

**Report to:**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Responsible officers:** Jennifer Clayton - Head of Public Protection and Enforcement

**Date of Scrutiny:** 20 March 2024

## **PUBLIC PROTECTION ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

To consider the performance of the Public Protection and Enforcement Service in relation to operational delivery. It will provide a brief outline of the various elements of the services delivered, identify areas of good performance and highlight any current or anticipated barriers or challenges as well as enabling opportunities.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

To review the performance of the services, receive feedback from the Committee and identify any matters for further scrutiny.

### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 To ensure effective scrutiny of the Public Protection and Enforcement Service

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

- Request Internal Audit to schedule into the annual work plan programme
- Refer to external audit

### **5.0 Council priority**

The relevant Council priorities are:

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool'
- Communities: 'Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

### **6.0 Background and key information**

The Public Protection (PP) and Enforcement department play a vital part in supporting

Blackpool Council's priorities and have a long-established role within the functions of local government.

The majority of the work carried out within the department is statutory requirements of a local authority. A small amount of work falls outside of those parameters, however this work does support the Council priorities. The fundamental purpose of PP services is to protect and safeguard residents, consumers, businesses, and communities.

**6.1** Public Protection is made up of the following services:

- Community Safety Team which also encompasses anti-social behaviour (ASB) officers
- Food Control
- Health and Safety
- Housing Enforcement
- Environmental Protection and Animal Health Welfare and Enforcement
- Trading Standards
- Licensing Enforcement

Please refer to Appendix 9(a) for additional information on individual services main functions

**6.2** **Key Successes and highlights for each team within Public Protection**

**Community Safety Team (CST)**

The CST is the operational arm of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CST delivers on the priorities set out by the CSP in the Community Safety Plan. (See separate annual report)

**7.3** **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)**

The most recent PSPO was launched in February 2024, this PSPO included our Parks, Green Spaces and Crematoriums.

We were able to demonstrate, alongside the Police, support for the PSPO that issues within these spaces were having a detrimental impact on the communities, such as camping on our green spaces, dogs attacking our wildlife in our water bodies and general ASB across all the spaces.

During February 2024 half term, a community engagement week was organised in Stanley Park. This week was organised to ensure that our local communities and park users were aware of the new PSPO. The community engagement event involved our

members of our Public Protection Teams, Parks team, Envenco, Stanley Park's Friends' Group, Police colleagues and the Animal Welfare and Enforcement officers.

#### 7.4 Food Control

The main focus of the Food Control Team is to operate within the 'Food Law Code of Practice' and to effectively deliver the 'Food Premises Inspection Programme'. The Inspection Programme categorises businesses from A (highest risk) to E (lowest risk). This ensures that high risk (category A and B rated) businesses are prioritised, and inspected within a calculated time frame. The Food Standards Agency is satisfied with the team and that officers have made satisfactory progress post-COVID to re-align overdue inspections within the programme.

Food Control Officers also play a fundamental role in the disruption of premises that are believed to be involved in criminal activity such as the sale of drugs, illegal immigrant workers and the exploitation of children by partaking in important multi-agency work.

The table below shows the work the Food Control team have carried out over the last financial year:

<b>Food Hygiene</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Inspections	819
Revisits	36
Complaints	172
Sampling	40
Infectious disease investigation	120
Other (advice / interview / education	430
Premises served hygiene improvement notice(s)	52
Simple Cautions accepted	4
Concluded Prosecutions	0
Pending Prosecutions	5
Emergency prohibitions	0
Voluntary Closure	5

<b>Food Standards</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Inspections	709
Complaints	4
Sampling	0
Premises served improvement notice(s)	2
Simple Cautions accepted	1
Concluded Prosecutions	0

Pending Prosecutions	0
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Any enforcement action taken by officers is in line with Blackpool Council's Enforcement Policy.

## **7.5 Food Control Projects and Success stories**

A new pilot scheme designed to improve food standards in England's schools was launched by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department for Education (DfE). The School Food Standards Compliance pilot was designed and to test a new approach to helping schools comply with existing requirements to help develop healthy eating habits and ensure children get the energy and nutrition required across the whole school day.

**7.6** The pilot, announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, incorporated 18 local authorities, including Blackpool Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, Oldham Council, and Herefordshire Council.

**7.7** Officers visited schools throughout the academic year to identify potential non-compliance with current School Food Standards. They assessed menus and advised on salt and sugar levels to ensure children are receiving healthy, nutritionally balanced meals. Alongside conducting food hygiene inspections, they observed how food was being served and help schools to instigate supportive interventions to aid compliance, and work with the government to shape food safety visits in the future.

**7.8** Blackpool's schools are in line with FSA and DfE standards. However, officer's observations found variations between schools that may be in more deprived areas, and there was a significant difference between foods served in primary and high schools. There is a 'grab and go' culture in Blackpool's high schools because students want easy, fast food, rather than a sit-down meal. The FCA has requested that a survey be carried out, but have not yet discussed any results/ trends. Food Control and Public Health's Nutritionist have also produced a report as to their findings.

**7.9** A new 'Food Standards' delivery model has been introduced by the FSA. This will change the way that food businesses are rated for 'Food Standards'. The new ratings will include allergen information, labelling, traceability and hope to stop businesses providing misleading information. The aim is for local authorities to be able to target their resources at the non-compliant businesses.

**7.10** The team has re-commenced with proactive food sampling as part of UK Health Security Agencies Sampling Programme. Sampling involves taking a representative portion of a food product or ingredient and testing it for the presence of harmful contaminants or pathogens, such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Sampling is used by Food Control officers to monitor and ensure the safety of food products. This work is being carried

out after many years of having insufficient resources to carry out this function.

**7.11** Some examples of successful operations with the food control team are discussed in the multi-agency section of this report.

**7.12 Health and Safety**

One of the main functions of the Health and Safety team is to investigate accidents and incidents that happen in Blackpool in certain workplaces. This relies upon complaints, intelligence reports from other agencies and RIDDOR reporting.

**7.13** Other Health and Safety priorities include the inspection of petrol filling stations, visits to piercing and beauty studios, and the national priorities set out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). In 2024, the Health and Safety team also intend to carry out proactive work around the testing of pool and spa water.

**7.14** The Health and Safety Team also play a significant role in the disruption of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC), with intelligence submitted or requested at the GENGA Working Group. The team assists with the disruption of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) by conducting multi-agency visits and by using their powers such as Emergency Prohibition Notices (EPN's). Businesses can be forced to remain closed because of certain issues such as dangerous electrical installations, and poor structural integrity of the building. These powers have been used to close businesses such as brothels and cannabis farms. The team also share pertinent information for the prevention and detection of crime and disorder with other teams within PP and also with Police colleagues.

Any enforcement action taken by officers is in line with Blackpool Council's Enforcement Policy.

**7.15** The table below shows the work the Health and Safety (HS) team have carried out over the last financial year:

<b>Health and Safety Enforcement</b>	
Pro-active inspections	8
Complaint investigations	77
Incident investigations	5
HS other	66
Tattoo hygiene rating scheme assessment	10
Revisits	36
RIDDOR reports received	92
Petrol Station Inspection	10
Prohibition notices	10
Premises served improvement notices	22

Simple Cautions accepted	4
Concluded Prosecutions	0
Pending Prosecutions	4

### **7.16 Health and Safety Projects and Success stories**

#### **7.17** The Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme (THRS) was re-launched in 2022.

There are currently 26 tattoo studios included in the scheme, with newer studios awaiting an assessment by HS officers.

The THRS uses a set of criteria to rate a business from 4 (Excellent) to 1 (Needs Improvement). Information of the scheme can be found on the Blackpool Council website. This includes a list of all studios included on the scheme, their rating and an interactive map. It also details the safeguards in place for the businesses, such as an appeals process and a request for a re-visit once improvements have taken place.

#### **7.18** Health and Safety are the lead authority in the investigation of a fatality in a local hotel. Working alongside the HSE and the Coroner, the Health and Safety Manager, with support from other managers is continuing with this investigation.

#### **7.19** Grant money to the sum of £8500 has been received from Blackpool Council's Public Health Department in relation to the Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021. This funding will be used to carry out visits and test purchasing scenarios to premises in Blackpool that offer these services, ensuring procedures are in place to protect children.

### **7.20 Licensing**

The main focus of the Licensing Service is to administer and regulate numerous licensable activities within Blackpool. The key areas being, alcohol retail trade and the taxi and private hire trade. When compared with 2022 figures, applications to the team have marginally increased in respect of Taxis (1629) but have reduced in respect of alcohol licence applications (1225). In relation to the applications made under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, it is highly likely that applications would have been higher had the Council not adopted a Cumulative Impact Assessment as part of its current statement of Licensing Policy. This effectively deters new applications from areas within the catchment area of the policy.

#### **7.21** From an enforcement perspective, the Licensing Service has not experienced any specific areas of concern in respect of the alcohol trade. However, the taxi trade is experiencing a difficult period due to an influx of out of area vehicles. This trend has

become more prevalent since the summer of 2023. The Licensing Service cannot provide any measurable data as to why this is happening, although observations of operational officers and reports from local drivers suggest that the main causes are likely to be the emergence of Uber and other similar nationwide online private hire operators.

**7.22** Licensing officers also play a vital role in the disruption of Serious organised Crime (SOC) and local Organised Crime Groups (OCGs). Officers provide information to the GENGA co-ordinator when requests for information/referrals are submitted by other departments or partners. Officers also do joint visits with other PP officers and or Police colleagues to any premises of concern.

### **7.23 Licensing Figures**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Total 23/24</b>
Application numbers (LA2003)	1153
Application Numbers (Taxis)	1755

### **7.24 Licensing Projects and Success Stories**

The Licensing team has its own Child Protection officer who does work to safeguard and protect children who visit licensed premises.

**7.25** The officer also attends the Daily Exploitation and Missing (DEM) meeting chaired by AWAKEN. The officer carries out investigations when reports of alleged Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are received or discussed at the DEM meeting regarding premises of concern in Blackpool. These premises are usually fast-food outlets that operate in the night time economy. This information is fed back to Police colleagues and Blackpool Council's AWAKEN team so that disruption or enforcement can be planned and executed.

**7.26** The officer also liaises with local taxi companies to obtain information regarding taxi drop offs and collections for vulnerable young people who may be missing or being exploited.

### **7.27 Trading Standards**

Trading Standards (TS) officers enforce the law across a range of subject areas, including:

- Age restricted products
- Agriculture
- Animal health and welfare

- Fair trading, which includes: pricing, descriptions of goods, digital content and services
- Illicit Trade
- Intellectual property (for example, counterfeiting)
- Petrol and fireworks storage
- Product safety
- Terms and conditions
- Weights and measures

## 7.28 Trading Standards Figures

Indicator	Total 2023
Consumer Complaints received	910
Illicit Cigarettes seized (packs)	8658
Illicit Tobacco seized (Kg)	32.05
Illicit Vapes seized (n)	17317
Underage Tobacco Sales to underage Children (nos of failures)	13
Underage Knife Sales (nos of failures)	4

## 7.29 Trading Standards Projects and Success stories

Illicit trade is a key priority for the Trading Standards service, especially in connection with the sale and supply of illicit tobacco and vaping products. The illicit tobacco trade has evolved in Blackpool over the last decade from a position of isolated shops selling a few packets of under the counter cigarettes, into a key cash generator for organised criminals. The team secured funding from Trading Standards Northwest (TSNW) to carry out additional operations around the illicit tobacco and vape industry.

This shift in illicit vaping products has provided evidence that young people are being targeted by unscrupulous traders. In December 2023, Trading Standards (TS) carried out an operation that targeted the sale of vapes to young people. Ten premises were tested with a 15-year-old female volunteer who carried out test purchasing for tobacco products. There was a 100% failure rate, with all shops selling tobacco products to her



without question or requesting ID. The same shops were tested again on the 19th of February 2024, which produced a 70% pass rate. This shows evidence that visits undertaken by TS officers to shops selling tobacco products are successful. It is hoped that with continued visits, the pass rate will significantly increase year on year, hopefully achieving 100% compliance.

**7.30** TS officers have also continued to seize illicit goods on a weekly basis. Currently 62% of visits by officers find the premises selling illicit goods. The visits and consequential seizure of goods causes disruption to the criminals engaging in this activity. Following continued compliance failure, these premises are considered for further sanctions such as Prosecution. This results in the team referring the most serious cases for prosecution where there is persistent offending. Proceeds of Crime (POCA) is also considered as a means of making it more difficult for organized criminals to operate. TS officers are also informing the landlords of problematic premises that their properties are being used for illegal purposes. This means that if they fail to act, TS officers can consider taking action against the landlord as well for money laundering offences.

**7.31** The team are responsible for providing operational policing of itinerant (Pedlars) traders throughout the tourism season from Easter to the end of the year. In 2023 the team conducted 40 operations of this nature. On average officers working these operations (at least 2 officers per shift) engage with 8-12 traders per operation. These operations allow the team to regulate the movement of itinerant traders, conduct examination of the goods offered for sale for compliance purposes and check for the relevant authorisations.

These operations historically were tasked to deal specifically with street trading issues; however this has evolved over time, officers now deal with multiple regulations. As an example in 2023 there was an emergence of illicit traders attempting to sell counterfeit perfumes as well as PSPO breaches and some horse drawn hackney carriage issues.

Any enforcement action taken by officers is in line with Blackpool Council's Enforcement Policy.

**7.32 Housing Enforcement (which also encompasses Selective Licensing)**

Housing Enforcement officers interpret, implement and enforce a wide-range of housing, nuisance and other related legislation to deal with poor housing, private rented sector housing conditions and meet the aims and objectives of the Council and improve the health and well-being of residents in the Borough. Under the Housing Act 2004, properties are assessed using the Housing health and Rating System (HHSRS). This tool identifies category of defects, category 1 and category 2 hazards, category 1 being the most severe.

**7.33** The table below shows the number of complaints, inspections and Enforcement notices

that have been served by the Housing Enforcement team over the past 12 months. All enforcement tools and powers are utilised to tackle poor accommodation and management in the private rented sector. Failure to comply with an Enforcement Notice leads to a prosecution or Civil Penalty Case. Other tools and powers to be considered include a banning order for repeat offenders.

<b>Housing Enforcement</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Number of complaints received	1218
Number of inspections carried out	1197
Cat 1 Hazards removed	766
Number of enforcement notices served	931

Any enforcement action taken by officers is in line with Blackpool Council's Enforcement Policy.

#### **7.34 Housing Enforcement Projects and Success Stories**

A problematic House In Multiple Occupation, (HMO) was visited by the Housing Enforcement team with the Department of Levelling Up to illustrate the scale of poor standards of HMO's in Blackpool. There were 93 defects in the property of which, 42 were Category 1 Hazards (see separate explanation sheet). One of the flats housed a family with young children, and because of the defects and Category 1 hazards, the family were rehoused.

**7.35** Social Services referred a property in serious disrepair to the Housing Enforcement Team. Consequently, after visiting the premises, officers issued a Prohibition Order and the family living in the property were relocated to more suitable accommodation. Following this intervention, the Housing Enforcement Team issued a Civil Penalty to the landlord for breach of licensing conditions as they had failed to manage the property effectively.

**7.36** The Housing Enforcement Manager developed and delivered a bespoke training package for the Council's Social Services team. This training was developed to ensure that appropriate referrals were made to the Housing Enforcement team by social workers visiting properties where poor housing conditions are identified.

**7.37** Alongside Adult Social Services, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, (LFRS) the Housing Enforcement Team identified a problematic property in a densely populated residential area which contained over two thousand lithium batteries. The batteries posed a serious fire risk to adjoining properties. Officers visited the premises and issued an Emergency Remedial Notice to safely remove and dispose of the batteries. The elderly resident was re-housed in safe suitable accommodation.

### 7.38 Selective and Mandatory Licensing

Selective licensing is a licensing regime for private landlords that applies to a specified area designated by the relevant Housing Authority (HA).

7.39 Local Authorities may designate specific areas for selective licensing based on factors such as:

- Housing demand
- Anti-social behaviour
- High levels of crime
- High levels of migration

Once an area is designated for selective licensing, any rental property in the designated area (except certain exempt properties) will have to apply for a licence. Selective licensing can apply to any type of rental property - not just HMOs.

7.40 The current Selective Licensing scheme in the Central area of Blackpool and includes parts of Brunswick, Bloomfield, and Talbot wards. The scheme has licensed 2,600 properties and has run for 5 years from 2019 and will finish at the end of March 2024.

7.41 Mandatory licensing is required where a HMO is occupied by five or more persons living in two or more separate households with shared facilities. Children of any age contribute to the number of occupants.

7.42 Blackpool Council has submitted a new Selective Licensing application to the Secretary of State for approval. If the application is approved, 11,307 properties will be included in this new scheme in central Blackpool.

### 7.43 Selective and Mandatory Licensing figures 23/24

7.44

<b>Selective Licensing Figures</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Total number of applications	60
Total number of units	61

7.45

<b>Mandatory Renewals</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Total number of applications	10

7.46

<b>Mandatory First Applications</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
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Total number of applications	7
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**7.47 Environmental Protection, Animal Health, Welfare and Enforcement**

A key role of the Environmental Protection team is to protect and the public and the environment from harm. They team are responsible for dealing with complaints around air, water, land and noise pollution.

The Animal health and enforcement team are responsible for complaints in relation to animal welfare, dog related enquires such as dog on dog attacks and strays and other animal enforcement enquiries such as illegal breeding and dangerous dogs.

**7.48** The table below shows the number of complaints that the EP service received in 2023-24:

<b>Environmental Protection Figures</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
EP standard complaints (exc from full count)	2747
Noise complaints	1127
Refuse complaints	1128
Drainage complaints	167
State of premises	405
Burning toxic waste/odour/smoke/dust complaints	130
Fly tipping	8
Abandoned vehicles	515
Illegal encampments/Evictions	7

**7.49** The table below shows the number of complaints that the Animal Health service received in 2023-24:

<b>Animal Health and Welfare Enforcement Figures</b>	<b>2023-4</b>
Dog Welfare	109
Dog Warden Enquiries	257
Dog Straying Reports	375
Dog Attacks	184

**7.50 Environmental Protection and Animal Welfare and Enforcement Projects and Success stories**

Blackpool's Air Quality Strategy 2023-2028 has been completed focusing on the Air Quality in Blackpool and how the Local Authority can monitor and improve it.

**7.51** A warrant was executed with Social Services under the Mental Health Act to remove a resident from a property to a care facility whilst works were undertaken on their property. The work's included the clearance of the front and rear garden in compliance with an enforcement notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Repairs inside the property were also undertaken because a water leak had caused the ceiling to collapse and water to go into the electrics.

**7.52** There has been a number of success stories carried out by the Animal Welfare and Enforcement officers under the Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Some examples include:

- Formal Caution, advice and education given to a local kennelling facility
- Numerous entry warrants for animal welfare issues in collaboration with the RSPCA
- An increase in animal seizures on the grounds of animal welfare
- Prosecution against an irresponsible owner for failing to ensure his garden was secure for his animal, which was an aggressive dog.

## **8.0 Multi-agency Work**

**8.1** There has been considerable multi-agency work done across the PP department for a number of years. This approach is of significant importance in identifying all agency's tools and powers and how to utilise them most efficiently and effectively. This collaborative and innovative approach ensures all parties are meeting their obligations, ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our local communities and visitors.

**8.2** Some of the internal and external agencies we work closely with include:

- Parks and Leisure
- Public Health
- Highways
- Adult and Children Social Services
- Strategic Housing and Housing Options
- Police
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS)
- Gang Master and Labour Authority
- Immigration
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- UK Border Force

- Gambling Commission
- Transport Police
- Royal Society for the Protection of Animals (RSPCA)
- Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA)

- 8.3** The PP service benefit from strong links with internal and external partners. These include the CST who attend meetings with partners to protect and safeguard vulnerable people and victims of crime and ASB. They also go on visits with other partners, especially the Police where there are joint concerns or where civil tools and powers may be more effective, or Police powers may be needed from crimes committed. The team receive Protecting Vulnerable People (PVPs) reports from the Police so that help can be offered and action plans put in place quickly.
- 8.4** Trading Standards and Licensing Service, also receive PVPs and are notified of any safeguarding concerns in respect of elderly and vulnerable consumers who may be victims of rogue traders. Equally the PP service can submit PVP referrals to internal partners and external agencies where there is a safeguarding concern.
- 8.5** A recent example of good partnership work by TS officers was that of a rogue trader encountered in the Hampshire Place area of Blackpool. TS officers received reports of a suspected doorstep crime taking place with information suggesting two elderly victims had been targeted by rogue traders. Officers were immediately dispatched to attend the area supported by Police colleagues. Officers were able to speak to the suspected victims whilst the trader was still on site. This resulted in the trader being advised he would not be paid for work done (due to some technical failures on his part) and the team were able to reassure the victims that they would be safeguarded from any future visits by the trader. The Trader has also received a Community Protection Warning (CPW) preventing him from returning to the area for trade purposes unless it is in response to a pre-arranged appointment. The victim was safeguarded from paying out any money for work done that they did not agree to or did not need doing.
- 8.6** Other Examples of successful multi-agency operations include:
- 8.7** The Public Protection (PP) service has worked closely with Police and Community Safety Team (CST) colleagues resulting in a court ordered closure of two local shops. This action, taken under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, was achieved following a number of shop visits conducted by Trading Standards officers resulting in the acquisition of quantities of non-compliant vaping and illicit tobacco products.  
The information and intelligence obtained resulted in Immigration detaining a worker in the shop and the individual is pending deportation. BBC news have reported on one of these Closures recently.

- 8.8** Underage sales test purchasing operations involving the sale of alcohol or knives have recently been conducted with Police colleagues
- 8.9** The Food Control and Health and Safety team have worked with immigration and border control around takeaways for employing illegal workers. One of these establishments was fined £20,000.
- 8.10** PP officers have worked alongside Police colleagues around properties identified as being linked to Human Trafficking alongside significant electrical defects.
- 8.11** The teams have worked alongside LFRS and have carried out joint visits to properties of concern. These visits have identified a vast array of problems that have subsequently been remedied through joint working and collaboration.

Some examples of the defects found which has since been remedied include:

- Inadequate sleeping accommodation
  - Electrical shocks
  - Poorly maintained and faulty fire alarms
  - Illegal use of premises as HMOs
  - Bed bugs
  - Non-compliant passenger lifts
- 8.12** Housing Enforcement and Planning Enforcement teams have carried out joint visits where significant health and safety issues were identified. On one of the visits a window with no safety restriction next to a bunk bed was found. This is of particular concern as there was an incident a few years ago where a child fell out of the window of a hotel and had life changing injuries.
- 8.13** These multi-agency visits also encourage members of the public to talk to the teams when they are out and about. There have been numerous occasions where residents have provided significant intelligence which has been cross referenced and graded so that reactive visits were undertaken with other agencies and identified further issues in the area.

**8.14 Night Safe**

Night safe is a multi-agency team made up of internal and external parties, typically joining with the Police and LFRS, working together outside of core office hours to visit problematic premises.

Blackpool has a significant night time and weekend economy so it is of paramount importance that these visits take place for the safety of the public. These pro-active

inspection visits can involve all teams across the department depending on the types of premises they visit or need entry to.

Any enforcement action taken is in line with Blackpool Council's Enforcement Policy

## **9.0 Key Challenges and Focus Over the next 12 Months**

- 9.1** Historically PP has struggled to recruit people to vacant posts due to several issues. There are limited opportunities for progression and development in-house and limited numbers of qualified staff available in the open job market.
- 9.2** The qualifications market for PP staff is very limited, with courses for Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing being axed nationally from Universities therefore this is not only a local problem.
- 9.3** More recently the department has been liaising with the Council's Workforce Development team to identify new training opportunities. A Chartered Institute of Environmental Health accredited apprenticeship scheme has been found for officer training and development. This scheme allows officers to train on the job with a day release for formal teaching at the University of Leeds.
- 9.4** Night safe work will continue on an ad-hoc basis throughout 2024-25
- 9.5** The Contaminated Land Strategy will be updated over the next 12 months, this will be a comprehensive piece of work as part of the Environment Act 2021.
- 9.6** Health and Safety has been given additional powers to regulate the aesthetics industry, so this will be a new project with its own challenges.
- 9.7** Conversations are ongoing with a view to conducting joint working operations with Police Road Policing Unit in respect of the regulation of taxi and private hire licensable activities.
- 9.8** Trading Standards will continue to prioritise illicit trade for the foreseeable future. It is anticipated that it will be quite some time before we see effective change to the habits of the traders of illicit goods in Blackpool because of changes to legislation.
- 9.9** Vaping products are of national concern, this issue has recently been raised by the Prime Minister, who has now communicated plans to provide new legislation to address some of the concerns associated with the sale and supply of vaping products. Therefore, we expect that the numbers of illicit vaping products we see will worsen before it starts to improve. This work is supported heavily by our colleagues in Public Health.
- 9.10** The delivery of new Selective Licensing scheme will be a challenge in relation to



recruitment and successful delivery of the biggest scheme Blackpool has ever run.

- 9.11** The Animal Health, Welfare and Enforcement officers will continue to work alongside the RSPCA in regard to illegal puppy breeding and welfare cases as well as managing the law changes around XL Bullies with the Police Dog Liaison officers.
- 9.12** There are three PSPO renewals due before the end of 2024. These schemes require additional work and resources to ensure smooth implementation.
- 9.13** It is a priority for the Licensing Service to target resources in the enforcement of vehicles not regulated by Blackpool but trading in our area, to ensure they are operating lawfully.
- 9.14** The out of hour's noise nuisance service is currently under review. The service operates with support from Lancashire Police from April to November on a Friday and Saturday night from 9pm until 2am.
- 9.15** Public Protection have a member of staff from Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) transferring over to work within Public Protection to gain enforcement experience and support from the Public Protection officers. This is to enable BCH to carry out more of their own enforcement work with support from the Public Protection officers.

## **10.0 Opportunities/ Improvements**

- 10.1** Over the past 12 months there has been an increased amount of media coverage in regard to the successful work of the Public Protection service. This media coverage has showcased our strengths in collaborative and innovative working across multiple partnerships services internally and externally. This positive media is a further opportunity to explore, ensuring that our local communities and businesses are made aware that action will be taken, where appropriate to ensure compliance with the laws under which we operate.
- 10.2** Due to the success of the recent vape and tobacco operations Public Protection are hoping that Trading Standards can secure further additional financial support to continue this work. Consistent enforcement will be the key to the long-term improvements in this area and the positive impact this will have on the health of Blackpool's population.
- 10.3** We have significant intelligence provided to us from several internal and external sources which is graded to ensure Public Protection can take a more targeted approach therefore ensuring our resources are utilised efficiently and effectively.
- 10.4** The service is currently looking at alternative ICT solutions to improve efficiency, reporting and case management.

**10.5** We will continue to explore collaborative and innovative ways to ensure we meet service demands through continued partnership working and technology that may be available to us.

**11.0 Formal Enforcement Interventions with Legal Services.**

The following table shows the number of cases that have been passed to Legal Services for formal action or prosecution for 2023/2024.

Community Safety Team	22
Food Control and Health and Safety	6
Environmental Protection	1
Trading Standards/Licensing	5(plus appeals)
Housing Enforcement	6

**12.0** Additional Information regarding Public Protections annual performance (see appendices)

**13.0** Include any exempt information? No

**14.0 List of Appendices:**

- Appendix 9(a) - Individual Services main functions.
- Appendix 9(b) - Trading Standards and Licensing
- Appendix 9(c) - Health and Safety Actions
- Appendix 9(d) - Food Safety and Hygiene
- Appendix 9(e) - Environmental Protection and Animal Welfare and Enforcement
- Appendix 9(f) - Housing Enforcement

**15.0 Financial considerations:**

15.1 None.

**16.0 Legal considerations:**

16.1 None.

**17.0 Risk management considerations:**

17.1 None.

**18.0 Equalities considerations & the impact of this decision for our children and young people**

18.1 None.

**19.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

19.1 None.

**20.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

20.1 None.

**21.0 Background papers:**

21.1 None.