EH Housing Policy 2025 – 2028. | Renters’ Rights Act 2005 has now received Royal Assent |

# 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

## Introduction

On 9th January 2017 Public Protection Partnership (PPP) was formed, this was a shared service covering Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards provided for Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council. On 31 March 2022 Wokingham Borough Council left the partnership. As such this plan will only cover the work of Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils.

PPP governance arrangements have led to the PPP being directed by a separate committee of elected members representing each authority (Joint Public Protection Committee, JPPC) who are advised by a joint management board (JMB) made up of relevant Directors representing each authority and lead officers from PPP.

The PPP serves a rising population of almost 300,000 residents, comprising around 127,000 (BFBC) and 163,000 (WBDC). Whilst the two authorities share many similarities such as the types of businesses, their more modern industrial and historic towns and villages, political governance, and health demography, each area is also unique. For example, major retail, shopping and leisure facilities within the Lexicon can be found within BFBC, within West Berkshire, rural landscapes, farming and horse racing are commonplace.

## Scope of the Compliance and Programme Team.

Environmental Health Housing sits within the Compliance and Programme (C&P) Team in within the PPP.

In addition, the C&P team enforces food hygiene and Infectious Disease Control; Health & Safety in all Local Authority enforced premises, and environmental protection such as commercial nuisance, air quality, contaminated land and private water supply.

## Scope of the Environmental Health Housing Policy

This Environmental Health Housing Policy applies specifically to each Council's environmental health housing enforcement functions and duties. Local Authorities are required to keep under review the housing conditions in their areas with a view to identifying what courses of actions are necessary under the various Housing Acts. This includes the following:

- **Enforcement of the Renters' Rights Act 2025**
- Regulating standards of repair, amenity and safety in the private rented sector and dealing with housing hazards.
- Investigating service requests from tenants of Registered Social Landlords.
- Carrying out investigations relating to vacant dwellings and dealing with issues they present.
- Regulating standards of management, repair, amenity and safety in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
- Administration of the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation mandatory Licensing Scheme.
- The licensing of Caravan Sites and park home sites and camp sites.

- Regulating standards in the private rented sector in relation to immigration inspections.
- Homes for Ukraine (from March 2022) where officers carry out home safety checks on host homes, and welfare checks when guests arrived.
- Taking enforcement action including the use of civil penalties.
- Setting the civil penalty in respect of landlords' duties to install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors ([see appendix 1](#)).

## Vision of PPP

To protect and support residents and legitimate business through the successful use of information and intelligence, delivering safe and healthy neighbourhoods.

## Mission of PPP

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

To enable a service the size of the Public Protection Partnership to achieve this vision we work to a set of values and an operating model which enables us to respond to changing demands.

## Values of PPP

Our values have a major influence on the way we want to be seen:

- Objectivity in decision-making
- the desire to meet the needs of the community and
- an approach to service delivery which is professional on every level.

## Inter Authority Agreement Overarching Priorities of PPP

In the Inter Authority Agreement the overarching priorities of PPP are:

- Community Protection.
- Protecting and Improving Health.
- Protection of the Environment.
- Supporting Prosperity and Economic Growth.
- Effective and Improving Service Delivery.

From these the Public Protection Partnership Priorities are developed. These are detailed in the [Strategic Assessment](#) which is presented each year to the Joint Public Protection Committee.

In 2024 we carried out a review of our strategic assessment and of the priorities of the service to bring themes together, to reorder priorities and to create a more cohesive grouping of

topics across the PPP remit. This has now been presented to the Joint Public Protection Committee and been approved and published as the Strategic Assessment 2024-2027.

## Cross Cutting Priorities

The cross-cutting priorities set in PPP are those that cover all areas of the service, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing:

- eCrime.
- Climate Change and Environmental Protection.
- Protecting Vulnerable Adults and Children.
- Safeguarding (which includes modern slavery).
- Safer Streets.
- Protecting and Improving Health.

## Operational Priorities

The Operational Priorities, in alphabetical order, set in the PPP strategic Assessment are as follows:

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 also.

In terms of Housing the operational priority 'Improved Living Environment' covers the work of the service.

Areas not deemed as the Strategic Priorities will be carried out but will not be given priority

## Emerging Priorities

The work we carry out and the prioritisation we give to that work is dependent on circumstances. Should circumstances change then we adapt to meet those challenges. In recent years we have seen the impact of Covid on the prioritisation of our work. More recently we have had the prioritisation of the work of the team shifted to Homes for Ukraine.

## 2. HOUSING PRIORITIES

### The Role of the Compliance and Programme Housing Team with regard to the Overarching Themes and Strategic Priorities

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Community Protection</b>            | <p>The main role of the team is to ensure that premises for which we are the enforcing authority for private sector housing, including caravan and park homes sites (<a href="#">see appendix 2</a>) are compliant with the legislation; the purpose of this legislation is to protect residents' health and safety, many of whom are vulnerable, from living in poor conditions.</p> <p>We provide safeguards to the community through an effective licensing service and will act as champions for the local area. We will deal with anti-social behaviour in identified problem areas and with aggressive and unreasonable landlords irrespective of whether they are Registered Social Landlords or those in private rental.</p> <p>Our work with commercial to residential conversion properties conversion project looks to ensure commercial buildings that are converted into residential accommodation are safe and fit for purpose from the planning stage (as part of the consultation process) to responding and investigating complaints of potentially unsafe living conditions.</p> <p>We work to identify and regularise unlicensed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (<a href="#">see appendix 3</a>). Mandatory HMOs are properties where there are five residents or more from two households sharing facilities, and these are required to be licenced with us.</p> |
| <b>Protecting and Improving Health</b> | <p>We enforce Housing legislation. Our role within this meets the requirement to protect health safety and wellbeing of residents within the PPP area irrespective of tenure; in doing so we will tackle the causes of health inequalities, both physical and mental. Note that we cannot enforce in Council owned housing.</p> <p>We will develop and deliver initiatives designed to improve and enhance health and wellbeing of individuals, for example. specific projects aimed at areas such as damp houses, cold dwellings.</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Protection of the Environment</b>             | <p>Enforcing within residential properties in connection with waste disposal and drainage and ensuring sources of contaminants are secure.</p> <p>We will ensure Private Sector Housing and Park Homes are energy efficient, through adequate heating and repair, and compliance with MEES Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (<a href="#">see appendix 4</a>).</p>   |
| <b>Supporting Prosperity and Economic Growth</b> | <p>By enforcing the legislation consistently in all residential premises ensuring that landlords are not economically advantaged by non-compliance we will be supporting compliant local businesses to thrive through the provision of advice and guidance.</p> <p>By assessing all Relevant Protected Site owners using the Fit and Proper Person Regulations we will ensure owners are fit and proper to run their sites in a safe and well-maintained manner.</p> <p>Trading Standards has a range of responsibilities with respect to letting agents. These include the enforcement of the requirements on tenants' deposits and the legislation relating to tenants' fees. The service is also responsible for the regulation of property descriptions and wider fair / unfair trading legislation in so far as it relates to the sector.</p> |
| <b>Effective and Improving Service Delivery</b>  | <p>Working on Quality Management Systems to ensure the service is consistent and streamlines feedback from landlord and residents with an ethos of continuous improvement.</p> <p>We will continue to develop PPP staff, to ensure a competent workforce that are committed to delivering and improving.</p> <p>We will work on improving PPP communication with the housing sector, through social media and Landlords Forum.</p> <p>By the implementation of the national intelligence model, we identify and effectively tackle priority areas.</p> <p>We will build effective working relationships with key partners within the Councils to deliver the key objectives of the Service and the partner Councils.</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Building effective relationships with key external partners including Thames Valley Police, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, housing providers, other local authorities, Immigration Service |
|--|--|

## The Role of the Compliance and Programme Housing Team with regard to the Cross Cutting Themes

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Climate Change and Environmental Protection</b> | As part of our work with rented properties we look at energy efficiency in homes, we have extended this work in that we have recently moved a Senior Trading Standards officer into the team so that this work can progress and improve the links between our reactive work and programmed work with energy performance certificates.  |
| <b>Protecting Vulnerable Adults and Children</b>   | The number and complexity of investigations involving people from recognised vulnerable groups has driven the PPP to adapt its risk management approach. Skills in communication, safeguarding and partnership working have never been more important in the workloads of officers and managers. This will be a key consideration in any priorities and projects initiated.  |
| <b>Safeguarding/ Modern Day Slavery</b>            | Thames Valley Police continue to run a number of operations looking at the issue of exploitation where people are being kept in poor conditions and forced to work for limited financial reward. An anti-slavery network has been set up across the Thames Valley. The PPP must be alive to this risk, and all priorities and projects should be evaluated to consider how it may be able to improve the intelligence picture. |
| <b>Safer Streets</b>                               | This is an initiative to help people feel safer in their environment. Housing can help by tackling nuisance behaviour and empty homes ( <a href="#">see appendix 5</a> ) and general disrepair.  |
| <b>Protecting and Improving Health</b>             | All of the work of the PPP Housing team aligns with protecting and improving health, none more so that our work to improve living conditions and our specific work on damp and mould   |

### 3. STRUCTURE AND PARTNERS

#### Compliance and Programme EH Housing Team Staffing (May 2025)

| Category of staff   | Acceptable Housing Related Qualification such as the HHSRS                  | Number of Officers in post May 2022/ FTE | Number of Officers in post May 2025 | Full Time Equivalent for carrying out Housing work May 2025 |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Strategic Manager</b>                                  | BSc/ MSc in Environmental Health  | 0.81/0.1                                 | 0.81 Strategic Management           | 0.3 Strategic Management                                    |
| <b>Principal Environmental Health Officer<sup>1</sup></b> | BSc /MSc in Environmental Health  | 1/1                                      | 1 operational management            | 1 operational management                                    |
| <b>Senior/Environmental Health Officers</b>               | BSc/ MSc in Environmental Health  | 1/1                                      | 1                                   | 1   |
| <b>Senior Trading Standards Officer<sup>2</sup></b>       | TSP Diploma   | -  | 1                                   | 1   |
| <b>Senior / Environmental Control Officers</b>            | HHSRS certificate<br>BTec – housing or equivalent                           | 2/2                                      | 3                                   | 3   |
| <b>Graduate EHO</b>                                       | BSc /MSc in Environmental Health and working towards Registration with CIEH | -  | 1                                   | 1   |
| <b>Regulatory Services Officer</b>                        | Level 4 apprenticeship in Regulatory Services                               | -  | 1                                   | 1   |
| <b>Total</b>  |   | 4.81/4.1 FTE                             | 8.81                                | 8.3 FTE   |

- <sup>1</sup>the Principal EHO post was vacant from May 2024 to February 2025 when successfully recruited to. The work of the post was covered by the Strategic Manager in the interim.

#### Staffing Changes

Within the PPP we are aware of the importance of EH Housing, and this has been echoed by the respective Councils who view this as a priority area. Funding was made available after 2022 which enabled two new officers to be recruited into the team. Additionally, the team

was extended by the placement of an officer who completed their level 4 apprenticeship with PPP into housing.

<sup>2</sup> In 2025 PPP, when reviewing and consolidating the priorities, the management team made the decision to move 1FTE Senior Trading Standards Officer into the EH Housing Team. This is to assist with joined up working on housing issues, the Trading Standards element of the housing workstream has been transferred under the Principal Environmental Health Officer for Housing. Trading Standards have a range of responsibilities with respect to letting agents. These include the enforcement of the requirements on tenants' deposits, the legislation relating to tenants' fees and the 'minimum energy efficiency standards' (MEES) for rented properties. The service is also responsible for the regulation of property descriptions and wider fair / unfair trading legislation in so far as it relates to the sector.

## Staff Development Plan

- All staff are subject to a formal appraisal each year with interim monthly review meetings.
- Part of this appraisal process is the development of a training needs analysis for staff.
- Housing Officers must complete a competency matrix
- A matrix of the training needs of the team is compiled.
- 20 Hrs of 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) training is provided for all staff operating under the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Membership; 30 hours for Chartered Members.
- Each officer is responsible for keeping a record of training undertaken and maintaining their own CPD records.
- A system of quality monitoring of work has been instigated as we are committed to continuous improvement

## Key Service Partners and Partnerships

- LA Housing Departments, Planning Enforcement and Building Control; Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire Councils.
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Thames Valley Police.
- HM Immigration Service.

## 4. PPP HOUSING WORK PLAN

In order to translate the service priorities into a work plan, PPP use the following as a framework:

- **P**revention – What action can PPP take that would stop a problem occurring
- **I**ntelligence – What information can the PPP gather to help make better decisions
- **E**nforcement – what action can the PPP take to ensure those breaking the law are taken to task.

In keeping with this, a summary of the work which will be progressed by the Compliance and Programme team in relation to Housing is as follows:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| PREVENTION  | To carry out each Council’s statutory duties in relation to Private Sector Housing Standards (reactive and programmed work).  |
|   | To ensure unlicensed HMOs are brought to compliance; licence applications are processed, and that licensed HMOs maintain the required standard.   |
|   | To review existing Park Home licences to ensure fit for purpose; to work on unlicensed sites to bring them to compliance.   |
|   | We will ensure all relevant park home sites have their nomination Fit and Proper Person identified through the process of registration – and that this information is available to all.   |
|   | We will investigate complaints from tenants, and where referrals are made to us from other agencies.  |
|   | We will investigate complaints from residents in the Registered Social Landlord sector to ensure decent housing.  |
|   | Work with LA Housing Partners to carry out House Condition Surveys; and where these are carried out use of the surveys to address the needs demonstrated. The House Condition Survey for West Berkshire was commissioned and carried out in 2024. |
|   | We will carry out projects aimed at assisting landlords and tenants to improve housing conditions with respect to damp and mould / cold homes.  |
|   | We will proactively look at commercial to residential conversion premises to ensure that they are suitable.   |
|   | We will work with our partners on the safety of those premises identified over 18m high, and 11 – 18m with cladding causing a fire risk.  |
|   | We will carry out visits and safeguarding checks in connection with Homes for Ukraine.  |
|   | We will investigate complaints from residents and businesses regarding trading standards housing issues.  |
| We will respond to requests for service concerning trading standards regarding letting agents and the regulation of property descriptions and |   |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
|              | wider fair / unfair trading legislation in so far as it relates to the sector, including the enforcement of the requirements on tenants' deposits, the legislation relating to tenants' fees.   |
|              | We will work reactively and proactively on ensuring properties rented out in the private rented sector have a minimum energy rating of E on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).  |
|              | We will work to ensure that estate and letting agents that operate within our area are complying with the necessary regulation around tenant fees and redress schemes.  |
|              | We will monitor emerging issues, such as Air BnB use and short term lets to establish compliance.   |
|              | We will link the Furniture and furnishings guidance enforced by trading standards with the HMO licensing regime.  |
|              |   |
| INTELLIGENCE | Active media and social media campaigns on high-risk areas and emerging issues.   |
|              | Hold Landlord Forums in partnership with the LA Housing Departments and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service RBFRS.  |
|              | Work with landlords to raise standards.   |
|              | Where there is funding, we will commission a LA House Condition Survey and we use the information to target our work.   |
|              | Liaise with RBFRS to understand high risk areas and target work in these areas.   |
|              | Use of information from MHCLG National Remediation Safety for resident safety in higher risk buildings.   |
|              | Ensure that we keep up to date with the progression of the Renters Rights Bill through Parliament and action plan its implementation.   |
|              |   |
| ENFORCEMENT  | Develop staff to undertake complex housing and licensing investigations and knowledge about property tribunals.   |
|              | We have dedicated case management support for housing and site licence investigations.  |
|              | Training in housing topics and legislation so we can determine breaches and ensure competency in line with relevant legislation and associate regulations.  |
|              | Training of officers in private sector housing investigation, evidence gathering, decision making and production of case file and Court proceedings to optimise success rates.  |
|              | Ensuring competency of Authorised Officers using a competency assessment toolkit to ensure that the action taken by Authorised Officers is correct and does not cause unlawful economic implications to the businesses or put the public at risk. |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Clear inspection program of targeted residential properties, including mobile home and caravan sites, and ensure non-compliance is actioned. |
|  |  |

The PPP recognises the importance of EH Housing, and this has been echoed by the respective Councils who view this as a priority area. Therefore, funding was made available to enable two new officers to be recruited into the team over the period up to 2025. This allowed areas of added value to be carried out, specifically:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Unlicensed HMO                                    | Project – Identify unlicensed HMOs as part of the House Condition Survey and active Borough Surveillance and to let adverts, and monitoring of reactive work. Education regarding definition of HMO – landlords and tenants |
| Conversions of Commercial to Residential premises | Project – to Identify conversion premises commercial to residential and ensure that these meet housing standards – in conjunction with RBFRS and Building Control.  |

## 5. SECURING COMPLIANCE

**AMENDMENT – Please take note that with the introduction of the Renters’ Rights Act 2025 PPP has implemented a separate enforcement policy for Environmental Health Housing Enforcement and that policy takes precedence over the written content in this EH Housing Policy 2025 – 2028.**

### Securing Action by Relevant Duty Holders

Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) provided by the Housing Act 2004 and the associated guidance.

Whilst the HHSRS is fundamental, housing legislation also covers matters such as the provision of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in rented housing, energy efficiency, overcrowding, and the management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and caravan sites.

Where unsatisfactory or unsuitable housing conditions have been identified, the Council will aim to address the situation through a combination of:

- Giving advice and assistance; and/or
- Operation of licensing schemes (applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation and Caravan Sites); and/or
- Enforcement action.

The approach taken will depend on the individual circumstances of each case and this policy sets out the factors that are taken into account when determining the course of action that it is appropriate to take. The Council are not bound by the policy and may deviate where there are unusual circumstances that warrant that.

The purpose of the intervention programmes we carry out is to improve housing outcomes by:

- Securing actions by relevant duty holders
- Targeting those that influence risk reduction
- Dealing with serious risk and least controlled hazards
- Enforcing on those that seek economic advantage from non-compliance

We are committed to ensuring compliance and will make this a focus over the coming years, to tackle non-compliance.

## Enforcement Action

Enforcement action will be appropriate in some cases where there is a breach of a statutory obligation, most notably where a property owner has failed to provide to his/her tenants conditions and facilities that are safe and satisfactory. Enforcement action is usually discretionary but is mandatory in some prescribed circumstances, for example where a serious or imminent risk of harm exists.

It is recognised that some contraventions of housing law may be minor and/or inadvertent and appropriately tackled on an informal basis. With regard to decision-making, the Council will apply the principles of good enforcement practice set out in the Regulators' Code (April 2014). In this context, the Council aims to:

- carry out its activities in a way that supports those that it regulates.
- Provide simple and straightforward ways to interact with those it regulates.
- Target resources based on risk and the risk will be considered when making decisions about enforcement.
- Share information about compliance and risk where appropriate to avoid duplication of regulatory effort.
- Make available clear information, guidance and advice to help those it regulates to meet their responsibilities to comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure that the Council's approach to regulatory activities is transparent.

In the first instance the Council will generally seek to resolve situations by agreement in an informal manner and without recourse to formal enforcement action. This may involve giving advice to residents (tenants and owner-occupiers) and property owners.

Where properties are rented, the Council seeks to work in partnership with landlords to ensure properties are improved such that they meet required standards. Where possible, the landlord will be given an opportunity to carry out works within a reasonable timescale. This approach may not, however, be possible in some circumstances, for example, where:

- The situation requires urgent remedial action.
- Serious or imminent risk of harm exists.
- The legislation dictates other actions.
- The person responsible is not contactable.
- The proposed timescale for works is considered too long.
- The person responsible appears uncooperative and/or has a history of non-compliance.

At all interactions the Council will seek to ensure that there are no vulnerable occupants exposed to serious hazards.

The Council will normally seek occupants' views, where possible, and take these into account when deciding what action to take in relation to hazards.

When deciding whether to take enforcement action, all circumstances will be taken into account, including the following (where known):

- The nature and severity of the defects.
- The risks to the occupants and/or people visiting the property.
- The tenure of the property.
- The views of the occupant(s).
- The number of occupants, their ages and whether they are vulnerable.
- The willingness and ability of the responsible person to carry out repairs within a reasonable time frame.
- The management record of the owner and the number of other properties they control.
- Whether the owner has been convicted of relevant offences previously and/or is listed on any database of rogue landlords (taking into account the Rogue Landlord Enforcement Guidance for Local Authorities).
- The use of any management agent and the number of properties they control.

There are a number of options for formal action, ranging from formal Notices to Civil Penalties and Prosecution. The decision as to which may be the most appropriate will depend on the circumstances of the case, the relevant legislation and guidance, the risk to health and safety, and the required tests relevant to each option.

In all cases the Council seeks to provide clear advice in plain language.

## Civil Penalties for Housing Offences

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends the Housing Act 2004 to allow financial penalties, up to a maximum of £30,000, to be imposed as an alternative to prosecution for certain relevant housing offences. Various procedures and statutory guidance have to be followed when issuing such penalties.

Where an offence has been committed under the relevant legislation and the Council is satisfied that there would be a reasonable prospect of conviction, the Council will then consider whether to proceed with a prosecution or issue a civil penalty.

The level and seriousness of offence will be taken into account along with any aggravating factors.

The decision as to which is the most appropriate and effective sanction will be taken on a case-by-case basis taking into account all relevant factors in each case.

At the [Joint Public Protection Committee October 2022](#), the Committee approved the direction that the PPP are taking in Environmental Health Sector Housing with regards to the use of Civil Penalty Notices.

## Charging for Enforcement Action

Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 gives the Council's the power to make a reasonable charge as a means of recovering certain expenses incurred in:

- serving an improvement notice.
- making a prohibition order.
- serving a hazard awareness notice.
- taking emergency remedial action.
- making an emergency prohibition order.
- making a demolition order

The expenses are in connection with inspection of the premises, subsequent consideration of action and the service of notices. A charge will be made for all eligible enforcement action where works are not commenced by the specified date, unless there are extenuating circumstances. This charge will reflect the costs incurred by the authority. The charges are detailed in the Fees and Charges Policy that is set each year.

The charge set is the hourly rate.

## Works in Default

Where a notice, order or licence has not been complied with this PPP will consider where the legislation makes provision, carrying out works to secure compliance with the notice. Except in urgent cases the owner/person responsible must be served with:

- a) The relevant notice of intention; and
- b) Information which clearly states the effect of the proposed action, and its subsequent costs including administration charges and details of how such sums may be recovered or made a charge on the property. Immediate action: this includes the power to take emergency action by entry to premises, if necessary, and make safe areas or articles which are causes of imminent danger of serious harm under section 40 and 43 of the Housing Act 2004.

Attempts will always be made to contact the responsible person to carry out these works themselves before resorting to this action.

It will be an offence if that persons tries to obstruct the PPP or any contractors working on behalf of the PPP once works have started.

The complete costs will be recovered in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions.

It should also be noted that carrying out works in default does not prevent prosecution which may also be appropriate.

## Rent Repayment Orders

Rent Repayment Orders (RRO) ([appendix 6](#)) can be made by the First Tier Tribunal where they are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that a landlord has committed certain offences (whether a landlord has been convicted of that offence or not).

## Rogue Landlord Data Base

The majority of landlords in the private rented sector provide decent and well managed accommodation, but there are a small number of rogue landlords and property agents who knowingly flout their legal obligations and rent out accommodation, which is substandard, frequently to vulnerable tenants.

PPP will make an entry on to the National Rogue Landlord's database where a person has been prosecuted or has received a civil penalty for offences occurring within PPP Council's area; and also, where a successful banning order has been made on application by PPP.

Details can be found at [Appendix 7](#)

## Banning Orders for Housing Offences

A "banning order" means an order, made by the First-tier Tribunal, banning a person from:

- letting housing in England,
- engaging in English letting agency work,
- engaging in English property management work, or
- doing two or more of those things.

Section 18 of the Act which enables a banning order to include a ban on involvement in certain bodies corporate.

PPP will consider applying for a Banning Order where a landlord has been a convicted of a relevant serious offence. In most instances this will be where landlords have committed other banning order offences, regardless of location, and the latest offence was particularly serious and caused or had the potential to cause severe harm for the tenant. Regard will be given to the circumstances of each case and the Government guidance in force at the time.

[See appendix 8.](#)

## 6. HORIZON SCANNING

### Renters Rights Bill

The Renters Rights Bill started life under the previous Conservative Government as the Renters Reform Bill which fell away prior to the election in 2024. An updated 'Rights' Bill was published in the autumn of 2024 which significantly extended previous proposals to take account of manifesto commitments of the incoming Labour Government. The Bill seeks to introduce a whole range of new protections for tenants, strengthen enforcement and embed improved housing standards in the rented sector. Specifically, it proposes:

- Abolition of section 21 'no fault' (no reason) evictions and moving to a new tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic – providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction.
- Steps to equalise the fairness of possession grounds for both parties, giving tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when it's reasonable to do so. The Bill introduces new safeguards for tenants, giving them more time to find a home if landlords evict to move in or sell, and ensuring unscrupulous landlords cannot misuse grounds. Section 8 of the Housing Act 1988 is being extended with a range of updated mandatory and discretionary grounds for eviction.
- Provide stronger protections against so called 'backdoor evictions' by ensuring tenants are able to appeal excessive above-market rents which are purely designed to force them out. Landlords will still be able to increase rents to market price for their properties, and an independent tribunal will make a judgement on whether they are excessive if needed.
- Make it illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children.
- End the practice of rental bidding by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent. Landlords and agents will be required to publish an asking rent for their property, and it will be illegal to accept offers made above this rate.
- Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman that will provide binding resolutions for tenants' complaints about their landlord. This will bring tenant-landlord complaint resolution on par with established redress practices for tenants in social housing and consumers of property agent services.
- Create a Private Rented Sector Database providing advice to landlords. This will also support local authorities – helping them target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Landlords will need to be registered on the database in order to use certain possession grounds.
- Tenants will be given the right to request a pet in the property which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse. Landlords will be able to require pet insurance to cover any damage to their property
- Apply the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector to give renters safer, better value homes and remove the blight of poor-quality homes in local communities. The Decent Homes Standard covers issues such as repair, living standards e.g. kitchens must be under 20 years old as well as protections from cold homes through insulation etc.

- Apply ‘Awaab’s Law’ to the sector, setting clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards.
- Strengthen local authority enforcement by expanding civil penalties, introducing a package of investigatory powers and bringing in a new requirement for local authorities to report on enforcement activity.
- Strengthening of rent repayment orders by extending them to superior landlords, doubling the maximum penalty and ensuring repeat offenders have to repay the maximum amount.

In relation to new powers for local authorities and their authorised officers. These include:

- An extension of civil penalties and rent repayment orders, placing a new duty on the council to take enforcement action. The Government are looking at introducing a national framework for setting civil penalties based on clear culpability and harm considerations, supporting a consistent approach to civil penalty setting and reducing the likelihood of reductions on appeal.
- Currently officers work with Justice for Tenants who provide a framework for the correct processing and drafting of the civil penalties.
- Enhanced powers of investigation to give environmental health housing staff similar powers to trading standards for these purposes. These will include new enhanced investigatory powers that will make it easier for local councils to obtain financial information from landlords and third parties when seeking to build a case for suspected breaches of the Act. This will also include the power to enter business premises and – in more limited circumstances – residential premises to obtain on-site evidence.
- A power to issue civil penalties against landlords who fail to comply with the provisions of the Act e.g. if they fail to register on the Private Rented Sector Database or with the Ombudsman or abuse the new grounds of possession or against landlords who evict their tenants illegally.
- The penalty levels will be raised with a minor breach incurring a civil penalty of up to £7,000 and serious or repeat non-compliance civil penalty of up to £40,000. Alternatively, officers will be able to pursue a criminal prosecution with an unlimited fine.
- Extension of the rent repayment order system to some of the new offences in the bill, increasing the maximum penalty to two years’ rent and requiring repeat offenders to repay the maximum amount of rent.

In terms of timing the Bill has passed all stages in the House of Commons and the House of Lords and is, at time of writing, in the final stages of Consideration of Amendments. It is likely to receive Royal Assent in the Autumn of 2025 and then be introduced in stages by commencement order.

The Government have indicated that the first package of measures to be introduced will be those relating to evictions (including the revocation of Section 21 and updating of Section 8) and enforcement of matters relating to breaches of these provisions.

The areas that will most impact the PPP Housing Team will follow, possibly enacted later in 2026, as secondary legislation will be required for their implementation.

PPP Housing will be working with the LA Housing Departments of West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest to look at the detail and division of the work under the Bill.

## Supported Living (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

[The Supported Living \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023](#) came into force on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023 having started life as a Private Members Bill. The aim of the Act is to address concerns over the level of care provided in ‘exempt accommodation’. Previously the National Audit Office had looked at the sector and identified a regulatory deficit.

Supported accommodation provides residents with care, supervision or support. It is usually managed by a local authority, housing association, charity or voluntary organisation. ‘Exempt accommodation’ is accommodation where the normal cap on housing benefit does not apply allowing for payment for some degree of care or support.

The Act itself allows the Government to set up the ‘Supported Housing Advisory Panel’. Applications for panel membership closed in December 2024. The panel will have representatives from local authorities, charities, social service, social landlords and residents. The Act also allows the Government to put in place new National Supported Housing Standards and licensing powers. These could include the type or condition of accommodation, as well as the care or support provided.

The proposed licensing regime would be administered by local authorities and is described as being akin to the existing HMO licensing scheme. However, this will not be introduced until such time as the National Supported Housing Standards are in place.

Local authorities are also tasked with carrying out a review of supported housing accommodation in their areas and producing a ‘supported housing strategy’. The strategy will be cognisant of the demand in the coming five years. Once the strategy has been published the social services and the statutory housing services of an authority must have regard to it.

In terms of implementation timing there is still a fair degree of uncertainty. The next stages are the formation of the advisory panel and there will be a consultation on the standards and licensing regime. More should be known in the near future.

It is clear that both pieces of legislation will have impacts for the PPP, and this will include resource impacts. The government have stated that new burdens funding will be available but at this stage the amount is not known.

## 7. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed to respond to any changes at least every three years and will consider any changes to legislation, legal challenges and any discrepancies raised.

## 8. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Rented Housing

[The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) introduced new legal duties on private sector landlords, most notably to install at least one smoke alarm on every storey of their properties and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. a coal fire, or wood burning stove).

The Council must serve a Remedial Notice where the Council has reasonable grounds to believe that there is a breach of a landlord's duty and, if that Remedial Notice is breached, the Council may impose a civil penalty charge. This is subject to procedures for review of the penalty charge if requested by the landlord and an appeals procedure to a tribunal which may quash or confirm the penalty charge notice or may reduce (but not increase) the amount of the penalty charge. The amount of the penalty charge is left to the discretion of the Council but must not exceed £5000. The Council is required to prepare and publish a statement of principles which sets out how it will determine the amount of a penalty charge.

The Council's statement of principles in respect of penalty charges is as follows:

*The provision of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms does not place an excessive burden on a landlord and a penalty charge only applies if, following discovery of the breach, the landlord does not comply with a subsequent Remedial Notice. In addition, the penalty charge is subject to an appeals process. Whereas the maximum potential penalty may present an excessive financial burden in some circumstances, it is also recognised that the charge serves as a deterrent against non-compliance and the penalty charge ought to be higher for repeat offenders. In the interests of simplicity and clarity for what landlords may expect, the scheme of penalty charges will be as follows:*

- £3,000 (the standard penalty charge) in the case of a first breach by the landlord;
- £5,000 for any second or subsequent breach.

## APPENDIX 2 Caravan Site Licensing Scheme

[The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960](#) requires the licensing of certain caravan sites which includes most mobile home parks. Such licences will attach suitable conditions which are based on a set of national model standards relating to the standards of facilities that ought to be provided.

To cover regulatory costs, an annual licence fee may be charged, and the applicable charges will be reviewed each year and set out in the PPP's fees and charges scheme. In accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, the Council is obliged to prepare and publish a fees policy. This policy, which sets out the principle by which the fees will be determined, is provided by the JPPC (Joint Public Protection Committee) papers 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 which are published on the West Berkshire Council Website. The PPP annual fees and charges scheme will then provide annual updates of that policy.

A site owner, or nominated manager, must be a fit and proper person to lawfully operate a park home site. The Council will carry out checks as appropriate and necessary on application. Fees are payable with the application, and the application will not be considered until the appropriate fee has been received by the Council.

The methodology associated with the policy, processes and fee setting associated with The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020 was agreed at the Joint Public Protection Committee meeting on the 14 June 2021. It was however recognised that each of the local authorities covered by the partnership had their own constitutional requirements associated with the setting of fees that would need to be adhered to. For West Berkshire this was passed at West Berkshire Committee 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021. For Bracknell Forest this was passed at the Executive Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The PPP annual fees and charges scheme will then provide annual updates of that policy.

PPP maintains and publishes the Fit and Proper Persons Register. Entries on the register will last for up to 5 years. A person's status on the register may be reviewed at any time.

If a person is deemed not to be fit and proper, the site licence holder will be able to find a more appropriate person. The Council may nominate a manager on request. In certain circumstances the Council may apply to the Courts for the licence to be revoked.

## APPENDIX 3 Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme

[The Housing Act 2004](#) covers licensing of certain rented properties. In general (at the time of publication), mandatory licensing is required for all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that have five or more occupants, comprising two or more separate households, but living within the same property and sharing some of the facilities.

There are discretionary licensing schemes that local authorities may choose to bring into force. The Additional HMO licensing scheme would apply in cases where it is expected that an especially high number of HMOs concentrated in any area would give rise to additional problems. Selective licensing can require any private rented property to have a licence where there is a particular need to control specific issues arising, for example in relation to housing conditions or crime. The adoption of such additional schemes is not considered in the PPP areas at this time.

Accordingly, at present PPP will operate the mandatory HMO licensing scheme only.

## Appendix 4 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

It is unlawful to rent a property which breaches the requirement for a minimum E rating, unless there is an applicable exemption.

A civil penalty will be imposed for breaches.

Officers consider the availability of wider grant-funded aid when dealing with properties not achieving the required standard and support households accordingly.

The requirement to have an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) is not just looked at in respect of the property itself which is being let out. It also applies where there has been a requirement for the building, of which the property itself being let is part, to also have an EPC. This is particularly relevant to non-self-contained units such as bedsits and the position regarding these is explained further.

It should be noted that if the letting is not legally an assured tenancy (shorthold or not) or one of the other tenancy types within the scope of the Regulations then the MEES does not apply.

Where a landlord obtains an EPC, but is not legally required to have one, the landlord will not be required to meet the MEES. A voluntary MEES of this type may be registered on the official EPC database but there is no requirement to do so.

### *Flats and Bedsits*

Flats and houses are subject the Regulations. Flats within the meaning of 'self-contained' units require their own individual EPC at the point of letting or sale.

If a bedsit is within a property that does have an EPC, then the Regulations will need to be complied with before the bedsit can be rented out if its F or G (or an exemption is registered). Although normally bedsits do not need an EPC, where the house containing the bedsit has been sold the whole property needs to have an EPC. In those cases, the Regulations will apply.

### Improvements which can be required

Improvement work which can be required is any energy efficiency improvement work which qualifies for Green Deal and installation of gas for an off-gas property so long as the mains are within 23 metres from the property. The landlord can choose what work needs to be carried out as long as the minimum E rating is obtained. A higher rating can also be achieved where the landlord chooses to carry out additional works.

### Prohibition on Letting

A domestic private rented property is substandard if the EPC rating is F or G, unless an exemption applies. The legislation prohibits a landlord from letting out a substandard property. Where F or G properties are let the landlord is liable to penalties.

### Registration of Exceptions

All exemptions (including temporary exemptions) will be required to be notified to the PRS Exemption Register. It is a database of exemptions and is open to public inspection. Failure to register the exemption will render the exemption ineffective and will amount to non-compliance with the Regulations.

The Enforcement Authority will be entitled to require landlords to furnish them with evidence supporting a claim for an exemption. Landlords will be in breach of the Regulations if they claim an exemption to which they are not entitled.

#### Enforcement

Local authorities will enforce compliance with the Regulations. Where a local authority suspects non-compliance the local authority can serve a compliance notice on the landlord requesting further information it considers necessary to confirm compliance. If provided but insufficient to provide compliance the local authority may proceed to issuing a penalty notice.

Penalties for a single offence may be cumulative, up to a maximum of £5,000. Further penalties may be awarded for non-compliance with the original penalty notice where a landlord continues to rent out a non-compliant property. Penalties are again cumulative up to a maximum of £5,000.

#### Appeals

Appeals are heard at the First-Tier Tribunal (General Regulatory Chamber).

## Appendix 5 Empty Homes

Empty properties will be investigated where such properties are brought to the attention of PPP in terms of complaints relating to the state of the property affecting the community in terms of nuisance for example verminous.

Where empty properties are assessed to be a public health and safety concern officers will use [The Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1982](#) Section 29 which gives powers to serve a Notice of intended works for the prevention of unauthorised entry or danger to public health. This is usually by way of boarding up to prevent unauthorised access.

## Appendix 6 Rent Repayment Orders

Under the [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) a Rent Repayment Order occurs when a tribunal order a landlord or agent to repay rent to tenant(s) because they have broken the law. This is usually between 6 months and 1 year of rent

The same Act also introduces the option of applying for a Rent Repayment Order (RRO) in respect of the following offences:

- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice
- Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order
- Breaching of a Banning Order
- Using violence to secure entry to a property
- Illegal eviction or harassment of the occupiers of a property
- Having control of an unlicensed house in multiple occupation
- Having control of an unlicensed property

Where rent is paid by the Council, an RRO award is retained by the Council, whilst an award to tenants paying their own rent is due to the tenant considering using RRO's as a sanction, or responding to a tenant who wishes to utilise this route should first discuss this with their the line manager as this course of action seeks to recover a monetary value that sits with the host authority (namely the housing services).

Similarly, tenants paying their own rent could apply to the (First Tier Property Tribunal) FTPT for an RRO, once an offence has been secured by the Local Authority.

PPP officers should support this course of actions by assisting the tenant accordingly.

## Appendix 7 Rogue Landlord Database

The measures introduced by the Government to tackle rogue landlords include the Rogue Landlord Database

Local Authorities are responsible for entering names on the database and maintaining the contents which includes adding details if a banning order has been imposed.

All local authorities have access to the database for the purposes of identifying landlords, agents and owners with properties in more than one borough. This national database has been set up by Housing Communities & Local Government (HCLG) using a DELTA platform for the purpose of listing rogue landlords and property agents convicted of certain offences, including immigration offences.

Officers use the register as part of their usual checks regarding 'fit and proper' tests.

## Appendix 8 Banning Orders

Under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 a local housing authority in England may apply for a banning order against a person who has been convicted of a banning order offence.

If a local housing authority in England applies for a banning order against a body corporate that has been convicted of a banning order offence, it must also apply for a banning order against any officer who has been convicted of the same offence in respect of the same conduct.

A Relevant Housing Offence includes:

- Illegally evicting or harassing a residential occupier in contravention of the protection from Eviction Act 1977 or the Criminal Law Act 1977 or:
- Any of the following offences with an Improvement Notice (section 30).
- Offences in relation to Licensing of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (section 72).
- Offences in relation to licensing of houses under Part 3 of the Act (section 95).
- Allowing an HMO that is not subject to licensing become overcrowded.
- Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of HMOs (section 234)

*A relevant offence also includes:*

- An offence under section 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
- Failure to comply with a Prohibition or Emergency Order under sections 20, 21, and 32 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 provided it relates to a property that is being rented out or managed by a landlord or property agent.

NB: Banning Order offences also apply to Immigration Offences, Serious Criminal offences, and Other Criminal offences.

The First-tier Tribunal may make a banning order against a person who:

- has been convicted of a banning order offence, and
- Was a residential landlord or a property agent at the time the offence was committed (but see subsection (3) of the Act).
- A banning order may only be made on an application by a local housing authority in England that has complied with section 15.
- Where an application is made under section 15(1) against an officer of a body corporate, the First-tier Tribunal may make a banning order against the officer even if the condition in subsection (1) (b) of the Act of this section is not met.

In deciding whether to make a banning order against a person, and in deciding what order to make, the Tribunal must consider:

- the seriousness of the offence of which the person has been convicted,
- any previous convictions that the person has for a banning order offence,
- whether the person is or has at any time been included in the database of rogue landlords and property agents, and

- The likely effect of the banning order on the person and anyone else who may be affected by the order.
- Duration and effect of banning order
- A banning order must specify the length of each ban imposed by the order.
- A ban must last at least 12 months.

A banning order may contain exceptions to a ban for some or all of the period to which the ban relates, and the exceptions may be subject to conditions.

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## Water Safety Partnership Annual Report (Review of 2025)

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|                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Committee considering report:</b> | Joint Public Protection Committee |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>            | 9 March 2026                      |
| <b>Chair of Committee:</b>           | Councillor Tom McCann             |
| <b>Date JMB agreed report:</b>       | N/a                               |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                | Jon Winstanley                    |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>             | JPPC                              |

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### 1. Purpose of the Briefing

As agreed by West Berkshire Council's Executive on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021, an annual report would be presented to the JPPC detailing the activities of the Bracknell and West Berkshire Water Safety Partnership.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Following a tragic incident in March 2021, involving the loss of life of a young child in the Kennet and Avon Canal adjacent to Victoria Park in Newbury, West Berkshire Council Officers and representatives from the Canal and River Trust and emergency services came together to look at measures that could be implemented to prevent future loss of life from accidental drowning. A proposal from this group was the establishment of a Water Safety Partnership for West Berkshire. Following the initial annual report to the Joint Public Protection Committee in 2022 it was agreed that the Water Safety Partnership would cover both West Berkshire and Bracknell to align with the Public Protection Partnership.
- 2.2 On average, around 250 people lose their lives in accidental drownings in the UK every year, with hundreds more having near drowning experiences, sometimes suffering life-changing injuries. Children can be particularly at risk.
- 2.3 One of the striking characteristics of the data on accidental drownings is that a large proportion of victims did not leave home on the day they died intending to go into water of significant depth. Roughly 40% of deaths happen whilst people were out walking or running, in comparison to approx. 20% who lose their life whilst swimming. It shows the importance of everyone being aware of the risks posed by water. West Berkshire is home to a number of significant water courses and bodies, some of which extend through our urban areas, which can significantly increase the risk of accidental drowning.
- 2.4 The incident in March 2021 has emphasised the devastating impact water related tragedies can have on our communities. Through the Partnership key stakeholders have an opportunity to play a leading role in helping prevent future incidents of accidental drowning
- 2.5 The objectives of the partnership being to:

- Promote and develop water-safety education and initiatives within West Berkshire and Bracknell with particular emphasis on the most at-risk groups identified through incident data and local knowledge.
- Proactively promote public awareness of water-related risks and ensure a consistent message through campaigns and communications.
- Share best practice and resources across the district (and beyond) highlighting a multi-agency approach to water safety.
- To be the focus group in responding to water related incidents in West Berkshire.
- Work with partner organisations to gather and improve data involving water incidents in West Berkshire in order to inform a targeted approach to water safety.

2.6 Partnership member organisations include:

- WBC Service Director Environment (Chair).
- WBC Officers (Public Protection, Environment and Communities & Wellbeing).
- Bracknell Forest Council Officers.
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Canal and River Trust.
- Thames Valley Police.
- South Central Ambulance Service.
- National Health Service.
- Environment Agency.

2.7 The meeting has also been attended by representatives from Laura Farris' (MP) office and there are plans to invite representatives from other local unitary authorities as part of a knowledge sharing exercise.

### 3. Implications and Impact

| Implication             | Commentary   |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial:</b>       | None   |
| <b>Human Resource:</b>  | None   |
| <b>Legal:</b>           | None   |
| <b>Risk Management:</b> | An objective of the partnership is to reduce the risk of accidental deaths from water related incidents. |
| <b>Property:</b>        | None   |
| <b>Policy:</b>          | None   |

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Consultation and Engagement</b> | None |
|------------------------------------|------|

#### 4. Current Status

4.8 There has been no reported water related fatalities in West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest over the last 12-month period.

4.9 Points of note from throughout the year include:

- (a) A review into the case following the drowning of the young boy in Waterloo Meadows, Reading took place in February. Whilst outside of the area, learning and actions from the review was shared at the WSP meetings.
- (b) Pangbourne Meadows Public Spaces Protection Order came into operation during 2025 and this has resulted in a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour and associated water related incidents. RBFRS has however noted that there has been an increase in reports of antisocial behaviours and swimming at Purley Lock and the WSP will look at educational/promotion in this location.

4.10 Given the issues at Pangbourne Meadows and Purley Lock, water safety and awareness roadshows now include messaging around the Royal Life Saving Society UK's national campaign that encourages smart decision making whilst intoxicated around water (Don't Drink and Drown).

4.11 4 meetings of the Water Safety Partnership took place in 2025 and the following actions have been completed during that period:

- Terms of reference for the partnership have been updated.
- Further clearance work along the river corridor to the west of Newbury has been undertaken to remove willow branches.
- RBFRS hosted a Water Safety Day in Newbury in July in Victoria Park with throw line demonstration and training. This was attended by West Berkshire Council Countryside Officers who took part in the training.
- Water Safety Messaging has been incorporated into Emergency Planning's Heatwave Health Alerts and flood risk and preparedness comms.
- Further development of the PPP website as a resource for sharing information etc. [Water Safety Messages - Key Resources - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
- Annual inspection and maintenance of water safety cabinets at Pangbourne Meadows, Victoria Park Newbury and Northcroft Newbury.



*Northcroft Newbury*

- Cabinet features rescue buoy with rope, solar powered beacon, and keypad entry to prevent vandalism.
- Joint promotional activities around water safety week in May, drowning prevention week in June, summer water activities and promotional material around cold-water shock along with winter preparedness late Autumn.

## 5. Next Steps

5.1 Currently planned activities for 2026 include the following:

- [Little Explorers](#) being organised by the Canal and River Trust, date TBC.

Further engagement with youth groups to promote water safety especially during the summer months. Groups such as <https://togetherasone.org.uk/> [Don't die of cold water shock! Mellesa explains what you should do if ... | TikTok](#)

- Continuous monitoring and assessment of water related incidents.
- Comms/Events plan for the year currently being developed a draft of which can be seen in Appendix B.
- Liaison with suicide prevention group to look at Samaritans signs on appropriate bridges.
- Wild/Open Water Swimming coaching and instruction event for adults and children targeting popular areas.
- Monitoring the use of QR codes at key locations linking to water safety educational and safety messaging.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Although instigated as a result of a tragic event, there is a clear need for a multi-agency group to focus on water safety and reducing the risk of accidental drowning.
- 6.2 This group was effective in the initial response to the incident in March 2021, but also provides the longer-term opportunity for individual members to present ideas, initiatives, research and updates on their individual work on water safety.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Water Safety Partnership Terms of Reference.
- 7.2 Appendix B – Draft 2025 Comms Plan

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# West Berkshire Water Safety Partnership

## Terms of Reference

### Document History

| Document Revision | Date       | Reason for Change |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
| V3                | 02/05/2021 | Simplified        |
|                   |            |                   |
|                   |            |                   |

### Terms of Reference

**Name of Group:** West Berkshire Water Safety Partnership (known as “WBWSP”)

**Background:** The group initially met in April 2021 in response to an incident on the Kennet and Avon Canal in Newbury that involved the death of a small child. The purpose of the group was to look at preventative measures for that particular incident, however it soon became clear that appetite exists for a wider Water Safety Partnership across the District.

WBWSP

**Purpose:** The purpose of the WBWSP is to work towards prevention of accidental drowning deaths in West Berkshire by working in partnership to ensure consistent guidance for the safe enjoyment and management of activities in, on and around water.

**Aim:** The aim of the WBWSP is to work to improve the safety of persons from water risks in West Berkshire with the intention to reduce accidental drowning deaths of people who live, work and visit the District.

| Objectives |  |
|------------|--|
| 1.         | Improve fatality and incident data in West Berkshire by advocating Water Incident Database (“WAID”) and sharing WAID reports with partner organisations and local authorities.             |
| 2.         | Promote and develop water-safety education and initiatives within West Berkshire with particular emphasis on the most at risk groups identified through incident data and local knowledge. |
| 3.         | Proactively promote public awareness of water-related risks and ensure a consistent message through campaigns and communications.  |
| 4.         | Sharing best practice and resources across the District highlighting a multi-agency approach to water safety.  |
| 5.         | To be the focus group in responding to water related incidents in West Berkshire.  |

## **Structure**

All organisations (“members”) of the WBWSP sit on the **Main Group**. This group provides the opportunity for individual members to present ideas, initiatives, research and updates on their individual work. The main group includes a Chair, Vice Chair and administrative support.

In addition to this main group, **subgroups** may be established to develop and deliver specific objectives. These subgroups will usually consist of members of the main group but may also include additional members as required.

The Chair and Vice Chair will rotate amongst the Partnership Members and are elected by the main group every 24 months at the April meeting.

The admin support for the group is provided by the current Chair’s organisation or another as agreed.

## **Membership**

Each member shall be represented by a nominated representatives (or such replacement as notified to the Chair) who shall have responsibility to contribute to the WBWSP.

All invitations for new members to the WBWSP should go through the Chair.

All potential members for any WBWSP will be approved by the main group.

In order to retain full membership, each organisation is expected to attend at least two meetings in a 12 month period.

An organisation must be a full member of the WBWSP to lead a subgroup.

If it is not possible to attend the WBWSP meetings, updates can be sent to the Chair to be included in the main meeting.

Members of the WBWSP can also invite guests to a WBWSP meeting by letting the Chair know.

## **Role of members (through nominated representative)**

The role of the members of the WBWSP includes:

- The attendance of meetings
- Providing updates of their own organisations (where appropriate)
- To be an advocate for the WBWSP and drowning prevention
- To contribute to the outputs of the WBWSP

## **Role of The Chair**

The role of the Chair of the WBWSP includes:

- To provide leadership
- Lead, organise and conduct the WBWSP meeting, including holding a casting vote
- To ensure the WBWSP functions properly.
- To ensure the WBWSP is managed effectively.
- To represent the WBWSP as its figurehead
- Ensure the terms of reference are followed
- Ensure an annual report is submitted to the Leader’s Office West Berkshire Council for onward submission to the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board, and (if applicable) represent the WBWSP at any West Berkshire Council committee.

## **Accountability/Governance**

The WBWSP will report to the Joint Public Protection Committee as part of the Public Protection Partnership.

### **Media Protocols**

All members of the WBWSP are encouraged to have a comms representative named and have a responsibility in the promotion of the work of the WBWSP.

All WBWSP members are asked to promote the use of the WBWSP brand where appropriate and use the WBWSP logo.

The members agree they shall not be permitted to use the other members Intellectual Property (including logo's) unless prior written consent of the member is provided. Such consent shall grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, terminable licence to use the other members Intellectual Property for the purposes agreed in this WBWSP or meetings.

All press releases and press statements will be agreed by all members of the WBWSP with the Chair (or if unavailable, the Vice Chair) of the WBWSP responsible for final approval.

### **Review**

This document and the WBWSP will be reviewed annually for continuous improvement. Any changes which would warrant an early review should go through the Chair where the issue will be raised at the next WBWSP meeting. If deemed appropriate, a review will take place.

### **Working Methods**

The WBWSP main group meets quarterly.

Subgroups may be created to manage and prioritise individual objectives or specific areas to support the purpose of the WBWSP. These subgroups must be approved by the main group before creation.

### **Meetings**

The WBWSP will meet formally every quarter (in person or via video conferencing); additional meetings being called as required.

All WBWSP meeting minutes will be produced following the meeting and shared with the partnership. At the following meeting the minutes will be agreed before being made available on the WBC website.

Any items that members wish to be placed on the agenda should be sent to the Chair 14 days in advance of the meeting.

The notice of a meeting with agenda and any accompanying papers shall be circulated at least 7 days in advance.

Agendas for meetings will be formed via:

- Incident information
- Items submitted by member organisations through the Chair
- Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings
- Correspondence received

All agendas should follow a consistent framework including:

- Welcome

- Minutes from previous meetings, accuracy and matters arising
- Review of Outstanding WBWSP Actions
- Review of Incidents since previous meeting.
- Agenda items
- AoB
- Date and Time of next meeting

In the absence of the Chair at a meeting, the Vice Chair will take responsibility for the group. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable, the meeting will be postponed until an appropriate time.

### **Sharing of information**

All minutes, and information regarding the group will be publicly accessible through the webpage which is located at westberks?? Hosted by WBC

### **Correspondence**

The WBWSP webpage will be maintained and updated by WBC. Members are encouraged to provide resources and information for the website.

### **Data Access**

The WBWSP agrees to only use WAID data provided by The Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents (“RoSPA”) and WBWSP members.

### **Finances**

Funding for the WBWSP will be provided through agreement at the WBWSP meetings with payment for campaigns, media and running costs being direct from partners. No WBWSP bank account will be established and as such financial responsibility will not be a requirement of the WBWSP but for individual partners.

### **Contingency Measures**

Events when contingency arrangements come into force:

- Chair and/or Vice Chair incapacitated, unable to perform normal duties or resign

Contingency arrangements: Chair and/or Vice Chair unable to honour duties or resign:

- The Chair/Vice Chair will undertake both roles until the Chair/Vice Chair is able to resume duties or, if an absence of more than 6 months is expected a new Chair/Vice Chair is elected at the next WBWSP meeting.

Contingency arrangements Chair and Vice Chair unable to honour duties or resign:

The remaining members of the WBWSP will call a meeting at the earliest opportunity and elect a new Chair and Vice Chair

### **General Provisions**

This WBWSP does not constitute or infer any contract or binding agreement on or between the members.

Nothing in this WBWSP is intended to, or shall be deemed to, establish any partnership or joint venture between the members, constitute either member as the agent of another member, nor authorise any of the members to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other members.

This WBWSP shall remain in effect until terminated by all members voting by agreement.

The members intend that any intellectual property rights created in the course of this WBWSP shall vest in the member whose employee created them.

Except as otherwise provided, the members shall each bear their own costs and expenses (along with any liabilities) incurred in complying with their obligations under this WBWSP.

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## Event Calendar 2026

| Date | Title   | Weblink   |
|------|---|---|
|      | <p><b>Little Explorers</b></p> <p>Free activities and resources suitable for the under 5s, aimed at helping children stay safe near water. You can use these at home or in nursery.</p>   | <p><a href="https://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/education/free-primary-school-trips-to-your-local-waterway">Canal &amp; River Trust Education - free primary school trips to your local waterway.   Canal &amp; River Trust (canalrivertrust.org.uk)</a></p> |
|      | <p><b>Summer Water Safety</b></p> <p>To enjoy the water safely and make the right call.</p>   | <p><a href="https://www.rlss.org.uk/summer-water-safety">Summer Water Safety   Royal Life Saving Society UK ( RLSS UK )</a></p>   |
|      | <p><b>Be Water Aware</b></p> <p>The aim of Be Water Aware is to encourage people to spend time in and around water safely. The campaign week runs in April, but messaging can be used throughout the year. The messaging supports the aims and objectives of the <a href="#">Strategy   National Water Safety Forum</a> and that of other member organisations of the National Water Safety Forum. By aligning our messaging and supporting a calendar of campaigns, we aim to reduce the number of accidental drownings in the UK.</p> | <p><a href="#">Be Water Aware - NFCC</a></p>  |

|              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
|              | <p><b>National Safe Boating Week</b></p> <p>National Safe Boating Week will be held from May 18-24, 2024, reminding all boaters to brush up on boating safety skills and prepare for the boating season</p>  | <p><a href="#">National Safe Boating Week Press Release - Safe Boating Campaign</a></p> |
| 17 May 2026  | <b>Victoria Park Family Day – Victoria Park, Newbury</b>   |   |
| 13 June 2026 | <b>Pangbourne Fete – Pangbourne Meadows</b>  |   |
|              | <p><b>Drowning Prevention Week (DPW)</b></p> <p>Drowning Prevention Week (DPW) is our biggest campaign of the year, targeting families, carers, teachers and instructors of children aged five to fifteen years old with the aim of educating them about water safety.</p> | <p><a href="#">Royal Life Saving Society UK's Drowning Prevention Week</a></p>          |
| 28 June 2026 | <b>Thatcham Family Fun Day – Henwick Worthy Sports Field, Thatcham</b>   |   |
| 27 Aug 2026  | <b>Kidsfest - Thatcham Broadway</b>  |   |
| TBC          | <b>TVP Open Day - Sulhamstead</b>  |   |
|              | <p><b>Don't Drink and Drown Freshers</b></p> <p>Don't Drink and Drown is the Royal Life Saving Society UK's national campaign that encourages smart decision making whilst intoxicated around water.</p>   | <p><a href="#">Don't Drink and Drown   Royal Life Saving Society UK ( RLSS UK )</a></p> |
|              | <p><b>Open Water Swimming Instruction event:</b></p> <p>For adults and children's sessions</p>   | <p><a href="#">Home of Open Water Swimming   Swim England</a></p>                       |
|              | <p><b>Ice Safety Message</b></p> <p>Some useful tips to keep safe this winter and follow the Water Safety Code.</p>  | <p><a href="#">Winter Water Safety   Royal Life Saving Society UK ( RLSS UK )</a></p>   |
|              |  |   |