

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board

Thursday, 6th October,
2022
4.30 pm

Parkside Suite
Market Street
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 8DA



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AGENDA

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

THURSDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2022

AT 4.30 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE, PARKSIDE, MARKET STREET, BROMSGROVE,
WORCESTERSHIRE, B61 8DA

MEMBERS: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor H. J. Jones
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor P.L. Thomas
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor J. Raine
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor B. Nielsen
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor S. Khan
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor N. Nazir
Worcester City Council: Councillor S. Cronin - Vice-Chairman
Worcester City Council: Councillor C. Mitchell
Wychavon District Council: Councillor D. Morris
Wychavon District Council: Councillor T. Rowley - Chairman
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor N. Martin
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor L. Whitehouse

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 23rd June 2022 (Pages 1 - 14)
4. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April - June 2022 (Pages 15 - 22)
5. Activity and Performance Data - Quarter 1 2022/23 (Pages 23 - 56)
6. Update on Automation Project (Pages 57 - 58)
7. Information Report Air Quality Grant (Pages 59 - 62)
8. 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

28th September 2022

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

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY, 23RD JUNE 2022, AT 4.38 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Deeming (substituting for Councillor H. J. Jones), P.L. Thomas, J. Raine, B. Nielsen, S. Khan, N. Nazir, S. Cronin, S. Ditta (substituting for Councillor C. Mitchell), T. Rowley and J. Thomas (substituting for Councillor N. Martin)

Observers: Mr. G. Day, Democratic Services Team (via Microsoft Teams)

Officers: Mr. J. Howse (via Microsoft Teams), Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr. R. Keyte, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. M. Cox, Mr. D. Mellors and Mrs. P. Ross

Partner Officers: Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council, Mr. I. Miller, Wyre Forest District Council (via Microsoft Teams), Mr. I. Edwards, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils

1/22

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor T. Rowley, Wychavon District Council be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

2/22

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor S. Cronin, Worcester City Council be elected Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/22

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

The following apologies for absence were received: -

Councillors H. J. Jones Bromsgrove District Council, C. Mitchell, Worcester City Council and N. Martin, Wyre Forest District Council with R. Deeming, Bromsgrove District Council, S. Ditta, Worcester City Council and J. Thomas, Wyre Forest District Council, in attendance respectively, as substitute Members.

Councillors D. Morris, Wychavon District Council and L. Whitehouse, Wyre Forest District Council.

4/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5/22 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 10th February 2022, were submitted.

RESOLVED that minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 10th February 2022, be approved as a correct record.

6/22 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022**

The Board considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Annual Report 2021/2022.

The Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that under the Shared Services Partnership Service Level Agreement (SLA) the Board was required to receive the annual report at its annual meeting.

The Head of Regulatory Services highlighted that the report covered the performance of the service from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, both in terms of KPIs and highlights of activity, with a short summary activity report, as detailed at Appendix 5 to the report.

Last year continued to be dominated by the global Covid 19 pandemic, which required a significant resource input from WRS. The service took on several new work-streams to support pandemic response and delivered these well. This had however, meant that some areas of work were more limited during 2021/22, one example being the Food Standards Agency's work programme, which recommenced in September 2021 via their road-map back to a "new normal" scheduled for 1st April 2023.

Despite these additional commitments, performance remained good in most areas. Food business compliance rates remained high. Taxi license renewals were dealt with within a reasonable time. The taxi fleet appeared to be generally in good order, although the number of vehicles that failed either when submitted to a garage for interim test or, to a lesser extent, whilst in-service had increased, with one partner area standing out.

As with previous years, complaints against the service were significantly exceeded by compliments. The main issues for complainants related to people:

- Unhappy with our response to their complaint about nuisance.
- Having pest controller issues.

- Unhappy with Covid Advisor advice.

Last year, many people were suffering from “Covid fatigue,” so it was not surprising that being reminded about some of the covid controls were not always welcomed.

However, with non-business customer satisfaction at only 61.5%, managers had realised that they needed to move forward on improving speed of response, speed of resolution and keeping people updated on progress. The nature of the service was such that officers would never be able to make everyone happy because a significant proportion of nuisance complaints would not amount to a statutory nuisance, but officers were aware that they could improve performance in this area. Some positions could not be back-filled so teams had been incredibly pressured.

Members were further informed that the Annual Report provided a summary of the financial position, the key achievements and covered issues relating to human resources. There were also sections on risk management and equalities. The Report would be published on the WRS website and would be shared with other all partner authorities.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to questions from Members with regard to staffing and explained that to a greater extent this had now been resolved, but it had put demand on the service with the covid grant funding ending at the end of March 2022. Officers still had to continue to carry out some work with businesses, so some staff contracts were extended. Members were reassured that there would be no further cost implications for partners with regard to staffing levels.

The Head of Regulatory Services further responded to questions from Members with regard to non-business customer satisfaction being low. Officers would ensure that they complied with the systems in place and with regard to noise complaints, they would keep people informed about any outcomes and timescales.

Members were further informed that with regard to the increase in noise complaints, that a lot of pubs had looked to diversify in order to raise additional income. Residents nearby had been used to having no noise during the pandemic, whilst premises were closed. The complaints were very low level, very minor, so not likely to see an increase in premises being called in for review at Licensing Sub-Committee meetings. The provisions in the Licensing Act 2003 were designed such that people living by premises that were not meeting the licensing objectives, were expected to be active citizens, willing to report any businesses in breach of the licensing objectives; and to call them in for review themselves with some support from the local authority if required. The system did not assume that all actions would be initiated and taken by the local authority or responsible authorities like the Police.

The Community Environmental Health Manager responded to questions with regard to food hygiene inspections and in doing so informed the Board that displaying the 'Scores on the Doors' food hygiene rating was not a legal requirement.

With regards to further questions on the percentage of defective vehicles, the Head of Regulatory Services and Licensing Manager clarified the different regimes for taxi/private hire vehicles and large vehicles classed as Public Service Vehicles (PSV), that were regulated under different legislation.

Officers responded to further questions on the Annual Report, which included: -

- Air quality / planning guidance
- Standardisation of taxi standards across partner authorities.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Regulatory Services and officers for a detailed report.

RESOLVED: that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2020/2021, be noted; and

- (a) that a copy of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2021/2022 be forwarded to the Chief Executive, Managing Director and Members of the six partner authorities.

7/22

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - MARCH 2022 & ANNUAL RETURN

The Executive Director of Resources, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC), introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on page 65 of the main agenda report.

The Executive Director of Resources confirmed that the report covered the period April to March 2022 and also included the Annual Return.

The detailed revenue report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. This showed a final outturn refund of £397k, which represented 12.2% of the actual budget and was mainly due to: -

- A significant underspend on the stray dog contracts due to the service dealing with fewer straying incidents. Which was likely to be related to people working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, officers had noted an increase in stray dog numbers, so a similar underspend should not be anticipated for 2022/2023.
- The inability to recruit like for like numbers of employees to backfill capacity committed to pandemic response work.

- The outturn underspend was £160k greater than that forecasted at Quarter 3. This was largely due to an additional £130k of income in relation to support for Covid grant funded work.

It was proposed that the 2021/2022 refund of £397k be refunded back to partners as detailed on page 65 of the main agenda report.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the WRS – Profit & Loss Report 2020/2021 and the reasons for variances.

RESOLVED that

- the final financial position for the period April 2020 to March 2022, be noted;
- the refund of £397k to the participating Councils, be approved as follows: -

Council	Refund from 2021/2022 £'000
Bromsgrove District Council	58
Malvern Hills District Council	51
Redditch Borough Council	70
Worcester City Council	92
Wychavon District Council	60
Wyre Forest District Council	60
Total	397

8/22

ACTIVITY & PERFORMANCE DATA REPORT Q1 TO 4

The Community Environmental Health Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4 for 2021/2022; and in doing so highlighted the following key points: -

ACTIVITY DATA

The final quarter of 2021/2022 followed on from a Christmas period free of Covid controls and Government continued to move away from controls, with all restrictions removed at the end of the period.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) had announced its plan to commence its roadmap to normal operations during the Summer of

2021, and this had commenced in September, increasing demands on a still stretched team that was continuing to juggle Covid controls and particularly Local Outbreak Management work. A creditable 1718 interventions were completed during the year, with over 500 in quarter 4. The numbers of complaints about food continued a slight up-tic from quarter 3 through to quarter 4, although following the trend predicted previously. Officers had worked evenings and weekends on Covid related business.

Quarter 4 followed the slow downward trend in relation to dog related complaints and enquiries, however, the number of strays reported over the year had increased above the level pre-pandemic in 2019/2020. The latter was a slight concern as officers had predicted an increase as people who purchased dogs during lockdowns returned to the workplace.

Numbers of licensing applications fell slight from quarter 3 to quarter 4, although overall numbers for the year were above the previous year but had yet to return to the level pre-pandemic. 20% of applications were for temporary events as the hospitality industry sought to recover from the impacts of pandemic controls. Of the 466 complaints received last year, 36% related to the taxi trade and 20% related to alcohol licensed premises, with 19% relating to animal establishments.

For much of this year, officers continued to deliver Covid pandemic controls as well as our business-as-usual activities, but this year was effectively a transition so, by 31st March, all controls had been lifted. The service had remained engaged with the County Council Public Health team as the Local Outbreak Response team was maintained in a reduced form to respond to the continuing issues with Covid and to be prepared to re-vamp up activity should a more dangerous, novel variant emerge. There was no further financial commitment to covid control activity from Government for 2022/2023 so this was very much a year where accommodating life with Covid 19 was the norm and people would continue to return to pre-pandemic behaviours or establish new ones as we move to the oft quoted “new normal.”

COVID RELATED ACTIVITIES

Covid Advisors were out daily mainly supporting the vaccination drive. Clinics occurred in most districts, with local ones being set up in many areas to provide access for those harder to reach groups. Figures consistently showed lower uptake in our more deprived communities and those with a higher proportion of residents from ethnic minorities. The Advisors had delivered several roles in support of these very successful exercises. Contact tracing and lost to follow-up activity continued through the period until Government finally ended the need for this towards the end of the quarter.

The Chairman expressed his sincere thanks to officers for an informative report.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 2021/2022, be noted and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

9/22

INFORMATION REPORT - NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

The Licensing & Support Services Manager briefly introduced an information report on the work of the Night Time Economy (NTE) team.

Members were briefly informed that as detailed in the report that, since the lifting of all Covid 19 restrictions, with funding for work still committed, officers originally tasked with this work had turned their hands to dealing with a range of other issues that could arise in the NTE.

The NTE Teams visible presence alone, out of office hours, had been delivering a message that the district councils took their responsibilities seriously in dealing with issues that arise in the sector. The focus of the NTE team had been ensuring that the licensing objectives were upheld by premises. However, the flexibility shown by the officers recruited had allowed us to direct them to a much broader supporting role as part of WRS, as detailed fully on pages 130 of the main agenda report, as follows: -

- Monitoring of taxi licensing activities.
- Licensing Enforcement Activities including suspended licences.
- Noise checks.
- Simple food hygiene checks.

Members were further informed that the funding for this team will come to an end on 30th June 2022. Therefore, the dedicated resource would no longer be available.

In response to questions from the Board, the Head of Regulatory Services commented that the NTE officers were not fully qualified Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) but having used their help officers would going forward, find ways cost effectively, by an intelligence lead approach using the information gathered by the NTE team. Which had highlighted that the service needed a cross cutting priority to focus resource on this important economic area and had also further highlighted the need for a cross team problem-solving approach that would sometimes lead to multi-agency action being required.

With regard to questions on income generation, the Head of Regulatory Services referred to the role of the officer, which partners had agreed to in 2018, to support the delivery of additional income generation via Primary Authority work. Officers in the Technical Services Manager's team, as a centre of excellence; and which they wanted to build upon going forward, would look at other authorities who could not get that level of expertise.

RESOLVED that the Information Report on the work of the Night-Time Economy (NTE) Team be noted and that Members use the contents of the information report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

10/22

PROPOSAL FOR TRANSACTION TRANSFORMATION OF WRS SERVICES

The Head of Regulatory Services sincerely apologised to the Board for the lateness of the Supplementary Agenda Item – Proposal for Transaction Transformation of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).

The Head of Regulatory Services drew Members' attention to the Recommendations, as detailed on page 1 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

Members were informed that, as detailed in the report, that WRS had been exploring the options to improve the customer experience and enable a smooth customer journey for licence applicants and general service requesters for some time. There was an assumption now that all transactions would be fully e-enabled and on-line payment was the norm in virtually all walks of life, from booking a holiday to paying vehicle excise fees.

Pre-COVID, a group was established to look at this. The group was led by the host's previous S151 officer because one of the potential outcomes was likely to be one partner collecting WRS related income on behalf of all six partners.

Internal audit had repeatedly expressed concerns with Partner Authority income reconciliation against licence records during annual audits. WRS had always responded that this situation could only be addressed by moving to a platform where payments were linked directly to the back-office system records (held in IDOX Uniform). This was not within the gift of the service without changes at individual partners leading towards fuller integration of the payment process with the issuing of licenses.

This idea was resisted in the early days of WRS but in more recent years, officers from the six partner authorities seemed more confident that this would be a suitable way forward, with one partner collecting funds and sending these on at routine intervals to the other partners. The precedent of WRS taking payments on behalf of partner authorities (through the host, Bromsgrove) had already been set with stray dog fees for example, albeit in much lower overall values than income from Licensing.

The pandemic had taught us that, in terms of the automation of transactions, we were somewhat behind other local authorities across the country, and currently budget a significant spend on the administrative side of the licencing service, where others had moved to a digital first assumption, automating payment and upload of applications to the back office. The WRS Licensing team had made significant changes through the pandemic, moving to a single method of application collection, however, this still required the additional support of printing off the application details and then manually inputting the data into the Uniform database system.

Prior to the pandemic applications would reach WRS through numerous channels, causing delays in them reaching the teams and inevitably impacting service delivery and partner performance indicators, as detailed on page 2 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

This had been improved somewhat, with some streamlining of the process due to the pandemic but WRS managers felt that this could go significantly further with some initial investment.

WRS had also previously investigated the use of the website as a channel to receive requests from our customers for environmental health related matters. We currently only had the option of supplying forms that, when submitted, came into the back office as emails for manual inputting into the Uniform database system for processing, allocation, and action. This could significantly delay the customer journey and did little to enhance the service given. Because of this, the service did not encourage this route as a method of engaging with our service.

Last year only 18 requests for service were received following completion of our on-line forms. By contrast, 2,412 environmental health service requests were received by telephone and 7,922 were received by email. This overwhelmingly demonstrated that our customers wished to engage with us through electronic means.

Given the wide adoption of “digital first” policies by the whole local authority sector, making the on-line route the key channel for engaging with services, it seemed at odds with the direction of travel that a group of key service areas that generated significant income streams for the district councils should be left out of this policy approach.

The development of the EU Services Directive before 2010 had led local authorities to be required to offer on-line application processes. Government provided this option through the .GOV website, enabling all

local authorities to achieve compliance in the timescales required. There were, however, only a limited number of compatible payment engines that linked to this website so as partners moved away from these, the gateway had effectively been closed as a legal route into the service.

At present WRS could only accept applications from two districts via .Gov as the remaining partners no longer had a compatible online payment engine. Officers therefore manually received applications and payments for these applications.

Government was also keen to close the .GOV portal, requiring that local authorities made their own compliant arrangements, to continue with this duty. On-going dialogue indicated that Government's preferred date for final removal would be April 2023. The LGA keeps pressing Government on this, for fear that ultimately the service would be withdrawn leaving local authorities that relied on it, to put in place their own solutions for accepting online applications at their own expense, at a time when the financial environment for local authorities was difficult.

Previously a significant volume of applications had come into WRS through .Gov, mainly relating to the Licensing Act 2003 and other licenses where large scale national operators were involved. E-enabling our own platform would provide a suitable replacement portal to .GOV.

Members' attention was drawn to the 'Proposal'.

There were two elements to the proposal. Firstly, there was the request for investment into a platform that provided the customer the opportunity to raise a service request for environmental health or licensing matters and, to apply and pay online for a licence, permit or registration. The detail of such requests would then be automatically fed into the WRS back-office Uniform system. This would significantly reduce the number of back-office staff and would release officers and free up resources on the administrative and front end of the service.

The second element of this proposal would be to invest in electronic ID cards for the taxi trade. This would enable officers to implement the new Taxi Standards more effectively and tie in with the reporting requirements to record a range of offending, suspensions, and revocations on the national NR3 database system. WRS currently already spent £2.5k on ID cards for the taxi trade but would like to use that current budget plus £22k to now introduce electronic ID cards for them. Electronic ID cards would facilitate immediate checks on identity

and status of drivers, ensuring better protection for the public when officers were out carrying out checks

The Head of Regulatory Services further drew Members' attention to the 'System and Costs' information, and the approximate costings from several suppliers, as detailed on page 4 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

The advantage of the "off the peg" solutions was that they come with pre-prepared forms that drop onto your website and would link into the back office with some configuration. Both were both more expensive in terms of initial investment and on-going running costs, but they would give a front end that was stable, used by others and presumably any changes in legislative requirements would be addressed by the supplier in amendments to the product package.

Doing nothing risked the service appearing to have been left behind and did not paint the best picture to potential customers for our income generation work in the absence of an online payment solution for in-house partner activities.

Since all three approaches would require integration with existing systems including host finances, none of the options was cost free in this aspect. Therefore, whilst working with Idox would probably draw more of our in-house resource, it was likely to remain the lowest cost in terms of cash input.

The Head of Regulatory Services continued and in doing so referred to the 'Benefits and risks'; and the assumptions, as fully detailed on pages 5 and 6 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

The Head of Regulatory Services highlighted that, should Members decide to take this project forward, that as detailed in the report; that there was potential for the shift to on-line payments to have more impact on particular communities in several districts, so officer members of the Board felt that, whilst in principle there were positives in the proposal, consideration should be given to equality impacts and, if necessary, some form of consultation be undertaken with the relevant traders in the area, particularly the taxi trade.

Members' attention was further drawn to the financial considerations, as detailed on page 6 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack and the 'Options Appraisal' and the 'Timetable for Proposal' as detailed at Appendices 1 and 2 in the report.

The Head of Regulatory Services further informed the Board, that should they be in agreement with the proposal, that WRS would follow the procurement rules of the Host Authority, Bromsgrove District Council.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to questions from Board Members with regard to: -

- Electronic ID cards
- Equalities impact
- Liaison with the taxi trade
- Licensing Surgeries / phone help

The Head of Regulatory Services reassured Members that although the group that was initially established to look at this project, pre-covid; that the figures provided, within the report, had been given on several occasions; and that the costings given last year would not significantly increase. Should there be any additional costs, WRS held reserves which would be used to meet those costs. He would reassure the Board that he would do his very best not to come back to partners within the next 12 months for additional funding.

Councillor S. Khan, Redditch Borough Council, expressed his concerns with regard to customers who were less IT literate being able to access services that were available on-line only. Councillor Khan therefore asked if this could be reflected in the Recommendations and that the Recommendations be amended to include the relevant wording.

Councillor Khan was reassured by the Technical Services Manager, that there was no intention of withdrawing Licensing Surgeries or existing phone help for customers.

The Head of Regulatory Services reiterated this and explained that, as detailed in the report; that there was the potential for the shift to on-line payments to have more impact on particular communities in several districts, so Partner Officers of the Board felt that, whilst in principle there were positives in the proposal, consideration should be given to equality impacts and, if necessary, some form of consultation would be undertaken with the relevant traders in the area, particularly the taxi trade.

Having considered the concerns raised by Councillor S. Khan, Redditch Borough Council and on being put to the vote, it was: -

RESOLVED that the Proposal for Transaction of WRS Services report: -

- (i) be noted;
- (ii) that Members agree in principle to the creation of a reserve, in the amounts outlined in the report;
- (iii) that Members agree that a detailed project plan be produced to be shared with and reviewed by Partner Officers of the Board, with progress reported back to future meetings of the Board; and
- (iv) that while Partner Officers of the Board work together to identify a suitable solution, that they also investigate any potential equalities issues that may arise; ensuring that support continued to be provided to those who required it.

The meeting closed at 5.58 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Board
6th October 2022

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING April – June 2022

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – June 2022
- 1.2 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2022-23 in relation to Bereavements

Council	Apr–June 22 Actual for Bereavements £000
Bromsgrove District Council	6
Malvern Hills District Council	4
Worcester City Council	5
Total	15

- 1.3 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2022-23 in relation to three additional Technical Officers

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2022/23 Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2022/23 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2022/23 Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Malvern Hills District Council	4	7	
Worcester City Council	5	2	70

Bromsgrove District Council	5	7	
Wychavon District Council	8	12	
Wyre Forest District Council	5	8	
Total	33	38	70

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 – June 2022.

Background

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

Report

The following reports are included for Joint Board's Attention:

- Revenue Monitoring - April – June 22 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown - April – June 22 – Appendix 2

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1.. This shows a projected outturn 2022/23 of £5k refund to partners. It is appreciated this is an estimation to the year end based on following assumptions:-

- A 2% pay award has been added to the projected outturn figures, but not included in the April to June 22 actual figures.
- A number of employees are working on grant funded covid related work. This in incurring agency staff costs due to backfilling of these employees.
- If April to June 22 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be a overspend on this service of £6k. WRS officers will continue to monitor and analyse this spend and advise of any changes in the projected outturn figure at quarter 2. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners is:-

Wychavon District Council £5k
Bromsgrove District Council £1k

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – June 22 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:-

Bromsgrove District Council	£6k
Malvern Hills District Council	£4k
Worcester City Council	£5k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – June 22
- Any grant funded expenditure is shown separate to the core service costs as this is not funded by the participating Councils.

WRS budgeted for a 2% pay award in 2022-23. The current proposed pay award is £1,925 per annum on all pay points (pro rata for part time work,) and, if accepted, will create additional pressure on WRS salaries beyond the budgeted amount to the value of £115,756. The Head of WRS will be discussing this with the Officer members of the Board ahead of November's meeting to agree how to address the potential shortfall

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this report

Contact Points

Peter Carpenter – peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

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WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2022/23
Total WRS June 22 / Period 3 - 22/23

Appendix 1

	Revised Full Year Budget 22-23	Revised Budget - Apr - June 22	Committed Expenditure Apr - June 22	Variance	Qtr 1 Projected outturn	Qtr 1 Projected Outturn Variance
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct Expenditure						
Employees						
Salary	3,048	755	633	-122	2,998	-51
Agency Staff	0	0	66	66	182	182
Employee Insurance	25	6	6	0	25	0
Sub-Total - Employees	3,073	761	705	-56	3,204	131
Premises						
Rent / Hire of Premise	61	15	15	-0	61	0
Cleaning	1	0	0	0	1	0
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total - Premises	62	15	15	-0	62	0
Transport						
Vehicle Hire	13	3	1	-2	10	-3
Vehicle Fuel	8	2	0	-2	5	-3
Road Fund Tax	1	0	0	0	1	0
Vehicle Insurance	5	1	1	0	5	0
Vehicle Maintenance	3	1	0	-1	3	0
Car Allowances	75	19	13	-6	70	-5
Sub-Total - Transport	104	26	16	-10	94	-10
Supplies and Services						
Furniture & Equipment	32	8	7	-1	32	1
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	0	0	-0	2	0
Printing & Photocopying	17	4	5	0	17	0
Postage	11	3	4	1	11	0
ICT	55	14	13	-1	55	0
Telephones	21	5	4	-1	20	-1
Training & Seminars	23	6	2	-4	23	0
Insurance	20	5	5	0	20	0
Third Party Payments	170	42	42	-0	170	0
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	349	87	82	-5	349	-0
Contractors						
Dog Warden	121	30	29	-2	115	-7
Pest Control	103	26	67	41	101	-1
Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	70	18	14	-4	68	-2
Other contractors/consultants	3	1	0	-0	3	0
Water Safety	5	1	1	-0	5	0
Food Safety	1	0	0	-0	1	0
Environmental Protection	12	3	21	18	27	15
Grants / Subscriptions	13	3	4	1	19	7
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	1	5	4	10	4
Sub-Total	332	83	142	59	348	16
Income						
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-543	-127	-210	-83	-685	-142
Sub-Total	-543	-127	-210	-83	-685	-142
Overall Total	3,378	846	750	-96	3,373	-5

Saving due to employees working of comf grant working work.
 Due to backfilling of staff working on grant funded work & other contractual work

Additional contract for Planning Enforcement £90k.
 See append 2

Notes:-

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Income 2022/23

Appendix 2

Income from Partners	April to June 22
	£
Budget	844,457
Pension Backfunding	7,300
Bereavement / Public Burials	15,007
Pest Control Overspend - Bromsgrove, & Wychavon	1,395
Employee for Animal Activity - Apr - June 22	9,536
Employee for Income Generation - Apr - June 22	8,230
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Apr - June 22 - Worcs City	62,500
	<u>948,425</u>
Grant Income	
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	3,500
	<u>3,500</u>
Other Income	
Stray Dog Income	9,019
Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal & Admin Support	13,300
Planning Support Work	25,390
Contaminated Land Work	13,545
PPC Work	431
Pest Control - Bath & North East Somerset Council	4,044
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	180
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	6,855
Licensing - Pre-App Advice	167
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening	3,973
Support for Comf Grant Funded Work	25,710
	<u>102,614</u>
Total Income Apr - June 22	<u>1,054,539</u>
2022/23 Base Budget from Partners	-844,457
Total Income Excluding Budget	210,082

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WRS Board

Date: 6th October 2022

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarter 1 2022/23

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 the first quarter of 2022/23, 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	<p>Activity Data</p> <p>The first quarter of 2022/23 saw us begin the year with no covid controls for the first time in around 2 years. The virus was still in circulation and remained a factor for some of our advisory work, but there was no legal enforcement framework. We continued to have some commitments, particularly with the Local Outbreak Response Team, where officers remained on duty to address issues, but this quarter's results show real signs of us stepping back to normality.</p> <p>The number of food safety cases recorded during quarter one is a reduction of 4% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 55% compared to 2020-21. This demonstrates our return to normal activity post-pandemic. Generally, a higher proportion of food safety cases are enquiries such as requests for business advice or export health certificates, but some are complaints about a business. Based on the 144 complaints recorded, 84% related to issues with products purchased from food businesses, whilst 16% related to poor hygiene standards and practices.</p> <p>A good number of visits were undertaken as we work towards the end of the Food Standards Agency's roadmap in March next year. Of the interventions</p>

conducted at businesses included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 7 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2) with most of these ratings issued to hospitality businesses.

The number of health and safety cases recorded during quarter one is consistent with 2021-22, but an increase of 42% compared to 2020-21. Again, this reflects the post-pandemic return to normality. Approximately 34% of cases were reports of accidents, with 50% relating to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days and 28% relating to injuries to members of the public. The remaining cases were accidents, where major injuries were sustained, dangerous occurrences, and two fatalities. Slips, trips, and falls continue to be the prominent cause of accidents.

The number of stray or lost dogs recorded during quarter one is an increase of 18% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 22% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 72% of cases related to 'contained' stray dogs, which means that a dog was found and held, usually by a member of the public. Overall, 68% of contained strays were reunited with their owners, however, figures vary significantly between partner authorities and, of course the others then must be re-homed by the charities we work with.

Generally, we receive a low number of dog control complaints. Of the 9 complaints recorded, 6 related to fouling and persistent straying, 3 related to welfare concerns, and a single complaint related to a dangerous dog. The last of these are usually referred to West Mercia Police.

The number of licensing cases recorded during quarter one is an increase of 17% compared to 2021-22. There were significantly fewer licensing applications recorded two years ago due to COVID restrictions and the closure of many hospitality premises, so we continue to see normality being restored. Approximately two-thirds of cases recorded during quarter one were applications and registrations; with 33% of those relating to temporary events, as hospitality venues began gearing up for the summer period. A further 25% relating to private hire or hackney carriage vehicle licences, and 13% relating to driver licences.

In general terms, WRS receives a higher number of enquiries about licensing matters than complaints about licensed or unlicensed activity. Based on the 152 complaints recorded during quarter one, 32% related to taxi licensing, 26% related to alcohol licensing, and 21% related to animal licensing.

The number of planning enquiries completed during quarter one is a reduction of 42% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of only 4% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 90% of enquiries were consultations, whilst 50% related to contaminated land. Around a fifth of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities. Information requests, which often link into the planning process were also down.

The number of pollution cases recorded during quarter one is a reduction of 8% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 22% compared to 2020-21. It should be noted that the increased number of cases two years ago coincided

with COVID-19 restrictions and a greater number of residents being at home because of lockdown provisions. The totals are in line with seasonal variations. Approximately 75% of cases related to noise nuisances, with noise from domestic properties (such as from dog barking or noise from audio-visual equipment) the most prominent sources. A further 11% of cases related to smoke nuisances and issues such as the burning of domestic or commercial waste. This is very similar to the picture before the pandemic, so again hopefully a picture of returning to normality.

Performance

As always, reporting against the suite of indicators is more limited for the first quarter. The non-business customer measure at 55.6%, down on the 61.6% figure at year-end last year and the 71% figure in Q1 last year. Although first response time scored reasonably, the time taken to deal with the issue, the overall outcome and whether people felt better equipped going forward, did not score well. Number of returns was low, but managers have been asked to investigate these figures. Satisfaction for business customers remains good at 98.7%.

We report overall numbers of compliant and non-compliant businesses at this point in the year, without the district breakdown. 98.4% of businesses were graded 3 stars to 5 stars on the hygiene rating scheme.

Compliments outnumber complaints by around 3:1 (30:10) similar to previous years.

Staff sickness is at 0.9 days per FTE, which is slightly above last year's figure for this period of 0.87 but still very similar to the 0.85 days per FTE from the same period in 2019. Another sign that we are back into more normal working.

Contact Points

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Simon.Wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

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

Appendix B: Performance indicator table**Table of PIs 2022/3**

Indicator	Reporting period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/ Outrun
1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	55.6			
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	98.7			
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.4			
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.6			
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA		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		NA	

7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	46.7			
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	10/ 30			
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.90 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		NA	
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA		NA	
13	Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17)	6-monthly	NA		NA	
14	Cost of regulatory services per	Annually	NA	NA	NA	

head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)					
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Worcestershire
Regulatory Services
Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2022-23



Bromsgrove
 District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Malvern
 Hills
 District
 Council
www.malvern hills.gov.uk



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
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Worcester
 CITY COUNCIL



WYCHAVON
 DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value



Wyre Forest
 District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the first activity report for 2022/3. It follows the format you will all now be familiar with and covers the period 1st April to 30th June 2022, but the graphs and tables allow comparison with the data in previous years.

Stray dog numbers were up in the first quarter, by 18% on the same period last year and 22% on the one previous to that. Officers have wondered for some time, if the boom in dog ownership during the period of Covid restrictions would lead to some increases. 68% of strays were reunited with their owners, but obviously that does mean that many have to be re-homed by the charities we work with. This has led to some congestion in kennels and officers have had to work hard with our contractors to ensure all dogs seized have somewhere to be placed.

Officers began the final year of the FSA's Food Recovery programme with a significant number of interventions, more than in Q1 last year and much higher than the previously year when visit programmes were suspended by the Agency. Food complaints fell very slightly this quarter compared to the same quarter last year but remain significantly above the previous year presumably as business activity was curtailed due to the pandemic. Activity on Health and Safety at Work follows a similar pattern to previous years but at a slightly elevated level.

Information requests were down, as were requests for planning support. These two figures are often linked as many information reports link into the planning process.

Licensing complaints and enquiries follows the now well know level trend. There continued to be a slight increase in license applications as the business community continues to build back post pandemic.

Pollution and nuisance complaints continued the upward trend we saw in Q4 at the end of last financial year. We always see an upturn into the warmer months, but this year has felt very pressured, as you will see when we report Quarter 2 in November.

We hope the report demonstrates the volume of work staff are undertaking and that some of the stories behind the numbers highlight the difficulties staff sometimes face. If you have further queries, please feel free to contact myself and the Team Managers.



Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory Services

Quarter One

The Community Environmental Health Team were kept incredibly busy throughout quarter one across the whole range of environmental health work.

Tragically we received a report in respect of a fatality at a white-collar boxing event which we are investigating in close collaboration with the Coroner's Office. Additional ongoing health and safety investigations include an accident involving a vehicle hitting an employee on private land in Kinver, whereby we had to detain the vehicle for examination, and a prosecution file has been submitted to Legal Services in respect of a serious forklift truck incident at a major retailer.

Your Officers resolved a significant private water supply issue in Timberhonger, providing support to the UK Security Health Authority in providing notices to residents on elevated Arsenic levels. Officers worked hard with landlord to resolve the issue, getting the water tested and implementing a regime for regular testing.

The Team attended, and in some cases chaired, Safety Advisory Groups throughout the period to ensure public safety including those convened for the Commonwealth Games Queens Baton Relay throughout the County.

In nuisance work, WRS worked with a car wash in Pershore in meeting its undertaking in respect of works to resolve a noise problem. We were also able to provide expertise in advising a local business in preventing light nuisance to residents where a film company was using their premises to film at night. We continued to receive a significant number of complaints concerning pubs having live music events in their gardens, often where they were fundamentally unsuitable for such events due to the proximity of neighbouring residential premises. We adopted a proactive intelligence-led approach to monitoring various large-scale events planned through the summer and served abatement notices in respect of noise from fans in Evesham, a cockerel crowing at a café in Bromsgrove, noise from barking at kennels and odour nuisance in Ombersley linked with a Planning enforcement notice. Another cockerel case made the national press, appearing in "The Sun", where we had been able to intervene and resolve the case.

A landowner in Worcester was served with a notice in respect of controlling rats and a Simple Caution was issued in respect of a long-running nuisance case involving barking dogs in Worcester. We also dealt with disturbance from a warehouse rave, carried out a BS4142 noise assessment on an industrial company in Evesham and investigated smoke nuisance from a business directed to burn tomato plants by The Animal and Plant Health Authority in Throckmorton.

A sad case involved the case of a deceased gentleman who had been resting with a Worcestershire Funeral Director for several months. We were contacted as conditions were getting very difficult for the staff and, for the dignity of the deceased, a funeral was needed. The situation was that money could not be released from the Estate and the daughter was abroad and unable to act. Your Officer intervened under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, and we were able to make the appropriate arrangements.

In food safety work, we were able to deliver 729 Inspections of which 185 were "first time" as we continued to focus on the Food Standards Agency Post Pandemic Recovery Programme which commenced in August 2021 and runs to March 2023.

Quarter One

The first quarter of every year always sees a steady increase in applications and this quarter has been no different with an increase in TENs applications leading the way as usual this time of year closely followed by taxi licensing.

The team are out doing more visits than ever before in all areas of licensing and this has illustrated where more resource have been allocated and more so in certain areas rather than others. These compliance visits will continue throughout the remainder of the year. Caravan licensing inspections have reached the second phase of the project with the majority of less contentious sites across Wychavon and Worcester City now being visited. There have been scheduled Taxi checks undertaken across the County and some in partnership with the County Council and officers are still finding problems with vehicles. The team will be looking to do more communication activities with the trade on the back of this. Animal licensing inspections have also peaked with officers now looking at the interim inspections that are required to be undertaken within the duration of a licence.

Within Taxi Licensing the Taxi Standards work has continued and the team are working with various suppliers to agree a provider for the 'Competency Certificate' whereby new drivers will undertake a suite of training as required under the new guidance.

Licensing officers have also commenced their annual training sessions for Members across all districts with more training to be provided later in the once the Taxi Standards have been implemented.

Quarter One

Information Management

Quarter one is particularly busy for our Information Management and Database Administration team with the preparation and submission of most of the service's government returns. Much of the day to day activity has been focused on increasing security and resilience of our systems. This has included include regular updates and patches to our main back office system, facilitating the recall of all laptops and mobiles for security updates, and promotion of cyber security awareness for all staff. In addition the team continues to help to support the income generation target of the service by delivering paid for services to Bromsgrove and Redditch Council's Planning Department, Worcestershire County Council Trading Standards and Tewkesbury Borough Council's Environmental Health & Licensing teams.

COVID Advisors

With no COVID restrictions in place the work of supporting the public and businesses with COVID recovery was continued through the first quarter of this year. This supporting Environmental Health colleagues providing advice and guidance to businesses through low level food hygiene inspections where compliance had been adversely impacted by the pandemic and to residents affected by nuisance where businesses had sought to change their operating methods to comply with restrictions or adapt to public demands post COVID. On the 20th April COVID advisors assisted with the Vaccine pop up clinic in Worcester where there was an uptake of 90 vaccinations, and also at further clinics in Worcester on the 7th May with an uptake of 71 Vaccinations and 28th May with an uptake of 12 vaccinations.

With COVID funding due to come to an end, a process of diversification was undertaken to enable the team to utilise their skills in engagement and contribute towards the service's income generation targets by providing meaningful assistance to our Partner authorities with the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Advisors, have been carrying out safeguarding checks for the guests arriving from Ukraine for Bromsgrove and Redditch during this period.

Enforcement Team

During quarter one of this year, we have been utilising former contact tracing staff with enforcement skills and knowledge to complement our existing service provision and enable us to widen it by assisting Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, and Wychavon Planning Enforcement teams. For Bromsgrove and Redditch, we have been delivering the vast majority of the service delivery deploying a range of investigative and enforcement tools to assist with COVID-backlogs and skills, knowledge and experience shortages. The work is exceptionally varied, ranging from unauthorised changes of use to breaches of permitted development rights and for Redditch and Bromsgrove areas will continue for the rest of the year.

Air Quality

June saw the completion and submission of air quality reports on behalf of each partner to DEFRA. The Air quality Annual Status Report (ASR) provides a detailed summary as to the status of existing air quality and emerging problem areas/improvement in each authority area. In other developments the team have begun planning additional air quality projects this year the first of which is the review of the 2013 Worcestershire Air Quality Action Plan and the submission of a DEFRA grant seeking funding with the deployment of enhanced air quality monitoring across the County of which further detail will be provided at the next quarterly report. The procurement process for the Wychbold air monitoring station was completed in June and the successful supplier will be Enviro Technology (ET) of Stroud. It is anticipated that the next phase of installation will take place over the autumn and winter once street works consents are secured from the County Council.

Contaminated Land

WRS continue to work with the Environment Agency on the PFAS contamination concerns relating to the old fire station site in Windsor Street, Bromsgrove. Officers are currently reviewing a significant status report and appraisal undertaken by Jacobs on behalf of the Environment Agency which was commissioned in 2021. It is anticipated that the Environment Agency will be making a decision in the autumn as to whether the site will require further investigation with regard to potential off-site contamination due to the characterises of the PFAS pollutant.

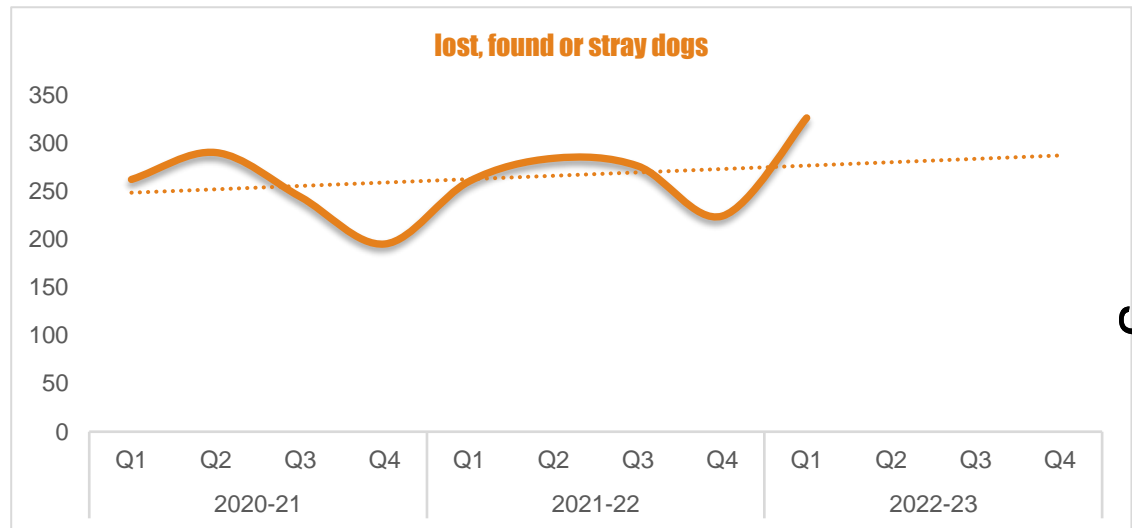
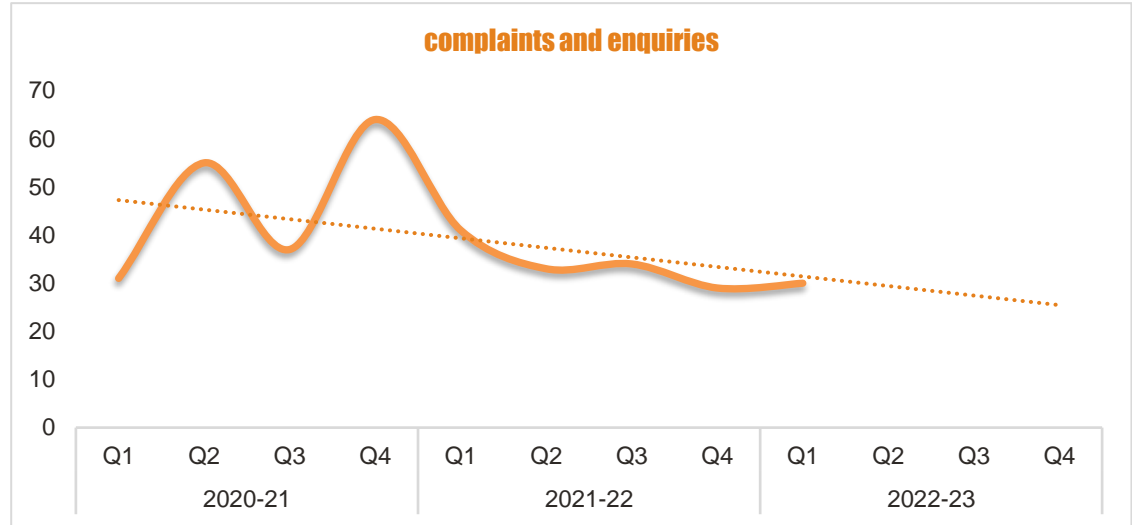
Dog Control

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.

The number of stray or lost dogs recorded by WRS during quarter one is an increase of 18% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 22% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 72% of cases related to 'contained' stray dogs; which means that a dog was found and held by, for example, a member of the public. Overall, 68% of contained strays were reunited with their owners, however, figures vary significantly between local authorities.

The dog warden service has seen an increase in strays throughout the summer, the number creeping up higher than we have seen over the past 3 years. The wardens, kennels and rescues are all extremely busy and operating at full capacity. The service continues to look after a client dog that we have been looking after since February 2022 as well as two dogs for a client who remains in hospital long term. We are seeing an increase in requests for handovers where people can no longer care for their pets which is likely linked to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In general terms, WRS receives a low number of dog control complaints. Based on the 9 complaints recorded, 6 related to fouling and persistent straying, 3 related to welfare concerns, and a single complaint related to a dangerous dog.



Environmental Permitting

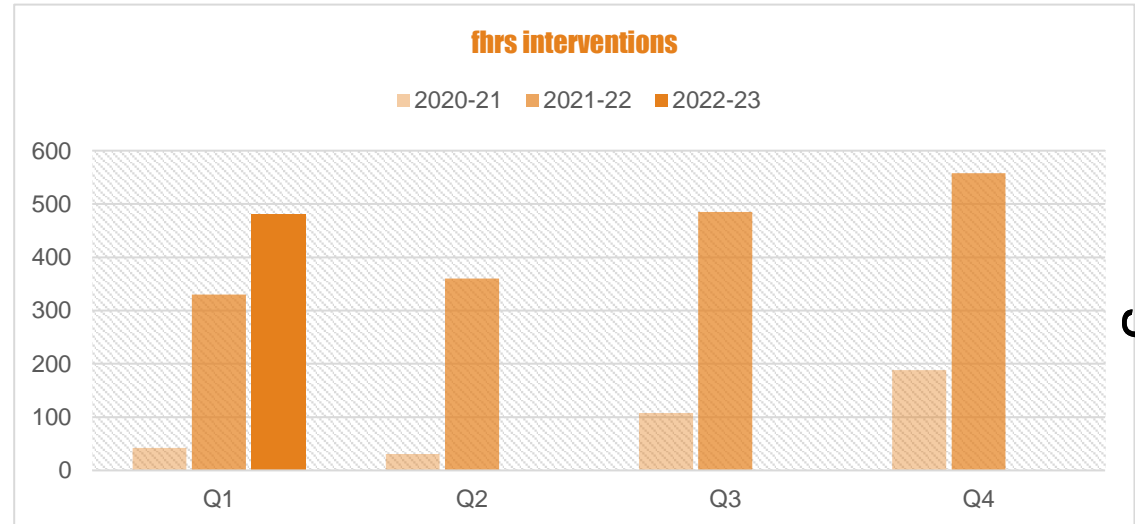
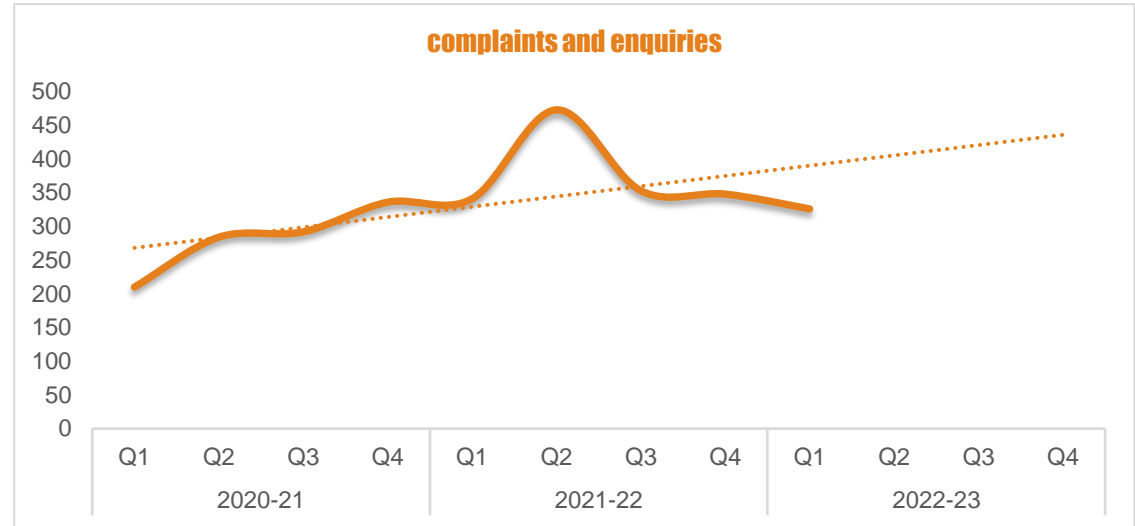
Officers have commenced this year’s programme of inspections and have been happy with the level of compliance to date. Whilst this remains high in this sector several companies are currently being pursued for technical breaches or operating without permit located in the Malvern Hills & Wychavon Districts. In other work officers are assisting companies with their PRTR waste returns that are reported annually to DEFRA.

Food Safety

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 recorded by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 4% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 55% compared to 2020-21. In general terms, a higher proportion of food safety cases are enquiries such as requests for business advice or export health certificates. Based on the 144 complaints recorded, 84% related to issues with products purchased from food businesses, whilst 16% related to poor hygiene standards and practices.

Of the 481 interventions conducted at businesses included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 7 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2) with most of these ratings issued to hospitality businesses.



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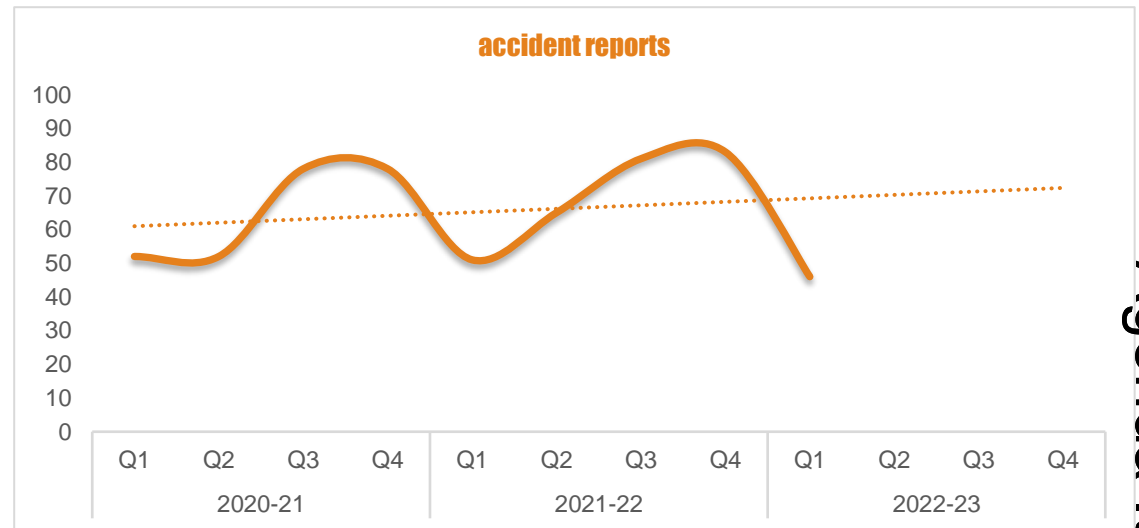
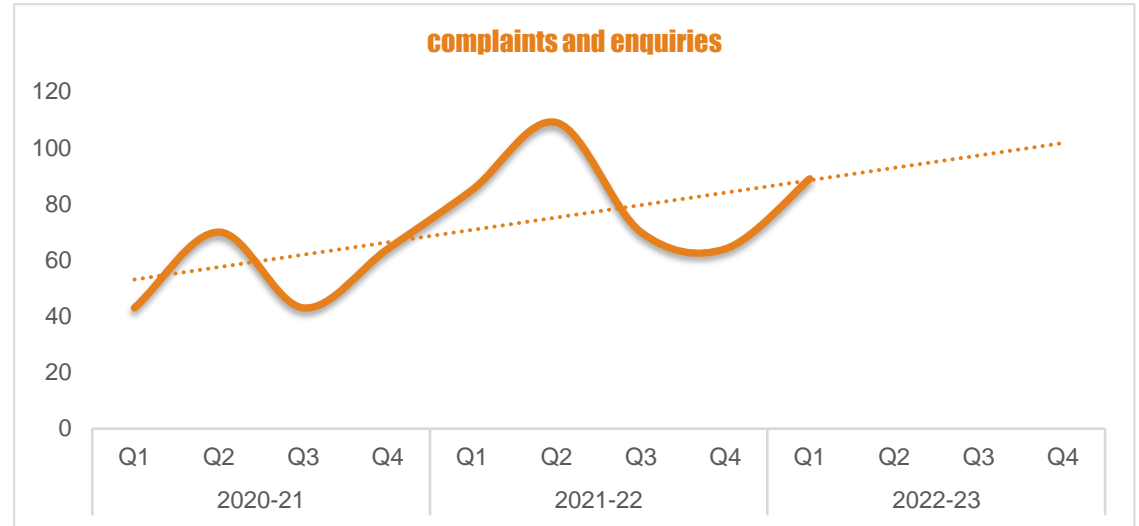
Page 43

Agenda Item 5

Health and Safety

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.

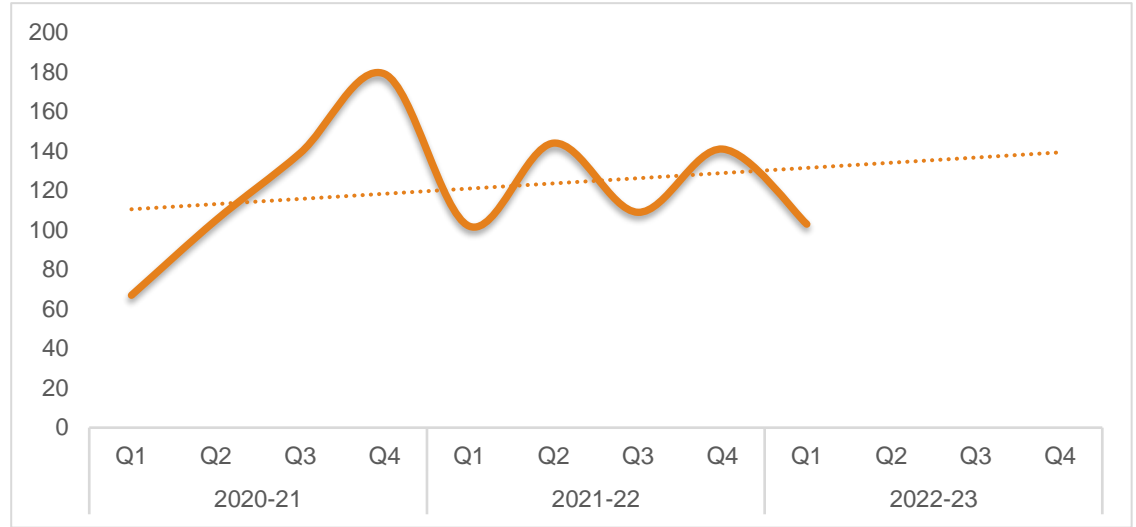
The number of health and safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter one is consistent with 2021-22, but an increase of 42% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 34% of cases were reports of accidents, with 50% relating to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days and 28% relating to injuries to members of the public. The remaining cases were either accidents where major injuries were sustained, dangerous occurrences, and two fatalities. Slips, trips, and falls continues to be the prominent cause of accidents.



Information Requests

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

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



Licensing

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.

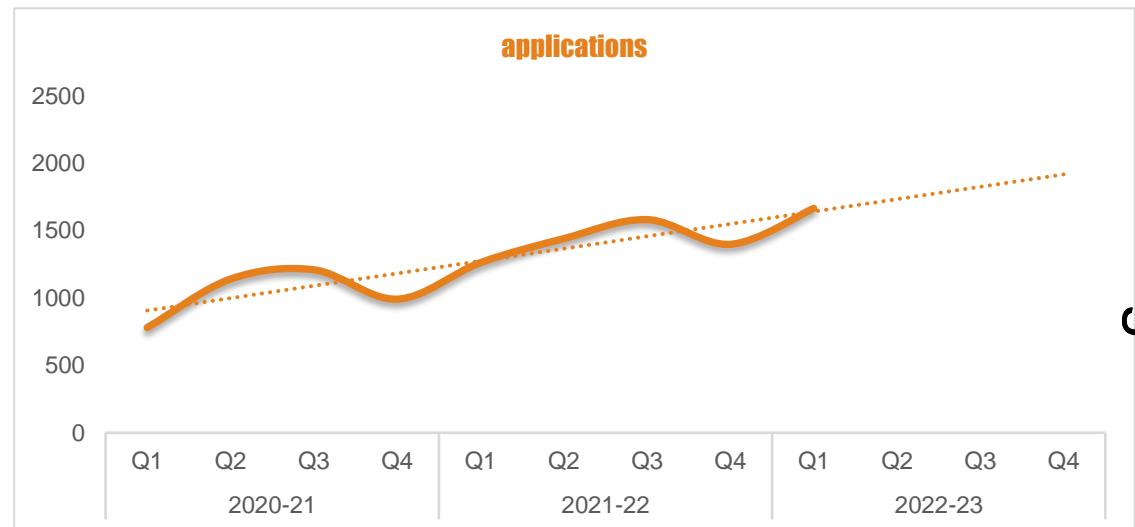
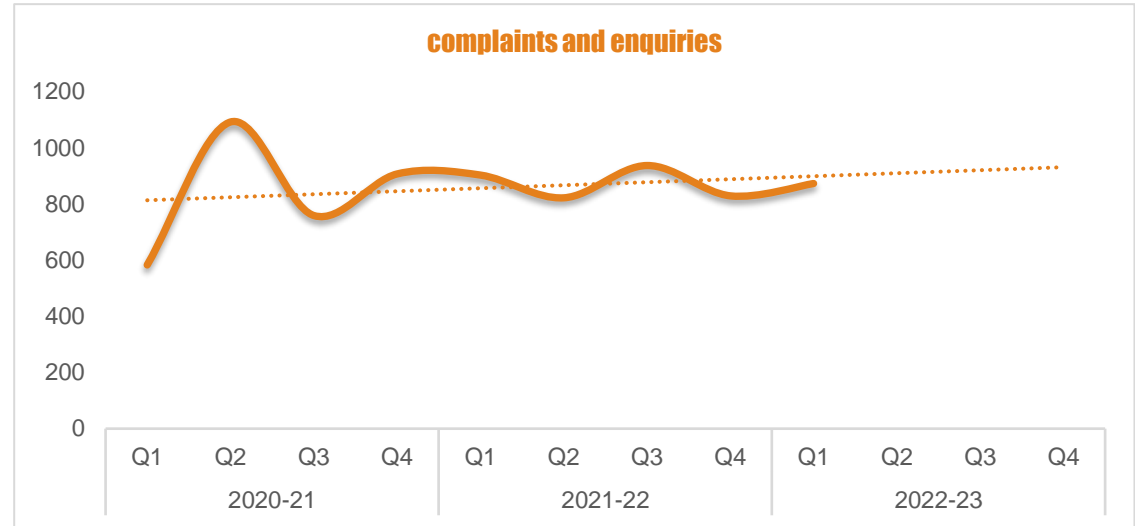
Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

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

Page 10

The number of licensing cases recorded by WRS during quarter one is an increase of 17% compared to 2021-22, but a n increase of 86% compared to 2020-21. It should be noted, however, that there were significantly fewer licensing applications recorded two years ago due to COVID restrictions and the closure of many hospitality premises. Approximately 66% of cases recorded during quarter one were applications and registrations; with 33% relating to temporary events, 25% relating to private hire or hackney carriage vehicle licences, and 13% relating to driver licences.

In general terms, WRS receives a higher number of enquiries about licensing matters than complaints about licensed or unlicensed activity. Based on the 152 complaints recorded during quarter one, 32% related to taxi licensing, 26% related to alcohol licensing, and 21% related to animal licensing.



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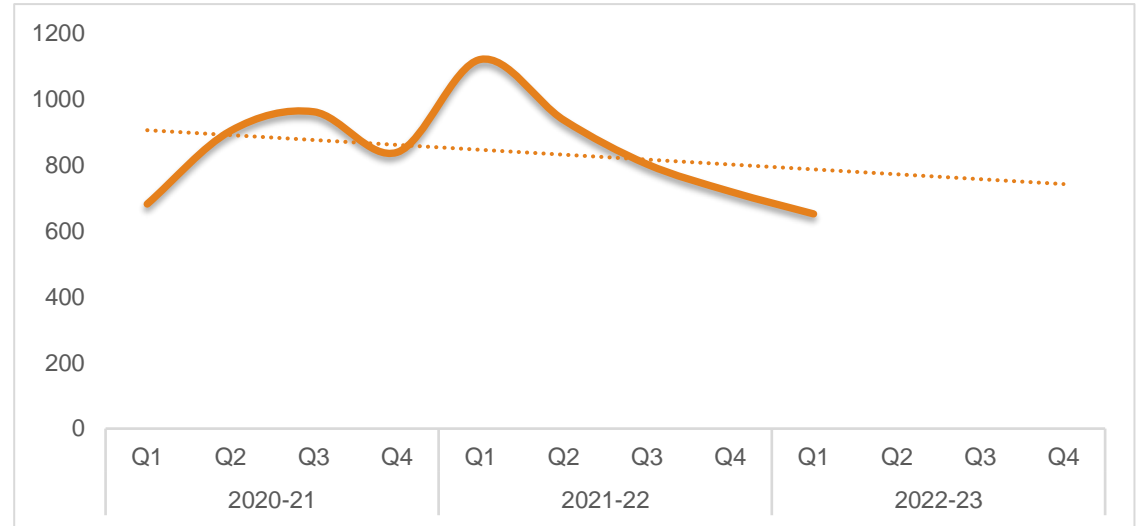
Agenda Item 5

Planning

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

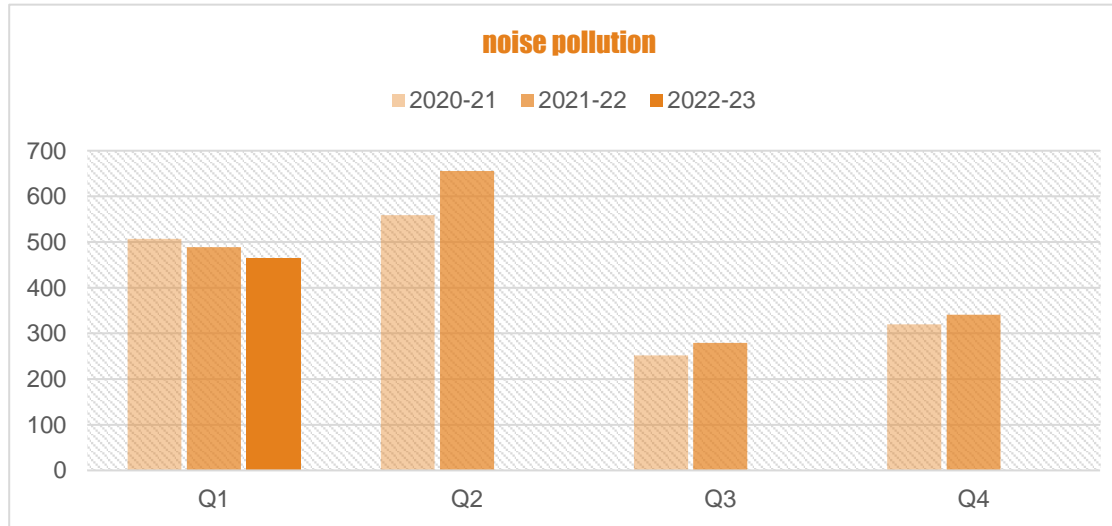
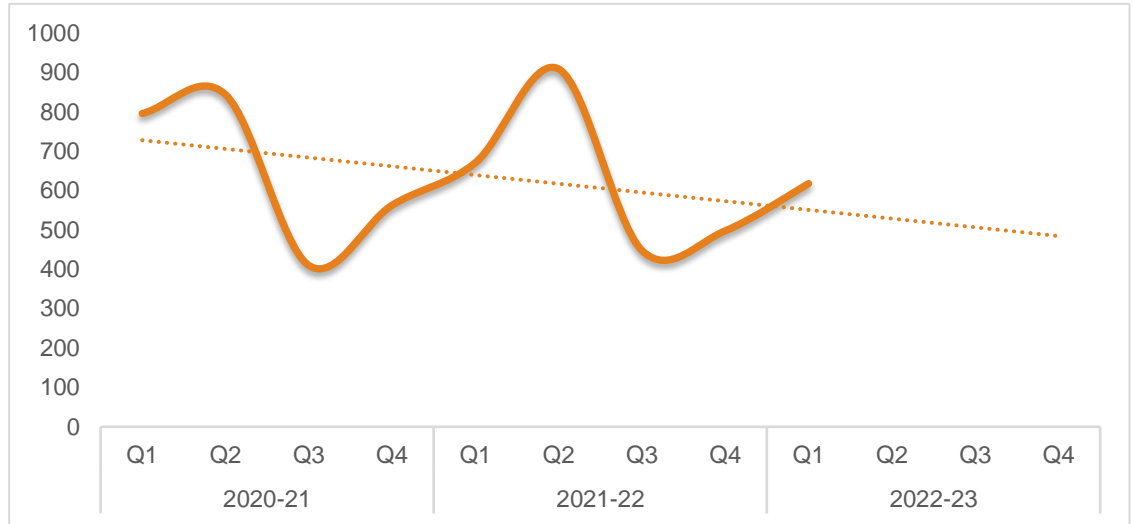


The number of planning enquiries completed by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 42% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 4% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 90% of enquiries were consultations, whilst 50% related to contaminated land. Around a fifth of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.

Pollution

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 recorded by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 8% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 22% compared to 2020-21. It should be noted, however, that the increased number of cases two years ago coincides with COVID-19 restrictions and a greater number of residents being at home. It also should be noted that totals are in line with seasonal variations. Approximately 75% of cases related to noise nuisances, with noise from domestic properties (such as from dog barking or noise from radio-visual equipment) the most prominent sources. A further 11% of cases related to smoke nuisances and issues such as the burning of domestic or commercial waste.

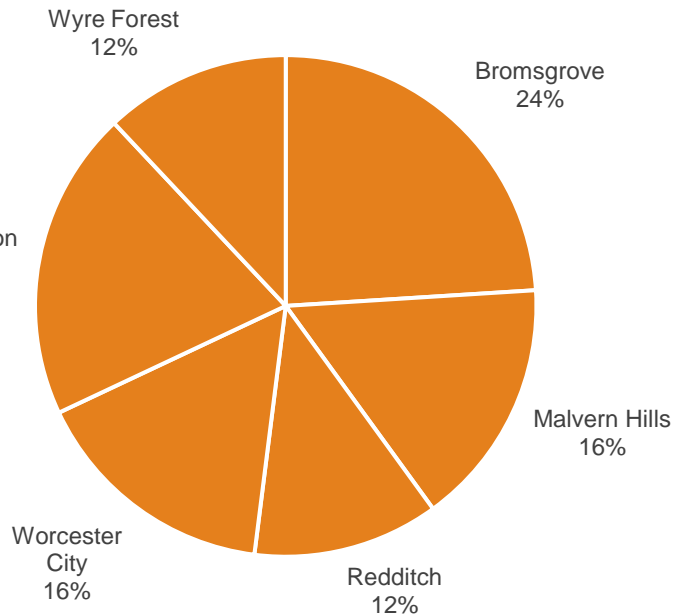


Noise

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.

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Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Ombersley	6	2,420	2.48
Marlbrook	7	2,890	2.42
Perryfields	3	1,501	2.00
Lowes Hill	5	2,903	1.72
Droitwich South West	8	4,969	1.61
Warndon	9	5,669	1.59
Teme Valley	3	1,964	1.53
Wythall East	4	2,978	1.34
Arboretum	8	6,233	1.28
Alvechurch South	4	3,131	1.28
Offmore And Comberton	12	9,664	1.24
Church Hill	10	8,062	1.24
Headless Cross And Oakenshaw	10	8,295	1.21
Drakes Broughton	3	2,577	1.16
Droitwich West	6	5,279	1.14
Alfrick And Leigh	4	3,590	1.11
Wribbenhall And Arley	6	5,444	1.10
Bedwardine	9	8,167	1.10
Rainbow Hill	6	5,511	1.09
Link	7	6,438	1.09
Priory	5	4,636	1.08
Catshill North	3	2,846	1.05
Matchborough	6	6,054	0.99
Bretforton And Offenham	3	3,054	0.98
Areley Kings And Riverside	8	8,315	0.96

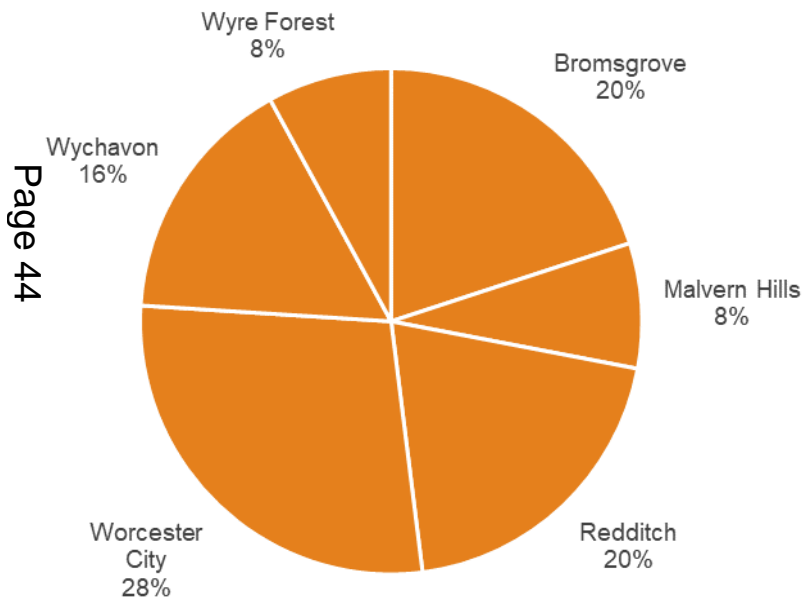
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Noise (2021-22)

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.



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Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Eckington	22	2,669	8.24
Sanders Park	22	3,651	6.03
Norton	20	3,707	5.40
Marlbrook	14	2,890	4.84
Bedwardine	36	8,167	4.41
Harvington And Norton	12	2,756	4.35
Pinvin	13	3,105	4.19
Arboretum	25	6,233	4.01
Batchley And Brockhill	34	8,783	3.87
Rainbow Hill	21	5,511	3.81
Cathedral	43	11,763	3.66
Greenlands	33	9,329	3.54
Headless Cross And Oakenshaw	28	8,295	3.38
Perryfields	5	1,501	3.33
Winyates	27	8,184	3.30
Claines	26	8,076	3.22
Warndon	18	5,669	3.18
Link	20	6,438	3.11
Drakes Broughton	8	2,577	3.10
Church Hill	25	8,062	3.10
Avoncroft	10	3,300	3.03
Mitton	30	10,047	2.99
Gorse Hill	17	5,839	2.91
Wyre Forest Rural	26	9,106	2.86
Priory	13	4,636	2.80

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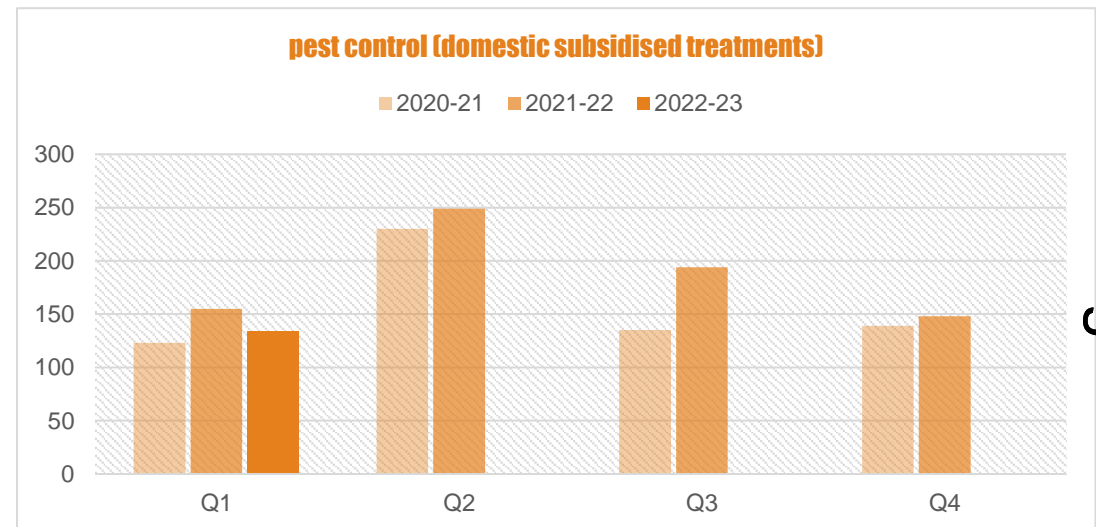
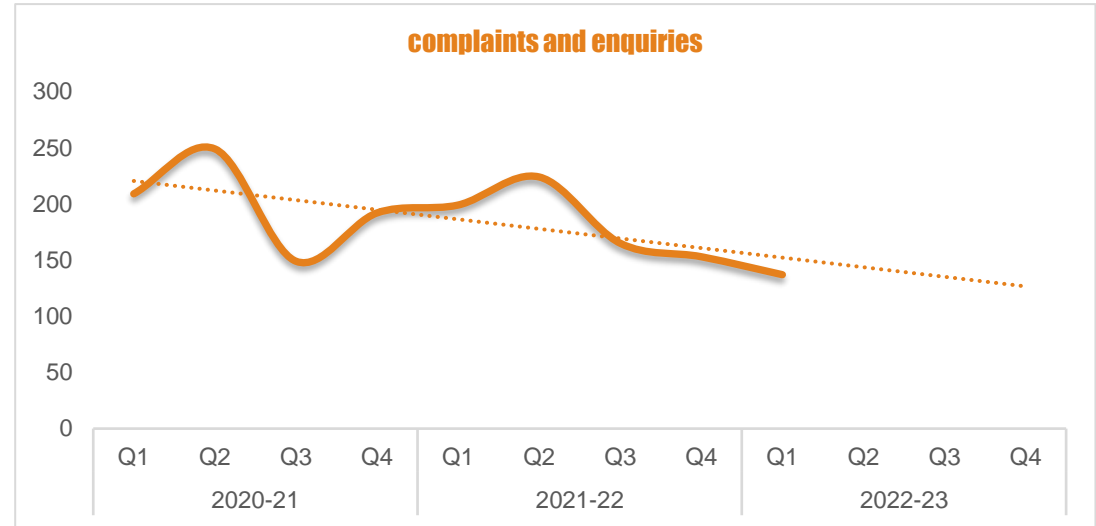
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Public Health

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 four Worcestershire Districts (Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch and Wychavon). Worcester City and Wyre Forest do not offer a subsidised pest control service.

The number of public health cases recorded by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 31% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 34% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 66% of cases related to pest control; whether enquiries about domestic treatments and sewer baiting, or complaints about pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 23% of cases were complaints relating to accumulations of domestic properties which can also include pest control issues.

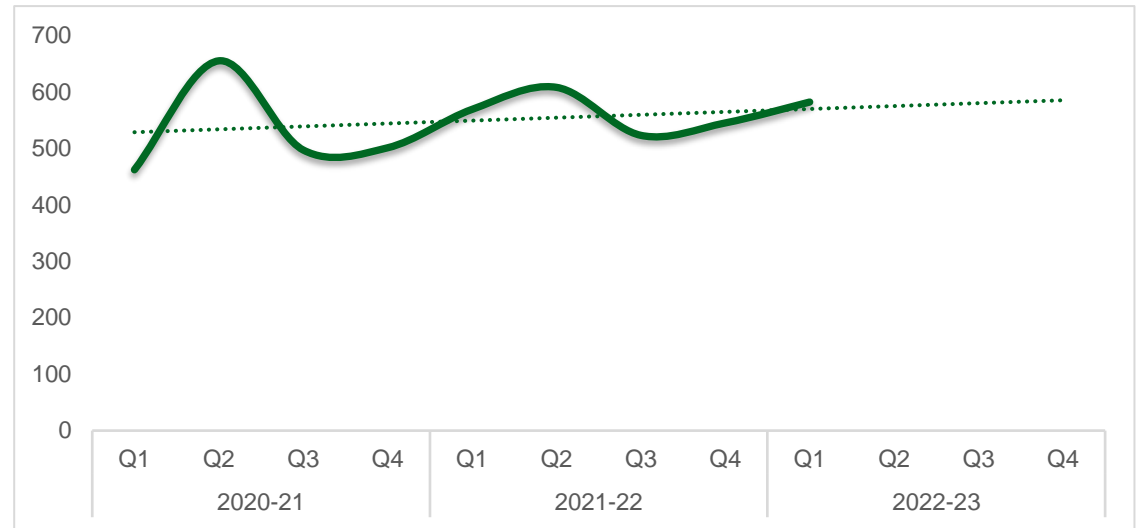
Of the 134 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter one, approximately 70% were due to issues with rats and 38% were due to pests at properties within the Wychavon district.



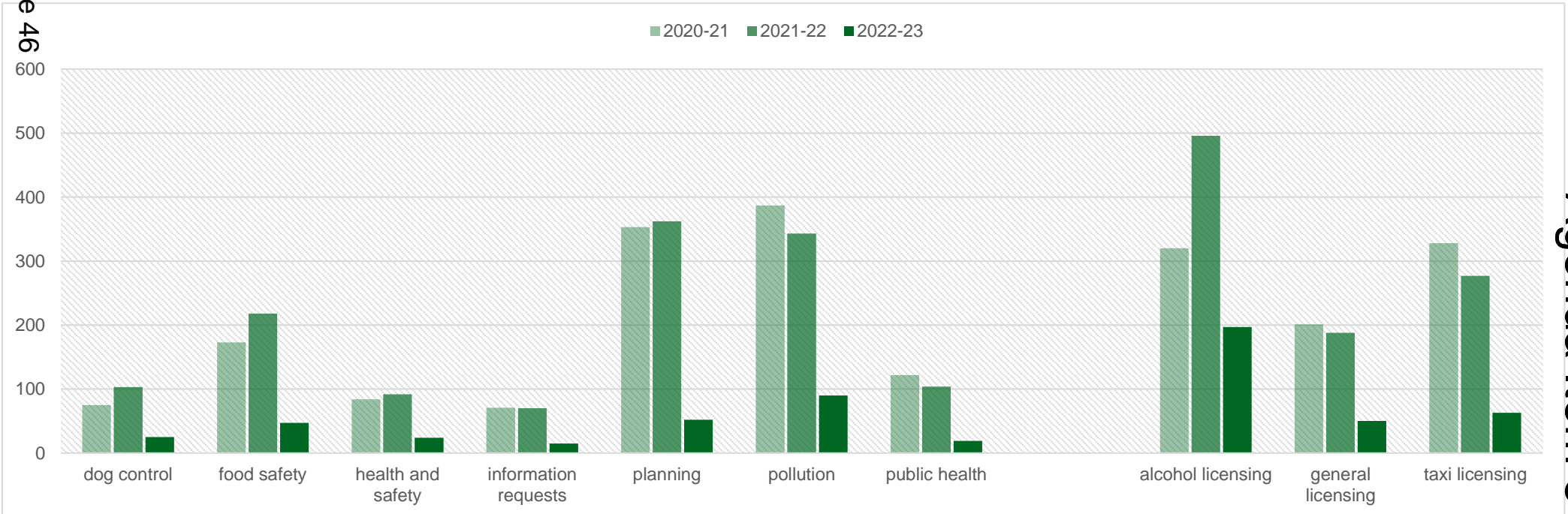
Bromsgrove

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.



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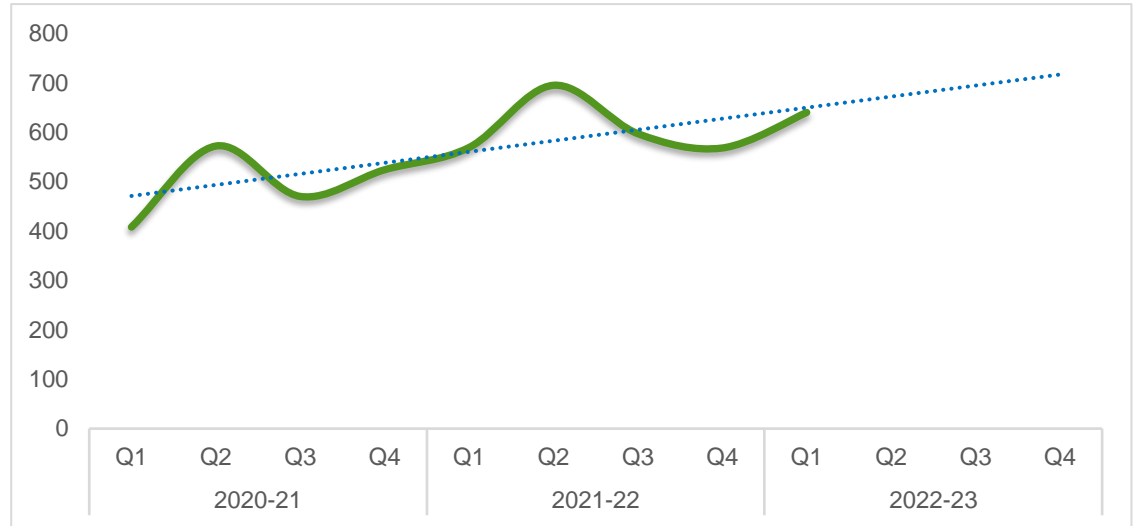
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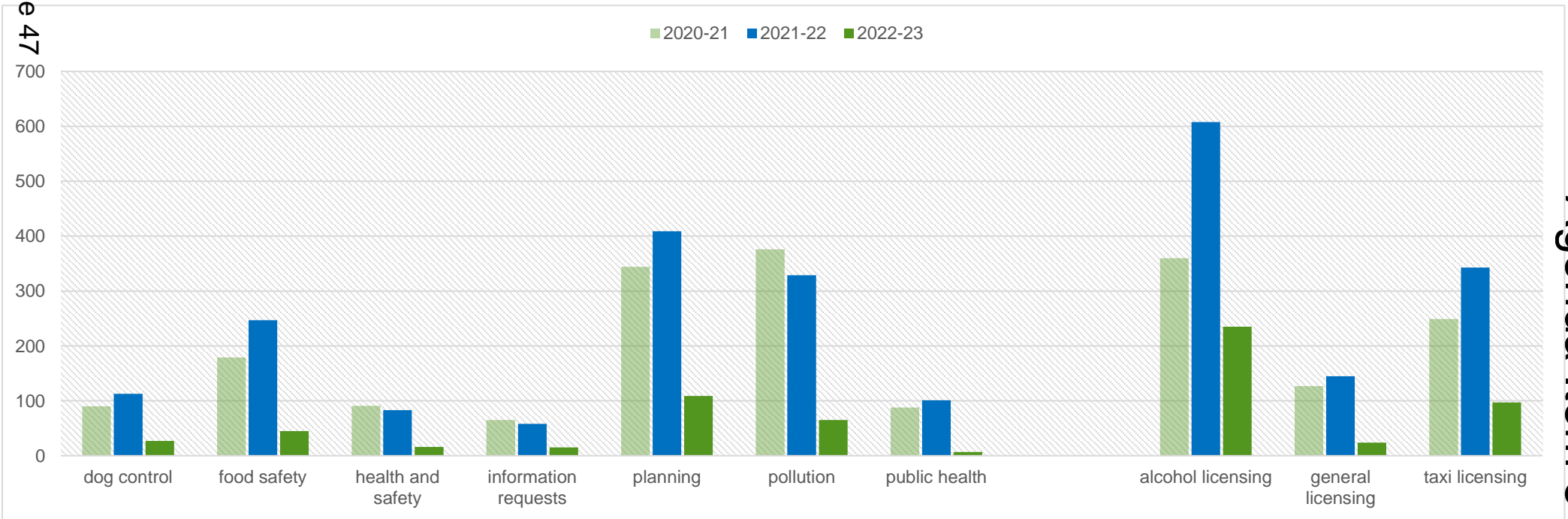
Malvern Hills

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.



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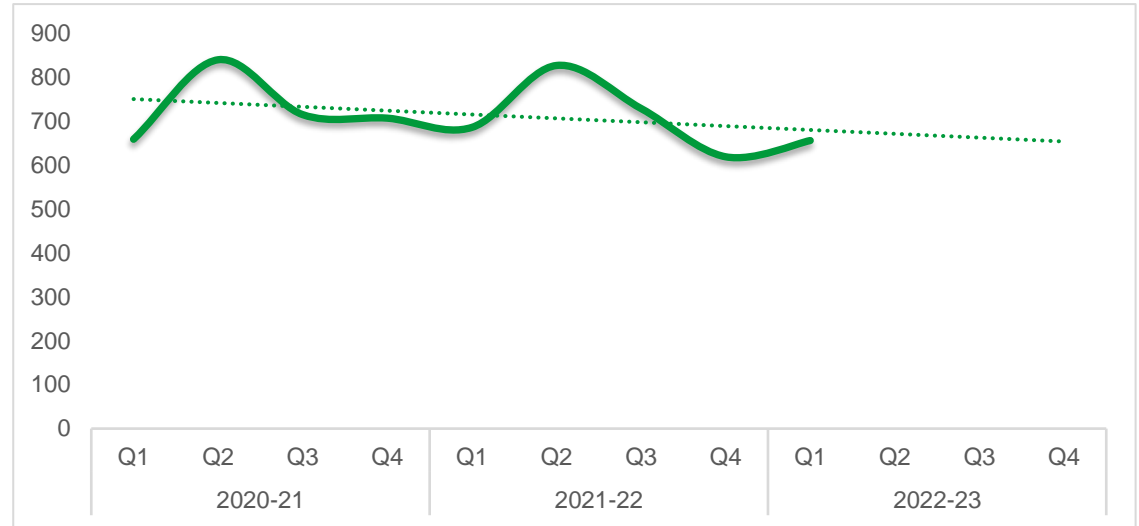
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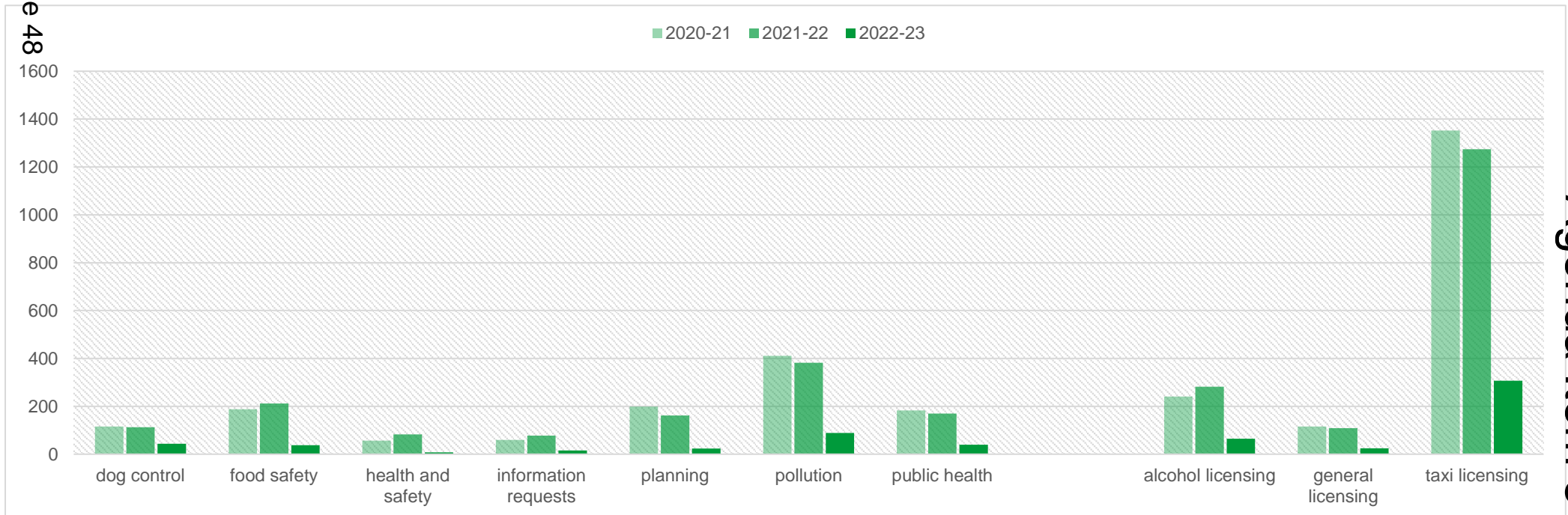
Redditch

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.



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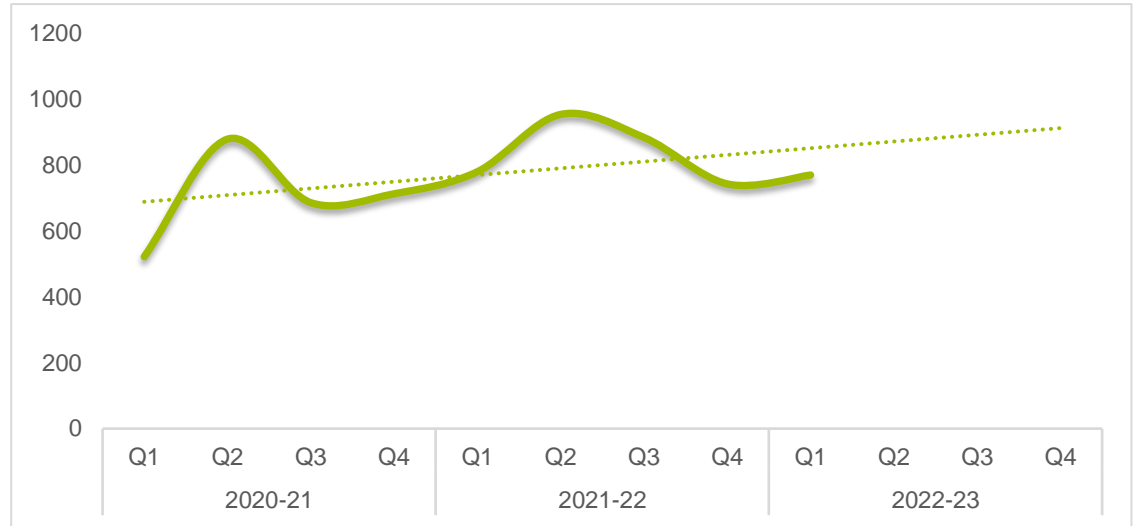
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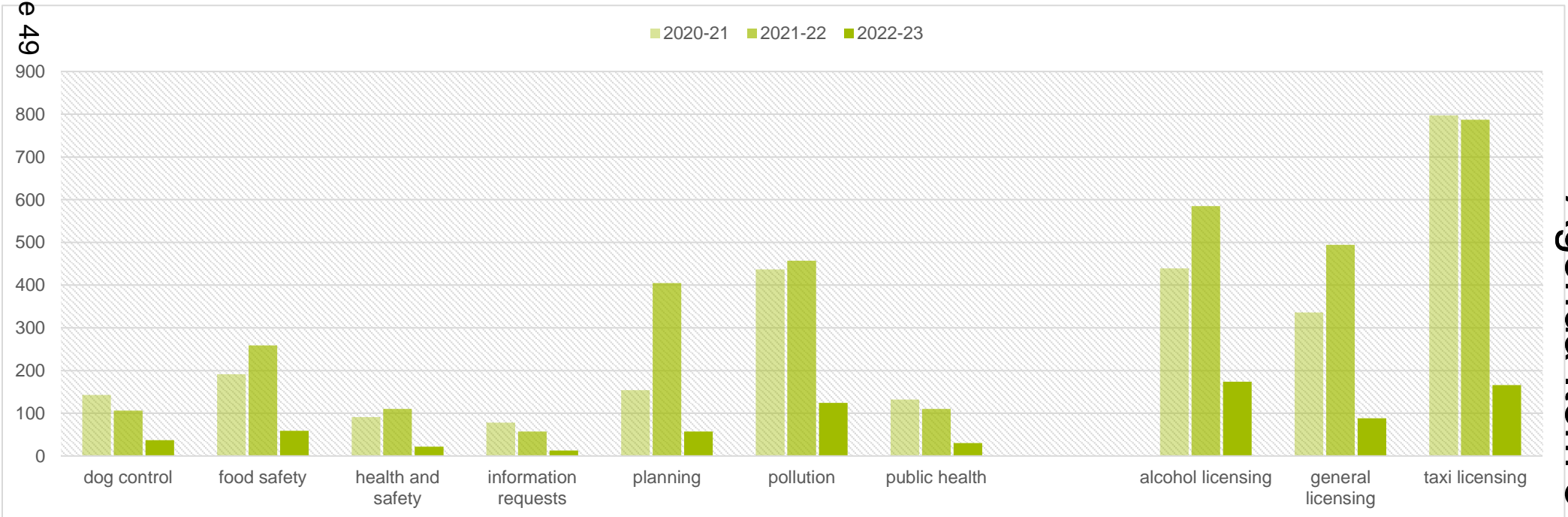
Worcester City

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.



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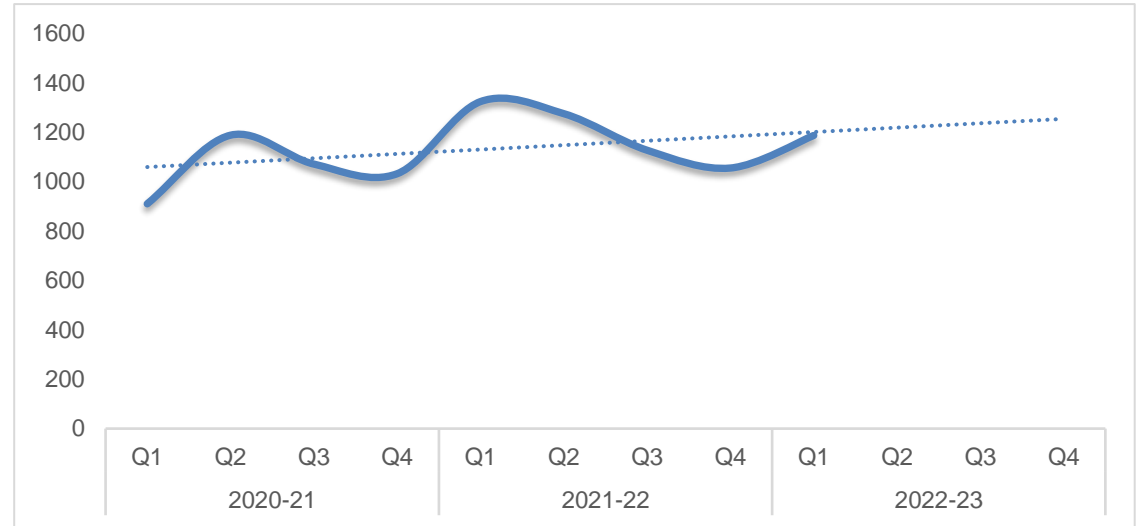
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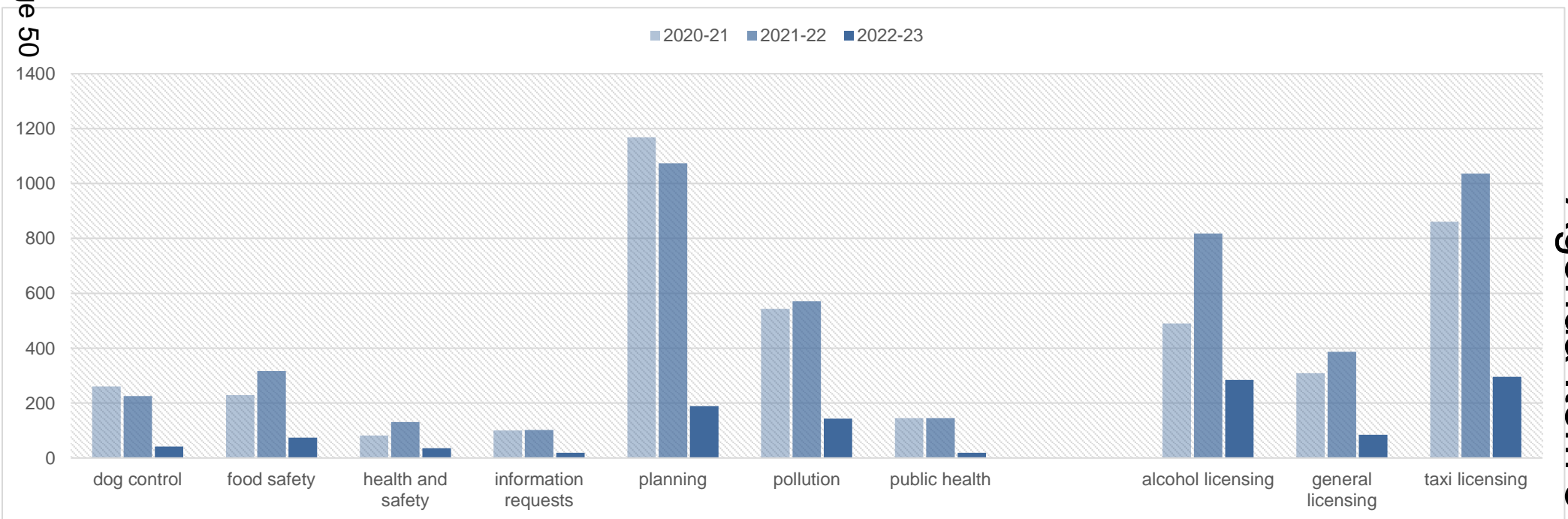
Wychavon

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.



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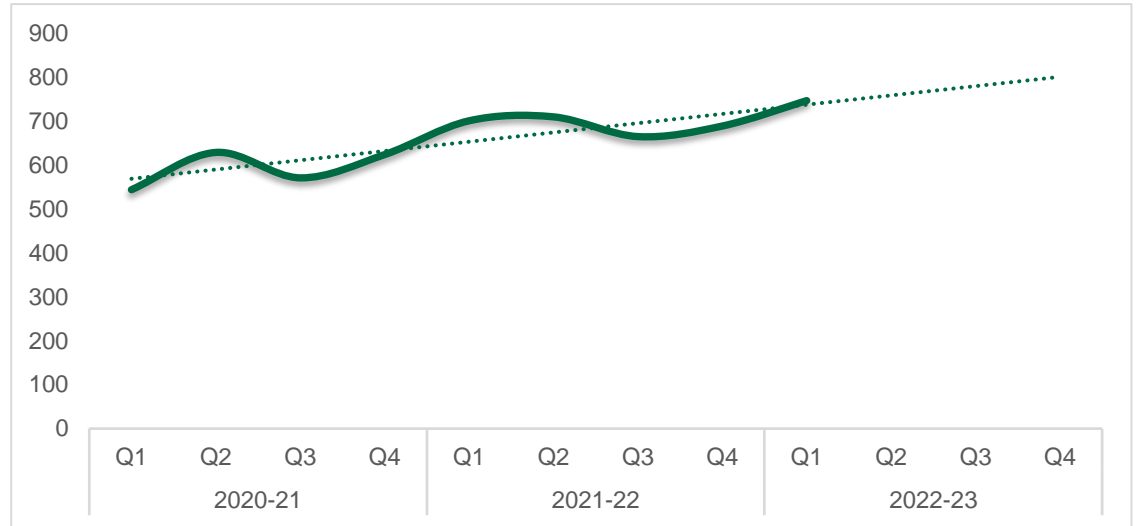
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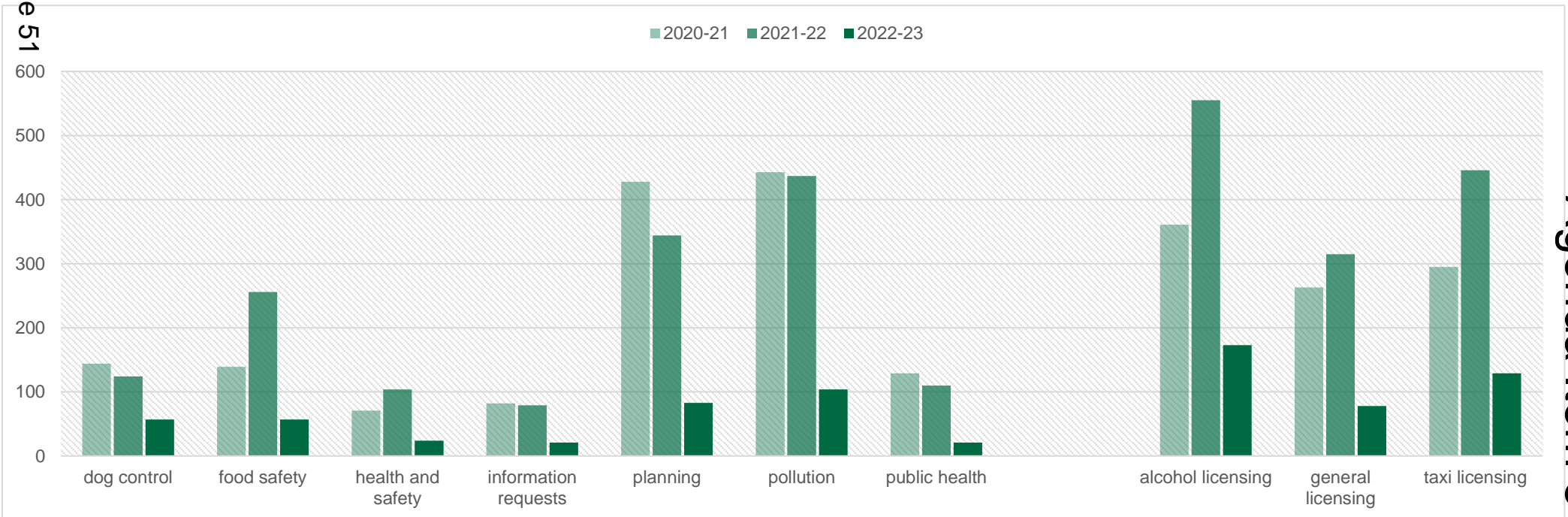
Wyre Forest

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.



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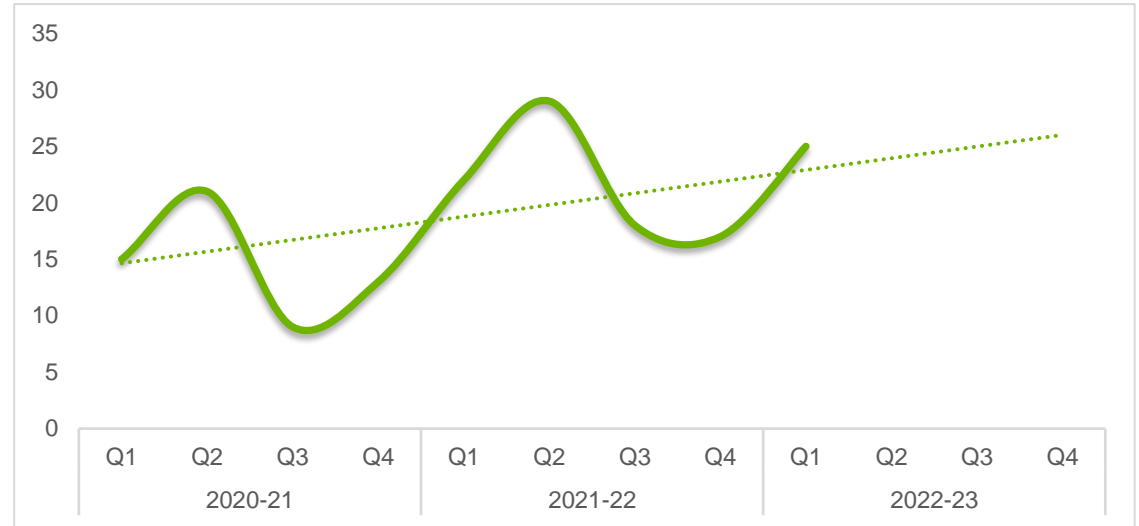


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Cheltenham

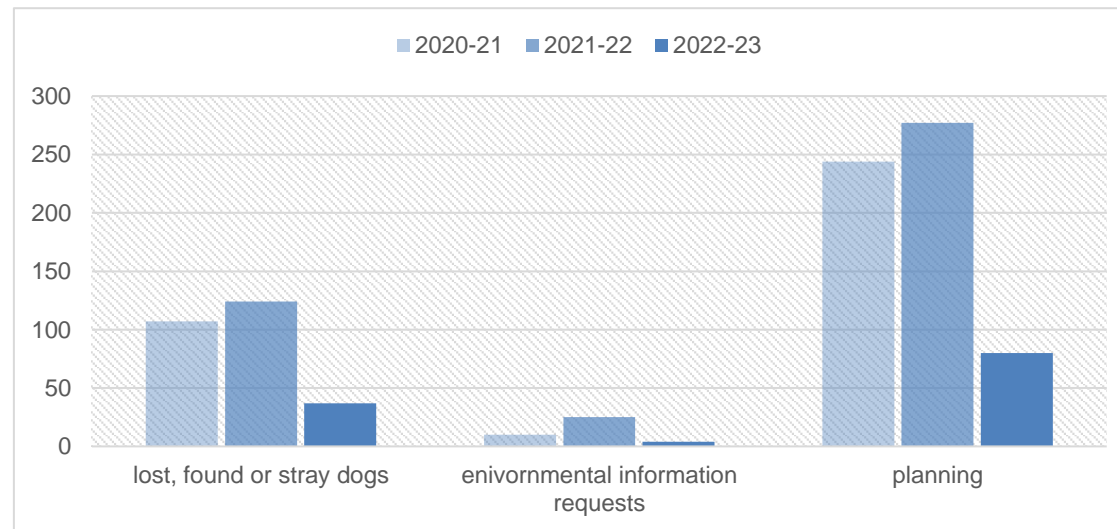
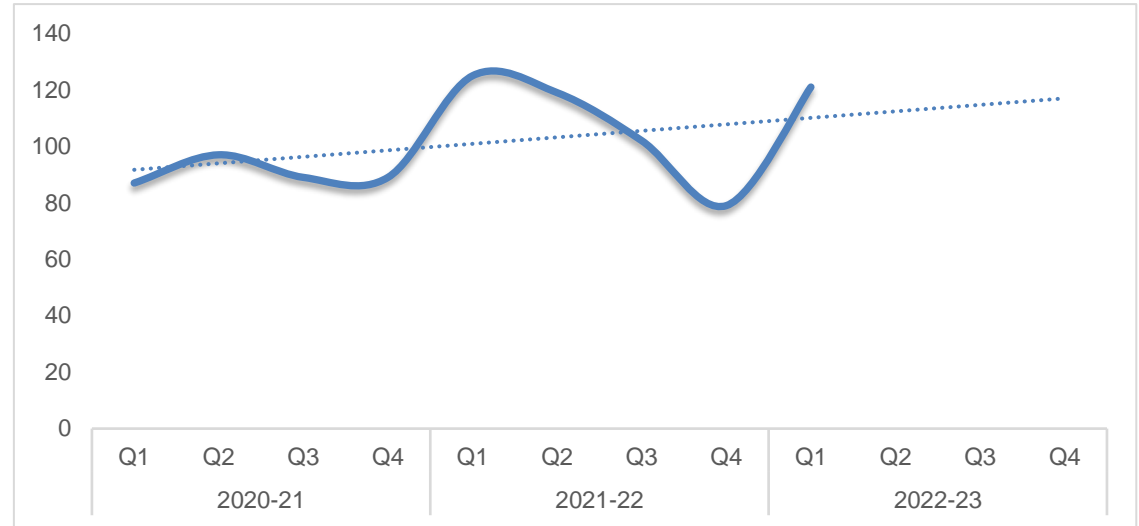
The dog control work undertaken for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Cheltenham Borough Council as well as 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, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.



Gloucester City

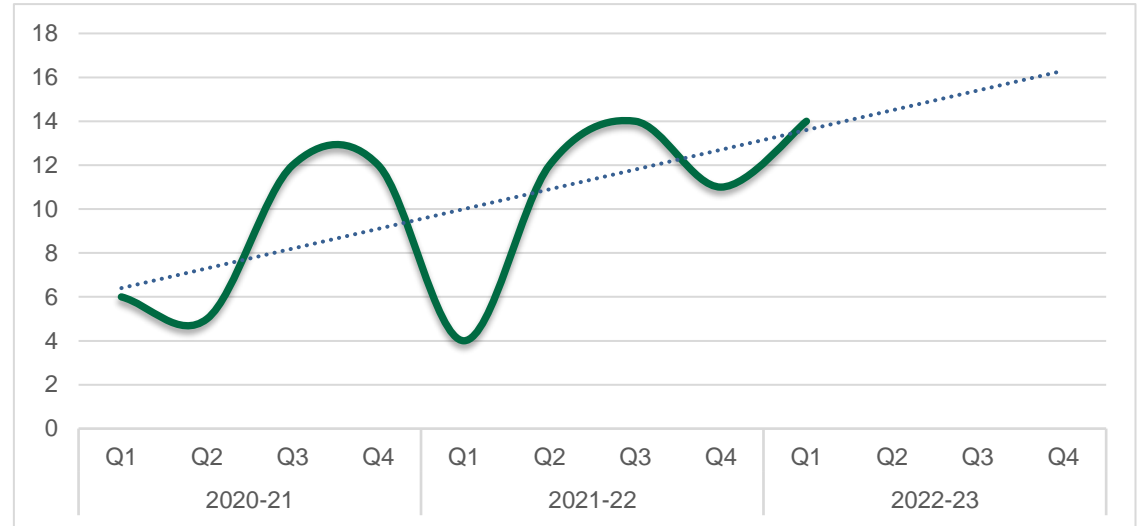
The dog control work undertaken for Gloucester City Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Gloucester City Council as well as 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, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In addition to dog control activity, the service continues to deal with environmental information requests and planning enquiries.



South Gloucestershire

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.

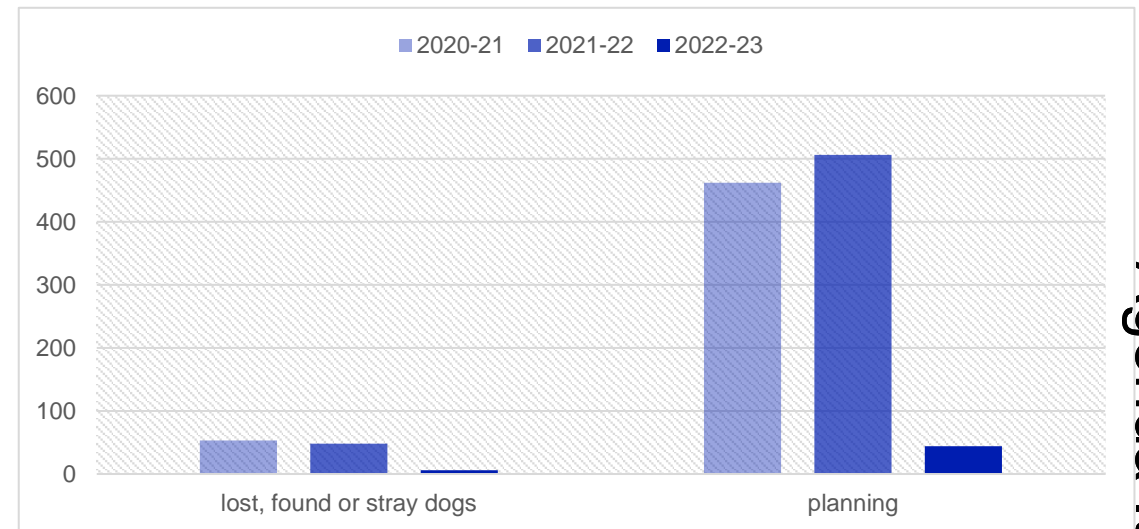
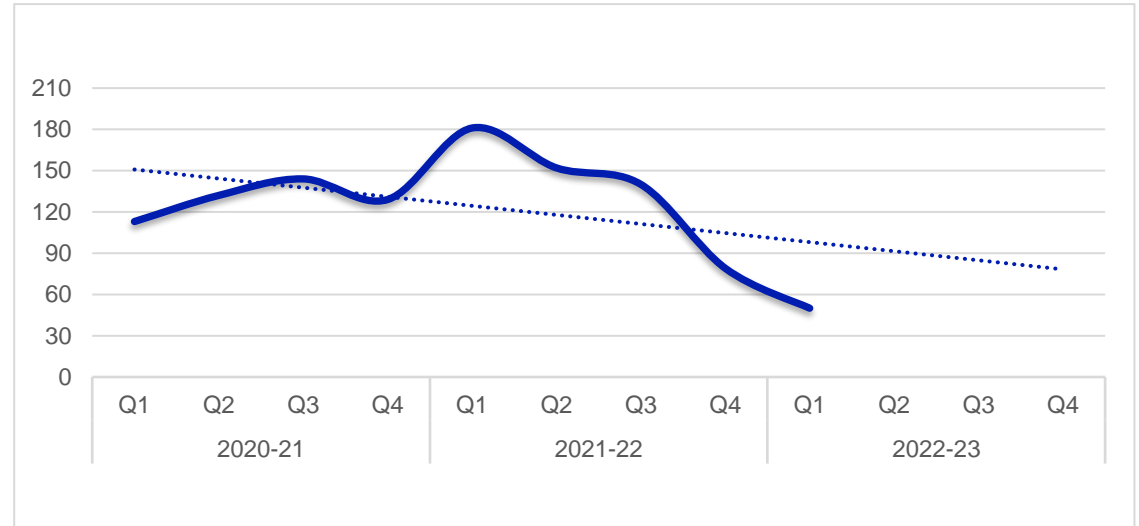


Tewkesbury

The dog control work undertaken for Tewkesbury Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council as well as 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, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In addition to dog control activity, the service continues to deal with planning enquiries.

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WRS Board: 6th October 2022

Update on progress of the automation project

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

Introduction | At the first meeting of 2022/23, members agreed to create a reserve of £150,000 from last year's underspend to fund the implementation of automation of data entry for customers, enabling a range of services to be addressed by the client entering data in forms on the WRS website, which would then upload directly into our IDOX Uniform back-office system. This includes the automation of payments for Licensing, so our host authority Bromsgrove District Council will collect fees for the 6 partners and pass money back to the other 5. Officers agreed to provide a short progress report at each Board meeting between then and the actual implementation of the project.

Report | The Summer holiday period got in the way of a very quick start to the project, but it is now moving forward. Wyre Forest District Council's IT team were asked to provide project management support as out IT Host. They have accepted this, and the IT Manager is providing support with the development of specifications and relevant documentation and one of the team's officers with experience of managing implementations will engage once a provider has been identified.

Calls have been made to colleagues in other local authorities and conversations are on-going to gauge first-hand experience of their journey in this area of work. The mid-Kent shared Licensing service have shared their experience of implementing the Victoria Forms package with IDOX Uniform. This was very informative. We have also had conversations with colleagues at Cheltenham Borough Council, who implemented a bespoke solution with IDOX, again to pass the information directly into their Uniform back-office system. It is pleasing that, after 2 years of isolation, local government colleagues are still willing to support each other in this way. A demonstration from Idox was delivered and a third system offered by Verso has also been viewed. Officers have been provided with contacts for authorities where this last solution has been deployed so we hope to speak to them soon.

Contact has been made with the Procurement Officer at Bromsgrove District Council as our host to look at the options for engaging with suppliers. There are two Government Procurement portals that offer the suppliers we are interested in, so these are options that can now be pursued. These may give the option for direct award, which would probably speed up the procurement phase. We are also discussing the option of creating a variation to the current IDOX contract, which can be done if the value is below a certain percentage of the current agreement. This would eliminate the need for any form of tender process, but we do want to consider the alternative suppliers, rather than jumping straight to this as a solution.

Contact Point | Kiran Lahel

Licensing and Support Services Manager
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Tel: 01562 738067

Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board:

Information Report – Environment Act 2021, Air Quality, Air Quality Grant Scheme 2022

Recommendation | **That the Board notes the Report and that members use the contents of the information provided in their own reporting back to fellow members of the partner authorities.**

Report

2022 has proven to be a busy year in terms of air quality and the purpose of this report is to provide members with an update as to the legislative changes and the various work streams currently taking place.

Environment Act 2021

The Act arrived on the statute book in January which hailed 2 significant changes that impact on WRS work on behalf of its partners. Part 1 establishes the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). The head office is based out of County Hall and will be the new watchdog that oversee the performance of all UK regulators including the Government (post Brexit). The focus for LA's will be around serious failure to comply with Environmental Law. The OEP is also outward facing in terms of complaints and members of the public can also raise grievances regarding a perceived or suspected breach of environmental legislation.

Part 2 amends the present Local Authority Air Quality Management Regime (LAQM) and broadens the statutory responsibility for delivering air quality improvement in the following areas:

- The County Council and National Highways (when appropriate) will be obliged by law to jointly deliver improvements in air quality through joint action plans.
- Air Quality Management Authorities (district councils in Worcestershire) will have power to impose improvement targets on air quality partners if they cannot be mutually agreed.
- The County Council will be obliged by law to jointly deliver improvements in air quality through joint action plans.
- Introduction of new 2040 emissions standards for PM10 and PM2.5, which are in-development to be implemented at a future date.

In terms of statutory reporting a further tightening has been introduced to ensure that

authorities adhere to the timeframes (annual status reports, detailed assessments, and declarations of air quality management areas) and their locally set deadlines for air quality action planning. This comes with the threat of ministerial directions should respective authorities fail to adhere to DEFRA's progressive deadlines. Also:

- Future action plans must have tangible outcomes in terms of improving air quality and not rely on aspirational statements in terms of delivering change and a strategy to maintain those standards for future years.
- A 'set date' deadline for delivery of each action must be identified in the plan. 'Work towards' change statements will not be acceptable. (S.85 Ministerial Directions on failure)
- Process of AQAP development must be a collaborative process with AQ partners. (County Council, National Highways)

Air Quality reporting

WRS submitted completed Annual Status Reporting for 2022 on schedule during June and have since received positive feedback following DEFRA review for all partners. However, the ministry made observations in relation to the age of the current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP 2013,) and a recommendation was made that a review would be necessary in the next 12 months.

WRS have acted on this recommendation and brought together key individuals to form a new county-wide officers' group that will collaborate on developing a new AQAP. However, it is noted that the new AQAP requirements will add an additional challenge in terms of producing an action plan with tangible deadlines and many of the themes in the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP 5,) may need to be brought forward to meet government requirements if aimed at reducing air pollution.

Defra Grant Scheme 2022

Pre-Covid 19 pandemic, officers at WRS and County Public Health were exploring the feasibility of enhancing the air monitoring capability of Worcestershire authorities through the deployment of an air monitoring network across the county using electro-chemical sensor equipment. This technique is an emerging technology and is a game changer as it allows authorities to monitor and report indicatively on various air pollutants in real time at significantly reduced cost in comparison with older methods and equipment.

2022's grant scheme is split in two halves this year and LOT 2 has provided us with the opportunity to bid for funding for this scheme. WRS will be submitting a £276,000 bid to purchase and run 24 monitoring stations for 4 years. WRS is seeking 90% Capital and revenue budget for the equipment £86,400 with an additional £162,220 of which the remaining 10% will require match funding to be provided by the partners £27,380. The grant window closes on the 23 September, and it is anticipated that the award will be announced in March 2023.

The enhanced monitoring programme will provide many advantages over the existing

diffusion tube network and will allow us to monitor the following pollutants in real time:

- Nitrogen Dioxide,
- Particulates PM10, PM2.5 and,
- Ozone.

The network will form a 'Mesh' and will be connected to the internet where the data will be harvested and processed using DEFRA's air quality pollution index. Many benefits are anticipated from having this resource. Immediate gains following deployment will be the warning system for poor air quality. Members of the public will be able to identify when episodes occur and in which part of the county to avoid these locations if they are particularly vulnerable. Longer term gains from the data and monitoring will be used for behaviour change activities, promoting active travel and EV vehicles in areas of poor air quality as well as sustainable transport planning.

Contact Details

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