

# Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board

Thursday, 19th  
November, 2020  
4.30 pm

Virtual meeting



[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

---

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Pauline Ross  
Democratic Services Officer**

**Tel: 01527 881406  
e.mail: [p.ross@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:p.ross@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**

---

**WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS****VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD**

**THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2020**  
**AT 4.30 P.M.**

MEMBERS: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor A. D. Kent  
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor H. J. Jones  
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor J. Raine  
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor T. Wells  
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor N. Nazir  
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor W. King  
Worcester City Council: Councillor J. Squires (Vice-Chairman)  
Worcester City Council: Councillor M. Johnson  
Wychavon District Council: Councillor E. Stokes  
Wychavon District Council: Councillor D. Morris  
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor H. Dyke (Chairman)  
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor P. Dyke

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
2. Declarations of Interest  
  
To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 1st October 2020 (Pages 1 - 14)
4. Information Report - The increase in charges by Wyre Forest District Council (Pages 15 - 20)
5. Information Report - Covid Activity Costings (Pages 21 - 24)
6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services - Revenue Monitoring April - Sept 2020 (Pages 25 - 32)
7. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget 2021/22 - 2023/24 (Pages 33 - 44)
8. Activity & Performance Data - Quarters 1 and 2 (Pages 45 - 78)

9. Information Report - IT Update (Pages 79 - 82)
10. The new Statutory Standards for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Pages 83 - 86)
11. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

10th November 2020

---

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Pauline Ross  
Democratic Services Officer**

**Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA  
Tel: 01527 881406  
e.mail: [p.ross@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:p.ross@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**

## **GUIDANCE ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

---

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Bromsgrove District Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police Crime Panels meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting conducted remotely by Skype conferencing between invited participants and live streamed for general access via the Council's YouTube channel.

You are able to access the livestream of the meeting from the Committee Pages of the website, alongside the agenda for the meeting.

If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.

### **Notes:**

As referred to above, the virtual Skype meeting will be streamed live and accessible to view. Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when the Board might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded and for any such items the live stream will be suspended and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.

**WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS**

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD**

**THURSDAY, 1ST OCTOBER 2020, AT 4.30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors H. Dyke (Chairman), J. Squires (Vice-Chairman), A. D. Kent, H. J. Jones, J. Raine, T. Wells, N. Nazir, M. Johnson, E. Stokes, D. Morris and P. Dyke

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. C. Forrester, Ms. K. Goldey, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. M. Cox, Mr. D. Mellors, Mrs. P. Ross and J. Gresham

Partner Officers: Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council and Ms. M. Patel, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council.

11/20 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor W. King, Redditch Borough Council.

12/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

13/20 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020, were submitted.

Councillor Kent, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) referred to page 3 of the minutes and in doing so, commented that Members had been expecting an update report at the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020, however, it was agreed that officers would provide an update on the ICT system including timescales, at the next meeting of the Board.

Councillor Kent expressed his disappointment that Agenda Item 5, Information Report – IT Update being presented to Members today, did not include timescales as agreed.

In response the Head of Finance & Customer Services informed the Board that the implementation of the new Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council Finance system was due to go live in October 2020. However, there had been delays due to Covid 19; with rolling out the necessary training, testing the system and not being able to get officers on site. Officers were looking at the schedule to see if an

extension was needed, but currently the revised implementation 'go-live' date was the end of November 2020.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the comments, as detailed in the preamble above; the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020, be approved as a correct record.

14/20

### **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGETS 2020/21**

The Head of Finance & Customer Services, Bromsgrove District Council, introduced the report and in doing so highlighted that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services budget for 2020/2021 as agreed by the Board at the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019, had had to be adjusted due to late changes, as follows:-

- The late changes in the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) forward pension funding rate from 16.9% to 20.5%;
- The Pay Award of 2.75% (budgeted at 2%);
- The increase in charges from Wyre Forest for accommodation and ICT hosting; and
- A change in the pest control service at Wyre Forest in March 2020.

As detailed on pages 17 to 21 of the main agenda report.

Councillor Kent, BDC queried the refund of £7k to Wyre Forest District Council with regards to their Pest Control Services; and the increase of £13k in accommodation charges and ICT hosting from Wyre Forest District Council in March 2020.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded and informed the Board that Wyre Forest District Council had ceased offering subsidised Pest Control Services for residents in receipt of specific benefits in February / March 2020.

With regards to the increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting, following discussions with the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of IT, Wyre Forest District Council, the overall cost of inflation was discussed and it was agreed that, since the contract was initially entered into in 2015, an adjustment was made upwards, which was simply a reflection of the increase over that 5 year period. It was not just to cover the ICT provision it also included a proportion for the increase in rent for the space occupied by WRS officers at Wyre Forest House. The initial agreement was a fixed annual charge over a 5-year period. A Consumer Price Index was used.

The Head of Regulatory Services agreed to provide Members with further details on the discussion that took place in respect of the £13k increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting.

Councillor J. Raine, Malvern Hills District Council commented that after getting his authority views on the pay award, which was more than expected, it was agreed that it was well deserved, particularly in these difficult times.

Further discussion followed, whereby Councillor E. Stokes, Wychavon District Council also expressed her concerns with regards to Recommendation 1.4 and if calculations were based on a Consumer Price Index, was that not compounding it.

The Council's Legal Advisor clarified that each Recommendation could be decided on individually.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Recommendation 1.4, as detailed on page 18 of the main agenda report, be deferred; and
- b) the Head of Regulatory Services be tasked to provide further information in relation to the increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting from Wyre Forest District Council, at the next meeting of the Board.

**RECOMMENDED** that partner authorities approve the following for 2020/21:

- 1.1 the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to increase in WRS pension forward funding rate and recommend the increase to individual partner councils:-

Bromsgrove District Council	£11k
Malvern Hills District Council	£10k
Redditch Borough Council	£13k
Worcester City Council	£13k
Wychavon District Council	£18k
Wyre Forest District Council	£12k
Total	£77k

- 1.2 the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to the additional increase in pay award of 0.75% from the original estimated 2% and recommend the increase to individual partner councils:-

Bromsgrove District Council	£3k
Malvern Hills District Council	£3k
Redditch Borough Council	£4k
Worcester City	£3k

Council	
Wychavon District Council	£5k
Wyre Forest District Council	£3k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21k</b>

- 1.3 the refund to Wyre Forest in relation to the change of Pest Control Services and recommend the refund to individual partner councils:-

Wyre Forest District Council	£7k
------------------------------	-----

- 1.5 the revised budget for 2020/21 and partner percentage allocations for 2020/21 onwards, due to the change in pest control service at Wyre Forest:-

	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	468	14.59
Malvern Hills District Council	412	12.82
Redditch Borough Council	564	17.57
Worcester City Council	532	16.58
Wychavon District	748	23.29
Wyre Forest District Council	486	15.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	

15/20

### **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - JUNE 2020**

Members were asked to consider the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring for April to June 2020.

The Head of Finance & Customer Services, Bromsgrove District Council, introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 27 and 28 of the main agenda report.

Members were asked to note that the budget may need to be adjusted slightly following the deferment of Recommendation 1.4, Agenda Item 4.

Members were further informed that the report showed a projected outturn 2020/2021 of £26k deficit. This was an estimation to the year-end based on the following assumptions:-

- There were two vacant posts within the service, we have assumed no recruitment to the Business & Relationship Manager for the current year to assist in reducing the projected outturn deficit. This would need to be reviewed at the end of quarter 3. The other vacant post was a Regulatory Apprentice which we hoped to recruit to in the near future.
- If April to June 20 spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of year, there would be an overspend on this service of £20k. WRS officers would continue to monitor and analyse this spend and advise of final recharges for 2020/21 as soon as possible. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners was:-

Redditch Borough Council	£6k
Wychavon District Council	£4k

Members' attention was drawn to the figures detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, which detailed a -£60k variance, due to a reduction in dogs straying, the out of hours dog warden had been taken in house. This could peak though when lockdown started to be lifted. Also, the variance of £19k due to additional costs relating to Gull Control & Pest Control that was charged to relevant partners.

Councillor J. Squires, Worcester City Council raised the following question "WRS was in receipt of a grant from government around Covid-19, but this was not included in any of the finance papers before Members tonight. Where / when would this feature; and what work had been carried out."

The Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has received a sum of money from government for the disease control activity that was required to manage the Covid-19 outbreak. WRS were asked to provide Environmental Health Officer cover for the local outbreak response team; to work with the Public Health Consultants. Environmental Health Officers time had been costed in order to help manage this and the work needed to address the outbreak. The estimated bill to WCC was £168k, which had not yet been drawn down, however WCC were aware that they would be billed. All of the funds would be spent, if not more, in order to continue to carry out the normal WRS business activities.

The Head of Regulatory Services further informed Members that he was not aware of any additional funding for Covid-19 related work. He had not approached the partner Chief Executives / Managing Directors yet to request further funding, but it was something he was considering given the significant draw on WRS resources with Covid-19.

In response to Councillor J. Squires, Worcester City Council, the Head of Regulatory Services explained that the financial impact of Covid-19 and any impact on WRS income would be seen in quarter 2. The Technical Services Managers team were working on income generation, with some difficult projects that would generate some income. His best guess estimate would be potentially £30/40k reduction in income.

Work with the Public Health Consultants local outbreak response team did not commence until after quarter 1, the cost of that work and the monies drawn down from WCC would be included in the quarter 2 financial monitoring report.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the final financial position for the period April – June 2020 be noted;
- b) partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2020-21 in relation to Bereavements as follows:

<b>Council</b>	<b>Apr–June 20 Actual for Bereavements £000</b>
Redditch Borough Council	3
Malvern Hills District Council	2
Worcester City Council	3
Bromsgrove District Council	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

- c) partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2020-21 in relation to Pest Control as follows:

<b>Council</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn Recharge in Relation to Pest Control 2020/21 £000</b>
Redditch Borough Council	6
Wychavon District Council	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

- d) partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2020-21 in relation to three

additional Technical Officers

<b>Council</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Income Generation £000</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Gull Control £000</b>
Redditch Borough Council	4	1	
Malvern Hills District Council	3	9	
Worcester City Council	4	4	35
Bromsgrove District Council	3	6	
Wychavon District Council	5	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	3	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>

16/20

**INFORMATION REPORT - FORECAST IMPACT OF FUTURE SALARY SETTLEMENTS**

Members received an Information Report - Forecast impact of future salary settlements.

The Head of Regulatory Services reminded Members that they had previously asked for information regarding the potential impacts of future salary increases on the overall Worcestershire Regulatory Services budget. Some Members of the Board had expressed their concern at the host authority's normal policy of only forecasting 1% salary increases each year beyond the current.

Members raised their concerns when it started to become clear that the salary settlement for 2020-21 was likely to be 2% or more and, as we have been told in recent weeks, 2.75% had been agreed between employers and unions. The forecast increase in forward pension funding also exceeded the 16.9% originally indicated by the Pension Scheme

and WRS partners had had to contribute 20.5% for its members of staff in the shared service.

In order to give the Board a clear understanding of the financial information looking forward, the host authority accountant who supported the WRS Management Team had provided the figures that informed the budget setting process that the Board undertook in November 2019 in Table 1 of the Appendix. At this time the pay increase was being anticipated as 2%, with a 1% per annum increase following on from that.

2020/21 was also to be a re-calculation year for pensions funding by the Pension Fund and it was assumed that WRS would follow the host authority with an increase in forward funding of 16.9%. The impacts of this were illustrated in Table 1 of the Appendix; and Members may recall that they agreed to increase the base budget by £90,106 collectively to cover off a salary increase of 2% and the predicted increase to pension forward funding.

The Head of Finance & Customer Services, Bromsgrove District Council clarified that the projection was an underfunding and that this was based on The Actuary assumptions.

**RESOLVED** that the Information Report – Forecast impact on future salary requirement be noted.

17/20

### **ACTIVITY & PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTER 1 2020/21**

The Licensing and support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarter 1 2020/2021.

Members were informed that the report focused on quarter 1, but the actual data allowed a comparison with previous quarters and years.

At the last Board meeting in June, Members received an update on the work the service had undertaken in relation to Covid-19 since the beginning of lockdown. The report focused on the other work carried out during quarter 1, on what was often referred to as our 'business as usual' activities rather than the disease response work that featured in the June report.

The first quarter of 2020/2021 commenced with the economy in lockdown and with many of the businesses WRS would normally deal with either closed or operating on a different trading model (by takeaway for food or delivery for non-food products). This made this quarter unlike any other in the 10-year history of WRS.

The Food Standards Agency suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning on lockdown in March and this continued throughout the first quarter. This explained the low number of inspections, reflecting that the service was mainly engaging with new entrants to the sector or those wanting re-rating. Any allegations of serious misconduct were followed up.

Stray dog numbers continued to follow their downward trend. Officers were concerned that the economic difficulties might lead to a spike in dog abandonment as people decided that they could not afford to feed their pets, however it appeared that the government's financial measures, whilst not having this in mind, may have had a spin off in preventing this.

Numbers of license applications were also down in quarter 1. Usually there would be an increase in applications for temporary event notices during this period but with pubs shut and music festivals off the menu for much of the summer, these applications were not received

Planning application numbers fell during quarter 1, again linked to the lockdown. However, numbers started to rise again sharply subsequent to this. Environmental Information Requests often associated with the planning and development process were also down for this period.

One area that didn't fall was nuisance/ pollution complaints. With many more people working from home and encountering situations they would not normally encounter.

Members were often reminded that the reportable performance indicators were more limited in quarter 1, but the year appears to have started reasonably well from a customer satisfaction perspective, with the non-business customer measure at 74.6% and business customers at 99.3%. Given the pressure on the service during quarter 1 this was seen as positive.

Compliments outnumbered complaints by 3:1 (18:6) and staff sickness was looking reasonably good at 0.61 days per FTE. This was on a par with previous years at quarter 1 (0.75).

Councillor J, Raine, Malvern Hills District Council commented that it would be useful to have the previous year's figures included as a benchmark.

**RESOLVED** that the Activity and Performance Data report for Quarter 1, be noted; and that Board Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to fellow Members of each partner authority.

18/20

**INFORMATION REPORT - IT UPDATE**

Members received an Information Report – IT update, which Members had requested at the last meeting of the Board.

The Technical Services Manager informed the Board that the current work programme listed 18 projects. The four significant key elements being: -

**Reliable and secure digital management systems and infrastructure**

WRS records were cleansed in line with the WRS retention and disposal policy every quarter with the actual policy itself being reviewed every six months for appropriateness. In May 2019, the Electronic Document Management System (EDRMS) system was included in this process.

A programme for updating IT equipment commenced in late 2019. At that time a large number of laptops were from 2013 with the remainder from 2015. Therefore, the proposed programme for the replacement of 2013 laptops was a mixture of migrating 2013 laptops to UDC mode or a new laptop depending on officer need, and for the 2015 ones.

**Remote working capabilities**

Prior to March, the majority of the workforce were able to work remotely, but there was a proportion who were not able to do so without changes to processes and equipment. The IT equipment updating programme was suspended in March to enable the IT Host to focus on enabling remote working (from home) for the remaining officers.

In 2019 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC) upgraded their Microsoft licence to include Microsoft Office 365 and to enable access to Microsoft Teams. WRS had remained on BDC and RBC Microsoft Office licence even after the move to the Wyre Forest network. Unfortunately, BDC and RBC did not include WRS in this licence upgrade. This was further complicated by BDC Corporate Management Team indicating that internal meetings should only be conducted by Skype or Microsoft Teams without WRS staff necessarily having access to either these platforms.

**Website Development**

The WRS website was currently built on an older version of the Umbraco software platform. A decision was taken last year to upgrade to Umbraco version 8, which would enable significantly more functionality.

An outline of our agreed requirements was drawn up and provided to Wyre Forest IT who agreed to assist with the initial set up. A background structure to the new web site in Umbraco 8 was completed with training notes and an agreed WRS style guide. Unfortunately, Umbraco 8 was significantly different to the current version and with Covid-19 it meant that familiarisation/training had been slow and difficult for the two Officers leading on developing the first few pages.

Lead Officers from within WRS were invited to attend a training session on Umbraco 8 to formulate a detailed project plan. Following this, a decision would be taken by managers as to whether outside support was necessary to make the new website as good as it can be.

### **Integration with BDC Finance project**

WRS were notified in 2019 of the intention by BDC and RBC to change their finance system. As BDC hosted WRS, WRS used their HR, procurement and finance system. Unfortunately, direct access to the current system was not possible for WRS staff from their Wyre Forest Citrix working environment.

Where necessary, officers accessed the internet based system either from their laptop desktop or one of two dedicated PCs in Wyre Forest House.

As reported at the Board meeting in June, the new Finance Project was due to go-live in October 2020, this was pushed back to November.

WRS Managers were invited to participate and be involved with the project working group in September to ensure that WRS requirements were satisfied by the new set up and to enable WRS officers to continue working in their Wyre Forest Citrix environment but still take payments, approve requisitions and authorise invoices.

Members were reassured WRS would continue to contribute to the development of the project to ensure their processes were included and could be used effectively.

Councillor Kent, Bromsgrove District Council stated that he found the report deeply unsatisfactory. It appeared that there was poor communication, no dates for delivery and that the same update had been provided at previous Board meetings about the WRS website and being able to take payments.

Councillor Kent further referred to the trial of UDC laptops and the upgraded Microsoft licence to include Microsoft Office 365 and access to Microsoft Teams; as detailed on pages 73 and 74 of the main agenda report.

In his opinion there appeared to be a total communication breakdown and a myriad of excuses and in his opinion, it should be escalated to a much higher level and that a Gantt chart be produced with delivery timescales.

In response the Head of Regulatory Services commented that clearly the UDC laptops did not work for accessing video conferencing platforms like Skype for Business, so that decision had had to be reversed, however at the time the decision was made, before Covid-19, it was thought to be a sensible decision.

Whilst he appreciated Councillor Kent's comments it was very difficult at this moment in time to move things forward and to keep their own side of the business running. The service had moved forward with using Zoom as a platform.

The decision taken to trial UDC laptops was a cost effective way of continuing to manage mobile and flexible working before the pandemic.

It had now been identified that Umbraco 8 was much more complicated. Currently WRS may not have the capacity, in house, to carry out a full migration of the WRS website from the current system into this new platform. If that was the case then he would have to draw up the kind of project plan that Councillor Kent had suggested, because an external person would have to be brought in to deliver that.

The Head of Service informed the Board that currently the focus of the service had to be on maintaining the response to the pandemic and to also maintaining the general business of WRS.

There was a huge strain on the management team and officers that was stretching the budget considerably, it was not easy to try and juggle everything that both he and his officers were currently dealing with.

The taking of payments had been moved forward as much as possible. He understood that Members were keen to see additional payment facilities being made available on the WRS website. But this was a much larger step which the Director of Finance & Resources, BDC, had been working on and that required the buy in of all s151 officers from all partner authorities; to make that decision that WRS would take payment on behalf all partner authorities. In the past some partners were not keen on this approach, so there was a lot of work that needed to be put in on this; at a time when the service was very stretched making it difficult to achieve.

Should Members be in agreement he was happy to provide a more detailed update at the next meeting of the Board. He would also ask Members to note that the service was under huge pressure responding to Covid-19.

Councillor J. Raine Malvern Hills District Council also commented that Councillor Kent was correct and it was important that WRS had the best technology, however Board Members had to take some responsibility. In his opinion WRS had been famously underfunded from the start. Members must be part of the solution and not just be seen to be criticising unfilled ambitions.

Councillor H. Jones, BDC, stated that it would be nice to have an upgraded website. However, having worked with WRS officers these past few months and seeing how they were practically on their knees dealing with Covid-19 issues, whilst maintaining their normal workload; it was important that frontline services were protected and Members

needed to support WRS officers responding to the demands of Covid-19.

Councillor H. Jones then took the opportunity to congratulate all WRS officers on the amazing work they were carrying out.

**RESOLVED** that the Information report – IT Update be noted.

19/20

**INFORMATION REPORT - JOINT WORKING WITH PUBLIC HEALTH TO CONTROL COVID-19 OUTBREAKS IN WORK SETTINGS**

Members received an Information Report on the joint working with Public Health to control Covid-19 outbreaks in work settings.

The Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager introduced the report and in doing so, stated that as Members were aware Covid-19 posed a serious and imminent risk to public health and had been declared a global pandemic. On 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the first death from coronavirus in the UK was confirmed.

Local Authorities, with key NHS partners, worked alongside Public Health England (PHE) on the reactive response to outbreaks, following the usual arrangements in place for any outbreak situation.

National contact tracers followed up most non-complex, routine positive cases and their contacts and would escalate any complex cases, clusters and outbreaks to the West Midlands Public Health England team, who worked with the Local Authority to rapidly prevent and control transmission.

WRS Environmental Health expertise and resources were focussed on outbreak investigation, proactive advice and enforcement to supplement the National contact tracing programme. This was a key role in effective disease control and prevention and WRS officers had the essential experience, professional and legislative tools required to manage and control any outbreaks that occurred.

The report also contained information on the 3 outbreak investigations and the responses that WRS has delivered. 70 Covid-19 related service requests had been dealt with in the last week and the total number of requests for advice and investigations into non-compliance had crept up to 1600 in Worcestershire.

In addition to this officers had had to keep up with an unprecedented amount of legislation and amendments.

Officers had also worked with colleagues at West Mercia Police and had secured the closure and penalty fines in relation to a public house in Redditch that had carried on operating as a nightclub.

Officers were also working with colleagues in Public Health looking at the issue of local contact tracing arrangements, where national contact tracing had not been successful.

Councillor J. Raine, Malvern Hills District Council, highlighted that it was a most important report and Members should take the opportunity to recognise how hard WRS officers had been working in supporting Public Health colleagues as well as carrying out their normal workload. He expressed his thanks to all WRS officers.

Councillor E. Stokes, Wychavon District Council, commented that she was happy to endorse Councillor Raine's thanks and agreed that it was an amazing report.

In response to Councillor Stokes with regard to the £168k to be drawn down from WCC, the Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that the calculation of the full costs was for the 3 officers working as part of the Covid-19 direct response team.

A lot of the work that the Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager had referred to, was work that WRS was delivering, because Council's collectively across the country had been designated by the Secretary of State as the enforcement arm for all of the new regulations that were coming in; in particular business controls, none of which was funded. The £168k to be received from WCC was purely for local outbreak response teams. All of the other duties that government had dropped onto WRS, to regulate the local economy, were having to be addressed currently from within the WRS existing budget.

Senior officers were looking at what WRS needed going forward to bring that extra resource in and he had primed the Chief Executives / Managing Directors across all partner authorities.

The Chairman took the opportunity to echo everything that Members had said and stated that all Members were aware of the brilliant job that WRS officers were doing.

**RESOLVED** that the Information Report – Joint working with Public Health to control Covid-19 outbreaks in work settings, be noted; and that Board Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to fellow Members of each partner authority.

The meeting closed at 5.51 p.m.

Chairman



## WRS Board: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### Information Report: The increase in charges by Wyre Forest District Council

**Recommendation** Members are asked to note the report and either:

- i. Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to the increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting from Wyre Forest and recommend the increase to individual partner councils, as indicated in the table at Appendix A or,
- ii. Approve that the increase should be covered by income generation and, in event of income targets not being met, that the costs can be covered by reserves.

**Background** At the October 2020 meeting the Head of Service agreed to bring a paper to the Board to make them aware of the process that was followed leading to this increase in charges. This paper provides information about the timing and the discussion between the Head of Service and other officer members of the Board regarding the situation.

**Report** In 2014/15, before the service moved to Wyre Forest House, a search for accommodation across the local government family in the county was undertaken. The service was offered space in Redditch Library, Wyre Forest House and the old Police Station in Pershore. The review concluded that the Wyre Forest offer was the most cost effective and, with office space that was ready to move into without any additional work, it was the easiest to adopt.

At the end of January 2020, the Head of Service was approached by the WFDC IT Manager and their Director of Finance as the original agreement for accommodation and IT support was coming to an end. The initial conversation covered only IT provision but, in the first week of February, it was confirmed that a similar uplift would be requested for the accommodation. The increases were based on the compounded impact of the rate of inflation over that period. The table below demonstrates how colleagues at WFDC arrived at their final figures:

Year	RPI Annual %
2019	2.6
2018	2.7
2017	4.1
2016	2.5
2015	1.2

Applying these figures on an annual basis looking backwards leads to a compound figure of £50,000 per annum for IT provision (up from £44,000,) and £61,000 per annum for

accommodation (up from £54,000.) These figures are rounded, so the overall increase to the nearest £1,000 is £13,000.

The Head of Service expressed some concern that, coming at this point in the year made it difficult to incorporate these increases into the WRS budget as it had been set for the year already. WFDC officers apologised for this issue but as the Head of Service had to agree, this was not the first time that the need for the partnership to set a budget in November caused an issue for one or other partners in their own budget setting processes.

The service provided by WFDC IT team is very good and, as part of the annual staff survey, staff still comment on how changing ICT host improved their experience of work based IT solutions. The office accommodation at Wyre Forest House is also of an excellent standard, better than many other public buildings in the County.

Head of Service consulted with the officer members of the Board. Whilst all were disappointed that WFDC had asked for an increase, they did not object outright and reluctantly accepted that an inflation only increase was difficult to resist. The Head of Service queried the potential availability of other suitable accommodation within the partner portfolio of properties, but it was clear that nothing suitable was available at that time that could provide sufficient quantity of space and desk numbers, even before a consideration of cost was made. Only the old Police Station in Pershore remained available and this would have needed some work to bring it up to standard and make it suitable. The Head of Service also spoke to the County Council regarding space at County Hall, but at this time, there was not sufficient available.

Members should also be aware that, as well as the obvious disruptions to work and the workforce, a re-location would also entail officers becoming entitled to a disbursement payment equivalent to the mileage cost of any additional home to work travel for a period of one year after the move. This was a not un-substantial amount the last time the service had to move from Worcester.

On balance, the Head of Service felt that the sensible solution was to pay the uplift and continue with current arrangements. The increase spend is within the Head of Service's remit for decision making.

In terms of the service's accommodation, the partnership is now on a rolling contract that can be reviewed annually. We will ask colleagues at WFDC to be clear of their intentions for rent increases earlier in the year. It also gives the opportunity for the service to give consideration in the medium term to relocating should that be beneficial to service delivery.

One of the results of Covid 19 is the increasingly ubiquitous nature of working from home and this learning should give Councils the opportunity to re-consider staff working practices and accommodation needs. This may lead to partners, or even the County Council having further capacity available that may be suitable. A more central location for the service might have some benefits, albeit there would also be costs associated with moving.

With the current pandemic and the way in which resources are stretched, it would not be practical to consider this for 2021/22 but certainly exploring options the following year with, if it is beneficial, a move at the end of 2022/23 or in the early part of 2023/24 could be considered.



Originally, officer members of the Board indicated their preferred option was to simply include this increase in the income targets for the year. Given the current situation however, the Head of Service felt it worth asking members to consider whether they would make an uplift to the budget to cover this. If members do not wish to agree to uplift the budget by this amount, the option of reverting to fund this with income remains. Should the overall income target not be met, members have previously agreed that the service reserve can be used to cover overspends and this increase would simply be rolled into this calculation at the end of the year.

Should members be content with the calculations indicated in the report and agree to increase the base budget to cover these costs, the table in Appendix A demonstrates the amounts by which each partner's contribution will increase.

#### Contact Point

Simon Wilkes  
 Head of Regulatory Services  
 Email: [simon.wilkes@worcestersregservices.gov.uk](mailto:simon.wilkes@worcestersregservices.gov.uk)  
 Tel: 01562 738088

#### Appendix A: Table of partner contributions for this specific matter

Bromsgrove District Council	£2k
Malvern Hills District Council	£2k
Redditch Borough Council	£2k
Worcester City Council	£2k
Wychavon District Council	£3k
Wyre Forest District Council	£2k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13k</b>







This page is intentionally left blank



## WRS Board: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### Information Report: Covid Activity Costings

**Recommendation** Members are asked to note the report.

**Background**

At the October 2020 meeting several members thanked officers for all of the hard work they were doing and suggested that they would like to see additional funding being made available to support the service. The Head of Service explained that the WRS Management Team was giving active consideration to bidding to the Chief Executives for additional resources but that a paper would be brought forward to outline current spending levels on Covid related activity.

**Report**

When the first lockdown commenced at the end of March 2020, it quickly became clear that local authorities were going to incur significant additional costs for work related to controlling the pandemic. The Secretary of State made an announcement declaring that both Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers would be responsible for enforcement of the business closure and control provisions that required some businesses to close, others to operate by delivery only and moved many hospitality businesses towards takeaway only activities.

Our host authority immediately asked all of its services to record all Covid related activity in order that estimates of cost could be given to central government, in order that support payments might match the actual costs. WRS officers are already required to record the time taken on the majority of their activities, so it was a relatively simple exercise to add some additional coding into our time recording system and to ask officers to use these to record how much time is spent on these activities.

Because we have our fee earner model for charging out our officers for commercial activities it is a very straight forward exercise to convert the figures to a monetary amount that reflects the full cost of the officer undertaking the activities.

The table at appendix A contains the monthly totals, starting in April 2020 for the cost of undertaking Covid related activities on behalf of the six councils and the cost of the team embedded in the Local Outbreak Response Team. Given the nature of the pandemic, we have not sought to allocate these costs geographically to individual partners. This would go against the "One Worcestershire" approach that all seven councils in the County have taken towards tackling the pandemic.



Members will note that these amounts are not insubstantial. The service has been fortunate that the Food Standards Agency opted to put a moratorium on routine food hygiene inspection at the beginning of the pandemic. This has allowed the vast majority of staff resource that would otherwise have been dedicated to food related work to be put into pandemic response.

However, as members will see from this month's activity report, the Summer saw the usual spike in nuisance complaints and at a level equal to or beyond 2018/19. It was certainly much busier than last summer, showing that 2019/20 was simply a blip in the normal levels of nuisance activity. If anything, this summer was exacerbated by more people being at home during the day time with the furlough scheme and working from home being the norm. Limitations of opening for pubs probably led to fewer complaints relating to the night time economy but other alleged nuisances made up for this.

As the economy has re-opened, the service being in essence an economic regulator, so the pressures have grown on the service and its staff. Balancing business as usual activity has become more difficult and additional agency staffing resource has been brought in to support the efforts. This will be funded by the monies due from the County Council to cover the cost our officers who form part of the Local Outbreak Response Team. These pressures will only grow as numbers of cases rise and it is almost certain that more capacity will be required for the service to both deliver pandemic controls and respond to what we all refer to as "business as usual" activities.

The Community Environmental Health team has been re-organised to deliver both Covid controls and an embedded unit within the Local Outbreak Response team. The table below shows how this has been done:

<b>Area of Work</b>	<b>No FTE allocated</b>
<b>Covid Compliance Activities</b>	6.8FTE
<b>Local Outbreak Response Team</b>	3FTE, soon increasing to 4.6FTE
<b>Nuisance and other Business as usual complaints</b>	6FTE
<b>Capacity brought in to support BAU activity</b>	3FTE, soon to be 5FTE

Originally 3 members of the Technical Services team were moved into Community Environmental Health to help deal with capacity issues. They have had to move back into Technical Services to deliver income generation activities.

Work in the Local Outbreak Response team is being funded by monies from the County Council that government has already provided for the disease response. This is covering the cost of the additional capacity brought in to deal with business as usual activities. The County Council is currently awaiting confirmation from Government on further funding bids to provide additional capacity for backwards contact tracing within the Local Outbreak Response Team, for delivery by WRS, and also for dealing with referrals from the national contact tracing system to deal with those people who have a positive test but have not responded to calls from the national system. This is known as "lost to follow up." WRS will pick up this work along with district colleagues to deliver this service aspect, including door knocking where local telephone calls do not lead to a response.



As members will know, WRS has been entrusted with delivering the project referred to nationally as Covid marshals and locally as Covid Advisors. The district councils have pooled this funding for WRS to deliver this advisory work but the funding is also earmarked for additional enforcement work. A proportion of the funding can be used to cover the cost of things like out-of-hours enforcement, so we avoid being short of capacity during the week and additional capacity generally. Work has commenced on recruiting this team and the first deployments will have taken place over the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup>/ 8<sup>th</sup> November.

This report should serve as a reminder to partners that, although many areas of local government are striving to move into Recovery phase, this service remains an embedded part of the Response phase and will be for the medium term. The service will do its best to contribute to the Recovery phase as it did during last year's winter flooding events but members need to be aware that many balls are currently being juggled by the service and we are doing our best not to drop any.

**Contact Point**

Simon Wilkes  
 Head of Regulatory Services  
 Email: [simon.wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk](mailto:simon.wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk)  
 Tel: 01562 738088

**Appendix A: Table of expenditure on Covid related activities Apr- Oct 2020**

April	£29,482.46
May	£ 20,527.24
June	£30,878.62
July	£37,353.87
August	£21,684.53
September	£27,110.66
October	£36,144.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>£203,181.88</b>



This page is intentionally left blank



## WRS Board 19th November 2020

### WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING April – Sept 2020

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – Sept 2020
- 1.2 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2020-21 in relation to Bereavements

Council	Apr–Sept 20 Actual for Bereavements £000
Redditch Borough Council	5
Malvern Hills District Council	2
Worcester City Council	7
Bromsgrove District Council	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

- 1.3 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2020-21 in relation to Pest Control

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn Recharge in Relation to Pest Control 2020/21 £000
Redditch Borough Council	9
Wychavon District Council	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

1.4 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2020-21 in relation to three additional Technical Officers

<b>Council</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Income Generation £000</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Gull Control £000</b>
Redditch Borough Council	3	2	
Malvern Hills District Council	2	9	
Worcester City Council	2	2	35
Bromsgrove District Council	2	6	
Wychavon District Council	3	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	2	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>

## Contribution to Priorities

The robust financial management arrangements ensure the priorities of the service can be delivered effectively.

## Introduction/Summary

This report presents the financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services for the period April – Sept 2020.

## Background

The financial monitoring reports are presented to this meeting on a quarterly basis.

## Report

The following reports are included for Board's Attention:

- Revenue Monitoring - April – Sept 20 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown - April – Sept 20 – Appendix 2

### Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. The revised budget 2020/21 is based on the recommended budget funding as stated in the previous agenda regarding the increase in ICT & Rent at Wyre Forest item. This shows a projected outturn 2020/21 of £17k deficit . It is appreciated this is an estimation to the year end based on following assumptions:-

- There are two vacant posts within the service, we have assumed no recruitment to the Business & Relationship Manager for the current year to assist in reducing the projected outturn deficit. This will need to be reviewed at the end of qtr 3. The other vacant post is a Regulatory Apprentice which we hope to recruit to in the near future.
- If April to Sept 20 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be an overspend on this service of £16k. WRS officers will continue to monitor and analyse this spend and advise of final recharges for 2020/21 as soon as possible. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners is:-

Redditch Borough Council	£9k
Wychavon District Council	£7k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – Sept 20 to be funded by partners. These costs are charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge it is not possible to project a final outturn figure:-

Redditch Borough Council	£5k
Malvern Hills District Council	£2k
Worcester City Council	£7k
Bromsgrove District Council	£5k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – Sept 20
- Any grant funded expenditure is shown separate to the core service costs as this is not funded by the participating Councils.

### **Financial Implications**

None other than those stated in the report

### **Sustainability**

None as a direct result of this report

### **Contact Points**

Chris Forrester – [chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers**

Detailed financial business case

This page is intentionally left blank

WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2020/21

Total WRS Sept 20 / Period 6 - 20/21

Appendix 1

	Revised Full Year Budget 20-21	Revised Budget Apr - Sept 20	Committed Expenditure Apr - Sept 20	Variance	Projected outturn	Projected Outturn Variance	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Direct Expenditure</b>							
Employees							
Salary	2,851	1,426	1,376	-49	2,670	-181	Savings due to employees working on Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT)
Agency Staff	0	0	16	16	145	145	Backfilling for employees working on LORT
Employee Insurance	25	12	12	0	25	0	
<b>Sub-Total - Employees</b>	<b>2,876</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>1,405</b>	<b>-33</b>	<b>2,839</b>	<b>-37</b>	
<b>Premises</b>							
Rent / Hire of Premise	61	30	30	-1	60	-1	
Cleaning	1	0	0	-0	1	-0	
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Sub-Total - Premises</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>-1</b>	
<b>Transport</b>							
Vehicle Hire	13	6	1	-5	13	0	
Vehicle Fuel	8	4	2	-2	6	-2	
Road Fund Tax	1	1	1	0	1	0	
Vehicle Insurance	5	2	2	0	5	0	
Vehicle Maintenance	3	2	2	1	4	1	
Car Allowances	75	38	22	-15	60	-15	
<b>Sub-Total - Transport</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>-16</b>	
<b>Supplies and Services</b>							
Furniture & Equipment	32	16	13	-3	40	9	Due to essential calibration on noise monitoring equipment
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	1	0	-1	2	-0	
Printing & Photocopying	17	9	7	-1	16	-1	
Postage	11	6	5	-0	11	0	
ICT	40	20	22	2	43	3	
Telephones	21	11	7	-4	18	-4	
Training & Seminars	23	11	1	-10	23	0	
Insurance	20	10	10	0	20	0	
Third Party Payments	150	75	75	-0	150	0	£100k BDC hosting / £50k WFDC ICT hosting.
<b>Sub-Total - Supplies &amp; Service</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Contractors</b>							
Dog Warden	145	73	24	-49	85	-60	Due to reduction in dogs straying, OOH dog warden has been taken in house. May peak when lockdown starts to be lifted.
Pest Control	50	25	40	15	69	19	Due to additional costs relating to Gull Control & Pest Control which is charged to relevant partners and offset in the income line
Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	62	31	36	5	66	4	
Other contractors/consultants	3	1	3	2	5	2	
Water Safety	5	3	0	-2	3	-2	
Food Safety	1	1	0	-0	1	-0	
Environmental Protection	10	5	22	17	29	20	Bereavement / Works in Default to be charged to relevant partners, offset in Income
Grants / Subscriptions	13	6	12	5	16	4	
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	3	0	-3	5	-1	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>-15</b>	
<b>Income</b>							
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-440	-220	-202	17	-361	79	See Append 2
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>-440</b>	<b>-220</b>	<b>-202</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>-361</b>	<b>79</b>	
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>-65</b>	<b>3,228</b>	<b>17</b>	

Notes:-

This page is intentionally left blank

**Worcestershire Regulatory Services Income 2020/21**

<b>Income from Partners</b>	<b>April to Sept 20</b>
	<b>£</b>
Budget	1,605,105
Bereavement / Public Burials	18,835
Pest Control Overspend - Wychavon & Redditch	8,060
Employee for Animal Activity - Apr - ~Sept 20	17,168
Employee for Income Generation - Apr - ~Sept 20	1,943
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Apr - Sept 20 - Worcs City	21,672
Health & Safety Investigation - Malvern Hills	2,760
	<b><u>1,675,543</u></b>
<b>Grant Income</b>	
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	7,038
	<b><u>7,038</u></b>
<b>Other Income</b>	
Stray Dog Income	10,518
Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal & Admin Support	26,600
Planning Support Work	14,731
Contaminated Land Work	18,690
PPC Work	7,982
MOD Contract	20,000
Primary Authority work	863
Screening / Compliance Review / Nox Tubes	869
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	3,303
Pest Control	3,544
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	14,948
Licensing - Training / Taxi Admin	410
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening	2,405
	<b><u>124,863</u></b>
<b>Total Income Apr - Sept 20</b>	<b><u>1,807,444</u></b>
<b>2020/21 Base Budget from Partners</b>	<b>-1,605,105</b>
<b>Total Income Excluding Budget</b>	<b>202,339</b>

This page is intentionally left blank



## WRS Board 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICE BUDGETS 2021/22 – 2023/24

#### Recommendation

The following recommendations are caveated as starting point assumes that the base budget figure for 2020/21 has been updated to include all of the increases mentioned at the October meeting including the additional funding for Wyre Forest DC for accommodation and IT costs.

It is recommended that the WRS Board:

- 1.1 Approve the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget of £3,739k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Approve the 2021/22 income budget of £529k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Approve the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 21/22 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	468	14.59
Malvern Hills District Council	412	12.82
Redditch Borough Council	564	17.57
Worcester City Council	532	16.58
Wychavon District	748	23.29
Wyre Forest District Council	486	15.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	

- 1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure.

Bromsgrove District Council	£9k
Malvern Hills District Council	£8k
Redditch Borough Council	£10k
Worcester City Council	£10k
Wychavon District Council	£14k
Wyre Forest District Council	£9k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£60k</b>

1.5 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to three Technical Officers.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Tech Officer Income Generation £000</b>	<b>Tech Officer Animal Activity £000</b>	<b>Tech Officer Gull Control £000</b>
Bromsgrove District Council	5	6	
Malvern Hills District Council	4	10	
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Worcester City Council	5	4	30
Wychavon District Council	7	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	5	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>

## Introduction/Summary

The production of a robust budget position enables partners and the service to manage the financial position of the organisation.

## Report

This report presents the revenue budget for 2021/22 – 2023/24 in relation to Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The following elements are included in this report for WRS Board Member's Attention:

- WRS Financial Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 – Appendix 1
- WRS Partner Contributions Breakdown 2021/22 – 2023/24 – Appendix 2
- WRS Income Budget Breakdown 2021/22 – Appendix 3

### WRS Budgets 2021/22

Appendix 1 shows the 2021-22 – 2023/24 budget breakdown for the district councils' partnership.

The following assumptions have been made in relation to the projections:

- 2% pay award across all staff for 2021/22 – 20223/24. This will be subject to the National Pay Negotiations that are ongoing and therefore the final position will reflect any formally agreed increases, the budget also includes any employee entitled to an incremental increase.
- Total partner contribution as included in Appendix 2
- Income projections as included at Appendix 3.
- No inflationary increases in supplies and services, premises or transport.
- Pension back-funding will be paid by all partners.

The unavoidable salary pressures are not able to be met currently by WRS making additional income, in the main due to the pressures created by the pandemic and the response to it. The normal sources of income (local authorities,) are not currently focused on the areas of work that WRS delivers for income generation purposes and WRS officers are at the heart of the response locally. Therefore, an increase to partner funding will be required of:

<b>Council</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23 - Cumulative</b>	<b>2023/24 - Cumulative</b>
<b>Council</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Bromsgrove District Council	9	20	31
Malvern Hills District Council	8	18	28
Redditch Borough Council	10	23	36
Worcester City Council	10	22	34
Wychavon District Council	14	31	48
Wyre Forest District Council	9	20	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>208</b>

Clearly, should the situation with the pandemic improve in the second half of 2021/22, WRS Officers will be looking to move forward with the programme of income generation and the benefits of this may be seen in an underspend that can be returned to partners at year end. Hence, an upfront investment this year will give certainty to the service and the partners in terms of cost, with the potential for a return on investment if the pandemic situation eases.

In addition to the base budget there are three additional technical officers working on income generation, animal activity and gull control. We are unable to include these officers into the base budget as the income generation officer is a temporary agreement agreed by partner councils and the animal activity and gull control officer recharge percentage basis is different to the agreed partner recharge allocations.

**Financial Implications**

None other than those stated in the report

**Sustainability**

None as a direct result of this paper

**Contact point**

Chris Forrester – [chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

**Background Papers**

Detailed financial business case

Account description	Revised Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Employees</b>				
Monthly salaries	2,848	2,935	3,012	3,090
Training for professional qualifications	0	0	0	0
Medical fees (employees')	2	2	2	2
Employers' liability insurance	25	25	25	25
Employees' professional subscriptions	2	2	2	2
<b>Sub-Total - Employees</b>	<b>2,877</b>	<b>2,964</b>	<b>3,041</b>	<b>3,119</b>
<b>Premises</b>				
Rents	58	58	58	58
Room hire	2	2	2	2
Trade Waste	1	1	1	1
<b>Sub-Total - Premises</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Transport</b>				
Vehicle repairs/maint'ce	3	3	3	3
Diesel fuel	8	8	8	8
Licences	1	1	1	1
Contract hire of vehicles	4	4	4	4
Vehicle insurances	5	5	5	5
Vehicle lease	9	9	9	9
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5	5
Car allowances	70	70	70	70
<b>Sub-Total - Transport</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Supplies &amp; Service</b>				
Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	22	22	22	22
Materials	9	9	9	9
Clothing, uniforms & laundry	2	2	2	2
Training fees	23	23	23	23
General insurances	19	19	19	19
Printing and stationery	17	17	17	17
Books and publications	2	2	2	2
Postage/packaging	11	11	11	11
ICT	40	40	40	40
Telephones	21	21	21	21
Taxi Tests	22	22	22	22
CRB Checks (taxi)	26	26	26	26
Support service recharges	100	100	100	100
Support service recharges - ICT	50	50	50	50
<b>Sub-Total - Supplies &amp; Service</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>363</b>

	Budget 2020 / 2021 £000's	Budget 2021 / 2022 £000's	Budget 2022 / 2023 £000's	Budget 2023 / 2024 £000's
<b>Contractors</b>				
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	227	229	229	229
Advertising (general)	5	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	13	13	13	13
<b>Sub-Total - Contractors</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-370	-372	-372	-372
Funding approved for unavoidable Salary Pressures				
<b>Sub-Total - Income</b>	<b>-370</b>	<b>-372</b>	<b>-372</b>	<b>-372</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Funding from partners for Technical Officers	-70	-97	-100	-104
<b>Sub-Total - Income</b>	<b>-70</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-104</b>
<b>Additional Income</b>				
Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures		-60	-134	-208
<b>Sub-Total - Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-60</b>	<b>-134</b>	<b>-208</b>
<b>DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>3,210</b>
<b>21-22 Partner Percentages</b>				
Bromsgrove District Council	14.59%			
Malvern Hills District Council	12.82%			
Redditch Borough Council	17.57%			
Worcester City Council	16.58%			
Wychavon District Council	23.29%			
Wyre Forest District Council	15.15%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>			

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Budget 2021 / 22</b>					
Bromsgrove District Council	468	11	479	9	488
Malvern Hills District Council	412	14	426	8	434
Redditch Borough Council	564	8	572	10	582
Worcester City Council	532	39	571	10	581
Wychavon District Council	748	16	764	14	778
Wyre Forest District Council	486	10	496	9	505
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>3,308</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3,368</b>

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Budget 2022 / 23</b>					
Bromsgrove District Council	468	12	480	20	500
Malvern Hills District Council	412	14	426	18	444
Redditch Borough Council	564	8	572	23	595
Worcester City Council	532	39	571	22	593
Wychavon District Council	748	18	766	31	797
Wyre Forest District Council	486	10	496	20	516
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>3,311</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>3,445</b>

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<b>Budget 2023 / 24</b>					
Bromsgrove District Council	468	12	480	31	511
Malvern Hills District Council	412	15	427	28	455
Redditch Borough Council	564	8	572	36	608
Worcester City Council	532	40	572	34	606
Wychavon District Council	748	18	766	48	814
Wyre Forest District Council	486	10	496	31	527
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>3,313</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>3,521</b>

This page is intentionally left blank

# WRS Partner Contribution Breakdown 2021-22 to 2023-24

Council	WRS Budget 21-22	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity	Tech Officer Gull Control	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 21-22
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Malvern Hills District Council	412	4	10	0	8	434
Bromsgrove District Council	468	5	6	0	9	488
Wyre Forest District Council	486	5	5	0	9	505
Wychavon District Council	748	7	9	0	14	778
Worcester City Council	532	5	4	30	10	581
Redditch Borough Council	564	6	2	0	10	582
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3,368</b>

Council	WRS Budget 22-23	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity	Tech Officer Gull Control	21-22 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	22-23 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 22-23
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Malvern Hills District Council	412	4	10	0	8	10	444
Bromsgrove District Council	468	5	7	0	9	11	500
Wyre Forest District Council	486	5	5	0	9	11	516
Wychavon District Council	748	8	10	0	14	17	797
Worcester City Council	532	5	4	30	10	12	593
Redditch Borough Council	564	6	2	0	10	13	595
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>3,445</b>

Council	WRS Budget 23-24	Tech Officer Primary Authority	Tech Officer Animal Activity - For 12 months	Tech Officer Gull Control - For 12 months	21-22 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	22-23 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	23-24 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 23-24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Malvern Hills District Council	412	4	11	0	8	10	10	455
Bromsgrove District Council	468	5	7	0	9	11	11	511
Wyre Forest District Council	486	5	5	0	9	11	11	527
Wychavon District Council	748	8	10	0	14	17	17	814
Worcester City Council	532	6	4	30	10	12	12	606
Redditch Borough Council	564	6	2	0	10	13	13	608
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,210</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>3,521</b>

Page 45

This page is intentionally left blank

## Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgeted Income 2021/22

## Appendix 3

### Grant Income

Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting

£  
14,000  
14,000

### Other Income

Employee - Income Generation - Rchg All Ptnrs	31,656
Employee - Additional Gull Work - Rchg Worcs City only	30,000
Employee - Animal Activity - Rchg All Ptnrs	35,802
Stray Dog Income	52,000
County - Mgmt / Admin / Legal etc	54,000
County - Petroleum Work / Safety at Sports Grounds	41,000
Education Case Work	6,000
Animal Re-Rating / Transcription Work	2,500
Contaminated Land Work / Planning Support work	65,000
Primary Authority work	42,000
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	15,000
Training	12,000
Health Certificates / Food Hygiene Re-Rating	15,000
Licensing - Pre-App Advice	7,000
Business - Pre-Opening Advice	6,000
MOD Contract	40,000
Unavoidable Salary Pressures	60,104
	<u>515,062</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<u><u>529,062</u></u>

This page is intentionally left blank

# Worcestershire Regulatory Services

*Supporting and protecting you*

## WRS Board

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarter 1 and 2 2020/21

#### Recommendation

That the Board notes the Report and that members use the contents of the activity data in their own reporting back to fellow members of the partner authorities.

#### Background

The detail of the report focuses on Q1 and 2 but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

#### Contribution to Priorities

Board members have asked the service to provide data on activity levels to help reassure local members that WRS continues to address a range of issues in each partner area and more broadly across the county.

#### Report

##### Activity Data

The second quarter of 2020/21 commenced with all of us coming out of lockdown and supporting the re-opening of the economy and local businesses.

The Food Standards Agency suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this continued throughout the second quarter. This explains the low number of inspections, reflecting that the service was engaging mainly with new entrants to the sector or those wanting re-rating. Clearly any allegations of serious misconduct were also followed up and food service requests did show an increase through the quarter.

On the Health and Safety at Work front, although accident numbers remained relatively low, there was an increase in complaints and enquiries. With fewer people in workplaces, it seems reasonable to assume that some jobs would be less pressured so accidents less likely but the focus of Covid controls in the workplace is driven by health and safety, which may have improved the focus on wider health and safety culture.

Stray dog numbers continued to follow their downward trend, albeit at one point, creeping slightly above the trend line. We can only assume that with more people working from home, the chances of dogs getting out has been



lower or perhaps if people are walking their pets more regularly, the urge to stray may be reduced. Officers remain concerned that the economic difficulties that will ultimately follow from the pandemic might lead to a spike in dog abandonment as people decided that they cannot afford to feed their pets, however as yet there is no evidence of this.

Numbers of licensing complaints and enquires began to grow during quarter 2, in line with the re-opening of licensed premises and the growth in wider licensed activities. Applications also began to rise to the kind of levels one might expect. However, the service did not experience the huge rush of temporary events over the summer that it would normally experience for events, fayres and festivals. In Quarter 2 2019/20 some 589 TENs were submitted to the service from across the county. During the same period this year only 115 were received, less than 20% of what might be expected in a normal year. This helps to illustrate the impacts that the pandemic has had on this sector of the economy.

Planning application numbers rose during quarter 2, going back towards their normal trajectory as the economy re-opened. Environmental Information Requests, often associated with the planning and development process were also returning to more normal levels during this period.

As we always see during the summer months, nuisance/ pollution complaints showed their characteristic peak. Noise complaint numbers exceeded the number for the same period in the previous two years, this time by a significant proportion, 12% or more above the previous two year's equivalent periods. Public Health complaints (accumulations, nuisances, and similar,) that are dealt with under the same legislative provisions were also high at least at the same level as 2018/ 19 and above last year's number for the same period.

This was at a time when a significant number of our officers were engaged with the pandemic response, supporting the re-opening of the economy and dealing with issues of non-compliance with Covid controls. Those who managed the normal day to day activities deserve a huge amount of praise for dealing with all of these issues often referred to as "business as usual" activities at a time when things were far from normal and a huge chunk of resource was not available to ease the workload.

## Performance

Quarter 2 sees a broader report of performance measures than the starting quarter. The year continues reasonably well from a customer satisfaction perspective with the non-business customer measure at 74.4% and business customers at 97.7%. Given the pressures on the service during the first six months of the year, this has to be seen as good. At the same point last year, customer satisfaction was at 73.8% and business satisfaction at 98.3%. People who felt better equipped to deal with issues is at 72.3% compared with 63% this time last year.

As we said at the last report, the broadly compliant measure for food businesses is based on relatively limited numbers of interventions, so



may be of limited value. We will continue to report this for completeness but it will be less relevant until the normal inspection routine re-starts. The Food Standards Agency has confirmed that this will not happen ahead of February 2021, and at that point they are likely to be looking to 2021/22 before anything like normal activities can be delivered. The Agency has written to Chief Executives to outline what their expectations are in the interim period and the Food Lead, along with the Community EH Manager is looking to ensure that this can be delivered. Finally, on Food, members are reminded that the broadly compliant measure is derived from what was National Indicator NI184 in the old suite of local government indicators, so any figures other than the final year end one are only ever indicative.

Processing of taxi driver license renewals remains good with a county-wide average of 97.4% done within 5 working days. This is much better than the same time last year, when the figure was 78.5% but we have to accept that demand has probably been lower as we are arranging for some to defer their renewals if they are happy to take vehicles off the road temporarily. We have also moved processes to online which has increased efficiency and communication with applicants.

We have not reported indicator 6 on vehicles found defective in service this period as the majority of the council garages that feed much of this data have only recently re-opened post Covid. A small number of vehicle operators have also deferred renewal of some cars, so fewer vehicles are on the road looking for business. Our enforcement resource is currently focused on alleged non-compliance with Covid provisions, so there hasn't been capacity for stop-check activities and again, with the garages being closed we'd have had nowhere to take the vehicles to be checked. We will report the period up to December in the February Board paper.

Compliments outnumber complaints by 3:1 (24:78) and staff sickness is looking reasonably good at 0.95 days per FTE. This is better than the previous year's figure at Q1 (2.91 days per FTE.)

The rate of reported non-compliance with the 4 licensing objectives is relatively low at 4.3%, with Redditch being higher than the other 5 districts at 8.3%. This reporting excludes reports of Covid non-compliance so that the figure remains comparable with previous years. Last year, the County average at this point in the year was 4.9%, with all districts being slightly higher than they are this year, except for Redditch which was at 6.1% this time last year.

The rate of noise complaints per 1000 head of population is up at 0.94 compare to 0.85 at the same point last year, some 10.6% higher overall. This was not, however reflected everywhere, with Wychavon actually seeing a fall (0.64 down from 0.89,) and Wyre Forest showing a small decrease (0.86 down from 0.94.) Bromsgrove showed the largest increase (0.98 compared to 0.66 at the same point last year.) This may be a reflection of more people being at



home or working from home and experiencing situations they would not normally be aware of.

Income as a proportion of budget is at 4.37%. This is as expected down on previous years due to the pandemic and our usual customer based of local authorities not requiring our services at the same level. At the same point last year, just over £160,000 had come in compared with just over £130,000 this year. To maintain comparability, we have not included income for measures to combat the pandemic in the calculation.

**Contact Points**

Kiran Lahel, Acting Licensing and support Services Manager  
01562 738067  
Kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk

**Background Papers**

Appendix A: Activity Report (separate document)  
Appendix B: Performance indicators Table



Appendix 1: Performance indicator table

Indicator	Reporting period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/ Outrun
1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	74.6	75.4		
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	99.3	97.7		
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3	Bromsgrove 98.6 Malvern Hills 98.6 Redditch 97.7 Worcester City 98.3 Wychavon 99.1 Wyre Forest 98.2 <b>Worcestershire 98.5</b>		
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 <sup>st</sup> April each year	Annually	1.7	1.5		
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 100 Malvern Hills 85.7 Redditch 97.9 Worcester City 93.9 Wychavon 97.9 Wyre Forest 100 <b>Worcestershire 97.4</b>	NA	
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this represents of the fleet county-wide	6-monthly	NA	As Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have only recently re-opened for business, at this stage there is no meaning full data for this measure. Enforcement capacity is currently focused on Covid compliance in licensed premises so no taxi stop checks.	NA	



7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	63.2	72.3		
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/18	24/ 78		
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.61 days per FTE	0.95 days per FTE		
10	% of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 4.0 Malvern Hills 3.0 Redditch 8.3 Worcester City 4.5 Wychavon 3.3 Wyre Forest 4.5 <b>Worcestershire 4.3</b>	NA	
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.98 Malvern Hills 0.84 Redditch 1.20 Worcester City 1.16 Wychavon 0.64 Wyre Forest 0.86 <b>Worcestershire 0.94</b>	NA	
13	Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17)	6-monthly	NA	<b>4.37% (i.e. £131,901/£3,017,00)</b>	NA	



14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
---	----------	----	----	----	--



This page is intentionally left blank

# Worcestershire Regulatory Services

*Supporting and protecting you*

# Activity Report | 2020-21



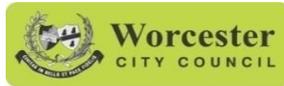
**Bromsgrove**  
District Council  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)



**Malvern Hills**  
District Council  
[www.malvern hills.gov.uk](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk)



**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
*making a difference*  
[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)



**Worcester**  
CITY COUNCIL



**WYCHAVON**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
*good services, good value*



**Wyre Forest**  
District Council

# Foreword

Welcome to the second activity data report for 2020/21.

The second quarter of the year continued to be dominated by Covid 19 work, however the gradual re-opening of the economy led to a significant volume of our normal day-to-day work coming back on-line, creating significant pressures that the service had to bear. Gradually, through July and August we saw the re-opening of the economy but with a range of controls in place. Through September, as case numbers began to grow nationally, we started to see changes to the controls that officers had to enforce. Dealing with changes in covid legislation at very short notice has become a way of life for the team.

The pattern of dog control complaints followed last year's very closely, rising through Q2. Food complaints also headed back towards more normal levels as food businesses re-opened to having the public on their premises. Proactive food visits remain low as the FSA continues to put a hold on the usual inspection programme. Health and safety complaints and enquiries went up, probably as Covid compliance has helped businesses focus on the broad range of these issues. Accident reports however were on trend.

Licensing numbers were up from a low level in Q1, almost certainly down to Covid but we did not see the large volume of temporary events that would otherwise feature at licensed premises over the summer period for events, fayres and festivals. Clearly the Covid controls meant that many of these did not happen.

Requests for planning support also began to climb from the low during the first period of lockdown and, as might be expected, as the planning system re-opened so the volume of Environmental Information and similar requests also began to rise.

Nuisance and public health complaints show their usual summer increase and, this year was busier than the previous year, with noise complaints for the period being higher than the equivalent period the previous year by a significant number. This is likely to relate to the numbers of people working from home and expectations in the domestic environment. The absence of business noise during lockdown may also have made things that people had previously taken for granted more visible, and of course many people are working at home at hours they normally aren't there. Daytime life in our towns and the city can be noisier than many think.

We hope you find the report interesting and if you've any questions please do contact myself or one of the Management team.

Many thanks



Simon Wilkes  
Head of Regulatory Services

## Community Environmental Health

The focus for Q2 has been responding to the significant additional responsibilities brought about by the Covid-19 Pandemic whilst maintaining the service for investigating statutory nuisances.

In respect of demand, the team dealt with over 900 Covid-related service requests and incidents across the County between 1 July 2020 and 30 September 2020 inclusive.

Worcestershire's Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) was established on 1 July 2020, when Worcestershire's Outbreak Control Plan was published. It comprises of WRS Environmental Health Officers and Public Health Practitioners operating under the direction of the Director of Public Health.

We continued to build on the local outbreak management process throughout Q2 that is seen as the key mechanism for controlling the spread of Covid 19 going forward, developing our outbreak investigation and back-tracing response where WRS expertise in communicable disease control and health and safety at work is proving invaluable. Beyond this WRS Officers continue to support investigations into outbreaks at schools, care homes and the larger high risk businesses enforced by HSE.

The arrangement was immediately called into action when the team was asked to support Herefordshire Public Health in their investigation into a major farm outbreak on the county border, where over 100 Covid cases were identified in overseas workers. The epidemic continues to create major learning curves for all and the lessons learned from the Herefordshire incident were soon put to the test with two outbreaks in Worcestershire, the first at a food packaging firm which distributes vegetables and salad products and the second at a large food manufacturer.

In September officers were involved in providing advice and guidance to a public house in Welland where two members of staff and a member of the public were found to be infected. This generated social media interest and this contrasting small business outbreak demonstrates that Covid can affect any workplace setting. Hence investigations are supplemented by an ongoing WRS programme of providing targeted business advice and support countywide, particularly in respect of the hospitality sector, to help ensure Covid safe workplaces and businesses.

All routine food inspection work remained suspended in Q2; however, we have continued an ongoing dialogue with businesses, particularly those posing the highest risk and new registrations. We will still conduct safe visits where there appears to be an issue, but to date such intervention has not been required.

Further detail on our Covid response and the work of the Local Outbreak Response Team can be found in the information reports presented to Board:

Joint working with Public Health to control Covid-19 Outbreaks in work settings 1 October 2020;

Covid-19 Response 18 June 2020;

## Licensing

The easing of lockdown measures towards the end of Q1 allowed Licensing to move towards a transition phase, doing more 'business as usual' activity. Most of the processes introduced during Q1 were still kept in force as the move towards online applications and providing advice remotely was, and continues to, work well. The biggest challenge faced by the team this quarter was the introduction of the Building and Planning Act 2020 whereby the team had to work at fast pace to introduce Pavement Licensing across all districts in a very short time frame. The expertise of the team, in collaboration with all the districts, allowed for WRS to be ahead of the game and implement these requirements ahead of schedule.

The team started to get out more this quarter in a number of areas. They looked at being more proactive with puppy breeding investigations in light of Lucy's Law that was introduced in April 2020 and this area of work has continued to raise awareness especially due to the fact more people have been at home due to lockdown and finding other sources of generating income. Animal inspections commenced and officers also attended three Zoo inspections across the districts in Bromsgrove, Wychavon and Wyre Forest.

The team proactively worked with Community Environmental Health on enforcement activity, mainly in the night time economy, and ensuring licensed premises were adhering to covid standards.

We ended the quarter with getting face to face licensing appointments underway and have been working with all the districts so that these can commence in a safe and proactive way.

## Technical Services

In the second quarter the dog warden team have once again been busy we have received contact about over 300 dogs, 17 of which were reported as lost or loose. WRS was successful in reuniting 214 dogs with their owners and rehoming 30 with recognised animal rehoming charities. We cared for three dogs while their owners have been in hospital one of which is now back with their owner. Sadly one dog reported to us was found deceased.

Due to the Covid 19 lockdown air monitoring work was suspended between March but resumed in June. Due to the unprecedented reduction of road vehicles it is anticipated that all of the air monitoring currently undertaken with diffusion tubes will not be usable for the purpose of providing annual average data for Worcestershire this year. Nevertheless reporting to DEFRA on air quality status continues. All annual Status Reports for each district have been submitted to DEFRA in June and are available on the WRS.

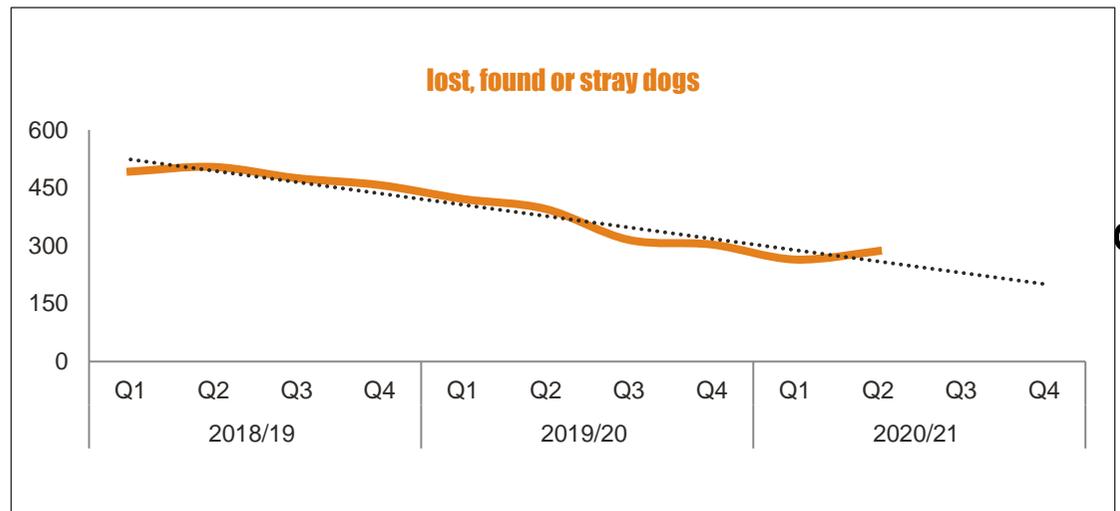
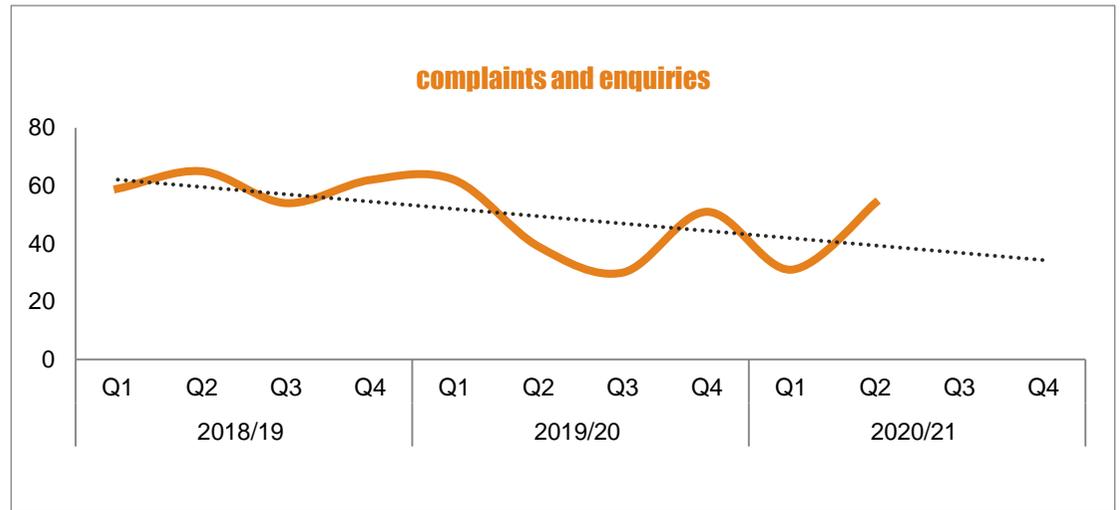
website <https://worcsregservices.gov.uk/pollution/air-quality/local-air-quality-progress-reports.aspx> .

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to dog control. Types of cases recorded under this category include fouling and persistent straying, dangerous dogs and welfare. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of dogs recorded by WRS as lost, found or seen straying.

Despite a minor increase this quarter, the number of stray or lost dogs reported continues to be a reduction of between 27% and 42% compared to previous years. The nature of the cases recorded remains consistent however, with 66% of cases relating to 'contained' stray dogs. This means the dog was found and held by, for example, a member of the public.

Approximately 70% of stray dogs were returned to their owners whilst 30% were rehomed.

In general, the service receives a higher number of enquiries than complaints. Based on the 43 complaints received during quarter one, 21 related to dog fouling and persistent straying, 16 related to dangerous dogs and 6 related to dog welfare.



Page 58

Page 62

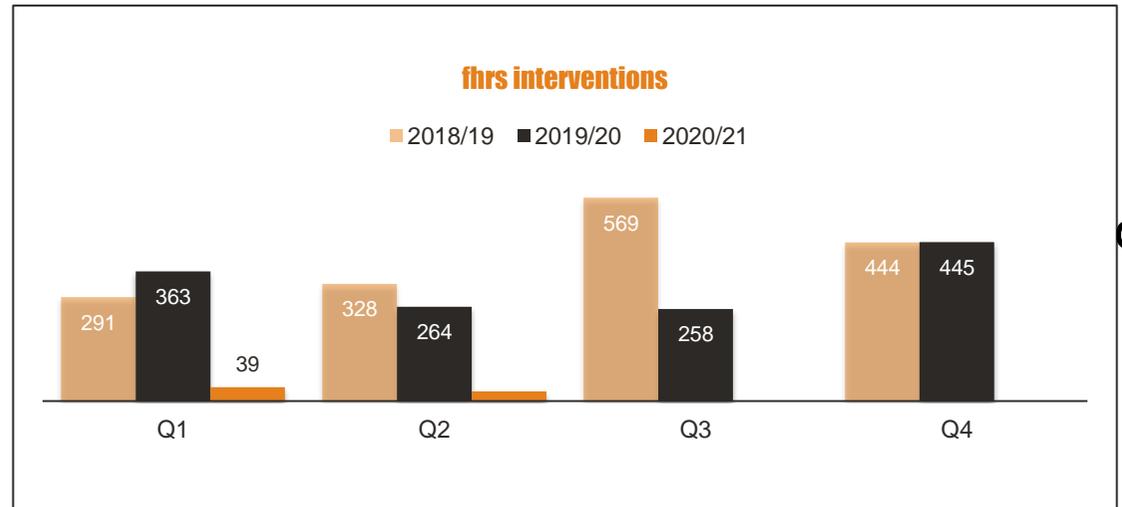
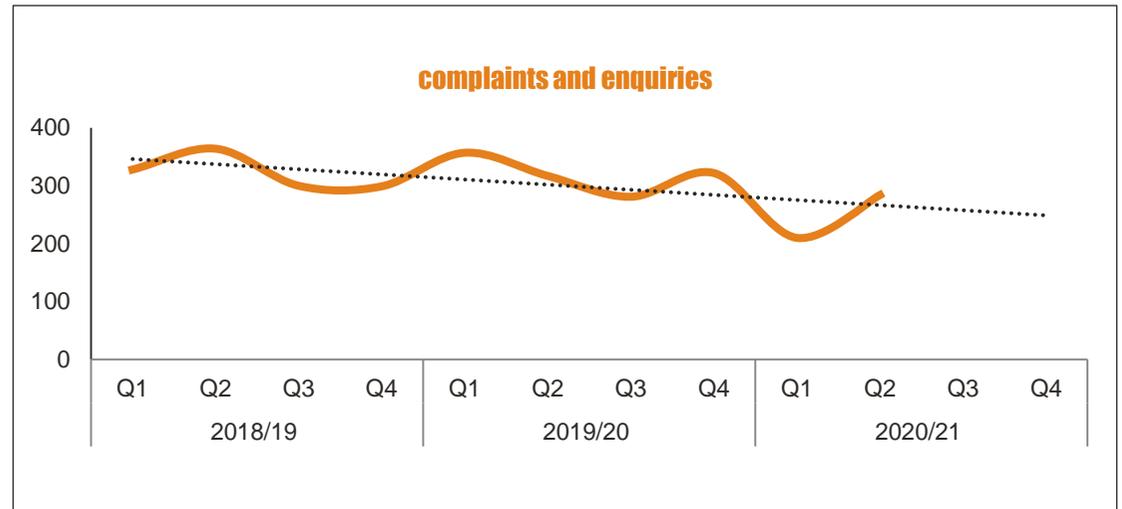
Agenda Item 8

DEFRA published the 2020-21 subsistence fee structure in early May. We can confirm that the fee structure remains the same this year. The technical pollution team are currently investigating the feasibility of undertaking virtual compliance inspections as many companies are still working during the lockdown. This may change to physical inspections as the lockdown is eased, and it is anticipated this area of work will resume in late July or August.

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to food safety. Types of cases recorded under this category include complaints about food products, hygiene of premises complaints and requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of interventions conducted by WRS at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, commonly known as FHRS.

The number of food safety cases received represents an increase of 35% compared to the previous quarter. This increase coincides with the easing of lockdown restrictions and the reopening of a number of hospitality businesses from 4th July. Approximately 43% of cases were enquiries, whilst 72% of complaints related to products purchased from food premises.

Page 60

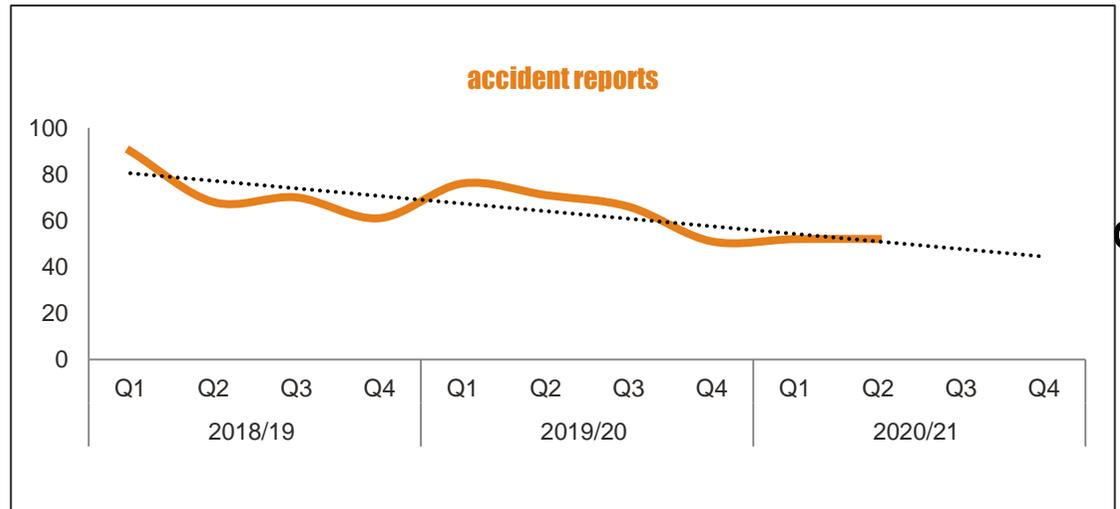
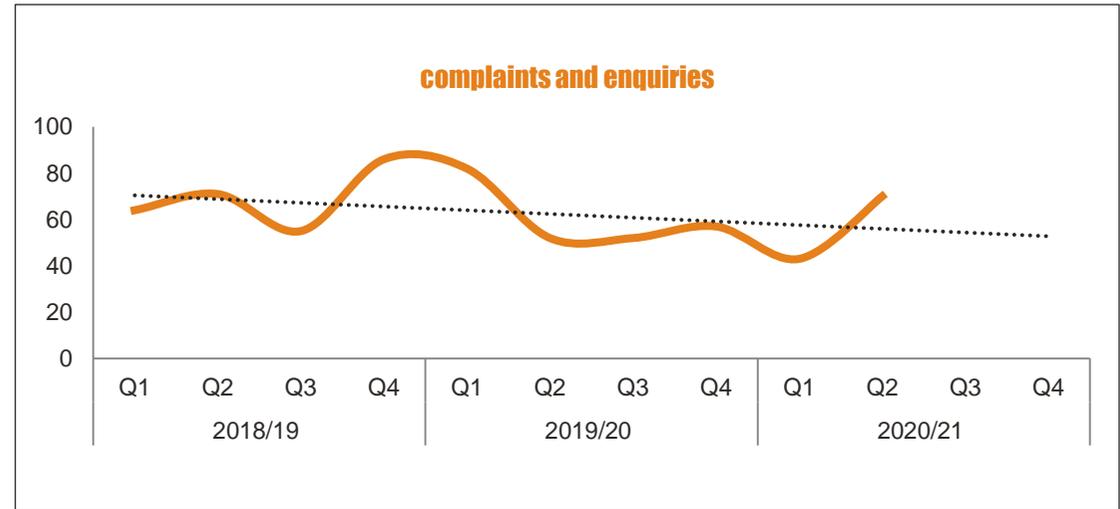


Page 64

Agenda Item 8

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to health and safety at work. This includes requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of notifications received by WRS relating to accidents.

*In parallel with food safety, the number of cases relating to health and safety at work has also increased during quarter two. The volume and nature of accident reports has remained consistent, with 40% of reports this year relating to injuries where a worker is incapacitated for more than seven days.*

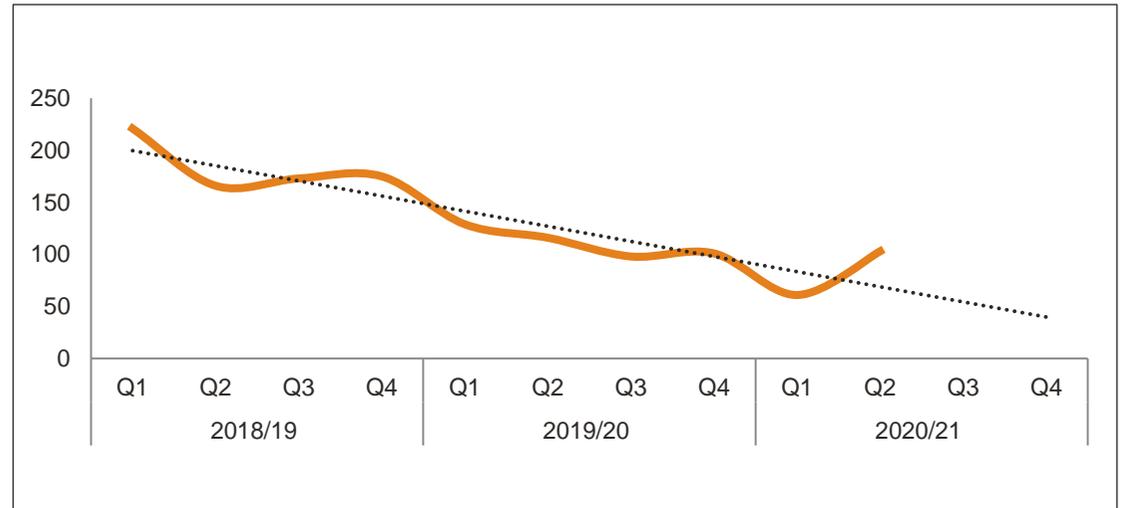


The chart (right) shows the number of information requests recorded by WRS over a three year period. Information requests relate to the following;

- Environmental Information Requests
- Freedom of Information Requests
- Requests for information under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation

*During quarter 1 this year, COVID-19 distractions reduced the demand of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests received by the service. Once lockdown restrictions lifted however, Environmental Information requests associated with house purchases increased and following the summer holiday period WRS have received a significant increase in FOI requests that would have usually been submitted earlier in the year or are related to COVID related activity.*

Page 66



Page 66

The chart (top right) shows the number complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to licensing. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of licensing applications.

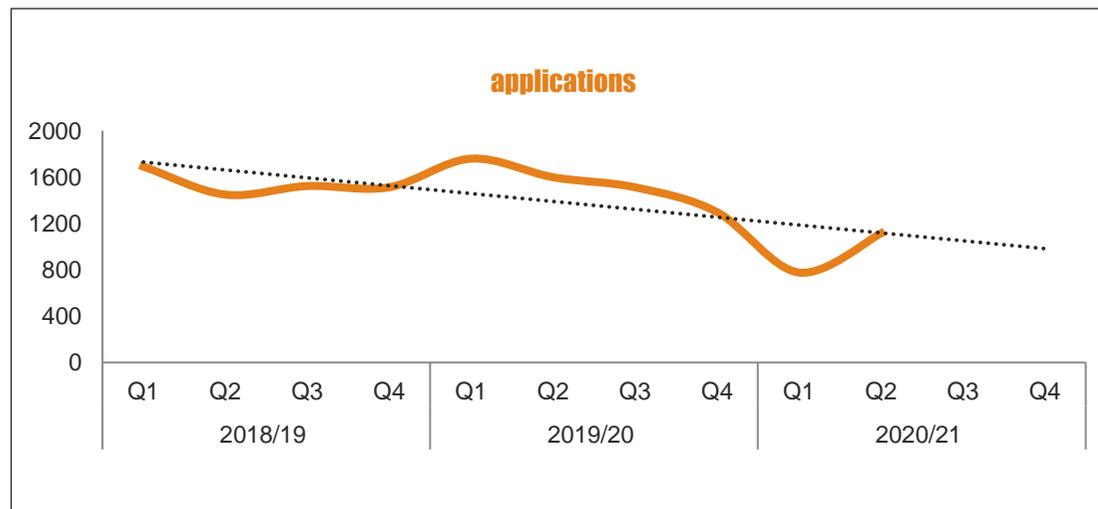
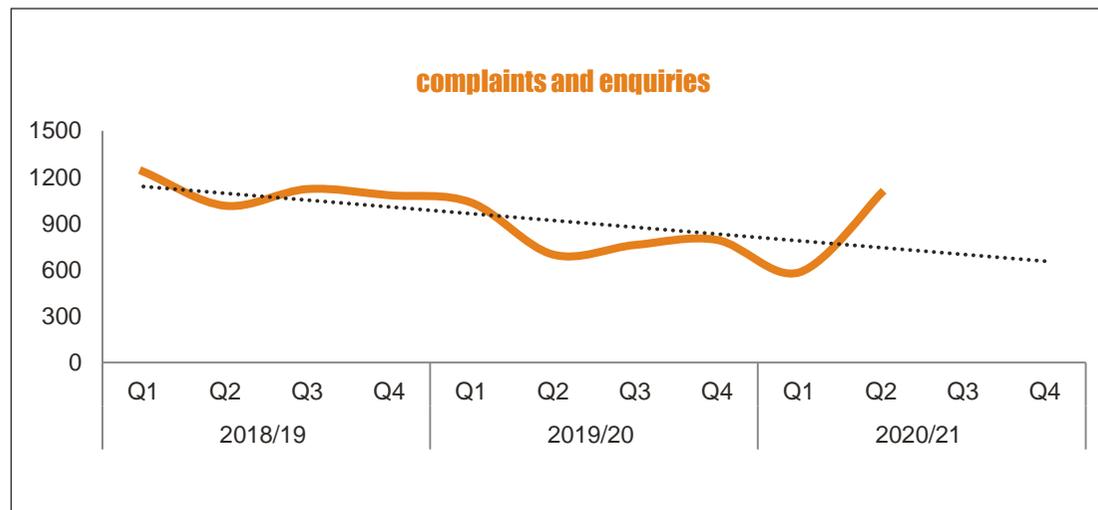
Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

- Alcohol and entertainment (including gambling)
- Animals
- Caravans
- Scrap metal
- Sex establishments
- Skin piercing
- Street trading
- Taxis

Page 63

*The volume of licensing cases received during quarter two is an increase of 61% compared to the previous quarter. With the hospitality sector and night time economy significantly affected by COVID-19 restrictions, this has led to a significant reduction in the volume of alcohol licensing applications - particularly temporary event notices. Overall, 28% of applications related to alcohol licensing whilst 36% related to private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.*

*Whilst the volume and nature of applications varied, almost two thirds of service requests continue to be enquiries relating to alcohol and taxi licensing.*



Page 67

Agenda Item 8

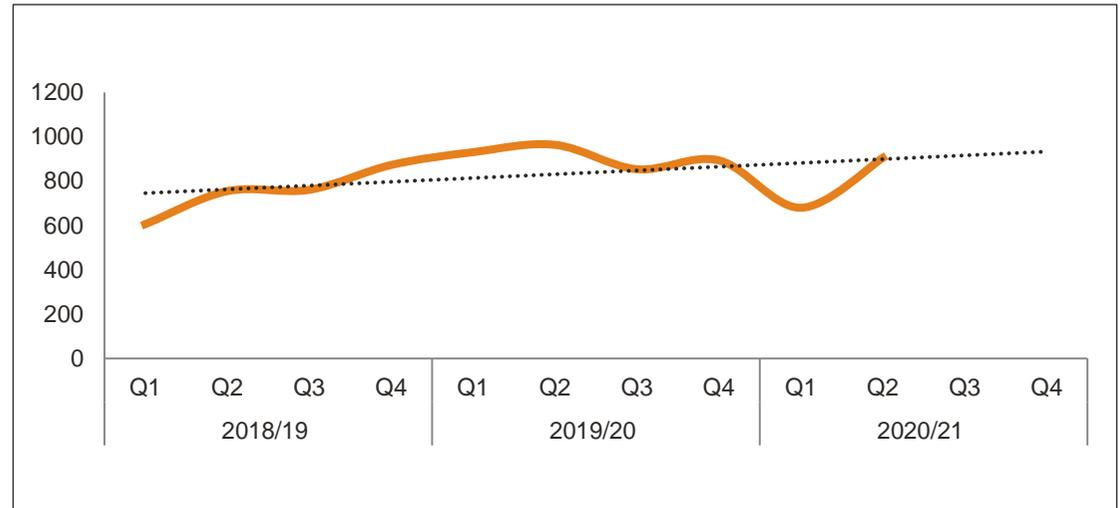
The chart (right) shows the number of planning enquiries completed by WRS over a three year period. The majority of these requests are consultations but can also include requests to discharge conditions.

Planning requests relate to the following;

- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Environmental Permitting
- Food
- Health and Safety
- Nuisance / Noise
- Private Water Supplies

Page 64

*The number of planning enquiries received represents an increase of 33% compared to the previous quarter; and continues the upward trend. Approximately 92% of enquiries were consultations, whilst 53% related to contaminated land.*



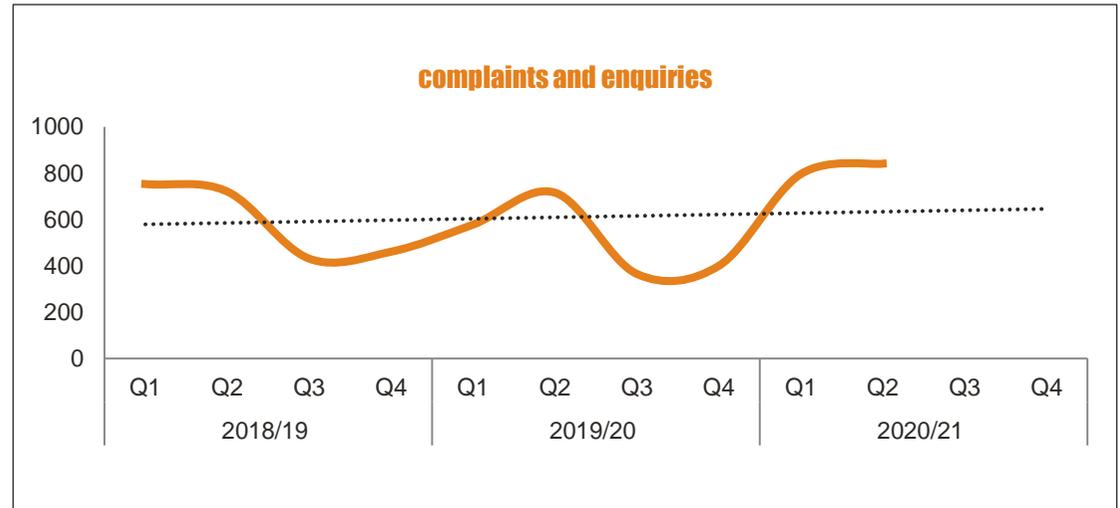
Page 68

Agenda Item 8

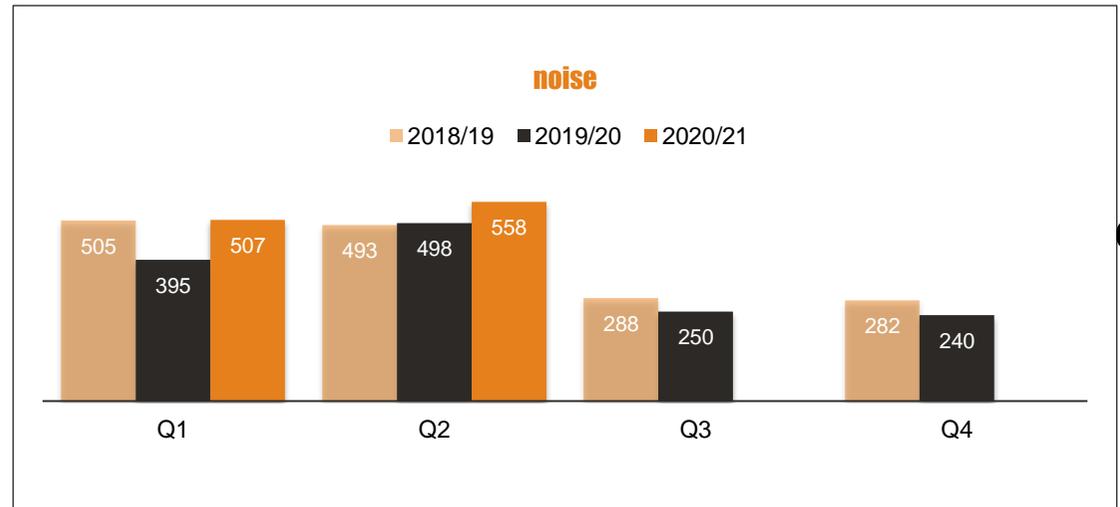
The chart (right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to pollution. Types of cases recorded under this category include contamination incidents, air pollution (smoke, fumes and gases), light pollution and noise pollution. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries relating to noise pollution.

*The number of pollution cases received was consistent with the previous quarter, and remains at its highest level for several years. Approximately 43% of cases related to domestic noise, whilst 21% related to smoke incidents and a significant proportion of bonfire incidents. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions are a notable factor in the level of domestic incidents, meteorological factors also have a significant impact.*

Page 65



Page 69

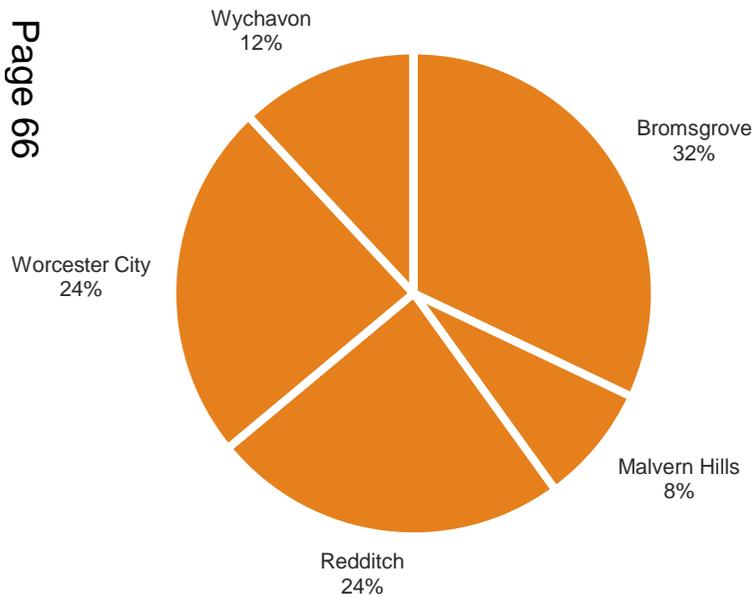


Agenda Item 8

The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. It also shows the relative population and the number of cases recorded. The chart (below) shows the top 25 wards by district.

*Note: Data shown on this page represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*

Page 66



Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Norton	14	3,404	4.11
Perryfields	6	1,498	4.01
Lowes Hill	11	2,921	3.77
Central (Redditch)	25	6,744	3.71
Avoncroft	12	3,270	3.67
Abbey	22	6,425	3.42
Chase	21	6,170	3.40
Lodge Park	18	5,598	3.22
Lindridge	7	2,269	3.09
Rubery South	9	2,996	3.00
Winyates	24	8,225	2.92
Cathedral	34	11,794	2.88
Saint John	25	9,004	2.78
Church Hill	22	8,072	2.73
Badsey	9	3,320	2.71
Crabbs Cross	15	5,640	2.66
Evesham South	14	5,419	2.58
Hill Top	6	2,333	2.57
Bedwardine	21	8,316	2.53
Sanders Park	9	3,576	2.52
Charford	9	3,656	2.46
Arboretum	15	6,151	2.44
Gorse Hill	14	5,786	2.42
Broadway And Wickhamford	11	4,748	2.32
Warndon	13	5,689	2.29

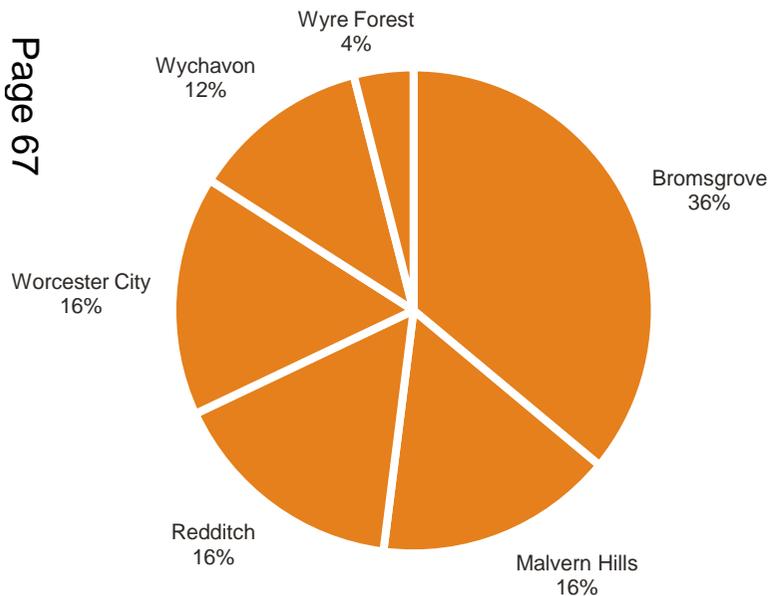
Page 70

Agenda Item 8

The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. It also shows the relative population and the number of cases recorded. The chart (below) shows the top 25 wards by district.

*Note: Data shown on this page represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*

Page 67



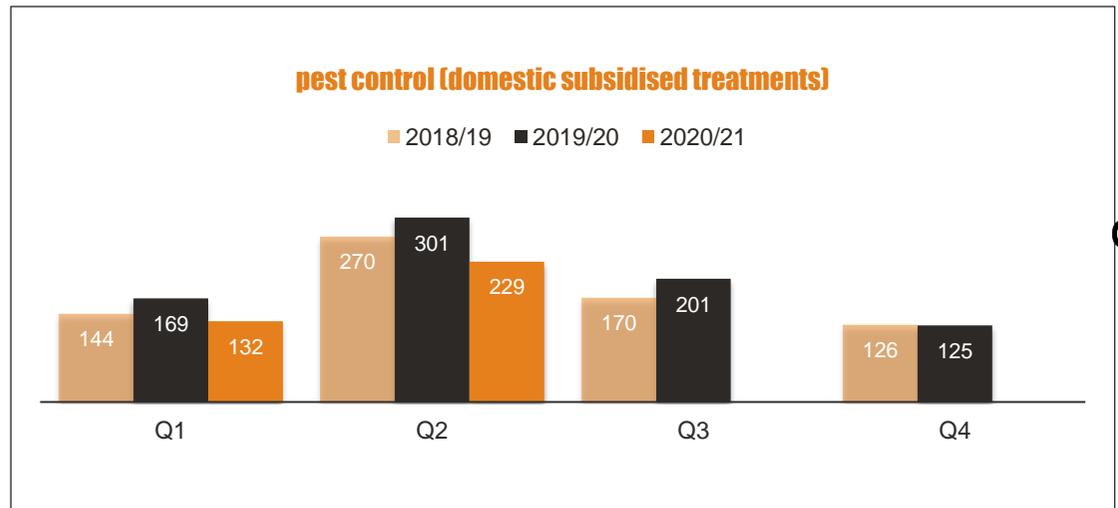
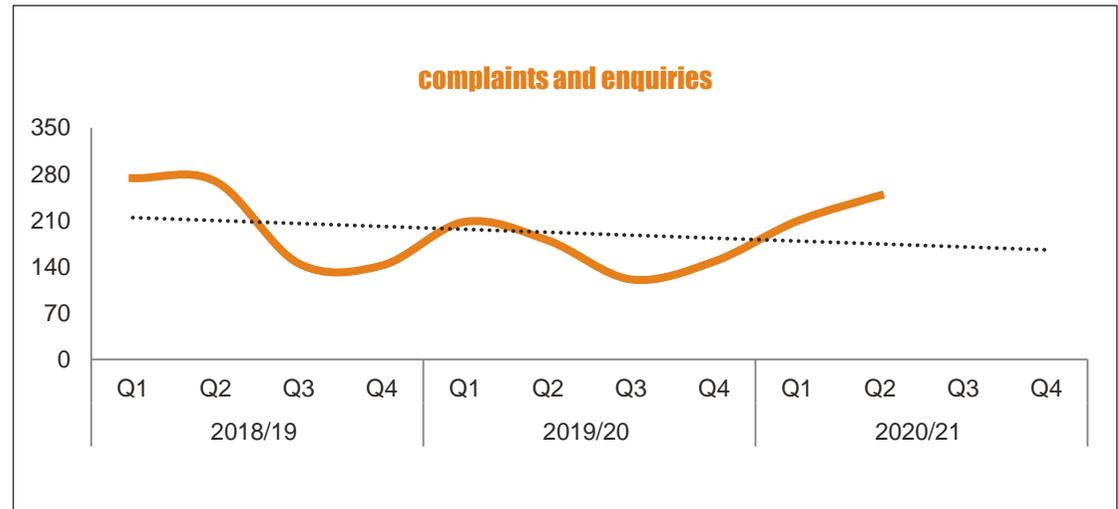
Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Droitwich Central	13	2,570	5.06
Cathedral	54	11,488	4.70
Upton And Hanley	18	4,153	4.33
Rainbow Hill	23	5,525	4.16
Loves Hill	12	2,888	4.16
Charford	15	3,670	4.09
Charford	15	3,670	4.09
Catshill North	11	2,818	3.90
Offmore And Comberton	35	9,726	3.60
Barnt Green And Hopwood	10	2,866	3.49
Warndon	20	5,754	3.48
Batchley And Brockhill	30	8,727	3.44
West (Malvern)	14	4,112	3.40
Avoncroft	11	3,242	3.39
Lodge Park	19	5,608	3.39
Bredon	9	2,666	3.38
Rock Hill	10	2,969	3.37
Arboretum	21	6,301	3.33
Abbey	21	6,323	3.32
Winyates	26	8,257	3.15
Sanders Park	11	3,559	3.09
Sidemoor	12	4,021	2.98
Pickersleigh	19	6,446	2.95
Alfrick And Leigh	10	3,493	2.86
Pershore	22	7,716	2.85

Page 71

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to public health. Types of cases recorded under this category include accumulations, public burials and pest control. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of subsidised pest control treatments have been carried out by contractors at domestic properties in three Worcestershire Districts (Bromsgrove, Redditch, Wychavon). Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wyre Forest do not offer a subsidised pest control service.

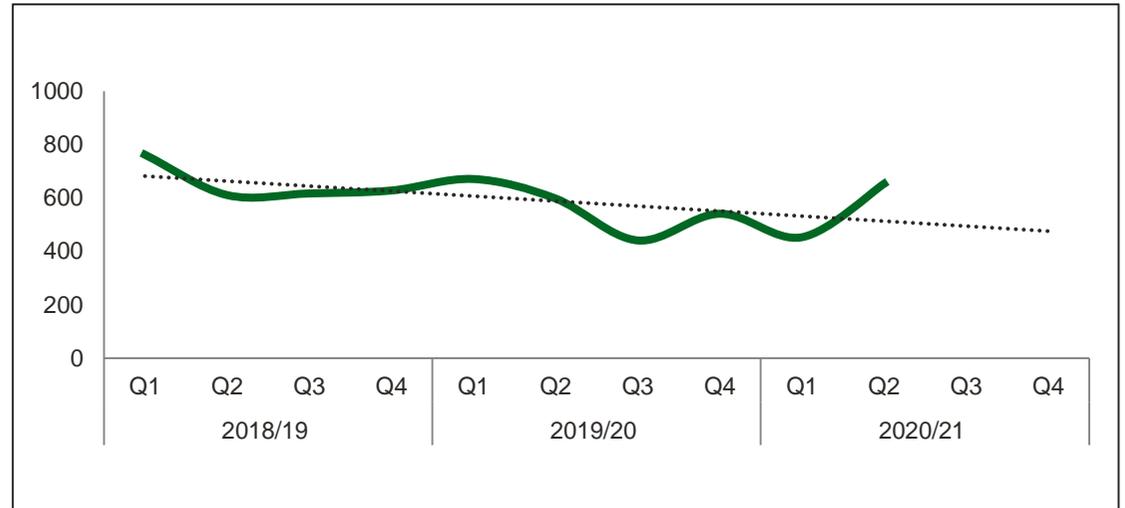
*The number of public health cases received is an increase of 18% compared to the previous quarter, but broadly in line with previous years. Approximately 64% of cases related to pest control, with a high proportion of cases relating to pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses.*

*The lower total of subsidised treatments is actually an increase, as only three districts are offering a service compared to four in previous years. Anecdotally the pest control companies have reported increases in rat complaints with reduced commercial opportunities for them to feed forcing them into gardens and contact with humans. This is despite this being a traditionally quiet time for rat treatment requests. Of the 229 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter two, 41% were due to the presence of wasps whilst 37% were due to rats/*



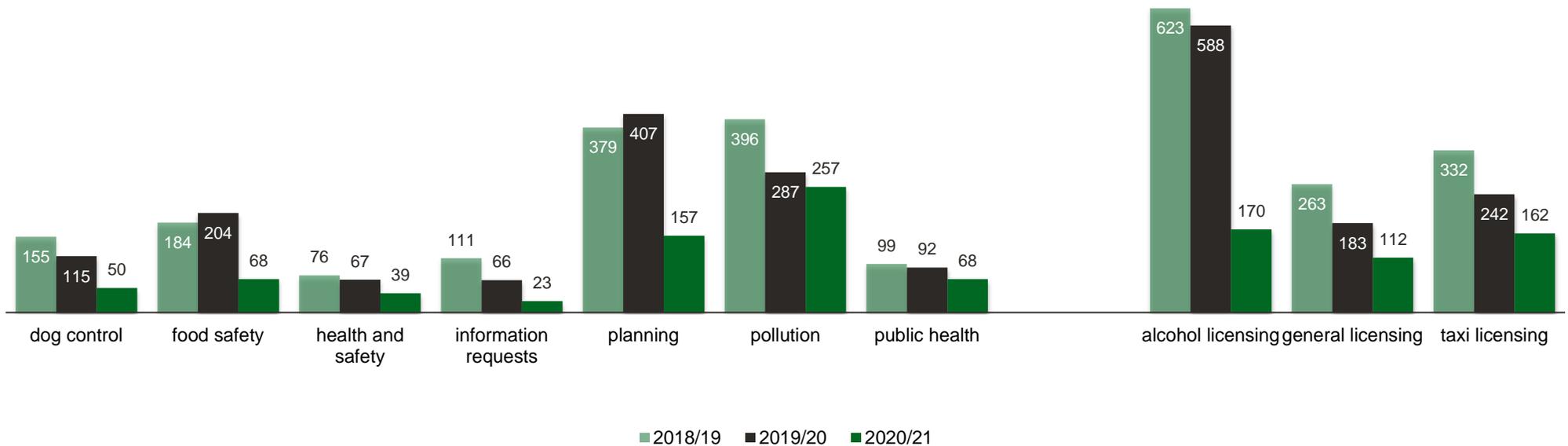
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Bromsgrove district.

*Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.*



Page 69

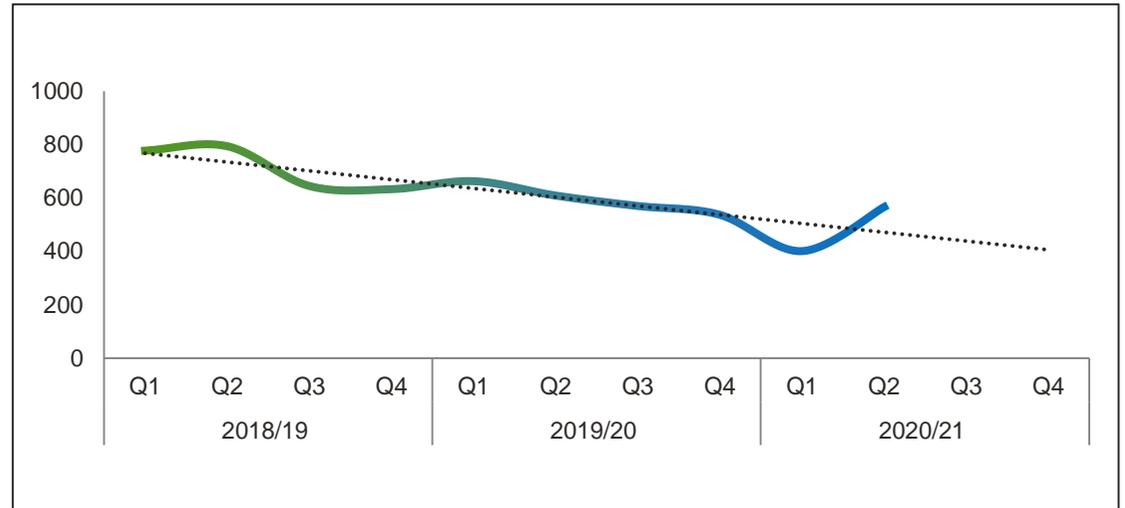
Page 73



Agenda Item 6

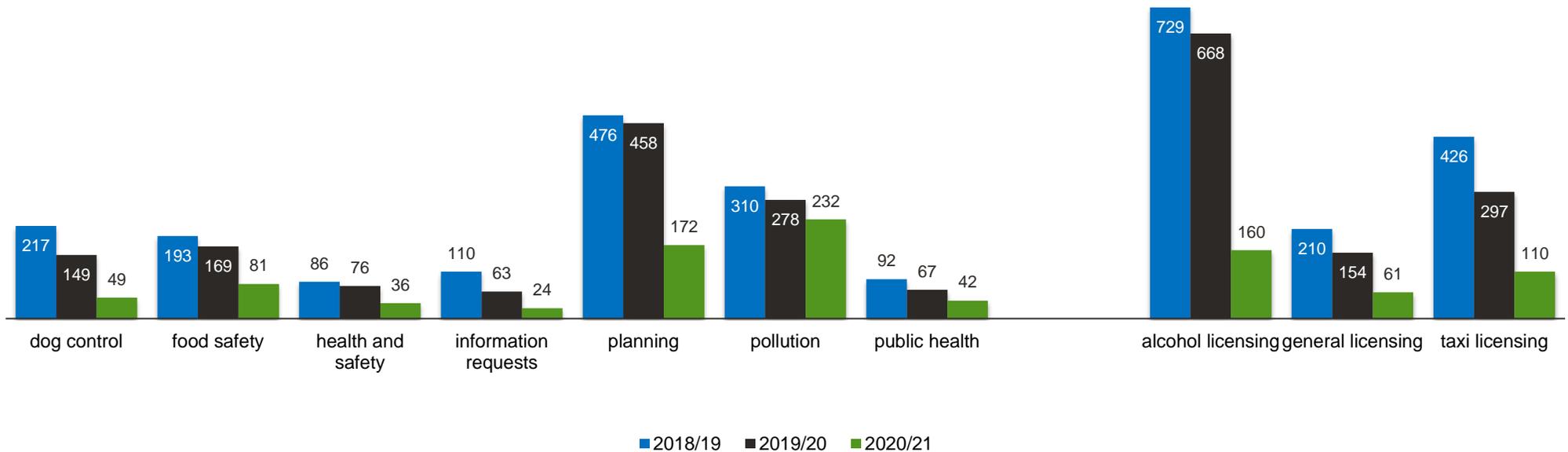
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Malvern Hills district.

*Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.*



Page 70

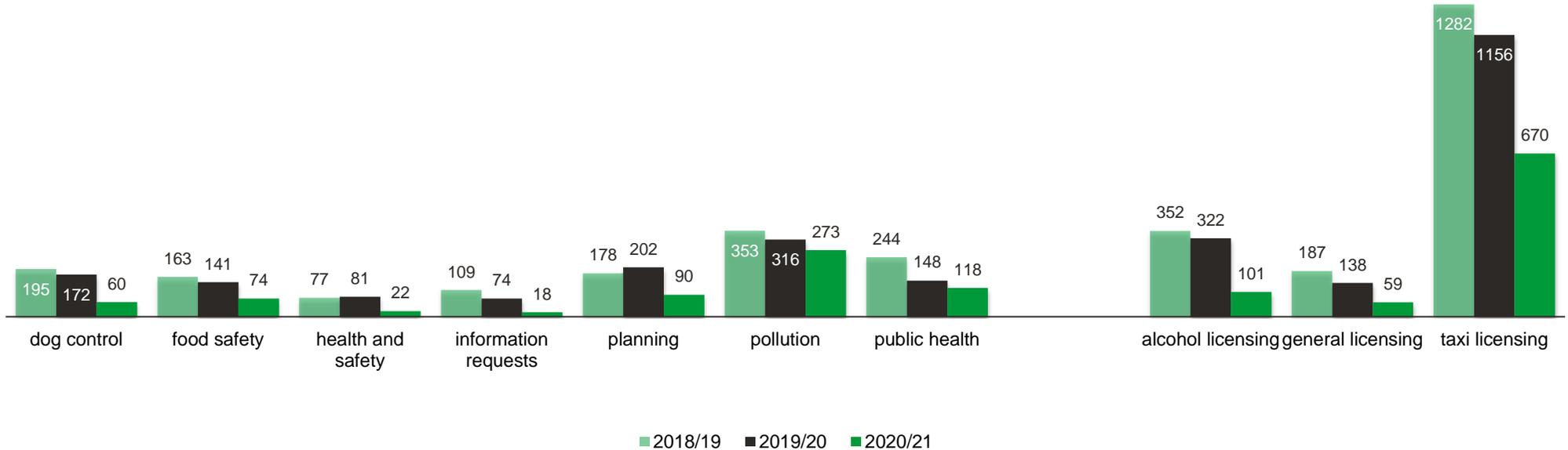
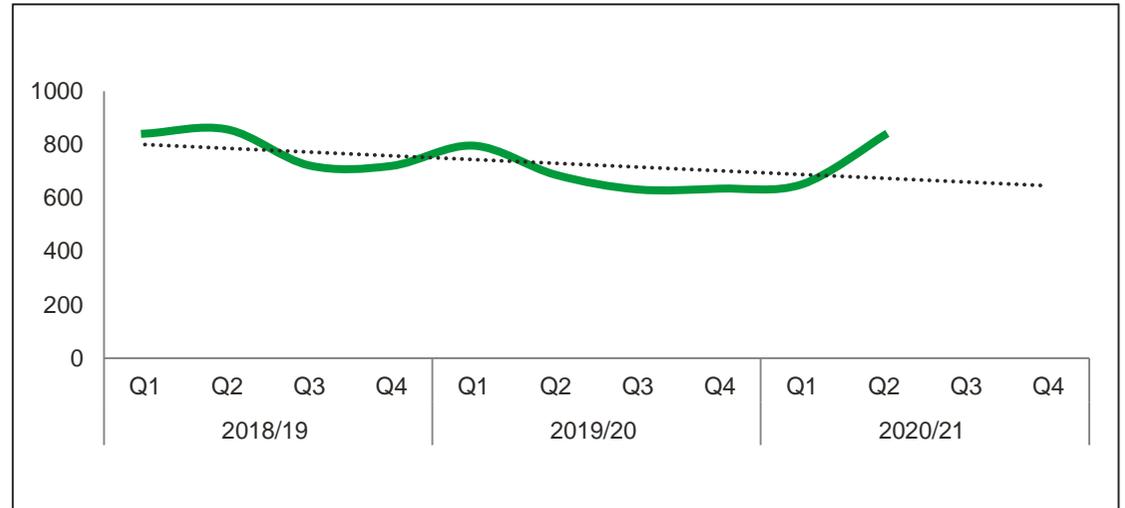
Page 74



Agenda Item 6

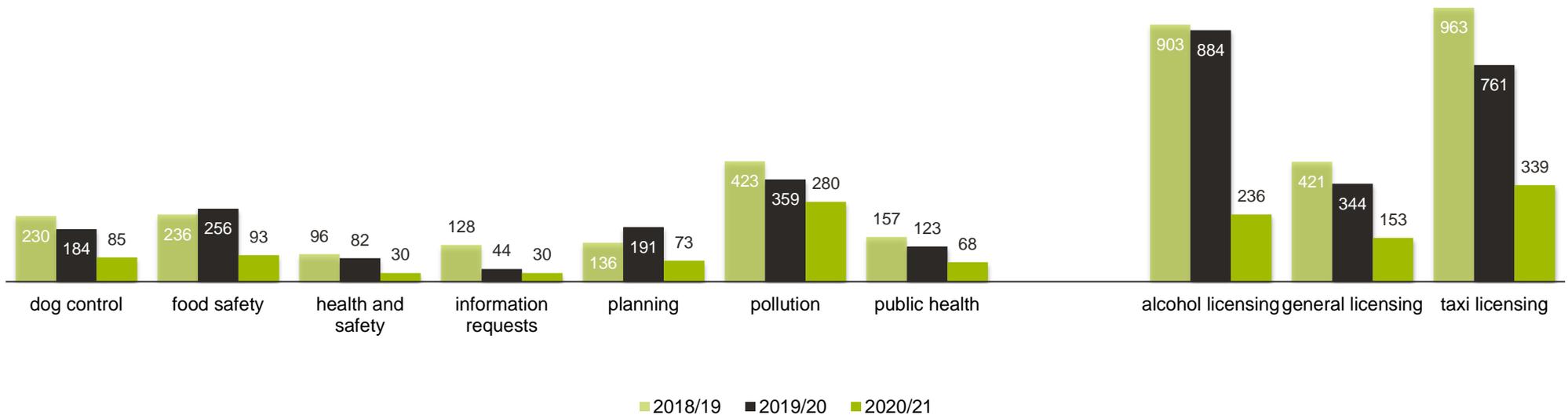
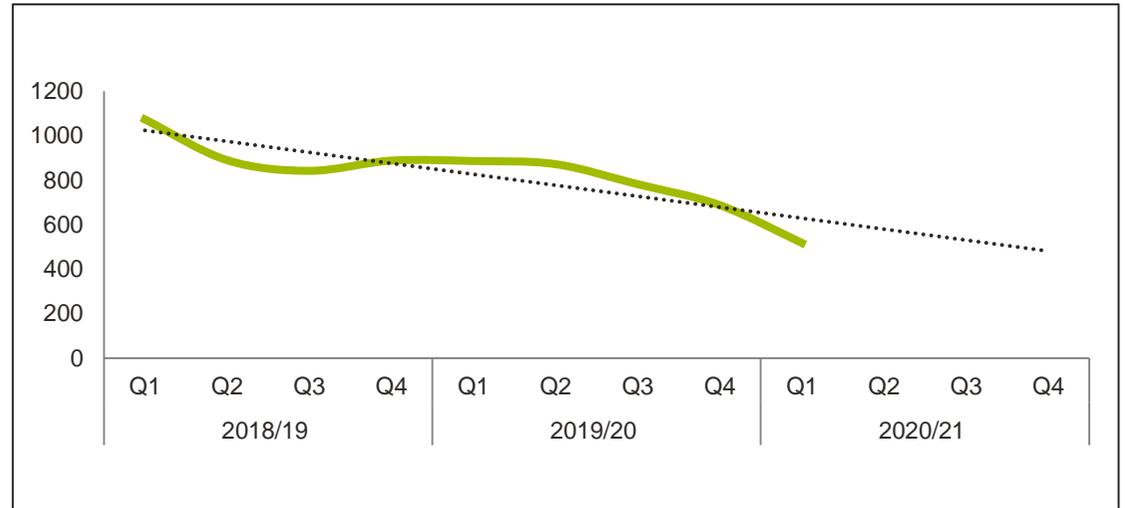
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Redditch district.

*Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.*



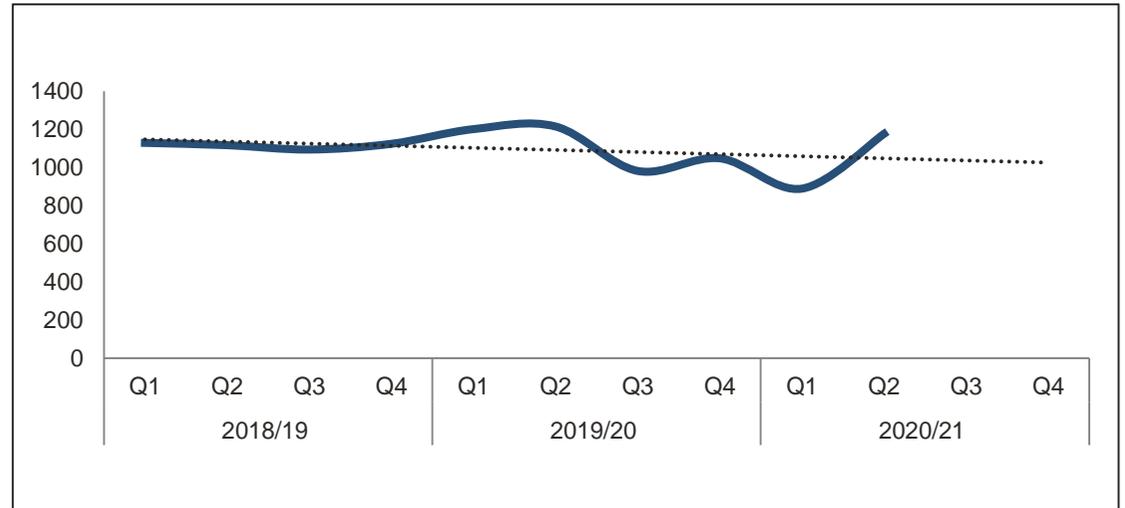
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Worcester City district.

*Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.*



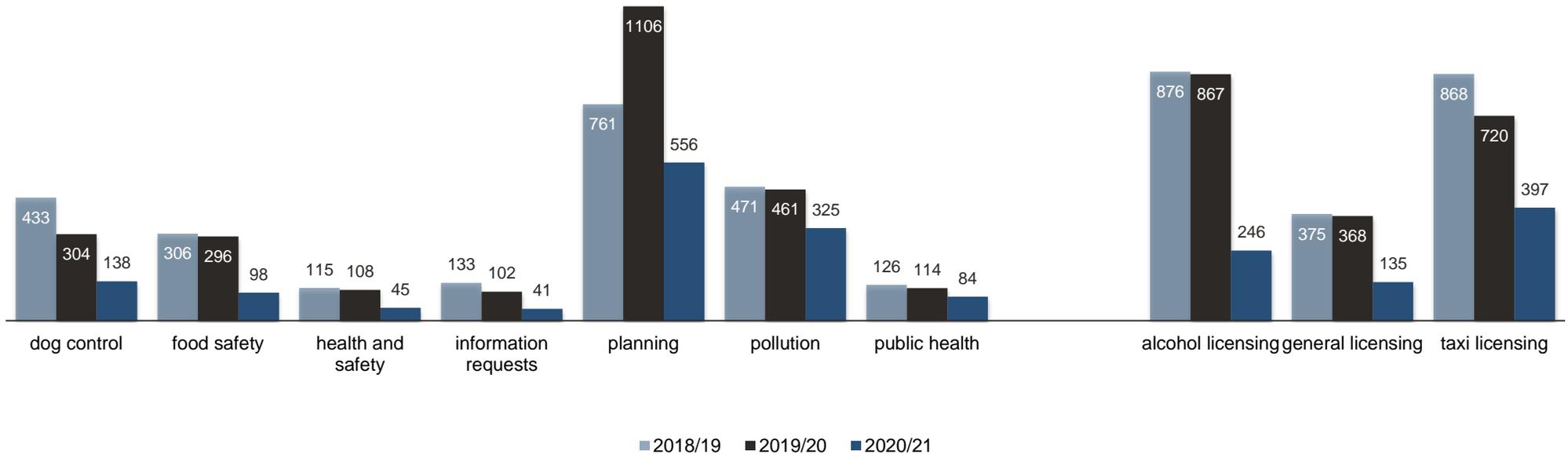
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wychavon district.

*Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.*



Page 73

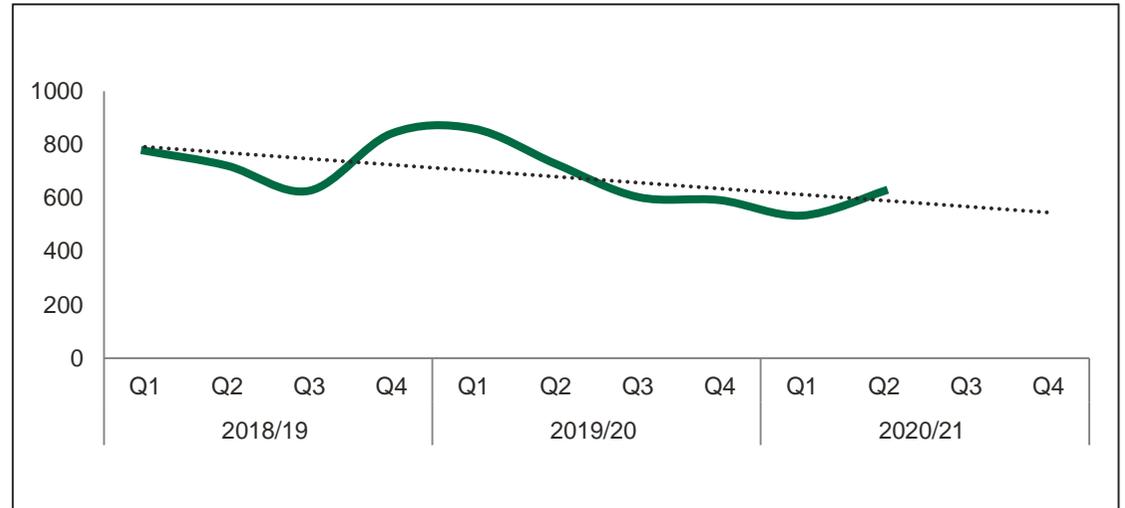
Page 77



Agenda Item 8

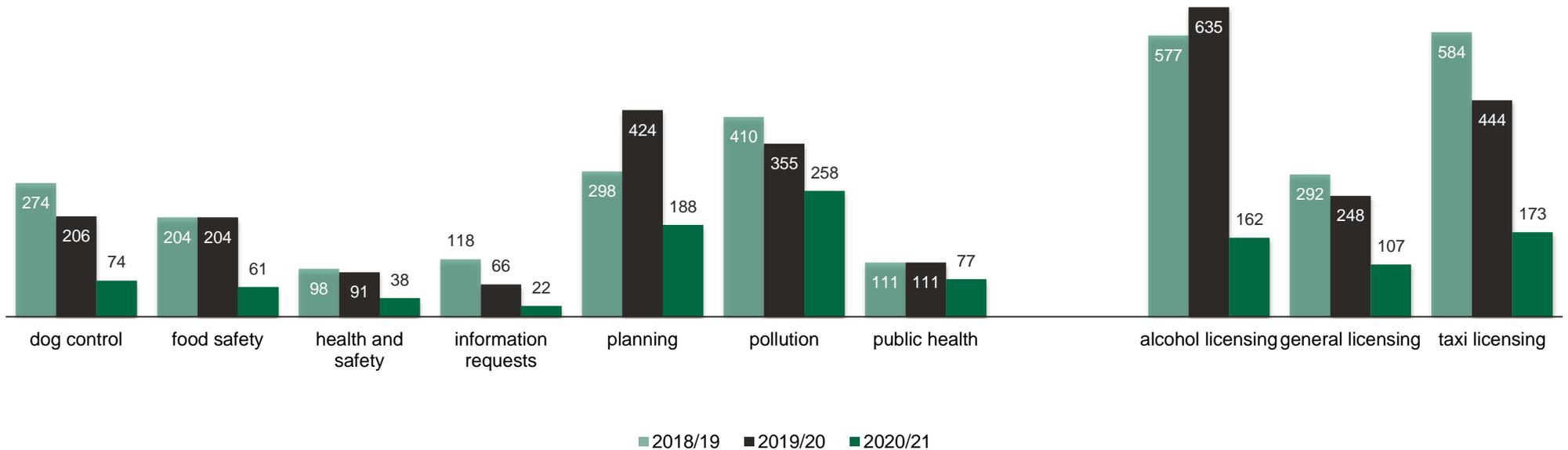
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wyre Forest district.

*Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.*



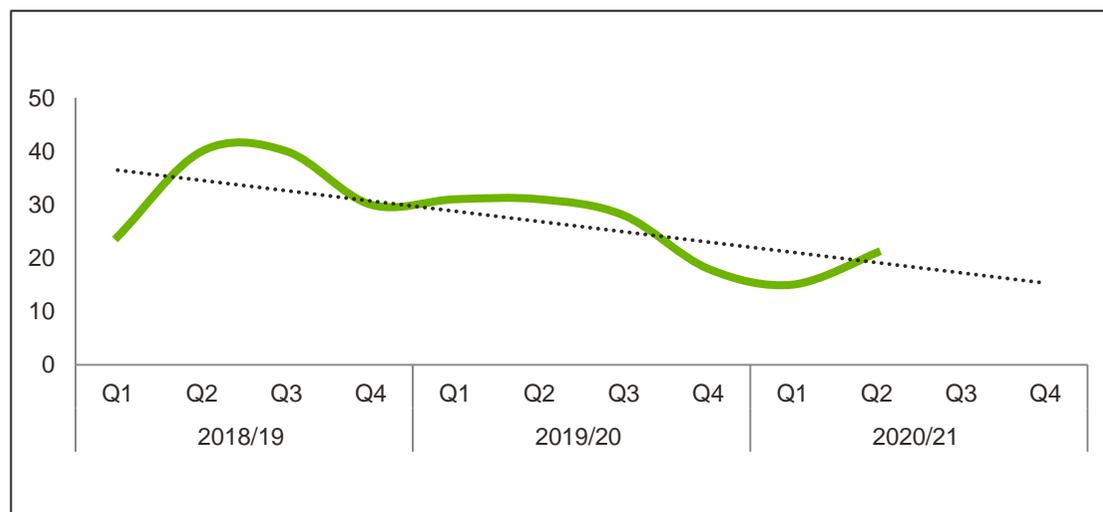
Page 74

Page 78



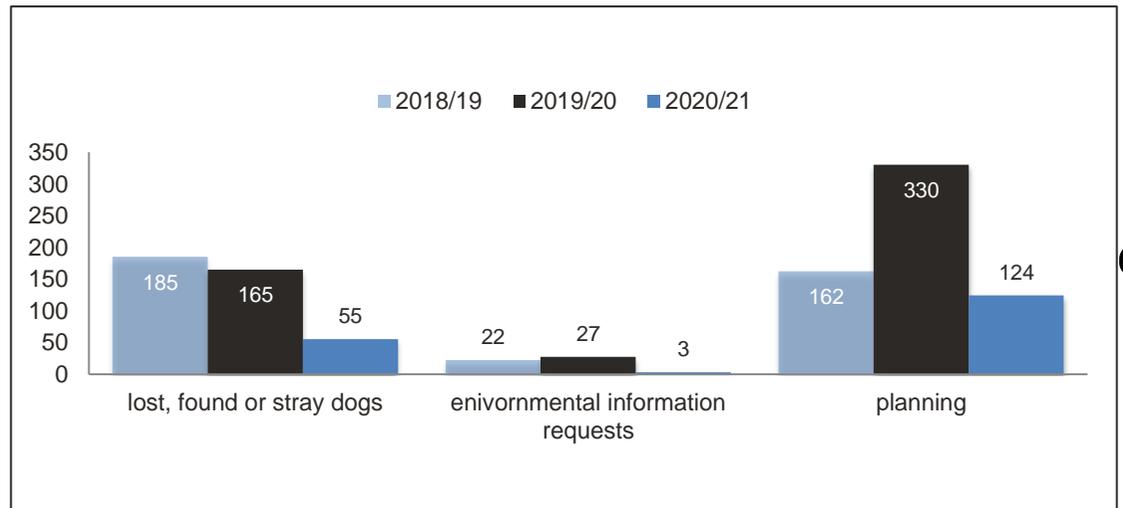
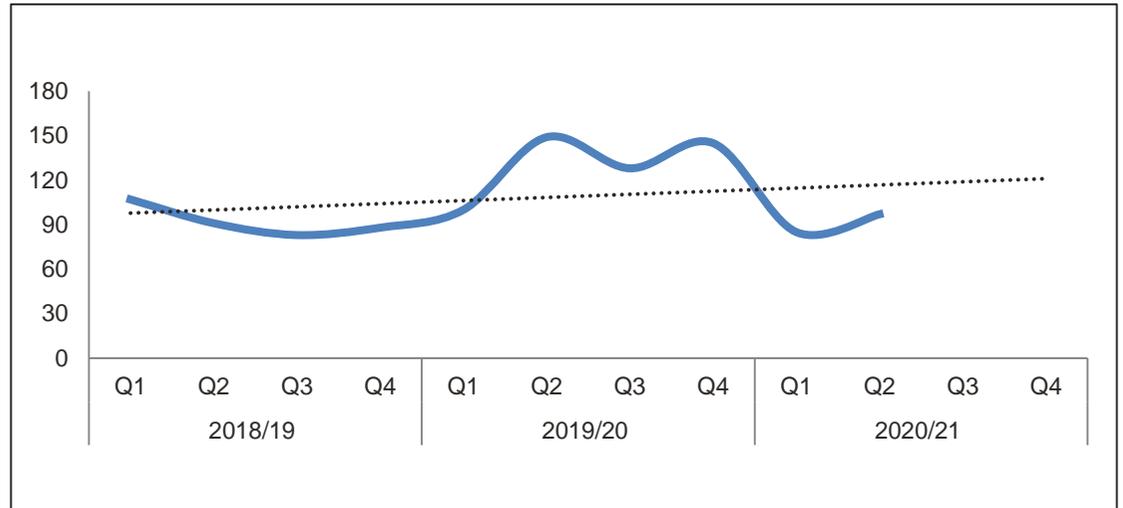
Agenda Item 8

The dog control work WRS undertake for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Cheltenham Borough Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. The number of stray dogs during lockdown has fallen associated with less human mobility where dogs would be found by those out and about and a presumed reduction in latchkey dogs (allowed to roam rather than being walked) with more people taking their allotted exercise time walking their dog. There is concern that post lockdown there will be an increase in the numbers of abandoned stray dogs when people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

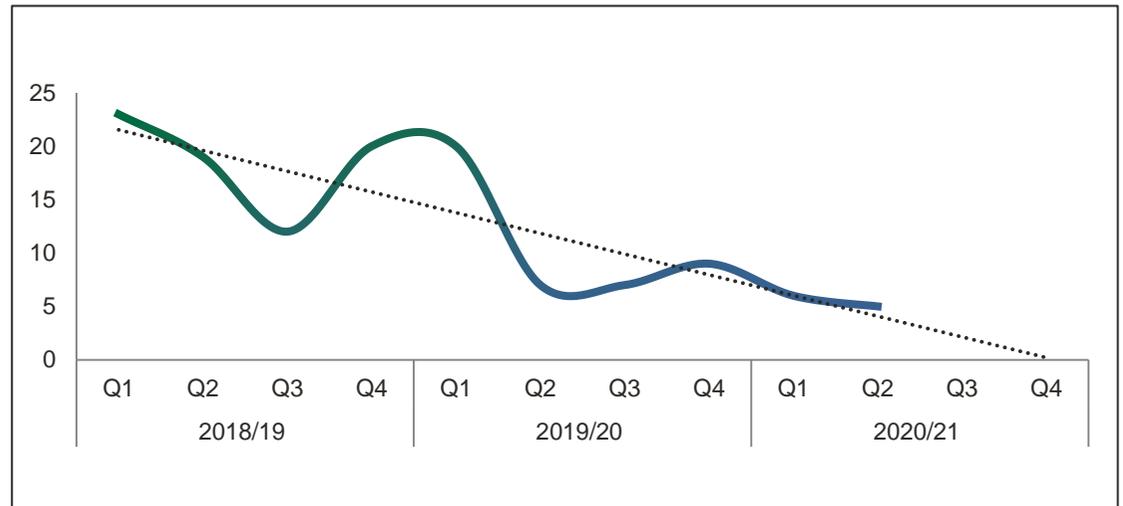


The dog control work WRS undertake for Gloucester City Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Gloucester City Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. The number of stray dogs during lockdown has fallen associated with less human mobility where dogs would be found by those out and about and a presumed reduction in latchkey dogs (allowed to roam rather than being walked) with more people taking their allotted exercise time walking their dog. There is concern that post lockdown their will be an increase in the numbers of abandoned stray dogs when people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

Planning work continues on a similar trend as seen in 2019. Nevertheless there has been some decline generally in planning work across the board due to the Covid-19 outbreak. With this uncertainty in place it is currently difficult to make any predictions on demand for the forthcoming year. WRS postponed PPC inspections due to the lockdown and some businesses mothballing their activities due to staff furlough. Inspection will remain under continuous review in Q2 and it is anticipated that physical inspections will re-commence in early autumn to allow businesses to re-establish production.

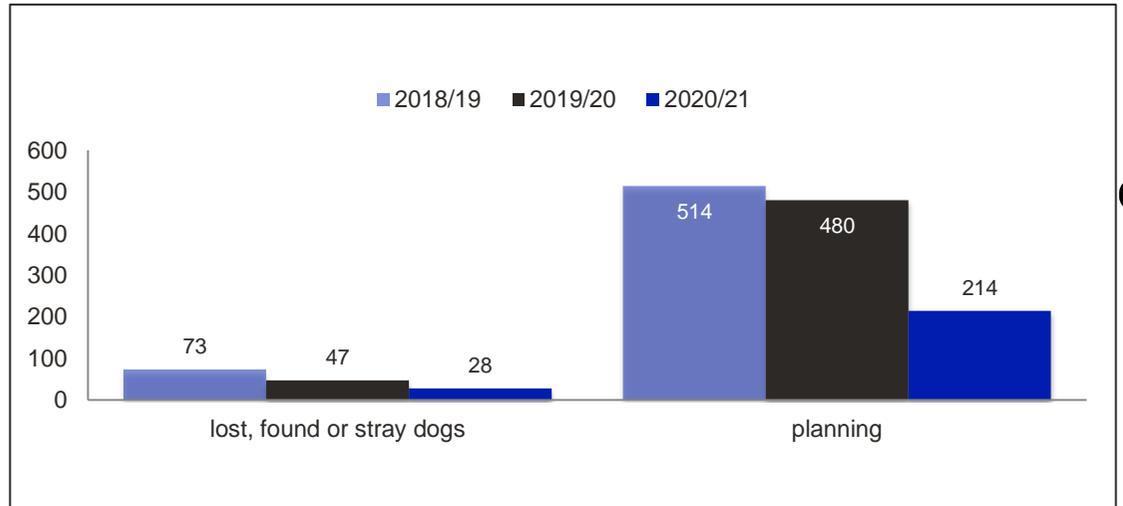
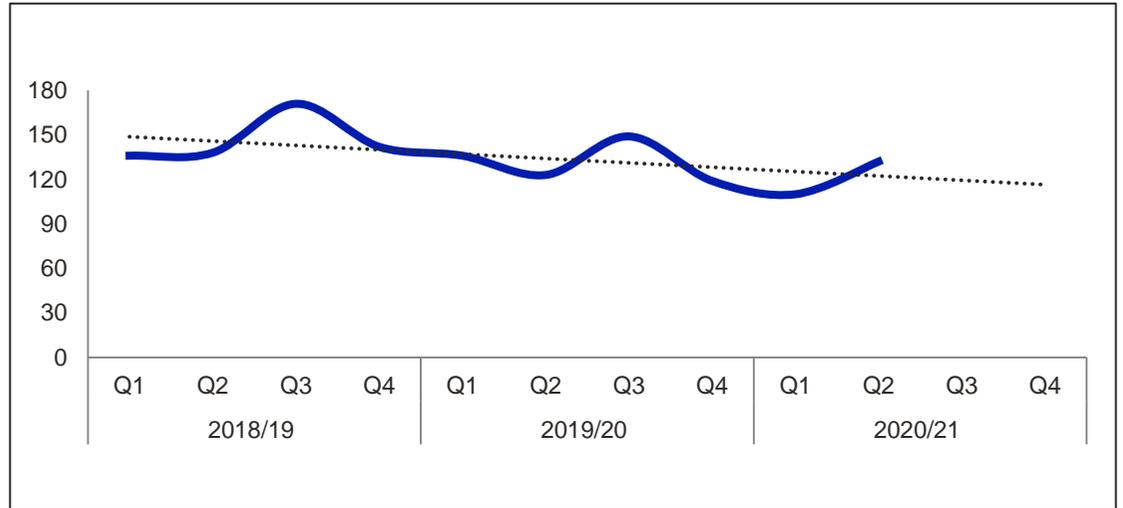


South Gloucestershire being located on the outskirts of Bristol was subject to significant contaminative industries and activities historically. Pressures on brownfield development recently have presented the authority with a large volume of planning applications on significantly contaminated and complex sites. For a number of years now WRS has been asked to assist with this work focusing on the complex sites, so whilst numbers of referrals remain low, when presented they tend to be time consuming and complex. Work demand is dependant on resource availability at South Gloucestershire Council and as a consequence WRS is retained to undertake repeat work for them when this becomes an issue. Not unlike other parts of the region planning work has been less due to the covid-19 lockdown resulting in the postponement of planning application submissions.



The dog control work WRS undertake for Tewkesbury Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. There is concern that post lockdown there will be an increase in the numbers of abandoned stray dogs when people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

Planning work remains steady, with consultations for the last quarter being relatively comparative to previous years work.





## WRS Board: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### Information Report – IT Update

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Members are asked to note the report.</b>
<b>Background</b>	This is an update to the information report presented to the Board on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020 to provide clarity on timescales and next actions.
<b>Report</b>	<p><u>Upgrading of IT equipment and improved software</u> The first phase of replacement laptops has been completed. Eighteen laptops with Microsoft 365 have been configured and set up with users during October 2020 by Wyre Forest IT.</p> <p>An example laptop is currently being cloned to reduce set up times ahead of the deployment of the second phase of replacement laptops which commenced 6<sup>th</sup> November and is expected to be completed (subject to WRS Officer commitments) before Christmas.</p> <p><u>Website Development</u> Work has continued on setting up the WRS website on Umbraco 8. The attached Gantt chart sets out the work elements still remaining. The subject headings primarily relate to content movement from the current website to the new proposed site.</p> <p><u>Integration with BDC Finance project</u> WRS will have a number of points of integration with the new BDC finance system. From a customer perspective these will be via telephone payments which will continue largely as they currently do with improvements for PCN compliance, and via the WRS website which will be an enhancement to the currently available options.</p> <p>BDC have postponed the 'go-live' date for their new finance system until the new year. Once complete they will work with WRS to fit the BDC payment engine into the WRS website. Discussions are to take place on whether WRS will be able to take payments for other partner authority licences.</p>
<b>Contact Point</b>	<p>Mark Cox Technical Services Manager Email: <a href="mailto:mark.cox@worcsregservices.gov.uk">mark.cox@worcsregservices.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01562 738023</p>





Appendix A

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Xmas/ New Year	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
09-13 Nov	16-20 Nov	23-27 Nov	30 Nov-04 Dec	07-11 Dec	14-18 Dec		04-08 Jan	11-15 Jan	18-22 Jan	25-29 Jan	01-05 Feb	08-12 Feb	15-19 Feb	22-26 Feb
Dog Service Dog Service														
	Pest Control Pest Control Pollution Pollution	Pest Control Pollution Pollution	Pollution Pollution Nuisance	Pollution Nuisance Nuisance	Pollution Nuisance Nuisance	Nuisance Nuisance Licensing Licensing	Licensing Licensing Food & Drink Food & Drink Food & Drink	Licensing Licensing Food & Drink Food & Drink Food & Drink	Licensing Food & Drink Food & Drink	Food & Drink Health & Safety	About Us About Us	Contact Us Private Water Covid 19 Public Health		
										Payment system integration				
										General audit of site - user testing, layout, sense, spelling				
										Accessibility audit of site (-with Wyre Forest Web Team)				
										WRS content editor/report writer training				
										Improve the look of the site - Wyre Forest Web Team				
													Accessibility statement	
													Set Live	



This page is intentionally left blank

# Worcestershire Regulatory Services

*Supporting and protecting you*

## WRS Board

### The new Statutory Standards for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

<b>Recommendation</b>	That Members note the report and the guidance highlighted via the link included in the paper.
<b>Background</b>	<p>In July 2020, following a number of high profile enquiries into criminal offences involving taxi drivers, the Secretary of State for Transport issued the long awaited, new 'Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards' to licensing authorities aimed at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>The standards set out a range of measures to protect passengers and the Department for Transport will require an update from each licensing authority by January 2021.</p> <p>Licensing authorities have a legal duty under section 177 of the Police and Crime Act 2017, to have regard to the Statutory Standards, and are expected to publish their considerations and any changes to policies and procedures that stem from them.</p>
<b>Report</b>	<p><b>Service Impacts</b></p> <p>Section 177 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 enabled the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance to taxi and private hire licensing authorities as to how their licensing functions may be exercised so as to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are 18 and over from harm.</p> <p>The legislation was, to a large extent prompted by the Jay and Casey reports on child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) in Rotherham. These issues have also come to light in a number of places across the country. Both of these reports highlighted examples of taxi / private hire vehicle drivers being directly linked to children that were abused, including instances when children were picked up from schools, children's homes or from family homes and abused or sexually exploited.</p> <p>A public consultation on the draft statutory guidance ran between 12 February 2019 and 22 April 2019, however, the Department for Transport (DfT) only published its</p>

'Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards' on 21st July 2020. Rather than providing members with 40 pages of additional papers, members can access the document on the .GOV website using the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/928583/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928583/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english.pdf)

The Standards are the result of a consultation and detailed discussions by DfT with the taxi trade, regulators and safety campaign groups during 2018 and 2019. This committee formally responded to the consultation in April 2019.

### **Recommendations in the Standards**

The Standards contain a number of recommendations regarding matters connected to taxi and private hire licensing functions including:

- Criminality checks for licence holders
- Working in partnership with the Police
- Sharing information with other licensing authorities
- Dealing with complaints about drivers and operators
- Training for Members
- The Fit and Proper Test
- Criminal convictions and rehabilitation of offenders
- Safeguarding awareness advice, guidance/ training for drivers
- Language proficiency
- CCTV in licensed vehicles
- Regulation of booking and dispatch staff
- Record keeping
- Changes to DBS frequency

The introduction to the Standards states that the Department for Transport,

**“expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to.”**

It is clear therefore that it is the desire of the Government to see consistent standards applied by taxi and private hire licensing authorities across the country.

### **Moving Forward**

WRS officers believe that, in light of the recommendations set out in the Standards, all of the district councils' current hackney carriage and private hire licensing policies will now need to be reviewed carefully with a view to implementing the changes. This review would ultimately lead to the drafting of a new cohesive policy document that brings together each district council's procedures on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This will include, but not be limited to, policies on convictions, a “fit and proper” person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards.

Officers see this as an opportunity to harmonise to a significant extent the districts' Taxi & Private Hire licensing policies with the recommendations contained within the Standards document at their heart, whilst continuing to

reflect the differing views that members from the individual authorities may express.

### **Risks**

Failure to have regard to the guidance issued under section 177 would leave the Council at risk of being in breach of its legal duty, although it remains the case that each individual Council must reach its own decisions, both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters in light of the relevant law. It may be that the Standards become a focus for legal challenge to an authority's practices, and that any failure to formally have had regard to the Standards without sufficient justification could be detrimental to each authority's legal position. The costs associated with conducting a review of the Council's hackney carriage and private hire licensing policies will be met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

Members will be aware that licensing is a reserved matter to each Council's Licensing committee so this committee does not have control of policy development in these areas. This report is therefore for noting only, but given that the committee contains a number of executive members from each Council, officers felt it right and proper that members of this Board should be aware of the likely direction of travel that this national development creates for the service and the partners.

What happened in Rotherham, Rochdale and elsewhere; places as close to here as Telford, must not be forgotten and all local authorities must remain vigilant, striving to ensure that young, vulnerable people are not subject to this form of exploitation so they do not suffer the fate of others around the country.

### **Contact Points**

Kiran Lahel, Acting Licensing and support Services Manager  
01562 738067  
Kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk

### **Background Papers**

Department for Transport guidance entitled "Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards" can be accessed at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/928583/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928583/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english.pdf)



This page is intentionally left blank