PPP Strategic Assessment Review (2026)

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	12 October 2026
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Iskandar Jefferies
Date JMB agreed report:	21 September 2026
Report Author:	George Lawrence
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present a review of the 2024-2027 PPP Strategic Assessment by identifying variations in key service delivery (further horizon scanning), activities, priorities and the resource challenges for the Service.

2. Recommendations

The Committee:

2.1 **NOTES** that the updated review of the Strategic Assessment continues to form the basis of the PPP priority setting.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	These service provision set out in the review will be met from the base revenue budget or from specific grants. Where appropriate, grants such as those that supports public health related work, national and regional campaigns and support for activity associated with legislative changes or investigations will be sought and used to deliver some of the key work streams set out in this review. Working with other authorities as part of shared working arrangements to deliver efficiencies and effectiveness will also feature as a key priority.
Human Resource:	This report highlights a shift in demand to more technical and complex duties which is likely to have an impact on staffing. Officers of the PPP are required to be technically qualified and affiliated to professional bodies in order to hold delegated powers. The Service is investing in a 'grow our own' approach to upskill officers and provide technical qualifications, however there is still a risk that the service will fail to recruit and attract qualified candidates into key roles.

	If approved the Joint Management Board will consider the most effective structure to deliver against the priorities in accordance with the Inter Authority Agreement.			
Legal:	The functions delegated to the Joint Public Protection Committee by the Councils have their basis in statute. In this respect many are statutory duties placed on the Councils. In some areas (such as food safety and standards, health and safety etc.) there is a high level of prescription about how elements of the service are delivered. The Council's apply the Code for Crown Prosecutors in respect of all enforcement matters.			
Risk Management:	Project Management Methodology will enable early identification of operational risks. Regular meetings with Principal Officers and Managers are used to allocate resources to high risk areas. The Service has a Strategic Risk Register which is considered by the Joint Management Board (JMB) as well as an Operational Risk Register that is discussed monthly at the Principal Officer and Managers meeting. The key risks to service delivery are related to the ability of the service to recruit, train and retain appropriate level qualified officers to work across the range of functional areas that make up the PPP.			
Property:	No specific issues arising from this review.			
Policy:	It is a key responsibility of the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) as set out in the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to set the strategic direction and priorities for the service and to review those priority's from time to time.			
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	**Commentary**
Equity Impact Assessment:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		Report is to note only.

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		Report is to note only.
Environmental Impact:	x			A number of the priorities will have a positive impact on the environment.
Health Impact:	x			A number of the priorities will have a positive impact on health.
ICT or Digital Services Impact:		x		The Strategic Assessment will be published on the PPP website.
PPP Priorities :		x		The report will have a neutral impact on the following PPP Priorities; 1. Building Safer Communities 2. Improved Living Environment 3. Protecting Consumers from Fraud 4. Reducing Harm in Young People 5. Protecting and Informing Consumers 6. Protection of the Environment 7. Promoting Animal Welfare 8. Safety in the Workplace 9. Safe and Healthy Food Chain Business as Usual Activity is supported too.
Data Impact:				
Consultation and Engagement:	Report will be considered by Corporate Board and Operations Board in West Berkshire and at CMT and the Executive Briefing in Bracknell Forest before being presented to the Joint Public Protection Committee. The Strategic Assessment will also be shared with colleagues in Wokingham Borough via the PGLT and CLT.			
Other Options Considered:				

4. Executive Summary

4.1 At the meeting of the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) on the 10th June 2024 the Committee considered and approved the priorities and Strategic Assessment for 2024-2027.

4.2 A copy of the Strategic Assessment is published on the PPP website, and can be found here: PPP_Strategic_Assessment_2024-2027.pdf

4.3 As part of the ongoing development of the Service, Officers have reflected on the current challenges facing the service, local and national threats, changes to local and national policies and priority areas, local, regional and national data sets, emerging issues and changes in legislation to produce the updated Strategic Assessment of the Service.

5. Operating Model & Strategic Assessment Review

5.1 The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) is a shared service delivering Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards functions on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council and West Berkshire Council. It also works with Wokingham Borough Council on Trading Standards and related activities, including case management, intelligence and financial investigations.

5.2 The Strategic Assessment is central to the Service's business planning. It informs annual service planning, priority setting and workforce development, and also supports communication and engagement activity.

5.3 The review draws on 2025 data and the most recent information available to the Service. Officers from the Intelligence Team and PPP Management Team contributed to the review, with the methodology set out in the review document.

5.4 The review considers both emerging priorities and business-as-usual activity, including statutory duties and other core workstreams that contribute to the nine PPP priorities.

5.5 The breadth of PPP activity is significant. The Service's work includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- **Environmental protection and public health:** air quality management, contaminated land, industrial pollution, environmental nuisance protection, statutory nuisance, public health, communicable diseases, private water supplies, pest and vermin enforcement, and health promotion.
- **Trading Standards and consumer protection:** consumer advice, consumer credit, doorstep crime, fair trading, fraud and counterfeiting, metrology, money laundering and confiscation, product safety, unfair trading, scams, Primary Authority, overloaded vehicles and weight restrictions, and offensive weapons controls.
- **Licensing and community safety:** alcohol licensing and controls, licensing for alcohol and regulated activity, gambling, taxi licensing, street trading, underage sales, anti-social behaviour, community mediation and community education.
- **Food, feed and workplace regulation:** food and feed safety, standards and hygiene, food standards, and health and safety at work.
- **Animal health and welfare:** animal welfare, animal warden activity, and related enforcement responsibilities.
- **Housing and specialist regulatory work:** private sector housing, case management, explosives storage and petroleum storage.

5.6 The Service operates through an approach that links local knowledge, professional risk management and information gathering to generate information and intelligence. This approach helps explain how officers prioritise activity and decide on appropriate courses of action.

5.7 The service remains agile and responsive, enabling resources to be directed to changing service demands, emerging risks and evolving local, regional and national priorities.

6. Key Observations

6.1 Strategic priorities remain broadly unchanged, with the review indicating high service activity and no major areas of concern identified.

6.2 Overall intelligence submissions fell slightly from 858 to 819, but submissions relating directly to the three PPP authority areas increased from 757 to 805.

6.3 West Berkshire generated the highest number of Intelligence Data Base (IDB) submissions among PPP authorities, followed by Wokingham and Bracknell Forest. The largest intelligence categories were:

- Doorstep Crime and Rogue Trading
- Age Restricted Sales
- Lifestyle / entity development
- Fair Trading
- Tobacco and Cigarettes

6.4 Doorstep crime remains a prominent issue, with roofing work accounting for a significant proportion of reports and payment amounts exceeding £1 million.

6.5 Age-restricted sales activity remains a major focus, particularly sales of vapes, alcohol, tobacco, knives and corrosive substances.

6.6 There is a clear increase in regulatory and legislative change, particularly in housing, licensing, tobacco/vapes, consumer protection, food regulation and private rented sector enforcement. These changes have been substantial i.e. Renters Rights Act places new duties on local authorities to enforce and investigate housing complaints in the Private Rented Sector, Food Standards regulations place new inspection and assessment criteria for food businesses and tobacco and vapes regulations bring new enforcement powers and future licensing regime.

6.7 Several areas show increased demand or workload across a wide range of services delivered by PPP. At the same time, resource and funding pressures are emerging, particularly in food work, victim support funding and inspection capacity.

6.8 Housing enforcement responsibilities are expanding, especially due to the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and potential future supported housing regulation.

6.9 Food service delivery is shifting, with the Food Standard Agency's new risk-based model and continued monitoring of inspection backlogs.

6.10 Environmental work shows a mixed picture, with improvements in air quality management but emerging workload from crematoria guidance, fly-tipping, construction noise and statutory nuisances.

6.11 Animal health and welfare risks increased, influenced by national disease pressures such as Bluetongue and Avian Influenza.

7. Areas in Need of Resource Monitoring

7.1 **Private rented sector enforcement.** The Renters' Rights Act 2025 creates new landlord enforcement duties from May 2026. PPP will need capacity for civil financial penalties, landlord compliance work, mandatory reporting to MHCLG, landlord register checks, and possible future supported housing licensing work.

7.2 **Trading Standards investigations and financial investigation.** Ongoing Trading Standards investigations have increased. Money laundering and confiscation investigations rose from 9 to 17 new cases. Additional Accredited Financial Investigator capacity has already been added, indicating rising specialist demand.

7.3 **Age-restricted sales, tobacco, vapes and knives.** Continued focus on underage sales, disposable vape controls, illicit tobacco and future Tobacco and Vapes Act duties. New online knife and crossbow age-verification expectations may require more test purchasing, digital evidence work and police partnership activity.

7.4 **Licensing and community safety.** Licensing Act applications increased by 34%, licensing consultations increased by 36%, Temporary Event Notices increased by 14%, Event Management Plans increased by 6%, and street trading applications increased by 31%. These trends point to greater administrative, consultation and enforcement workload.

7.5 **Animal warden and animal health work.** Dog warden reports increased by 21%. Dog-on-dog attacks, dog fouling and stray dog collections all increased. Animal health and welfare reports increased by 62%, influenced by national disease pressures such as Bluetongue and Avian Influenza.

7.6 **Food standards and food hygiene.** Food premises liable for inspection have slightly increased. Food labelling reports increased by 63%. The FSA is monitoring inspection backlogs, so maintaining programmed inspection capacity will be important.

7.7 **Environmental health and pollution control.** Updated crematoria guidance may increase workload through permit reviews, operator engagement and compliance monitoring. Construction noise and Control of Pollution Act 1974 activity have started to increase. Fly-tipping investigations in Bracknell Forest have increased by 14%.

8. Areas Where Resource Pressure May Reduce or Remain Stable

8.1 **Taxi and private hire licensing.** Applications decreased by 17.5%, although future cross-border enforcement powers may create additional enforcement demand.

8.2 **Scams and victim support.** Scam reports reduced by 20%, but victim support remains dependent on external funding.

8.3 **Pest control.** Reports reduced by 21%, suggesting reduced demand in this area. However, resources available for this field of expertise are low.

8.4 **Health and safety.** Overall reports reduced by 9%, but complaint-led work increased in some areas, particularly accident-related complaints.

8.5 **Infectious disease notifications.** Notifications reduced significantly, largely because UKHSA no longer notifies local authorities of confirmed Campylobacter cases.

8.6 **Weights and measures.** Reports reduced by 64%, suggesting lower routine demand.

8.7 **Food sampling.** Planned sampling appears reduced, but the document notes that no microbiological samples were taken in 2025/26 due to lack of officer resource, which indicates unmet demand rather than reduced need.

9. Concluding Observations

9.1 The main trend is a move away from purely volume-based workload toward more complex, specialist work and a need to adapt to continuing changes within legislative landscape.

9.2 Demand is increasing around areas such as housing enforcement, regulatory change, financial investigation, age-restricted products, food standards, private water supplies, licensing and animal health.

9.3 At the same time, some routine demand has reduced, but this does not fully offset the new and more complex statutory responsibilities emerging for 2026/27 and beyond.

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Public Protection Service 2024-2027 Strategic Assessment Review (2026)

11. Background Papers:

11.1 Strategic Assessment 2024-2027 PPP_Strategic_Assessment_2024-2027.pdf

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 or State Specific Wards

Officer details:

Name: George Lawrence
Job Title: Strategic Manager
Tel No: 01635 519163
E-mail: george.Lawrence@westberks.gov.uk