

SUBJECT: PUBLIC PROTECTION 2021/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT

MEETING: Performance & Oversight Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 17th January 2023

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To undertake scrutiny of service delivery across Public Protection services for the financial year 2021/22, with comparison to previous years. The Public Protection division comprises of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Animal Health and Licensing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To consider and comment on the contents of the attached report – Appendix One - entitled ‘Public Protection Performance Report 2021/22’.
- 2.2 Members receive the next annual performance report, for 2022/23 year, earlier in 2023. The report to be scheduled in the committee forward planner in June or July 2023. Members to consider whether they would like to scrutinise a specific area of Public Protection work in 2023/24.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In January 2015 Cabinet requested that Public Protection performance was reviewed regularly by this Committee to assess any negative impacts. Initially six-monthly reports were provided to Strong Communities Select committee, but for the last two years this has been presented annually as agreed in 2019. The last annual performance report was presented to the former Strong Communities Select committee in November 2021.
- 3.2 The attached report, Appendix One, summarises performance for the twelve month period of 2021/22, and highlights the following -
- The four service teams were diverted from normal service delivery by the need to respond to the second full year of the Covid-19 pandemic. Where services were maintained, often physical visits were replaced by virtual meetings and resolving problems remotely. All service requests continued to be risk assessed and physical visits made when deemed essential, eg. to respond to a complaint from a vulnerable housing tenant, even during heightened Welsh Government Alert Levels. Such activity could not be undertaken remotely.

- As detailed in Appendix One, reactive work has continued with some noticeable increases in demand. 'Service requests' refer to complaints from the public and businesses, eg noise complaints, or requests for information about consumer or licensing issues.
- The Environmental Health (Commercial) team dealt with over 15,000 cases of Covid, and 217 other notifiable diseases. The EH (Public Health) team responded to an increase in noise complaints, environmental protection and pest control issues. Trading Standards had a relatively stable year of service demand, and Licensing applications (1,515 last year) remained high.
- Organised events, for example horse racing, agricultural and music shows, increased from the previous year, as national restrictions were lifted for large parts of the year. These received help and guidance from the Monmouthshire Event Safety Advisory Group.
- External Governing Bodies were aware of Public Protection's prioritisation of the response to Covid taking precedent. Commercial EH staff spent significant time investigating Covid clusters in schools, care homes, local workplaces, etc. Senior Leadership were fully aware of the service's switch in prioritisation over the 20/22 two year period, so we are able to provide a robust response to any Governing Body queries on why proactive activities have dropped.
- Annual reports will continue to be made to this Committee to assess performance over time, and help inform future priorities noting the competing demands. Officers will endeavour to bring the 22/23 annual report before this Committee earlier in 2022, preferably June or July 2023.
- Services may struggle to take on any new statutory duties that protect the public and the environment, and therefore funding must be sought to support any new work.
- Future strategies for sustaining Public Protection services will be developed, (to include further income generation and collaboration), locally, regionally and nationally.
- A budget pressure mandate was successful in securing further Public Protection funding from April 2022. This provided some much needed extra capacity to the 4 PP teams.
- Services will improve linkages to the Authority's Community and Corporate Plan 2022/23 and other key drivers when prioritising future service delivery.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 The Cabinet decision log from 7th January 2015 stated:- 'Noting the continually changing legislative landscape in the future, it was decided Strong Communities Select Committee would receive six monthly performance reports on Public Protection services'. As stated in 3.1, it was agreed in 2019 to report annually to allow Members to scrutinise performance across the Division.
- 4.2 It is important Members are aware how Public Protection services play a crucial role in protecting some of our most vulnerable members of society, assist local businesses and protect the 'farm to fork' food chain, and help protect our natural environment. An infographic at the end of the attached report (Appendix One) summaries the purpose of the division and some key activities in 2021/22 year.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None as a consequence of this report.

6. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS, (incorporating Equalities, Sustainability, safeguarding and corporate parenting).

Assessments were previously completed for the Cabinet report 7th January, 2015. This report serves to update the position in relation to performance, and therefore does not require a further assessment.

7. CONSULTEES:

Public Protection service managers (& contributors)
Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Report to Cabinet, 7th January 2015, entitled 'Review of Service Delivery in Public Protection Department'.

9. AUTHOR:

David H Jones, Head of Public Protection

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644100 **E-mail:** davidjones3@monmouthshire.gov.uk