
Public Protection Partnership Service Update and Q1 Report for 2023/24

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	2 October 2023
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Lee Dillon
Date JMB agreed report:	11 September 2023
Report Author:	Sean Murphy
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC4251

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 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 first quarter of 2023/24.

2. Recommendations

The Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTES** the 2023/24 Q1 performance for the Public Protection Service.
- 2.2 **NOTES** the Service Update since the last meeting.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>The service is currently predicting an end of year underspend of around £200K. This has arisen due to a number of factors including the carry-forward of 2022/23 underspend and vacancies in year.</p> <p>As both councils have in-year pressures and the outturn is reviewed monthly with a view to allocating any under-spend to mitigate in year pressures being faced by the partners the expected end of year outturn is therefore zero.</p> <p>The service has a predicted an income shortfall of £140K in 2023/24. This is also being mitigated by vacancies in licensing and other areas of the service combined with reduced spend on agency staff.</p> <p>West Berkshire currently has strict controls in place where expenditure is incurred and is focused on the delivery of essential services only and these include restrictions on agency spend, recruitment and overtime.</p>

<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>Clearly the combination of vacancies and restrictions on the use of agency staff has the risk of increasing pressure on existing staff. We are constantly reviewing the service to ensure that resource is targeted in high priority areas and areas where there is greater risk of detriment to residents. There is some engagement of agency staff, but this is linked primarily to grant funding where there is not the resource to conduct the work e.g., level 3 investigation work and private sector housing work.</p> <p>A great deal of effort has gone into re-balancing the service through the delivery of a workforce strategy focussed on a 'grow our own' ethos by investing in apprenticeships, post graduate professional qualifications and post-entry training for both new and existing officers. This workforce strategy is underpinned by the Training and Development Plan.</p> <p>We have had some success in terms of recruitment to business-critical areas and these are set out in the body of this report.</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) charges the Joint Public Protection Committee with the responsibility to oversee service delivery and performance including financial performance. This report discharges this responsibility.</p> <p>Following a recommendation that was made at the 12 June 2023 meeting the necessary constitutional processes (through each Council and Executive) have been completed with the effect of increasing the membership from two to three Elected Members from each partner authority. These changes will be reflected in the IAA.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>We will continue to manage risk in line with the prevailing situation and corporate policies. The service maintains both a strategic and operational risk register.</p> <p>The strategic risk register is regularly scrutinised by the Joint Management Board (JMB) which meets fortnightly. The JMB considers the red risk action plans at these meetings.</p> <p>The operational risk register is routinely monitored by the Principal Policy Officer Group with concerns being escalated to the Joint Management Team.</p> <p>The first critical risk currently facing the service is the failure to retain or recruit business critical staff which would result in the Service being unable to fulfil our statutory obligations. This risk is being managed through the carefully executed workforce strategy.</p>

	The second critical issue is budget in respect of the loss of income and the legacy finance issues arising from the decision by Wokingham BC to leave the shared service.			
Property:	There are no direct property implications arising from this report although it is to be noted that the 'Transformation Programme' at West Berkshire is looking at rationalising the use of the estate. This may have an impact on the PPP use of Theale Gateway.			
Policy:	<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 by setting out the current performance levels and the approach to ongoing service recovery.</p> <p>The revised service priorities were agreed at the March 2023 JPPC meeting. The Delivery Plan 2023 to 2025 will be agreed at the December 2023 JPPC meeting which will assist with monitoring progress against the priorities whilst providing context about how the priorities are being delivered on a day-to-day basis.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		No implications
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		No implications
Environmental Impact:	✓			It is anticipated that the revised ways of working will continue to deliver reductions in travel for the team.

			In addition one of the aims of the Partnership is to deliver better outcomes, including environmental ones, for people living and working in Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire
Health Impact:	✓		The proposals create no direct health impacts on staff. They do however set out progress against community-based health protection measures and initiatives.
ICT or Digital Services Impact:	✓		<p>The use of ICT on service delivery has been transformational. Telephone conferencing, MS Teams and Zoom continue to be employed in the day today running of the service.</p> <p>The JPPC will continue to meet in accordance with the decisions made by West Berkshire Council, as the host authority, about meeting arrangements. The Licensing Committees will be conducted under the meeting arrangements of their individual authorities.</p> <p>The Service will continue to make use of the website, and social media platforms to improve the customer journey and keep residents and businesses informed.</p>
PPP Priorities :	✓		<p>This information sets out how the Service has maximised the use of resources to deliver against all the JPPC priorities as set out below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alcohol and Tobacco Harm Reduction 2. Animal Welfare 3. Cost of Living 4. Environmental Protection 5. Food Safety and Standards 6. Health and Safety Enforcement 7. Housing Standards in the Private Rental Sector 8. Impact of Nuisance on Residents and Communities 9. Improved Air Quality 10. Licensing 11. Nutrition and Childhood Obesity 12. Service Improvement 13. Tackling Fraud 14. Unsafe Consumer Goods
Data Impact:		✓	None

Consultation and Engagement:	There is regular engagement with staff as well as senior officer and Member briefings in each of the authorities that form the PPP.
Other Options Considered:	None. It is a requirement of the IAA to report on the performance of the service.

4. Constitutional and Policy Position

- 4.1 At its meeting in June 2023 the Committee resolved to request that the partner Councils consider amending the Inter-Authority Agreement and Terms of Reference of the Committee to expand the membership to three Members from each Council. This has now been considered by both Council and Executive in Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire and consequently two new Members have been nominated, namely, Councillor Nick Allen for Bracknell Forest and Councillor Howard Woollaston for West Berkshire. West Berkshire Council's Constitution has been amended to reflect these changes.
- 4.2 The Committee is mandated by the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) to keep under review the performance and activity of the Public Protection Service including the financial performance and outputs of the service. Throughout the year the Committee receives updates on aspects of performance and any emerging issues, achievements, and priorities. This report also sets out progress and risks in key strategic areas of the business i.e., Finance, HR, ICT, Property and Legal.
- 4.3 The summarised Quarter 1 (April to June) performance data is set out in **Appendix A** to the report. Some data is unavailable due to ongoing issues with the systems transition but will be provided in December.

5. Finances and Resources

- 5.4 As at the 31st August 2023 the Service is reporting a zero outturn which includes management of an estimated £140K shortfall in income which has arisen primarily in the licensing service.
- 5.5 The service continues to seek to access grant funding. In the year to date the service has made successful grant funding applications exceeding £300K for level 2 and 3 investigations. These grants pay for expert witnesses, some staff costs, agency costs and legal costs. We are also accessing a range of public health funding relating to housing standards and links to health, tobacco and alcohol control including the development of Community Alcohol Partnerships. Other grant funding sources relate to supporting scam (fraud) victims with interventions to reduce the risk of harm and detriment. Some examples of this work can be found elsewhere in this report and on this agenda.
- 5.6 The 2024/25 revenue budget and fees and charges proposals are the subject of a separate report to be found on this agenda.

6. Customer Satisfaction Rates, FOI's etc.

- 6.1 The Service has been looking at several ways to improve data capture on customer satisfaction for businesses and residents interacting with the service. All

documentation now issued by the service has a QR code that links to a short on-line survey.

- 6.2 During Q1 87% of respondents to these surveys confirmed that that they were fairly, very or exceptionally satisfied with the service that they had received.
- 6.3 During Q1 the team dealt with a total of 89* Freedom of Information requests which took around sixty hours to process. The number of requests increased by around 20% when compared to the same period in 2022/23 where 74 Fols were processed. The team also processed 40 enquiries from Councillors and the local MPs. This represented a significant increase when compared to the 14 (185% increase) that were dealt with in Quarter 1 of the previous year.
- 6.4 Seven service complaints were received. This is the same number of complaints processed during the same period of 2022/23. This amounts to 0.17% of the total number of service requests that were received.
- 6.5 Quarter 1 Data for Past 4 years (Wokingham Data Removed for Comparator Purposes):

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Fols	63 (46 Hrs)	79 (64 hrs)	74 (62 hrs)	86 (59 hrs)
MP/Cllr Enquiries	17	32	13	40
Complaints	9	13	7	7

7. Human Resources:

- Since the last meeting of the JPPC we have successfully recruited to two long standing vacancies in the Investigations Team. The two experienced ex-detectives will support trading standards colleagues on complex fraud and unfair trading matters as well as assisting in other areas of investigations across the service.
- The Community and Trading Standards Team have recruited a part time Trading Standards Officer. A more recent advertisement for Trading Standards Officers received no suitable applications.
- In the Housing Team we have recruited a Graduate Environmental Health Officer to a long standing EHO vacancy.
- In Licensing, where we have been running with significant vacancies for a protracted period, we have recruited 2.6 FTE Licensing Officers one of which has started and two start in October. This will significantly reduce our reliance on agency staff in this area.

7.1 The key training and development updates are:

- A whole service meeting was held on the 19 September 2023 based around a children and young people safeguarding theme. The Service has four additional areas of mandatory training which includes safeguarding and this training tends to be delivered at the whole service meetings.
- A series of bespoke training sessions around personal safety were arranged for staff and delivered by West Berkshire Council's Health and Safety Advisor.
- Our mediation service (RESOLVE) has delivered a series of conflict resolution training courses for frontline officers.

- Two existing Trading Standards colleagues have commenced their Level 6 Trading Standards Apprenticeship funded through the Apprenticeship Levy.
- We have successfully, tendered for and awarded a contract to deliver the Level 6 Environment Health Apprenticeship and one officer has now commenced the training.
- Two Senior Environmental Control Officers will shortly commence post graduate Environmental Health qualifications.
- Pradip Randeria – Environmental Control Officer has completed his CIEH HHSRS Assessment (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) which means he is now qualified to carry out HHSRS assessments at properties.
- John Stowe - Environmental Health Officers has completed his BTEC Level 7 Advanced Professional Certification in Investigative Practice.
- One of our Environment Control Officers completed a re-accreditation in Private Water Supply inspection works.
- Allyson Bartram – Trading Standards Officer and Accredited Financial Investigator received her final accreditation by the National Crime Agency to conduct confiscation investigations under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
- Five colleagues are studying for a CILEX qualification on criminal disclosure.

8. ICT

- 8.1 The implementation of the 'single system' for PPP is still presenting challenges. Many aspects of the system are now functioning well however, there are a range of issues with respect to the licensing elements of the system.
- 8.2 The transfer of the Wokingham Trading Standards data was completed successfully and all three connectors to the Citizens Advice Consumer portal are now functioning correctly.
- 8.3 The legacy systems in both West Berkshire and Bracknell are in the process of being replaced and we are working with the relevant teams to ensure that any historical records that need to be kept by the authorities are identified and retained in an appropriate form.

9. Property

- 9.1 The key property highlights are as follows:
- West Berkshire is conducting a review of the use its estate as part of the ongoing transformation programme. As part of that review the use of Theale Gateway is being considered.
 - Property (evidence) storage is also being considered with a long-term demand for increased storage capacity particularly around larger-scale seizures of counterfeit goods.

10. Operational Delivery – Measures of Volume

- 10.1 The key measures of volume data are set out in Appendix A to this report and the key highlights in terms of team activity is set out below.

11. Communication and Engagement

11.1 Since the last report to Committee:

- Officers have dealt with four press enquiries and the PPP has been mentioned in numerous online articles and multiple print articles. This has also included national press coverage following a recent court case.
- Officers have issued six press releases and conducted one radio interview in May on BBC Radio Berkshire relating to - iSpooof fraud and other banking scams.

Target	2022/2023 Outturn	Q1
Facebook – No of New Followers *	265	47
Facebook – No of Posts	358	101
Twitter – No of New Followers	29	0
Twitter – No of Tweets	311	58
Website – No of Visits	88,872	22307
Website – No of Articles	110	15

11.2 In line with the communication strategy we have sought verification to join the NextDoor platform which we feel would be a very useful communication route from many aspects of our work – especially around scams, fraud, rogue trader activity as well as community matters such as housing, dog fouling and enviro crime.

11.3 During Q1 Year the service worked with colleagues from Thames Valley Police and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to support Water Safety Partnership events as set out below:

- Sunday, 21st May Victoria Park, Newbury
- Saturday, 10th June Pangbourne Meadows, Pangbourne

11.4 Further events attended in Q2 as follows:

- 26th July – Warfield Family Fun Day
- 10th August – Winkfield Family Fun Day
- 24th August – Binfield Family Fun Day

11.5 Officers ran alcohol harm reduction sessions at the icollege during the last week of June and sessions on vaping at St Bartholomew’s School and Denefield School.

11.6 Offices finalised their fifteenth [PHSE4You podcast](#) towards the end of June which focussed on money including the cost of living crisis and the local help and support of groups such as Loose Ends, The Soup Kitchen, The Community Larder and The Food Bank, as well as assistance offered by West Berkshire Council. This series of podcasts cover a range of subjects including vaping, mental health, alcohol, sleep and nutrition which are used to assist with personal, social, health and economic

(PHSE) education in our schools. These podcasts are designed for school and wider viewing.

- 11.7 The annual schools attitudinal survey (smoking and drinking patterns among young people) was completed on the 20th July. The outcome of the survey report was provided to schools and tobacco control partners in August and is being added to our PPP website.
- 11.8 At the end of Q1 we had 19 amateur clubs signed up to the Smokefree Sidelines project and the interim report was presented to the Tobacco Control Alliance at their June quarterly meeting.
- 11.9 We now have around 100 larder users at the Thatcham Community Larder which meets on a Wednesday afternoon. You can read more about the larder on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/391249158661742>
- 11.10 The Communications Lead at PPP continues to work closely with West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest communication teams and liaises with them on a regular basis regarding our campaigns. For example, the Water Safety Partnership in West Berkshire and Bracknell and the anti-fly tipping campaigns in Bracknell Forest. We also share our press releases for their distribution, as well as both continuing to share relevant posts on each other's social media platforms.

12. Community and Trading Standards (including Customer Services)

- 12.1 The following is a summary of some of the work undertaken by the Community and Trading Standards Team:
- Both Trading Standards Officers and Community Environmental Health Officers continue to react to 'business as usual' (BaU) service complaints, as well as planned work. The number of service requests are set out in the performance update at **Appendix A**.
 - Of note, officers have dealt with a high number (247) of abandoned vehicles reports in Bracknell Forest during Q1. The vast majority of which were not actually abandoned due to having MoT and/or taxation and not being parked for any significant length of time. For those that were abandoned, officers worked with partners to remove them. We are now looking at how to improve reporting and awareness raising to reduce the number of reports where vehicles are not abandoned.
 - Although, not the statutory undertaker, officers used mediation skills in seeking a satisfactory public health resolution working with Thames Water over a flooding/sewerage matter in the Sandhurst area.
 - Several statutory notices have been issued on a range of issues including pest control enforcement, domestic noise nuisance and preventative public health works on filthy premises.
 - Occasionally, cases between disputing neighbours require a form of [mediation](#) where enforcement is not an appropriate course of action to resolve the issue. During Q1, nine cases have been referred to our independent mediation

service, two of which have been closed successfully with mutual agreements in place, and the remaining seven continue in positive dialogue.

- Quarter 1 was relatively quiet for abandoned dogs, but as the service moves into quarter 2, there appears to be an increase in both stray dogs, and (dangerous) stray dogs which are unsuitable for rehoming.
- The Animal Warden Service was recently re-awarded the prestigious Platinum RSPCA paw print award. [PPP Animal Warden Team celebrates another year of been awarded a prestigious RSPCA PawPrints award - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk)
- A long-standing high hedge dispute has finally been resolved, with the works eventually being carried out by the local authority in default, and full costs to the Council recovered.
- Food standards and animal feed inspection work continues, and officers are in the process of familiarisation and adapting to transitional arrangements for the new food delivery model expected to be fully in place by 31st March 2025. Grants have been sought to support farm animal feed inspection and sampling work as part of the controls to protect the food chain.
- The sampling programme report for 2022/23 has now been fully evaluated and results from the appointed Public Analyst have all been confirmed and will be produced in the annual food and feed plan to be considered by JMB. Areas where concerns were identified included undeclared milk in drinks where the officer had indicated that had an allergy to milk when ordered and undeclared allergens in take-away meat products. Follow up action on all unsatisfactory composition and labelling was taken to bring the businesses into compliance through advice.
- Officers investigated eighteen fly tipping incidents in the Bracknell Forest area where evidence was found. Thirteen fixed penalty notices were issued. There continues to be a number of matters at investigation / prosecution stage.
- Consideration is now being given to increasing the fixed penalty levels for waste offences including illegal depositing (fly-tipping) and duty of care offences. A report will be considered by the Executive Member at Bracknell Forest Council in the near future.
- In addition to BaU, Trading Standards Officers were busy preparing and delivering a large-scale test purchase and seizure exercise for illegal vaping products. This included building the correct intelligence picture, followed by test purchasing, visits, seizure of suspect non-compliant product and consideration of the most appropriate courses of actions and follow-up for formal interviews and evidence gathering. Currently, the failure rate is around 22% of those premises visited across PPP (50), with varying degrees of volumes seized.
- The service has been awarded a government grant to look at compliance issues with the on-line sale of vaping products.
- A significant amount of work has been undertaken to support health harm reduction. These include school presentations and guidance on the unknown

risks of vaping by young and older children. We also work with Public Health colleagues and the NHS in supporting smoking prevalence in health settings. We continue to deliver responsible retailer training, auditing challenge 25 and working with the Football Association to reduce smoking by adults when spectating at children's football matches.

- The service continues to support the most vulnerable through its management of the [support with confidence scheme](#), supporting users of the community larder with advice on subjects such as housing conditions, debt management, rogue traders, healthy eating, illegal money lenders, fraud, and scam prevention work as well as victim support. The West Berkshire and Wokingham Support with Confidence Scheme recently celebrated its 200th member. [Major milestone for Support with Confidence Scheme - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](#)

13. Commercial (Food Safety and Health and Safety)

- 13.1 One of the main focuses for the team this year will be to complete the food hygiene inspections of food businesses that are due for a risk-based audit. As has been previously documented, the inspection programme was seriously affected by Covid both due to premises not being open and because officers were engaged in Covid enforcement and prevention work. We are satisfied that we are on target to complete the programme this year which will see us audit almost 1,000 premises.
- 13.2 Officers are finding that the level of compliance in some premises has reduced. In discussions it seems that in part this can be attributed in some cases to the issues raised by business pressures relating Covid and the business costs. Subsequently we are having to spend longer with premises to achieve compliance and have instigated some temporary voluntary closures.
- 13.3 The team assisted the Food Standards Agency with their investigation into an infectious disease with possible links to meat imported into the UK. Traceability information was obtained from a food broker trading within West Berkshire.
- 13.4 Our work with food businesses also assists them to improve their food hygiene – and this in turn raises the Food Hygiene Rating that is published, for example, a small convenience store was re-rated from a 1 to a 5 under the FHRS after assistance from the team.
- 13.5 The Team continues to investigate accidents or concerns brought to our attention about possible breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. In one example, fixed wiring electrical installation compliance was achieved at a retail business which was subject to a complaint. This involved significant remedial works to remove potentially dangerous conditions.
- 13.6 We work with premises of all sizes, an investigation into an accident at a large supermarket store resulted in revised procedures at National Level.

14. Licensing (Including Applications and Licensing Governance)

- 14.1 In Q1 the team undertook a consultation on variations to the taxi tariffs in West Berkshire. The revised tariffs came into effect on the 19 June 2023.

- 14.2 Training sessions for Members on the Licensing Act and Sub-Committees were held on the 31 May 2023 and the 15 June 2023 in West Berkshire. A training session was also held on the 28 June 2023 for Bracknell Forest Members.
- 14.3 The Service prepared comprehensive packs for all Members of the licensing committees out relevant legislation, policies, guidance notes and the scheme of delegation.
- 14.4 The service has also conducted two licensing consultations since the last meeting. The first was a consultation on whether the geographical element of the ‘knowledge test; should be retained in Bracknell Forest. This consultation ran from the 07 July to the 28 July). The second consultation related to West Berkshire Council’s Draft Statement of Licensing Policy. The ten-week consultation was launched on the 12 July and ended on the 20 September. The outcome of consultations can be found [here](#). They will be reported back to the October (BFC) and November (WBC) Licensing Committees.
- 14.5 Consultations will be conducted on those elements of discretionary fees for taxi and private hire vehicles and Private Hire Operators proposed by this Committee.
- 14.6 The following licensing panel/subcommittee meetings have taken place in Q1:

Type of Application	Applicant	Outcome
Bracknell Forest		
None		
West Berkshire		
New Premise Licence	Bite Express Ltd	Approved with additional conditions

15. Private Sector Housing

- 15.1 The annual caravan site inspections programme is underway with officers carrying out on-site inspections to ensure that the sites comply with their site licences and to ensure that there are no risks to safety from the operation of the sites.
- 15.2 The work around prior approval conversions continues with joint inspections with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. This is revealing several issues that the service is working with owners and landlords to resolve.
- 15.3 We have carried out some inspections for both the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and proposed and existing asylum accommodation.
- 15.4 In the course of routine inspection activity, the team have identified:
- That increasing costs for landlords are having an impact on the landlords and their tenants, this created more complex issues and the resolution is prolonged.

- An increase in the number of cases that are progressing to enforcement, for example service of Improvement Notices, Prohibition Orders and investigation and we currently have two cases in the court system.

16. Environmental Quality

16.1 The team have continued to undertake work to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents through focused projects, planned inspections and responding to complaints particularly from noise from pubs this quarter. Some key activity undertaken during Q1 included:

- The Air Quality Annual Status Reports for West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham were all submitted to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the 15 June 2023 before the deadline of the end of June. The West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest Council documents will be presented to the JPPC once feedback is received from DeFRA. The Wokingham Borough Council document and results will be passed on to the authority for processing under their governance arrangements.
- [Clean air day](#) was marked on the 15 June 2023 in conjunction with the education program for the anti-idling and behavioural change work. A series of social media posts were issued to mark the event and raise awareness.
- Further visits to schools to promote understanding around the importance of good air quality are ongoing.
- The service was involved in the Aldex Emergency Planning Exercise which tested a simulated incident involving the release of radioactive materials from the Burghfield site and which affected areas in West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham. The aim of the exercise is to test West Berkshire Council's AWE Off-Site Emergency Response Plan.
- Staff have attended the mediation training delivered by RESOLVE during this quarter and were pleased to manage a successful outcome in a mediation case relating to residential accommodation above a health centre.
- The events monitoring programme for 2023/24 continues and has included a number of long-standing events as well as some new events being visited for the first time. These checks include noise levels and compliance with associated licence conditions.
- Work is now underway on petroleum licensing inspections work. One of the officers in the team has completed the necessary training and is now able to carry out inspections to support the trading standards team. The work will be conducted along with the pollution control work associated with filling stations which includes vapour recovery.
- The team has completed the update of the Private Water Supply sampling manual used by officers when conducting sampling.

- The team has attended a number of planning committees and briefings where noise issues and contaminated land are material considerations. They have also assisted with preparation and discharge of conditions.
- The team served a Control of Pollution Action 1974 s60 notice for noisy construction works.
- Officers undertook a waste clearance of a closed restaurant where they worked with colleagues from the Homelessness Team.

17. Case Management

17.1 The Case Management Unit continues to be busy working on cases and providing advice across PPP and also to partner organisations. Currently the team have oversight of some 56 criminal investigations (excluding road traffic matters). A number of these are at file stage or in the court system. New investigations are commencing all the time.

17.2 The NCA Accredited Financial Investigators have conducted 14 investigations relating to money laundering and confiscation under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

17.3 Cases are continuing to be heard in both the Magistrates Court and the Crown Court however significant delays are still being encountered with trial listings in the Crown Court with one four day trial being listed for September 2024. Recent case examples include:

Bracknell Forest –

- Gardening & Landscaping business convicted after entering a guilty plea to one charge of fraudulent trading.
- Once customers had paid a deposit to get their gardens done, the defendant either did not complete the work or did not even start it. He defrauded a total of £32,429 across seven households.
- The defendant was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months. He was also ordered to undertake 200 hours of Unpaid Work, to complete 20 Rehabilitation Activity Requirement days and to pay compensation in the sum of £10,800.

Wokingham –

- London based Locksmiths convicted at Reading Magistrates' Court after being pleading guilty to three consumer protection offences in relation to overcharging and breach of professional diligence. The Company was ordered to pay a fine of £6,000, £1,881.40 in compensation and £6,206.80 prosecution costs.

West Berkshire –

- Builder sentenced to 4 years and 3 months immediate custody following guilty pleas being entered to three offences of fraudulent trading. This case related to several consumers who agreed to works only to find issues with pricing and timetabling of work. Consumers were left significantly out of pocket or with incomplete works costing more to put right the works. There were multiple victims

inside and outside West Berkshire. Compensation to the value of £58K was also paid by the defendant but this was significantly short of the victim losses.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – 2023/24 Performance Framework

APPENDIX B – Q1 Communications Update

APPENDIX C - Service Compliments

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The report is to note only.

Wards affected: All Wards

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