

**DRAFT**

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, 13 DECEMBER 2021**

**Councillors Present:** Graham Bridgman (Substitute) (In place of Hilary Cole), John Harrison (Chairman), Rick Jones, Barrie Patman and Bill Soane

**Councillors Present Remotely:** John Porter

**Also Present:** Paul Anstey (Head of Public Protection and Culture), Moira Fraser (Principal Officer - Policy & Governance), Toby Green (Lead Officer - Training and Development), Sean Murphy (Public Protection Manager), Eric Owens (Service Director - Development & Regulation) and Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer – Democratic Services & Scrutiny).

**Apologies for absence:** Councillor Hilary Cole

**PART I**

**10 Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 November 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**11 Outstanding Actions from Previous Meetings**

It was noted that Sean Murphy had provided further information on air quality around the M4 smart motorway as requested by Councillor Bill Soane.

**12 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**13 Notice of Public Speaking and Questions**

No public questions were received.

**14 Forward Plan**

Councillor Graham Bridgman sought clarification about the dates for Items 3, 11 and 23. Sean Murphy undertook to review the items and confirm the dates for the Committee.

Members were asked to note that a response to the Bracknell Air Quality Status Report was still awaited from Defra.

**15 PPP Delivery Plan Update (JPPC4136)**

Sean Murphy presented the PPP Delivery Plan Update (Agenda Item 7). The Committee had received the strategic assessment for the service in June 2021, which set out local priorities - for Wokingham, these were only set up to the end of March as part of the Shared Service. The Delivery Plan provided some detail about how those priorities would be delivered. The Service reflected the National Intelligence Model, which was based on:

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 13 DECEMBER 2021 - MINUTES

prevention; intelligence gathering; and enforcement. Indicators were provided for each of the priorities set out in the Service Plan together with proposals for how these would be delivered. Although this was a high level plan, if it was approved, each aspect would be supported by a more detailed project delivery plan. It was highlighted that Covid Recovery was not included within the Delivery Plan, but it was referenced in the report. Members were asked to note that an additional priority had been added around Health and Safety at Work. Communications were seen as important and a running theme throughout the document. It was stressed that implementation of the Delivery Plan would be contingent upon the Service being able to return to business as usual activities.

The Chairman noted there were errors in the covering report relating to the equalities, environmental and health impacts – these should be positive rather than negative.

Councillor Rick Jones sought clarification about the difference between themes, priorities and projects. Sean Murphy explained that there were both horizontal and vertical priorities listed. Cross-cutting priorities included: e-crime; vulnerable adults and children; climate change; safer streets; and safeguarding. He noted that when the inter-authority agreement had been set up in 2017, a number of starting priorities had been agreed, which were the themes. These were fed into the priorities, and in turn to the projects, which were listed under each of the priorities. Each project would have its own delivery plan and objectives.

Councillor John Porter asked if action on overweight vehicles would extend to 7.5 and 3.5 tonne vehicles and Transit vans, and how these would be weighed. Sean Murphy explained that operations were targeted at all goods vehicles. Portable weigh-pads belonging to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency had been used on a recent operation, but usually, public weighbridges would be used and these were tested for accuracy on a regular basis. Action was also taken to enforce weight restrictions.

Councillor Porter asked whether all areas of Bracknell Forest, Wokingham Borough and West Berkshire could be made No Cold Calling Zones to protect vulnerable residents. Sean Murphy explained that cold calling was legal, so there needed to be clear reasons for any new restrictions (e.g. reported incidents), and such areas needed to be clearly defined. Local residents had to be surveyed on any proposal and new zones were usually created where at least two thirds of residents were in favour. Toby Green noted that there were quite a few No Cold Calling Zones in the PPP area, which had been instigated following requests from the Police and / or complaints from residents. These zones tended to have significant numbers of elderly / vulnerable residents. Zones could be part of a road, a full road, or several roads. These were denoted by signs and residents were given stickers they could display in their windows. It was noted that the last criminal action on cold calling was taken against a double glazing company, which had been charged with aggressive practices. Councillor Porter asked if the Zones were listed on the PPP website. Toby Green explained that each Zone had signs at each end and each house had a sticker and he thought that Zones were also listed on the PPP website.

Councillor Porter asked about enforcement against breeders who illegally clipped dogs' ears. Sean Murphy explained that this was a breach of the Animal Welfare Act and the PPP was responsible for enforcing this and could take enforcement against licensed / unlicensed breeders in the area. However, the RSPCA normally handed enforcement in relation to pets.

Councillor Graham Bridgman highlighted an error in the Delivery Plan relating to the second bullet point under Safer Streets on page 9. He also highlighted that the Domestic Abuse Board had suggested private housing rental agreements should be worded to

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 13 DECEMBER 2021 - MINUTES

exclude tenants if there was domestic violence, and the PPP may wish to consider this as part of its Delivery Plan. Furthermore, he highlighted that West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading were in the process of adopting the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and there were some common themes such as safeguarding, vulnerable adults and children, childhood obesity, alcohol and tobacco consumption, etc. He suggested that the PPP should work closely with Public Health colleagues to address these issues. Sean Murphy confirmed that he was aware of the content of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and action was already underway to address many of these issues in terms of education and enforcement. He stated that in Bracknell, the PPP was looking to expand its Public Health education remit and discussions had taken place with the Director of Public Health for Berkshire East.

Sean Murphy highlighted that the Delivery Plan only applied to Wokingham until 31 March. He confirmed that he had spoken to colleagues at Wokingham about how it would apply to services such as Trading Standards going forward, and he reassured Members that there would be a smooth transition.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the plan subject to the proposed corrections.

### 16 Training and Development Plan (JPPC4139)

Toby Green presented the Training and Development Plan (Agenda Item 8). He noted that the role of regulatory services was extensive with hundreds of pieces of legislation to be enforced. Also, officers needed to carry out enforcement professionally and competently and in accordance with relevant standards and codes of practice. Furthermore, all staff needed to be aware of issues such as modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and county lines. Officers needed the best quality training to deliver the best quality service. He highlighted problems with recruitment of officers, which had been addressed by developing staff, including apprentices. The new Training and Development Plan sought to streamline and standardise training, while leaving flexibility to respond to changes in workload.

Councillor Graham Bridgman suggested that all abbreviations should be defined within the Plan (e.g. GRT defined as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller).

Councillor Rick Jones agreed that the Committee wanted skilled and fulfilled officers and training was vital to achieving this. He noted that the recommendation asked the Committee to agree the training plan and associated budget, but he could not find any budget statement other than a reference to £300 per head. Sean Murphy confirmed that this was the only reference and that training and development would have been covered when the budget was set for the service as a whole. He suggested that the Committee should be asked to approve the plan and to recognise the proposed spend per head.

Councillor Bridgman noted that the Committee did not have the powers to set budgets, but merely made recommendations to each of the respective Councils. Sean Murphy agreed and confirmed that the proposed budget was in the process of being approved by each of the Councils.

Sean Murphy noted that the plan sought to capture cross-cutting skills and soft skills. He highlighted that many of the staff had been developed by the service, with a steady stream of apprentices. Councillor Jones agreed and recognised the value of soft skills.

Councillor Bill Soane asked if Wokingham would be able to buy into training as part of the service in the future. Sean Murphy noted that the PPP already worked with other local authorities on training and indicated that he would have discussions with officers at

## **JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 13 DECEMBER 2021 - MINUTES**

Wokingham about future joint working on training and would report back to Councillor Soane.

The Chairman commended the report and the concept of developing staff in the context of a difficult job market, and suggested that this was good for the service and for staff.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the Training and Development Plan.

### **17 Public Protection Partnership Q2 2021/22 Performance Report (JPPC4070)**

Sean Murphy presented the Quarter 2 2021/22 Performance Report (Agenda Item 9). It was structured to provide updates on cross-cutting issues around finance, HR / staffing, ICT, property, etc, then moved onto a team-by-team narrative, before providing an update on Covid activity. He noted that there had been recent changes to Covid restrictions, which were not reflected in the report, and this would involve additional work with event organisers and venues, as well as contact tracing. In addition to the narrative and examples of activities undertaken, the report also included a list of licensing hearings and legal actions.

Moira Fraser confirmed that the Service Director was in the process of reviewing measures of volume and performance indicators and a report would be brought to the Committee in March.

Sean Murphy concluded by highlighting the communications summary, which included some examples produced by the service, and details of website usage, which was receiving up to 6,000 visits per month.

The Chairman noted that the Plan B measures included Covid passes for certain venues and asked if this would result in significant additional work for the service. Sean Murphy confirmed that the regulations had only just been published and work was underway to identify affected venues and events. He noted that thresholds included 4,000 people standing, but some events were dynamic with throughput of people, which made it difficult to determine if a venue reached this threshold. Also, clubs and other venues may be affected if they had a dancefloor that was open beyond a certain time. He stated that the PPP would have enforcement responsibilities for the new restrictions.

Councillor Graham Bridgman indicated that he had been closely involved in the Covid response and that Sean Murphy had kept the Local Outbreak Engagement Board updated on the work of the PPP. He recognised the massive additional work that the service had been required to undertake in response to the pandemic. He noted that the report's recommendations included consideration of actions of areas of improvement, and asked what these were. Sean Murphy thanked Councillor Bridgman and commended the work of the team as a whole. He invited Members to highlight any actions that they felt to be missing or areas where more focus was needed.

Councillor Rick Jones thanked the service for their work. He had been impressed by the newsletters and had passed these onto residents. These had helped to make the service more visible to residents and feedback had been very positive. Sean Murphy indicated that there had been investment in communications and there was a lead officer for community engagement. He stressed the importance of communicating what the service did, and of getting intelligence from members of the public about what was concerning them.

Moira Fraser highlighted that the service was working with parish councils to explain to them about the work of the PPP.

## JOINT PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 13 DECEMBER 2021 - MINUTES

The Chairman also expressed his thanks to officers who had stepped up activity in response to the pandemic, and proposed to amend the report's recommendation such that the PPP be formally commended for the work that they had done.

Councillor Bridgman proposed that no further improvements were needed so the second recommendation should not apply.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the 2021/22 Q2 performance for the Public Protection Service.
- Note the role the Public Protection Service are playing across the Councils with respect to Covid-19 response.
- Commend the staff of the Public Protection Partnership for work that they have undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 18 **PPP Approach to Surveillance (JPPC4071 and JPPC4072)**

Paul Anstey presented the report on the PPP Approach to Surveillance (Agenda Item 10). The report presented some practical examples of how certain pieces of legislation were being implemented and it gave an overview of some of the implications and sensitivities that needed to be managed. The PPP was regulated on how it managed information collected as part of its surveillance powers. The service also had to interact with the judicial system to gain certain permissions. The report set out how the appropriate checks and balances were made in relation to any information that the PPP held. He highlighted developments in relation to body-cams that were used in relation to execution of warrants and how these were used to protect staff.

The Chairman praised the clarity and usefulness of the report in bringing Members up to date with surveillance issues.

This item was for information only and Members were asked to note the report.

### 19 **Date of the Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would be on 14 March 2022 in Wokingham Borough Council.

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

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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

This page is intentionally left blank