

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

VIRTUAL

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2020 AT 4.30 P.M.

MEMBERS: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor A. Kent
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor H. 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 18th June 2020 (Pages 1 - 16)
4. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgets 2020/21 (Pages 17 - 26)
5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April - June 2020 (Pages 27 - 34)
6. Information Report - Forecast impact of future salary settlements (Pages 35 - 40)
7. Activity & Performance Data - Quarter 1 2020/21 (Pages 41 - 72)
8. Information Report - IT Update (Pages 73 - 76)
9. Information Report - Joint working with Public Health to control Covid-19 outbreaks in work settings (Pages 77 - 80)

10. 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

23rd September 2020

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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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.

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VIRTUAL SKYPE

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE 2020, AT 4.38 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors A. D. Kent, H. J. Jones, J. Raine, T. Wells, J. Grubb, J. Squires, M. Johnson, E. Stokes, D. Morris, H. Dyke and P. Dyke

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

Partner Officers: Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council, Mr. M. Parker, Wyre Forest District Council and Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council

Councillor J. Grubb, Redditch Borough Council welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor Grubb took the opportunity to reflect on his year as Chairman of the Board, and in doing so, commented that he was elected as a Councillor for Redditch Borough Council in May 2018, so he came to the Board in June 2019 as a relatively newly elected member.

He was subsequently nominated and elected as Chairman of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board at the meeting held in June 2019. Unfortunately he was unable to attend the meeting but appreciated being nominated and elected in his absence.

Shortly afterwards he met with the Head of Regulatory Services and the Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officer at their offices in Kidderminster; in order to be informed of the principal functions of the service, as Chairman of the Board.

As Chairman of the Board he kept in regular touch with the Head of Regulatory Services about uptrends, activities and challenges. He would highlight the flexibility of the WRS model. All officers possessed a range of expertise and professional qualifications, however, they did not sit within individual silos, which enabled the Head of Regulatory Services and his managers to assign officers to work on other disciplines if necessary.

The advantage of having a multifaceted work force was that relative intelligence on alleged or actual illegal activities was shared across WRS, allowing its resources to be deployed efficiently and effectively.

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There was regular and comprehensive multi agency working with agencies / organisations that had an investigatory or regulatory role.

He was pleased to know that there was a distinct awareness of the present threat of modern day slavery. The responsive of WRS was impressive, for example, the Members' Eye Newsletter was an impressive read. It was very important that WRS generated an income as it contracts out to other local authorities.

WRS welcomed members of the public contacting them about relevant matters.

WRS were set to carry out its functions within challenging environments, the recent heavy flooding earlier this year and the current Covid-19 response.

Councillor Grubb thanked the Members of the Board and the Head of Regulatory Service and all officers for their support and advice during his role as Chairman.

1/20 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

A nomination for Chairman was received in respect of Councillor H. Dyke, Wyre Forest District Council.

RESOLVED that Councillor H. Dyke, Wyre Forest District Council be elected as Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

2/20 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

A nomination for Vice-Chairman was received in respect of Councillor J. Squires, Worcester City Council.

RESOLVED that Councillor J. Squires, Worcester City Council be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

3/20 **APOLOGIES**

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

4/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5/20 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board held on 13th February 2020, were submitted.

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Councillor A. Kent, Bromsgrove District Council, referred to pages 5 and 6 of the main agenda report, and in doing so, questioned if the timeframes for the new Finance IT system were known; as Members had not been informed as such. Members were also expecting that officers would provide an update on the ICT system at today's Board meeting.

The Head of Regulatory Services highlighted that the recent flooding and Covid-19 response had made it difficult to move forward, WRS were looking at returning to more business activities, but officers were still currently heavily involved in the Covid-19 response. However, moving forward the Technical Services Manager and (acting) Licensing Manager would pick this up.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, explained that the development of the new finance system and the integration of that with the WRS Uniform back office system had not progressed so far with the five other partner authorities. WRS would dovetail into Bromsgrove District Council's (BDC) new finance system, which was scheduled to go online during October 2020. This would hopefully enable WRS to take payments for licences and other similar activities which WRS carried out on behalf of all Partner Authorities. WRS would then build this process into their website. Discussions were taking place with the BDC Project Manager.

Other ICT development was progressing and WRS continued to develop their website; with a scheduled date of 8th July 2020, to move onto the Umbraco 8 system.

Officers agreed to provide a more detailed report on the new Finance IT system and ICT development at the next meeting of the Board on 1st October 2020.

Councillor H. Jones, Bromsgrove District Council, requested an amendment on page 8 of the main agenda report as follows:-

"The Head of WRS confirmed that WRS do as much as they can to ensure that events are well regulated and did not impact on residents or other temporary events that were taking place; and that safeguarding children at temporary events was paramount".

RESOLVED that

- a) subject to the amendment, as detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 13th February 2020, be approved as a correct record; and
- b) Officers provide an update report on the new Finance IT system and ICT development at the next meeting of the Board.

6/20

INFORMATION REPORT - COVID 19 RESPONSE

The Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager presented an information report that outlined officer's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were informed that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care had subsequently issued urgent regulations providing powers to limit onward transmission of the virus; this included the statutory closure of specified businesses, which included social venues such as pubs, clubs and theatres. The regulations identified those businesses that had to close, mainly those that attracted crowds or where there was likely to be close person to person contact. It also identified a range of businesses deemed essential that could remain open.

The first phase of response from the Community Environmental Health Team was to make proactive checks that businesses were closed. Officers were tasked to undertake proactive patrols at reasonable times to check that businesses were closed. Formal checks were not recorded for every property that was noted to be compliant and closed, but over 2,200 visits were made to businesses county wide.

The level of compliance was found to be generally excellent, with only 7 Prohibition Notices and 30 written warnings being required for non-compliant businesses across the County. These checks were supplemented with work of the Licensing Team who carried out spot checks on 550 pubs and clubs during the Easter Bank Holiday weekend to ensure that businesses were not still trading. Further proactive checks were made by the Community Environmental Health Team over the Spring Bank holiday.

Licensing Officers were in regular liaison with the taxi trade from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, as detailed on page 10 of the main agenda report.

TENs submission had significantly reduced due to the restrictions on public gatherings.

The teams had also worked with Economic Development and Town Centre management teams, as detailed on page 11 of the main agenda report.

Things had continued to move at a pace, so WRS officers were regularly updating the WRS website and had also provided webinars for businesses. Officers were also providing advice visits and support for the re-opening phase, following government guidelines and regulations.

Moving forward, as the focus moved towards businesses re-opening, pro-active patrols were taking place in the various centres in order to

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assist businesses to re-open and to ensure they were safe and healthy places to visit.

Although it was still early days, officers were finding a high level of compliance and businesses had commented that it was nice to see a friendly face giving them advice and encouragement.

The next phase would be to contact pubs, the beauty sector and other business types, which currently remained closed.

As part of the management process, WRS officers were also engaged in Covid-19 outbreaks and various settings, plus local outbreaks with public health which seemed the key mechanism for controlling the virus going forward.

Resourcing the outbreak, management arrangements were likely to take four Environmental Health practitioners out of the service area for a long period of time and WRS were committing significant resources to supporting the re-opening of high streets and providing advice and support to businesses as closures are lifted. Officers roles had already been reconfigured in the service to meet Covid-19 and statutory responsibilities.

Whilst delivering non service priorities, officers continued to be as flexible as possible. As Members will appreciate, these demands are significant and senior officers will liaise with partners to scope the possibility of some of the governments Covid-19 response money being invested into regulatory services, to enable WRS to deliver the response at the level partners required, whilst also providing those activities that WRS would normally deliver.

Councillor A. Kent, Bromsgrove District Council, queried if Members and officers were aware of his recent proposal to Worcestershire County Council, which County Members had accepted; with regard to allowing shops to operate more easily by using appropriate pavement space outside of their premises. He had wanted to raise awareness of his proposal.

In response, the Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that, the Worcestershire Chief Executives Group had asked that a group was established as a liaison point for those statutory bodies involved in re-opening the town/ city centres. The Trading Liaison Group was formed by the Head of Service on this instruction, being an officer led group (involving WRS officers, local policing, town and city centre management from across the County, along with Worcestershire County Council, Highways Officers); that could provide support to all services that were involved in the re-opening of the town centres and as part of this to help businesses implement the use of their space immediately outside of their businesses if they chose to.

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Making pavements safe to use, so that businesses could make the best use of any space available to them outside of their premises; whilst also ensuring it did not inconvenience members of the public or create any issues with social distancing measures that needed to be maintained outside of their business. Both district and county councils needed to work together on this particular aspect, which was what they were trying to achieve, via the Trading Liaison Group which met every Friday.

Councillor E. Stokes, Wychavon District Council took the opportunity to express her sincere thanks to the Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager, for providing such a detailed report and for his rapid response to the individual queries she had raised with him.

In response to Councillor Stokes, with regard to WRS bidding for some of the governments Covid-19 money being allocated to district councils, the Head of Regulatory Services, explained that he had spoken with partner authorities Chief Executives and had prepared a report, which had highlighted that the money would be used to support the safe re-opening of the high streets.

Councillor J. Squires, Worcester City Council also expressed her sincere thanks to WRS. It was a pretty intensive time for officers as far as Worcester City were concerned, every week at their leadership meetings they were hearing about the work that WRS were doing as part of the Covid-19 response. WRS were absolutely key to what we had been able to achieve over the past three months. They were also key to enabling businesses to safely re-open over the coming months.

Councillor Squires also took the opportunity to thank officers for the individual advice they had provided on behalf of a local charity that she was involved with.

The Chairman reiterated Members thanks and stated that WRS had been amazing during the Covid-19 response, which was on top of the recent flooding, so it had been a difficult year for WRS.

RESOLVED that the Covid-19 Response information report be noted, be noted, and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to fellow Members of the partner authorities.

7/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

The Board considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Annual Report 2019/2020. The report covered the performance from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

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.

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The Annual Report highlighted that most premises were well regulated, which enabled the service to focus their resources on those premises which were more problematic.

The Head of Regulatory Services further informed Members that the report covered the performance of the service for that period, both in terms of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and highlights of activity, with a short summary activity report, as detailed at Appendix 5 to the report. Appendix 5 to the report had been reduced since the Board now received a separate Activity and Performance Data report which provided more detail. Some detail of the performance indicators were also covered in the Activity and Performance Data report.

Generally performance had remained good. Food business compliance rates remained high. Taxi license renewals were dealt with in a reasonable time in the main. The taxi fleet appeared to be generally in good order, although the results from enforcement exercises suggested that some drivers / operators needed to improve in terms of maintaining vehicles.

Complaints against the service were significantly exceeded by compliments. It was understood that the main issue for complaints were related to either paying for the cost of stray dog recovery or the fact that WRS could not resolve an issue that was causing annoyance to a resident due to the law on nuisances.

The Head of Regulatory Services commented that he was pleased to report that non-business customer satisfaction had gone up from a low of 62% to just under 70%, WRS would continue to try and push this figure forward and improve.

The indicators for licensed premises and noise complaints had been in place long enough now in order to establish good base-lines.

The Annual Report also provided a summary of the financial position, the key achievements and covered issues with regard to human resources. There were also sections on risk management and equalities.

In response to Members questions with regard to potential incentives in order to increase the number of electric vehicles on taxi fleets; the Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that officers were currently looking at this with a number of partner authorities, in particular with Worcester City Council, National Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing. The Task and Finish Group were working with elected Members, looking at how to progress with changes in the taxi fleet.

Moving towards a free vehicle licence for electric vehicles might be a step too far for some authorities, who would need to consider their finances to see if this, was an option that could be taken forward. There

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were a number of other incentives that could be scoped and WRS were considering these with colleagues and Worcester City Council Members. These options may be options that other authorities could consider.

Nottingham City Council had purchased a number of electric vehicles to be used or hired by the trade, effectively as a test vehicle, to see the advantages they could bring; however, Nottingham City Council had the advantage of receiving government funding for to achieve this, district councils do not have that advantage.

The Head of Regulatory Services summarised and stated that there were a number of options that could be considered, trying to incentivise the trade, to move from diesel to electric vehicles; so he would advise Members to consider a range of options rather than jumping in immediately with free licences.

The (acting) Licensing Manager, WRS, further informed that Board that officers were working on a number of things in terms of looking at potential incentives, which had included looking at what other authorities had done. One option was to reduce licensing fees, some local authorities had pool vehicles that drivers could try, rent or part purchase. WRS licensing officers were working with Worcester City Council, Task and Finish Group looking at actual incentives and compiling an options appraisal.

The Chairman asked if the Board could be kept informed of the outcome of Worcester City Council Task and Finish Group. The Head of Regulatory Services agreed to liaise with the Leader, Worcester City Council and colleagues to see if they would be happy to share the findings of the Task and Finish Group.

Members discussed the various discrepancies with regard to the tariffs charged across the six districts and if a county tariff was possible.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that this was something that he had been working on since the inception of WRS in 2010. Any significant changes / increases had to evidence led. There was a significant difference across the six partner authorities, but that was accounted for, in the level of differences in each partner authority's scheme of delegations. Some partner authorities delegated more decision making to officers than others did.

It was a piece of work that WRS had looked at and officers had worked closely with colleagues and Members at Wychavon District Council to gradually move forward with their fees and charges to get a fee structure that worked for them and was closer to the average for the county and other partner authorities to achieve something that was more level, however, this was not something to be done as a 'one off' to put the same tariff for every partner authority. Partner authorities remained six sovereign district councils and that created a potential risk of judicial review of such decisions made.

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WRS would continue to work towards a more uniformed tariff across the county.

Councillor A. Kent, BDC, stated that there were a number of positive results within the report, but for clarity, he would suggest that the figures detailed (on pages 21 to 25 of the main agenda report), also detailed the relevant years.

The Head of Regulatory Services also responded to a number of questions from Councillor Kent, BDC, in respect of the 'Accommodation' information as detailed on page 33 on the main agenda report and in doing so explained that:

- The contract was renewed on a 12 month rolling basis, although WRS had tentatively agreed with Wyre Forest District Council that they would be there for a period of three years.
- It was agreed that WRS would always operate from a local authority base, thereby keeping accommodation in the local authority family. There was relatively a small amount of accommodation choice across the county that could provide enough seating space for officers who worked at relatively flexible levels.
- A small number of additional desks had been provided at a very low price, so for now WRS would retain those desks.
- There was an increase in the charge, but only an inflationary increase.
- Wyre Forest house provided excellent office accommodation and their IT support was brilliant, really responsive and supportive.
- The key thing was the amount of space required, even to go down to 2/3 of the desk space that they currently used, as far as he was aware, there was only potential space at County Hall or a further location in Wychavon. However, as mentioned earlier, he would prefer to keep the funding used by WRS for accommodation in the local government family.
- Going forward he would look again to ensure that WRS was getting the best deal and if fewer desk spaces could be workable. He would reiterate though, that the use of flexible and mobile working had been taken into account. It was generally now the norm for the service, with staff frequently using home as their start and finish point for work in the field.
- Covid-19 has shown them that maybe they can manage with fewer desks.

Councillor H. Jones, BDC, referred to page 22 and page 23 of the main agenda report:

- Number 3 (page 22) – include with the figures, the relevant years.
- Number 4 – (page 22) – where were the businesses located within the Bromsgrove District.

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- Number 6 (page 23) – the number of vehicles found to be defective, were these found from the recent enforcement exercise carried out in Bromsgrove?

Officers agreed to respond and to provide Councillor Jones, BDC with specific details.

The Democratic Services Officer noted the small typo, on page 25 of the main agenda report, picked up by Councillor J. Raine, Malvern Hills District Council. The report to be amended before being forwarded to the Chief Executive, Managing Director and Members of the six partner authorities.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Regulatory Services for the detailed Annual Report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2019/2020 be noted; and
- (b) that a copy of the (amended) Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2019/2020 be forwarded to the Chief Executive, Managing Director and Members of the six partner authorities.

8/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - MARCH 2020 AND ANNUAL RETURN 2019/2020

The Financial Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), introduced the report and in doing so highlighted the Recommendations, as detailed on page 53 of the main agenda report; and drew Members' attention to recommendation 1.2 – to approve £20k transfer to WRS reserves to purchase a dog warden van.

The Financial Services Manager, BDC further drew Members' attention to the final outturn of £57k, which represented 1.9% of the actual budget, detailed on page 54 of the main agenda report.

WRS Managers had set themselves an income budget of £490k for 2019/2020, unfortunately due to the loss of one of the stray dog contracts, which had generated around £60k worth of income, there was an income shortfall of £48k against budget. But still a fantastic performance from WRS again this year, as WRS still managed to outturn a surplus at the year end.

Councillor A. Kent, BDC, queried the County – Exit Fee and Worcs Works Well, as detailed on page 65 of the main agenda report; and if the figure should still be shown in 'Earmarked Reserves. .

In response the Head of Regulatory Services explained that when Worcestershire County Council departed from the partnership in 2016, they were required to pay an amount which covered the cost to partners

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in facilitating its exit and also a contribution to cover the costs of any redundancies or anything else it might incur looking forward. So the figure of £173k was agreed. The transfer out figure of £42,500 was in relation to the settlement of an employee tribunal for WRS. WRS had received advice from an external commercial solicitor, who had advised senior officers that the amount was a reasonable ending for the six partners.

Therefore it was agreed by the partner officers of the Board to use the reserves held by the service rather than asking partner authorities to pay the settlement costs.

The Head of Regulatory Services continued and further explained that it had been agreed at previous Board meetings that the funds would be held as a reserve for the service, should the income model be petered out and the service was in a position where it was not meeting its budget target. Members of the Board had previously agreed that this reserve would be used as a buffer against such an eventuality.

So if WRS hit a sudden year where there was a major downturn in income the six partner authorities would not be faced with having to find tens of thousands of pounds to cover the gap for the service.

It also created that thinking space potentially for officers to look at how these services might be delivered differently if it did get to the point where such decisions had to be made. So it was there in the event of emergencies and to give the six partner authorities that level of protection from anything going wrong with the service and its delivery.

At this point in time, that was why it is there, this had been agreed historically, but clearly if Members wanted to look at investing any of that into particular pieces of work or one activity; then that was something that officers could take away and discuss and bring back to the Board.

The Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager informed the Board that Worcestershire Works Well was a free accreditation scheme to support businesses to improve the health and well-being of their employees. The accreditation scheme was run by Worcestershire County Council but WRS delivered the expertise in terms of working with them on health and safety and nutrition in the workplace.

RESOLVED that

- a) the final financial position for the period April – March 2020 be noted;
- b) £20k transfer to Worcestershire Regulatory Services reserves to purchase a dog warden van, be approved; and
- c) that the 2019/202 refund of £37k to the participating Councils be approved, as follows:-

Council	Refund from 2019/20 £'000
Bromsgrove District Council	5
Malvern Hills District Council	5
Redditch Borough Council	6
Worcester City Council	6
Wychavon District Council	9
Wyre Forest District Council	6
Total	37

9/20

UPDATE ON INCOME GENERATION

The Technical Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services presented an Update on Income Generation following provision of additional resource.

Members were reminded that in 2018 that, Members of the Board and partner officers had agreed to fund a part time post on the basis that WRS would cover the cost of that post and make a margin to reinvest back into the service primarily through Primary Authority working.

The post had helped to deliver a number on contracts, although Primary Authority work had not been as lucrative as it was thought to be. Costs had been covered and officers believed that they would be providing a margin to reinvest into the WRS budget. Officers were confident that they had at least £19k of achieved income in Quarter 1 and a number of leads that officers were currently chasing, as well as ongoing pieces of work that officers still continued to deliver.

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions for businesses, officers were confident that they could cover the cost of the post should it be extended and would hopefully provide some increased margin across the next two financial years.

In response to Councillor A. Kent, BDC, the Technical Services Manager informed the Board that switching to the Zoom platform to deliver training was something that officers were in the midst of doing. It had been set up and once WRS had received the sign off from their client, officers would deliver the training in person, via Zoom, rather than on-line training sessions. If this proved successful, officers would certainly look at any lessons learnt and would look to deliver future training wherever possible via Zoom.

With regard to the current Ministry of Defence (MOD) contract, the Technical Services Manager explained that this was a one-off contract to deliver a specific piece of work. However, officers were discussing how they could assist the MOD with a wider roll out of some aspects of this

work. Discussions were taking place to see if WRS could secure that contract.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) the relevant Officer partners of the Board agree to the continuation of this fixed term post for a period of two years.

10/20

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTERS 1 - 4

The (acting) Licensing Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented that Activity and Performance Data for Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 and in doing so highlighted some of the keys points in the report.

The (acting) Licensing Manager, WRS, reported that the report focused on Quarter 4 but the actual data allowed a comparison with previous quarters and years.

With the exception of August, the number of food requests received during this year had been largely in line with 2018/2019. Approximately 51% of cases were hygiene related; with three quarters of complaints relating to food products and a quarter to hygiene concerns at food businesses.

Based on the 1242 inspection interventions undertaken this year, approximately 6% led to a non-compliant rating (a rating of 0, 1 or 2) being issued. The majority of businesses however had since been brought into compliance. It was worth noting that, towards the end of the year, proactive inspections of food businesses were suspended by the Food Standards Agency due to Covid-19.

The number of stray or lost dogs reported continued to decline, with the total this year a reduction of 17% compared to the previous year.

The number of health and safety cases received during this year was broadly in line with the previous year. There was however, a continued decline in the number of complaints and enquiries.

It had been a quiet year for nuisance work and that was how it ended albeit following a very similar pattern for previous years.

The number of public health cases received by WRS during the year was a reduction of 25% compared to the previous year. Approximately

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60% of cases related to pest control and a further 25% were complaints relating to the accumulation of waste at domestic properties.

Work to support planning officers across Worcestershire had kept the Technical Services team busy throughout the year, with the number recorded some 18% higher than the previous year. Approximately 89% of planning enquiries were consultations, whilst half related to contaminated land.

Newport City Council in Wales had now signed off their legal agreement with CEMEX and officers were pleased to confirm that they had now comprehensive primary authority arrangements in place for both England and Wales. WRS would now proceed to secure standardised inspections plans for all of CEMEX's sites (around 360 nationally) through the BEIS approval system.

Officers had now completed the first draft of the Medium Sized Combustion Plant technical standard on behalf of the Defence Industry Organisation (DIO).

Work continued with Worcester City's Air Quality Action Plan with source apportionment work taking place in 2 of the 5 survey areas and the incorporation of LTP4 actions into the plan. However accurate up to date traffic counts had not been secured for all areas due to the Covid-19 lockdown and there would be a need to glean this information before the report was completed.

Predictive air quality modelling work around Comberton Hill and Chester Road junction in Kidderminster was making progress, however, the project had been suspended due to the inability to collect accurate and representative traffic data due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

Meetings with representatives from Bromsgrove and Wychavon District Councils to progress the action planning of air quality in the Wychbold AQMA had also been suspended due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

The number of licensing applications received last year remained consistent with previous years.

Whilst licensing generally received a higher proportion of enquiries, 661 complaints were received this year with approximately 45% relating to taxi licensing.

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Councillor J, Raine, Malvern Hills District Council commented that he found it to be an excellent report and was presented in a really good format.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data report for Quarters 1, 2, 3, and 4, 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 Chairman took the opportunity to express the Boards sincere thanks to Councillor J. Grubb, Redditch Borough Council, as Chairman of the Board for 2018/2019.

The meeting closed at 5.57 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Board 1st October 2020

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICE BUDGETS 2020/21

Recommendation

The WRS budgets for 2020/21 were agreed at WRS Board on 14th November 19. However due to late changes in the WRS forward pension funding rate from 16.9% to 20.5%, Pay Award of 2.75% (Budgeted at 2%), increase in charges from Wyre Forest for accommodation & ICT hosting and a change in pest control service at Wyre Forest in March 20

It is recommended that the WRS Board:

- 1.1 Approve 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

Agenda Item 4

1.2 Approve 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 Council	£3k
Wychavon District Council	£5k
Wyre Forest District Council	£3k
Total	£21k

1.3 Approve 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
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1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting from Wyre Forest and recommend the increase to individual partner councils:-

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
Total	£13k

Agenda Item 4

1.5 Approve 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
Total	3,210	

Introduction/Summary

The revised budget 2020/21 excludes agreed Technical officers for Animal Activity, Income Generation and Gull Control Work.

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

This report presents the additional funding required from partners for WRS revenue budget for 2020/21

Officers from Partner Councils have considered the proposal and would recommend its approval to Members.

Report

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

- Breakdown of partner pension backfunding contributions – Appendix 1
- WRS revised Partner revenue budget contributions 2020/21 - Appendix 2

WRS Budgets 2020/21 – Forward Pension

A revised pension schedule was received from Worcestershire County Council with an increase in the WRS pension forward rate to 20.5%, the budget was set at 16.9%. This increase in the WRS pension forward rate from 16.9% to 20.5% for future years are not able to be met currently by WRS making

Agenda Item 4

additional income, therefore an increase to partner funding will be required of:-

Council	2020/21
	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	11
Malvern Hills District Council	10
Redditch Borough Council	13
Worcester City Council	13
Wychavon District Council	18
Wyre Forest District Council	12
Total	77

Appendix 1 shows the partner WRS pension backfunding deficit for 2017-18 to 2019-20 compared against the payment required for years 2020-21 – 2022-23. The WRS backfunding element of the pension has reduced significantly creating a saving for all partner councils. Therefore partners will still receive a saving even after the funding of the additional forward funding pension liability.

WRS Budgets 2020/21 – Pay Award 2020/21

The pay award for 2020/21 has been formally agreed at 2.75%, the budget was set at 2%. WRS are unable to cover this increase, therefore an increase to partner funding will be required of:-

Council	2020/21
	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	3
Malvern Hills District Council	3
Redditch Borough Council	4
Worcester City Council	3
Wychavon District Council	5
Wyre Forest District Council	3
Total	21

WRS Budgets 2020/21 – Increase in Rent & ICT Hosting

An increase in accommodation charges & ICT hosting was required from Wyre Forest in March 20. Therefore an increase to partner funding will be required of:-

Council	2020/21 £'000
Bromsgrove District Council	2
Malvern Hills District Council	2
Redditch Borough Council	2
Worcester City Council	2
Wychavon District Council	3
Wyre Forest District Council	2
Total	13

WRS Budgets 2020/21 – Pest Control Change

From April 20 Wyre Forest are changing their procedures for Pest Control and will no longer require WRS to carry out any pest control duties for them. Therefore WRS will need to refund Wyre Forest £7.5k, which is the budget at WRS for this service. This will result in a slight change in the partner percentages as per below:-

	Current %	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	14.55	14.59
Malvern Hills District Council	12.79	12.82
Redditch Borough Council	17.53	17.57
Worcester City Council	16.54	16.58
Wychavon District Council	23.24	23.29
Wyre Forest District Council	15.35	15.15

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this paper

Contact point

Jayne Pickering – 01527 881400

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

|

Breakdown of Partner Payments for WRS Backfunding Pension Deficit

Append 1

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	3 Year Cost
Partner	£	£	£	£
Bromsgrove	18,300.63	18,981.45	19,675.90	56,957.98
Redditch	22,040.03	22,859.97	23,696.31	68,596.31
Malvern Hills	16,091.46	16,690.10	17,300.71	50,082.27
Wyre Forest	19,275.34	19,992.43	20,723.86	59,991.63
Wychavon	29,186.92	30,272.74	31,380.28	90,839.94
Worcester City	21,119.69	21,905.38	22,706.80	65,731.87
	126,014.07	130,702.07	135,483.86	392,200.00

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	3 Year Cost
Partner	£	£	£	£
Bromsgrove	4,248.60	4,248.60	4,248.60	12,745.80
Redditch	5,118.76	5,118.76	5,118.76	15,356.28
Malvern Hills	3,734.68	3,734.68	3,734.68	11,204.04
Wyre Forest	4,482.20	4,482.20	4,482.20	13,446.60
Wychavon	6,786.08	6,786.08	6,786.08	20,358.24
Worcester City	4,829.68	4,829.68	4,829.68	14,489.04
	29,200.00	29,200.00	29,200.00	87,600.00

Saving each year from 2019-20 cost	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	3 Year Saving
Partner	£	£	£	£
Bromsgrove	-15,427.30	-15,427.30	-15,427.30	-46,281.90
Redditch	-18,577.55	-18,577.55	-18,577.55	-55,732.65
Malvern Hills	-13,566.03	-13,566.03	-13,566.03	-40,698.09
Wyre Forest	-16,241.66	-16,241.66	-16,241.66	-48,724.98
Wychavon	-24,594.20	-24,594.20	-24,594.20	-73,782.60
Worcester City	-17,877.12	-17,877.12	-17,877.12	-53,631.36
	-106,283.86	-106,283.86	-106,283.86	-318,851.58

	Additional Increase in Forward Pension Funding due to McCloud 2020-21	Saving 2020-21 due to reduction in backfunding	Net Saving offsett with increase in WRS Forward Funding due to McCloud
Partner	£	£	£
Bromsgrove	11,203.50	-15,427.30	-4,223.80
Redditch	13,498.10	-18,577.55	-5,079.45
Malvern Hills	9,848.30	-13,566.03	-3,717.73
Wyre Forest	11,819.50	-16,241.66	-4,422.16
Wychavon	17,894.80	-24,594.20	-6,699.40
Worcester City	12,735.80	-17,877.12	-5,141.32
	77,000.00	-106,283.86	-29,283.86

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET 2020-21

Append 2

	Starting Budget	Approved unavoidable Salary Pressure	Approved Budget at Nov 19 WRS Board	Unavoidable Salary Pressure due to increase in WRS Forward	Unavoidable Salary Pressure due to additional 0.75% Payrise	Increase in Rent & ICT Hosting from Wyre Forest	Refund due to Wyre Forest due to change in Pest Control Service	Revised Base Budget	Approved Percentages	Revised Percentages
	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021 £	2020 / 2021 %	2020 / 2021 %
Bromsgrove District Council	439,000	13,110	452,110	11,204	2,998	1,892		468,203	14.55%	14.58%
Redditch Borough Council	529,000	15,795	544,795	13,498	3,612	2,279		564,184	17.53%	17.57%
Wyre Forest District Council	463,000	13,831	476,831	11,820	3,163	1,996	-7,500	486,309	15.35%	15.15%
Wychavon District Council	701,000	20,940	721,940	17,895	4,789	3,021		747,645	23.24%	23.29%
Malvern Hills District Council	386,000	11,524	397,524	9,848	2,636	1,663		411,671	12.79%	12.82%
Worcester City Council	499,000	14,903	513,903	12,736	3,408	2,150		532,197	16.54%	16.58%
Total	3,017,000	90,103	3,107,103	77,000	20,606	13,000	-7,500	3,210,209	100.00%	100.00%

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WRS Board 1st October 2020

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING April – June 2020

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

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

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

- 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	6
Wychavon District Council	4
Total	10

Agenda Item 5

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

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2020/21 Gull Control £000
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	
Total	22	34	35

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 2020.

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 20 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown - April – June 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 item. This shows a projected outturn

Agenda Item 5

2020/21 of £26k 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 June 20 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be an overspend on this service of £20k. 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	£6k
Wychavon District Council	£4k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – June 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	£3k
Malvern Hills District Council	£2k
Worcester City Council	£3k
Bromsgrove District Council	£2k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – June 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

Jayne Pickering – 01527-881400

WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2020/21

Append 1

Total WRS June 20 / Period 3 - 20/21

	Revised Full Year Budget 20-21	Revised Budget Apr - June 20	Committed Expenditure Apr - June 20	Variance	Projected outturn	Projected Outturn Variance
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct Expenditure						
Employees						
Salary	2,851	708	684	-24	2,823	-28
Agency Staff	0	0	1	1	1	1
Employee Insurance	25	6	6	-0	25	0
Sub-Total - Employees	2,876	714	691	-23	2,848	-28
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	-1	62	-0
Transport						
Vehicle Hire	13	3	1	-2	13	0
Vehicle Fuel	8	2	1	-1	8	-1
Road Fund Tax	1	0	1	0	1	0
Vehicle Insurance	5	1	1	0	5	0
Vehicle Maintenance	3	1	1	-0	3	0
Car Allowances	75	19	12	-6	75	-0
Sub-Total - Transport	104	26	17	-9	104	-1
Supplies and Services						
Furniture & Equipment	32	8	5	-2	32	0
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	0	0	-0	2	0
Printing & Photocopying	17	4	4	-0	17	-0
Postage	11	3	3	-0	11	0
ICT	40	10	11	1	45	5
Telephones	21	5	4	-1	20	-1
Training & Seminars	23	6	1	-5	23	0
Insurance	20	5	5	0	20	0
Third Party Payments	150	38	38	-0	150	-0
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	315	79	71	-8	319	4
Contractors						
Dog Warden	145	36	8	-28	85	-60
Pest Control	50	12	14	2	68	19
Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	62	16	5	-10	63	1
Other contractors/consultants	3	1	0	-1	3	0
Water Safety	5	1	0	-1	4	-1
Food Safety	1	0	0	-0	1	0
Environmental Protection	10	2	13	10	18	9
Grants / Subscriptions	13	3	7	4	15	3
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	1	0	-1	6	0
Sub-Total	293	73	47	-26	262	-30
Income						
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-440	-110	-78	32	-359	80
Sub-Total	-440	-110	-78	32	-359	80
Overall Total	3,210	797	763	-35	3,236	26

£100k BDC hosting / £50k WFDC ICT hosting.

Due to reduction in dogs straying, OOH dog warden has been taken in house. May peak when lockdown starts to be lifted.

Due to additional costs relating to Gull Control & Pest Control which is charged to relevant partners and offset in the income line

Bereavement / Works in Default to be charged to relevant partners, offset in Income

See Appendix 2

Notes:-

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Income from Partners

April to June 20

£

Budget	797,401
Bereavement / Public Burials	9,911
Pest Control Overspend - Wychavon & Redditch	2,525
Employee for Animal Activity - Apr - June 20	8,353
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Apr - June 20 - Worcs City	5,981
	<u>824,171</u>

Grant Income

Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	1,510
	<u>1,510</u>

Other Income

Stray Dog Income	4,954
Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal & Admin Support	13,300
Planning Support Work	5,591
Contaminated Land Work	4,469
PPC Work	8,078
MOD Contract	4,000
Primary Authority work	583
Screening / Compliance Review / Nox Tubes	869
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	2,208
Pest Control	2,754
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	1,423
Licensing - Training / Taxi Admin	410
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening	1,010
	<u>49,647</u>

Total Income Apr - June 20875,328**2020/21 Base Budget from Partners**

-797,401

Total Income Excluding Budget

77,927

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WRS Board: 1st October 2020

Information Report – Forecast impact of future salary settlements

Recommendation	Members are asked to note the report.
Background	<p>Members have previously asked for information regarding the potential impacts of future salary increases on the overall WRS budget. This originally came about as some members of the Board expressed concern at the host authority's normal policy of only forecasting 1% salary increases each year beyond the current.</p> <p>Members concerns began 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% has 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 have to contribute 20.5% for its members of staff in the shared service.</p> <p>The tables appended to this report attempt to demonstrate to members the likely impact of pay rises of between 1% and 3% going forward from 2020/21. The next year for an assessment of pension forward funding will be for 2023/24, so a further pressure may be generated from this point onwards.</p>
Report	<p>In order to give members a clear understanding of the financial information looking forward, the Host's Accountant who supports the WRS Management team has 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 are illustrated in Table 1 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.</p> <p>Members will be aware that we have now been told that the pay increase for 2020/21 agreed with the unions is 2.75%. The Pension Scheme also decided that rather than the 16.9% forward funding increase the host had agreed to, their calculations indicated that WRS forward funding would need to be 20.5%. The Head of Regulatory Services understands that, although WRS officers are employees of Bromsgrove District Council, the shared service is effectively treated as a separate affiliated body for the purposes of calculating forward and back funding for pensions. Hence the fund can charge a different amount for the service compared to the host. The Host and Head of Service were not made aware of the higher increase until well after the 2020/21 budget had been set.</p>



Agenda Item 6

Tables 2(a-c) have been provided to illustrate the way that salary increases could impact on partner contributions going forward from what we now know will likely be the base position for 2020/21.

Members will note that the pay increase of 2.75% and the pension forward funding increase up to 20.5% from 15.7% creates an upward pressure of £188,492 in this financial year (2020/21,) rather than the £90,106 agreed by members in November 2019.

Working through the tables, further increases are forecast based on salary increases of 1% (Table 2a,) 2% (Table 2b,) and 3% (Table 2c,) in each of the years looking forward. Members should note that the figures in these tables will accumulate, so, for example, if the 2.75% salary increase were followed by a 2% increase in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (as in Table 2b,) the salary pressure would be £76,748 and £74,254 respectively, making a total financial pressure in excess of £150,000 by the end of the second year. This would be on top of the £188,492 created in 2020/21 by the 2.75% increase and the pensions forward funding rise to 20.5%. This is covered in detail by the line showing cumulative totals.

Members should also note that the next year for the Pension Scheme to re-assess contributions is 2023/24 so there is a possibility that this will generate further financial pressures.

WRS is subject to the same pressures as all other local authority services in terms of these forecast financial outcomes so this should be a picture that will be familiar to members in their wider budgetary discussions at the partner authorities. However, historically the shared Regulatory Service has always been able to ride the storm by using income generation to fill the gaps in funding created by these changes and challenges. However, this occurred at a time when salary costs were being held at increases of around 1% per annum and clearly before the intervention of Covid 19.

Whilst officers will continue to look to income generation to contribute significantly to the shared service's expenditure, it is difficult to see it achieving the kind of growth necessary to keep up with the levels of salary increases anticipated in these tables. The Head of Service and the WRS Team Managers will continue to pursue other avenues for income generation and work with Officer members of the Board to look at other ways of improving the financial situation but, there will be no easy ways around this difficult situation, as I am sure members are experiencing with the wider financial situation within local government.

Contact Point

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Head of Regulatory Services
Email: simon.wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk
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Appendix:

Contribution from each partner due to unavoidable salary pressures

Appendix

Table 1

With WRS Forward Pension Rate at 16.9%

Partner	Partner Percentages	Salary Pay Award at 1% year on year				
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Bromsgrove	14.55%	13,110	6,684	6,171	5,808	4,874
Redditch	17.53%	15,796	8,053	7,434	6,997	5,872
Wyre Forest	15.35%	13,831	7,052	6,510	6,127	5,142
Wychavon	23.24%	20,941	10,677	9,856	9,277	7,785
Malvern	12.79%	11,525	5,876	5,424	5,105	4,284
Worcs City	16.54%	14,903	7,599	7,015	6,602	5,541
Yearly Total	100.00%	90,106	45,941	42,410	39,916	33,498
Cumulative Total		90,106	136,047	178,457	218,373	251,871

Table 2 (a)

With WRS Forward Pension Rate at 20.5%



Partner	Partner Percentages	2.75% Pay Award	Salary Pay Award at 1% year on year				
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	
Bromsgrove	14.55%	27,426	6,919	6,387	6,012	5,045	
Redditch	17.53%	33,043	8,336	7,695	7,243	6,078	
Wyre Forest	15.35%	28,933	7,299	6,738	6,342	5,322	
Wychavon	23.24%	43,805	11,051	10,202	9,602	8,058	
Malvern	12.79%	24,108	6,082	5,615	5,285	4,435	
Worcs City	16.54%	31,177	7,865	7,261	6,834	5,735	
Yearly Total	100.00%	188,492	47,552	43,898	41,318	34,673	
Cumulative Total		188,492	236,044	279,942	321,260	355,933	

Table 2 (b)

With WRS Forward Pension Rate at 20.5%

Partner	Partner Percentages	2.75% Pay Award	Salary Pay Award at 2% year on year				
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	
Bromsgrove	14.55%	27,426	11,167	10,804	10,589	9,749	
Redditch	17.53%	33,043	13,454	13,017	12,757	11,746	
Wyre Forest	15.35%	28,933	11,781	11,398	11,171	10,285	
Wychavon	23.24%	43,805	17,836	17,256	16,913	15,572	
Malvern	12.79%	24,108	9,816	9,497	9,308	8,570	
Worcs City	16.54%	31,177	12,694	12,282	12,037	11,083	
Yearly Total	100.00%	188,492	76,748	74,254	72,775	67,005	
Cumulative Total		188,492	265,240	339,494	412,269	479,274	



Table 2 (c)

With WRS Forward Pension Rate at 20.5%

Partner	Partner Percentages	2.75% Pay Award	Salary Pay Award at 3% year on year			
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Bromsgrove	14.55%	27,426	15,414	15,306	15,342	14,727
Redditch	17.53%	33,043	18,571	18,441	18,485	17,743
Wyre Forest	15.35%	28,933	16,262	16,148	16,186	15,537
Wychavon	23.24%	43,805	24,620	24,447	24,506	23,523
Malvern	12.79%	24,108	13,550	13,455	13,487	12,946
Worcs City	16.54%	31,177	17,522	17,399	17,441	16,741
Yearly Total	100.00%	188,492	105,939	105,196	105,447	101,217
Cumulative Total		188,492	294,431	399,627	505,074	606,291



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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board

Date: 1st October 2020

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarter 1 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 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

At the last meeting in June, members received an update on the work the service had undertaken in relation to Covid 19 since the beginning of lockdown. This report will focus on the other work done during quarter 1, on what is often referred to as our "business as usual" activities rather than the disease response work that featured in June's report.

The first quarter of 2020/21 commenced with the economy in lockdown and with many of the businesses we 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 a quarter unlike any other in WRS 10-year history.

The Food Standards Agency suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this continued throughout the first 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.

On the Health and Safety at Work front, the numbers of complaints and enquiries was lower than the equivalent quarter of the previous two years, again most likely because many of our regulated businesses were either



closed or operating at much more limited capacity. Interestingly the number of accidents reported through the RIDDOR system remained reasonably level with previous periods and drops elsewhere in service areas were not reflected.

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 appears 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. We normally see 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. Other areas of business were slightly down but the taxi trade, in the main was not largely impacted. There were delays in some districts for new vehicles joining the fleets as the council garages that tested them were closed and license surgeries suspended, so any such applications needed to be delayed. Renewals went ahead as normal and licensing officers continued to monitor the impact of the pandemic on numbers applying to renew.

Planning application numbers did fall during quarter 1, again linked to lockdown, however numbers did start 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, the numbers of nuisance complaints began climbing late in Q4 and continued through the quarter with numbers ending up higher by the end of the quarter than either of the equivalent periods in 2018/19 or 2019/20. Public Health complaints (accumulation nuisances, and similar,) also appeared in relatively high levels, ending up at a similar level to 2018/19 and above last year's figure for the same period.

This was at a time when a significant number of our officers were engaged with the pandemic response, so those who managed the normal day to day activities deserve as much praise as colleagues working on the response to the emergency, having ensured we do as much as we can in these areas.

Performance

We always remind members that the reportable performance indicators are 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 has to be seen as good.

The Broadly Compliant measure for food businesses is based on



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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. This is unlikely to commence before 31st March 2021. Members should note that this is historically an annual measure and is derived from what was National Indicator NI184 in the old suite of government indicators, so any figures other than the final year end one are only ever indicative.

Compliments outnumber complaints by 3:1 (18:6) and staff sickness is looking reasonably good at 0.61 days per FTE. This is on a par with previous years at Q1 (0.75.)

Contact Points

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Background Papers

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



Appendix B: Table of PIs 2020/21

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			
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	99.3			
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3			
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.7			
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	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	63.2			



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	customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future					
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/18			
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.61 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 head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	





Worcestershire
Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2020-21



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Malvern
Hills
District
Council
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good services, good value



Wyre Forest
District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the third activity data report for 2019/20.

The first quarter of the year has been dominated by Covid 19 work. Many of our businesses were closed during this period so, as you might expect, numbers were down in a number of areas but this was more than made up for by Covid related work and a significant proportion of staffing resource was committed to either disease control or ensuring the business closure provisions were being implemented.

Noise complaints were similar to Q1 last year, which was relatively high for this time of year, likely precipitated by good weather and the fact that many more people were at home during the day when otherwise they wouldn't be.

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

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Simon Wilkes

Head of Regulatory Services

Community Environmental Health

In addition to the regular work carried out by the team and reported in the following pages, the focus for Q1 has been responding to the significant additional responsibilities brought about by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The first phase of response from the Community Environmental Health Team was to make proactive checks that businesses were closed. Officers were tasked to undertake patrols to check that businesses were closed and over 2,000 visits were made countywide. Compliance was generally high, though Prohibition Notices had to be served in respect of 14 premises.

The team responded to over 500 service requests, providing support and advice to businesses, investigating reports of businesses trading despite restrictions, or trading in a manner that breached restrictions. This task was particularly onerous as the rules and regulations were subject to regular change at extremely short notice, requiring a high level of professionalism from Officers in keeping abreast of the changes in legislation and applying them practically in assisting businesses to comply.

Projects were undertaken relating to the takeaway sector, the control of legionella, garden centres, outdoor markets and golf courses to support business compliance with the Covid regulations.

In Q1 we began to engage with the local outbreak management process that is seen as the key mechanism for controlling the spread of Covid 19 going forward. Our main focus is likely to be outbreaks at those workplace settings where our Health and Safety at Work role is relevant, but beyond this WRS Officers are likely to be involved in outbreaks at schools, care homes and the larger high risk businesses enforced by HSE due to our expertise in communicable disease control.

The Teams have also been working with Economic Development and Town Centre management teams to support the delivery of grant funding to those eligible for either Council or Government financial support packages, assist in recovery plans for city centre and town centre businesses and provide advice and support for businesses in respect of safe working practices and government guidance. The Team has also made regular contributions to the County Covid Business Support Group.

The Food Standards Agency suspended all routine food inspection work in Q1. 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.

There have also been fewer food complaints as pubs and restaurants remained closed. We continued to try and re-rate businesses under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme wherever possible and appropriate, such as where they had completed structural works or introduced food safety management systems to address a low rating or those who needed an initial rating having recently opened. To assist in this we piloted novel methods of working such as virtual visits by video call to be followed up with physical visits when permitted.

Despite lockdown restrictions we continued to provide an Export Certificate service without extended delays which enabled our major exporters to trade as normal.

This has allowed us to concentrate on our Engage/Educate/Encourage/Enforce approach to implementing the Health Protection Regulations, supported by targeted patrols, intelligence-led investigations and the excellent relationships forged through close liaison with the local Policing Teams.

A significant increase in specific types of complaints was noted in Q1, namely those relating to domestic noise, smoke nuisance and of course, alleged breaches of the COVID-19 Regulations. The former two may simply be down to the fact people were at home and being annoyed by things that they wouldn't normally encounter as they would be at work during the day. We have already re-configured officer roles in the service to meet Covid and statutory responsibilities whilst delivering on your service priorities and will continue to be as flexible as possible in moving people around in response to differing demands in a quickly changing regulatory environment.

Licensing

We started the quarter facing the challenges of the Covid pandemic and looking to work smarter and more efficiently; not only by changing processes but finding ways to communicate with licensed premise holders and the taxi trade in a relatively short space of time using alternative channels of communication.

Working across all the Districts, we looked at opportunities to help the taxi trade in such unprecedented circumstances and implemented a deferral process which gave drivers an opportunity to defer the renewal of their license for up to 6 months. This allowed them to then renew rather than have to re-apply for a new license within a six month window. This scheme will end in September 2020.

WRS licensing officers have had to adapt and change the way applications and correspondence were received from applicants including the paying of fees and we shifted everything to being online, via email or providing advice and guidance over the telephone due to the temporary suspension of licensing surgeries. This was a challenge for a lot of our customers, especially the taxi trade, but overall was well received and welcomed as a alternative way of doing things in the current climate.

Throughout the quarter we endeavored to provide information whether it was by email, newsletter or updates to the website to all current and prospective licence holders to ensure they were fully aware of changes to the regulations. Due to frequency of changes occurring, we wanted to ensure they were fully aware and kept as up to date as possible.

Animal licensing was also a key area where businesses were found to be struggling as people were not going away therefore boarding kennels were empty. In addition, officers were not able to go out and do inspections. We therefore mirrored the same deferral process that we put in place for the taxi trade for these businesses and again this will end at the end of September 2020.

Overall it has been a fast paced learning journey for the licensing team and no doubt the next quarter will bring its own challenges and encounters along the way.

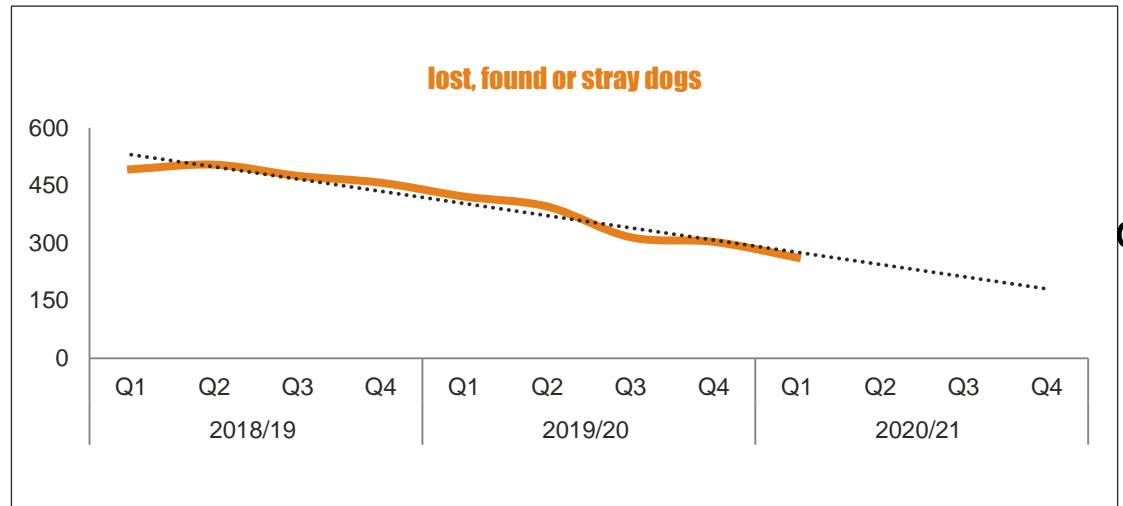
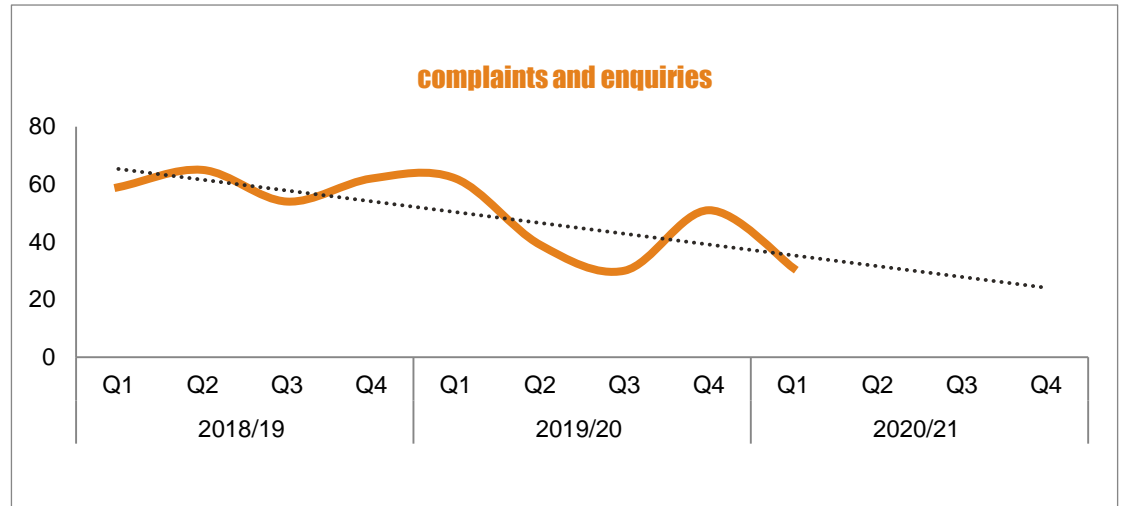
Due to the Covid 19 lockdown air monitoring work was suspended between March but resumed in June. Due to the unprecedented reduction of road vehicles it is anticipated that all of the air monitoring currently undertaken with diffusion tubes will not be usable for the purpose of providing annual average 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.

The number of stray or lost dogs reported continues to decline, with the total recorded during quarter one a reduction of between 37% and 46% compared to previous years. Despite this reduction, the type of cases remains consistent, with 67% 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 10% were rehomed.

In general, the service receives a higher number of enquiries that complaints. Based on the 22 complaints received during quarter one, 12 related to dangerous dogs and 10 related to fouling and persistent straying.

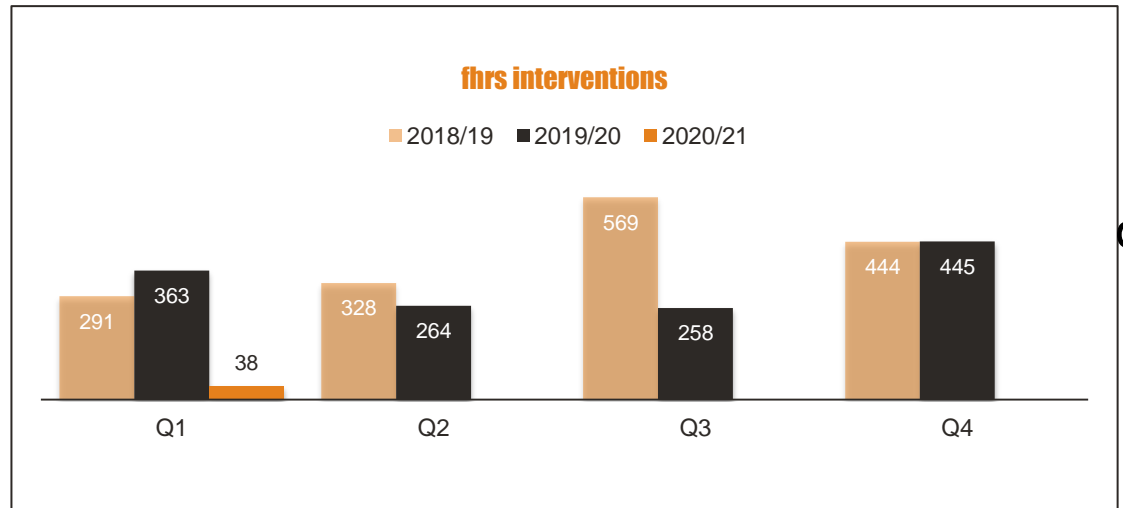
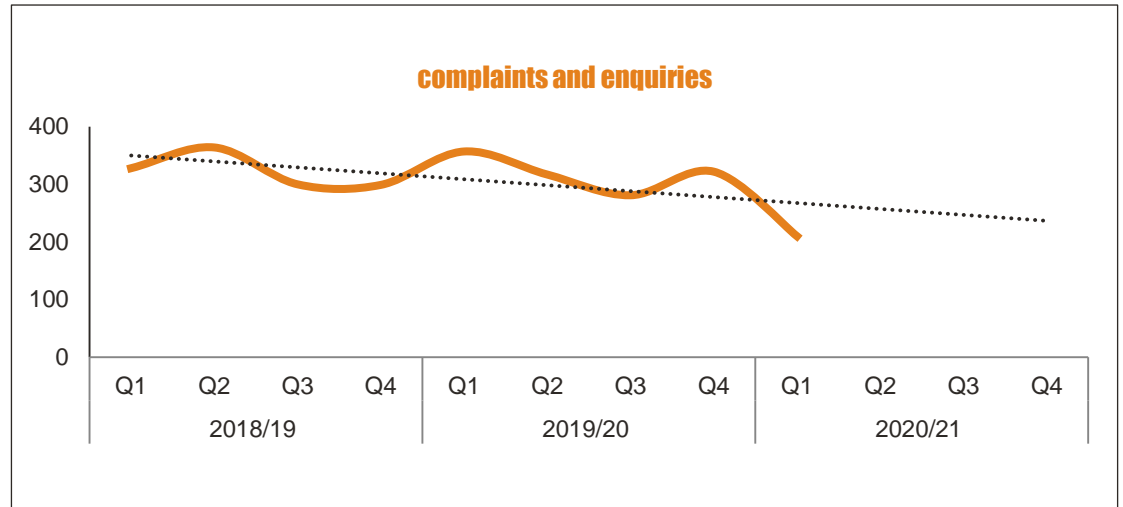


DEFRA published the 2020-21 subsistence fee structure in early May. We can confirm that the fee structure remains the same this year. The technical pollution team are currently investigating the feasibility of undertaking virtual compliance inspections as many companies are still working during the lockdown. 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.

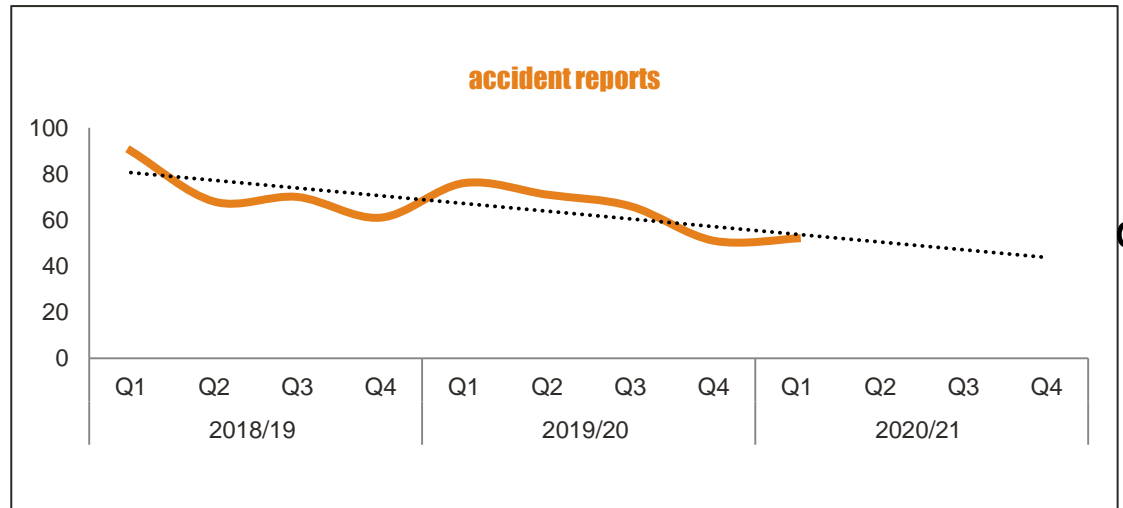
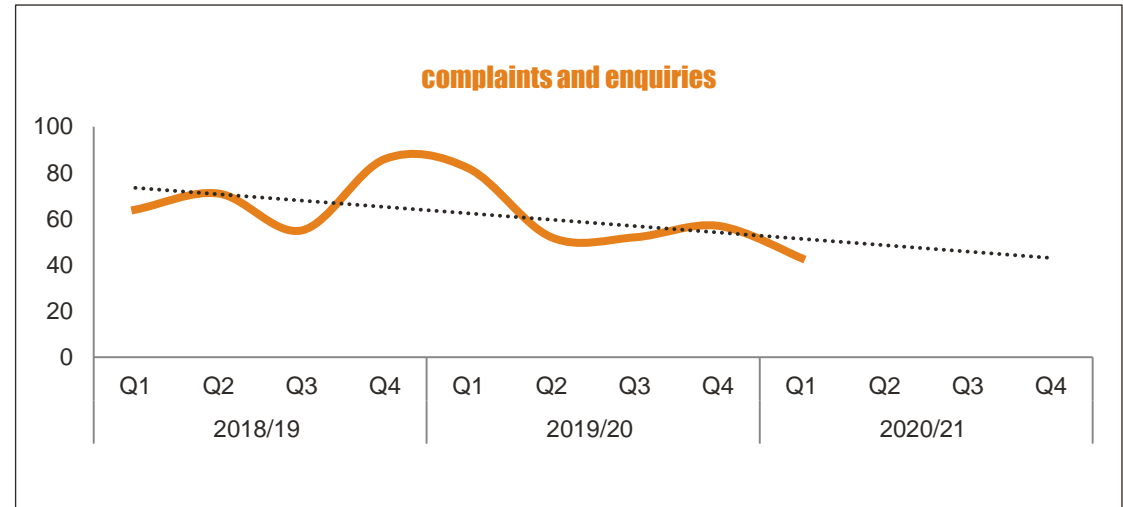
The reduction in the level of food safety cases coincides with a general reduction in commercial activity due to restrictions implemented in response to COVID-19. Where cases were recorded, over 50% were enquiries, whilst 29% were complaints about food products purchased from retail outlets.

Whilst proactive inspections have been suspended nationally due to COVID-19, the service has undertaken a number of food projects which our outlined in the team updates section of this report.



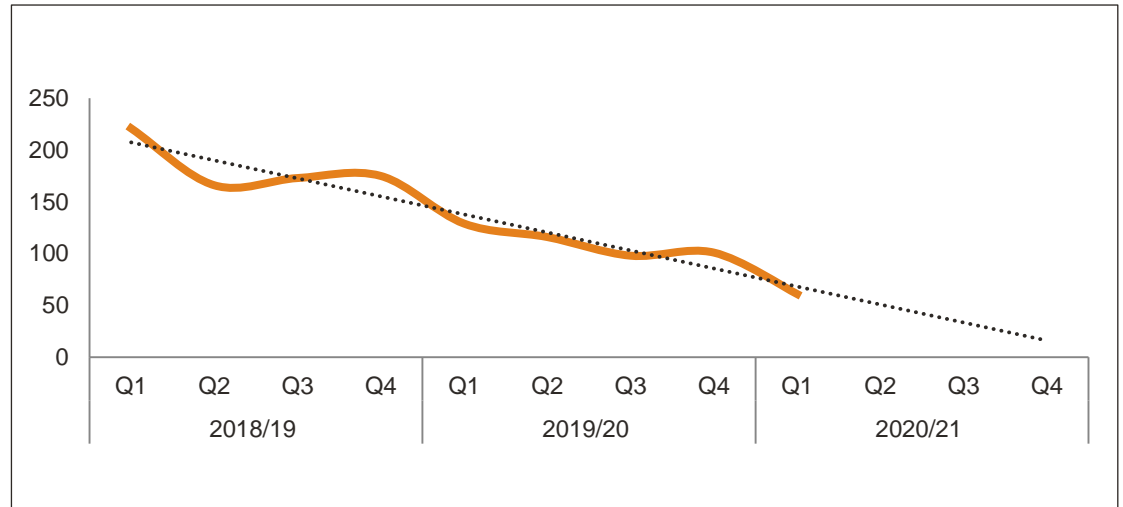
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to health and safety at work. This includes requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of notifications received by WRS relating to accidents.

In parallel with food safety, the volume of cases relating to health and safety at work has also reduced during quarter one. This reduction however, has been partially offset by a number of notifications relating to positive COVID-19 tests in workplaces such as caring premises. Also in parallel with food safety, the service has undertaken several projects in response to the pandemic. Details of these projects are outlined in the team updates section of this report.



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



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.

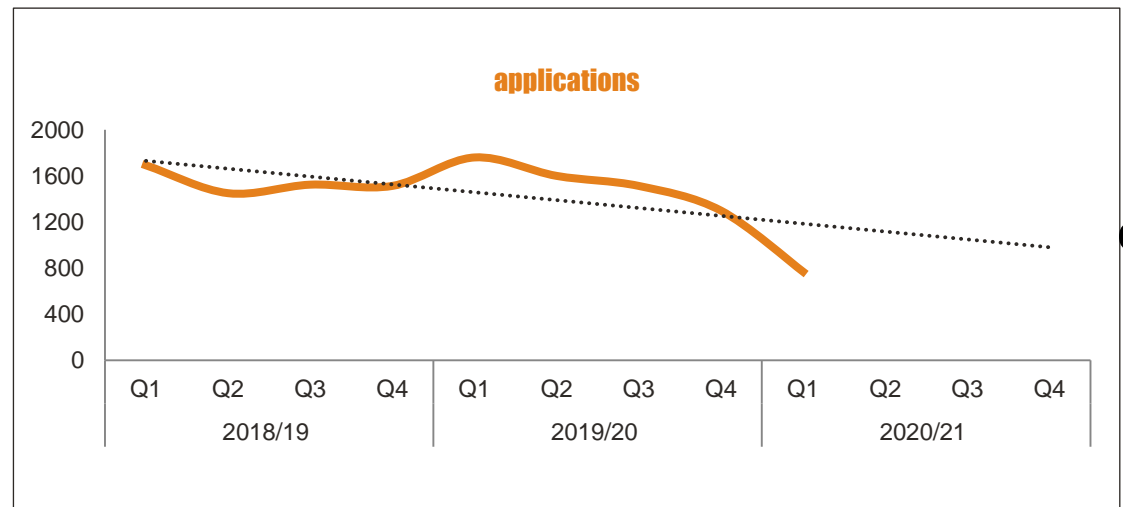
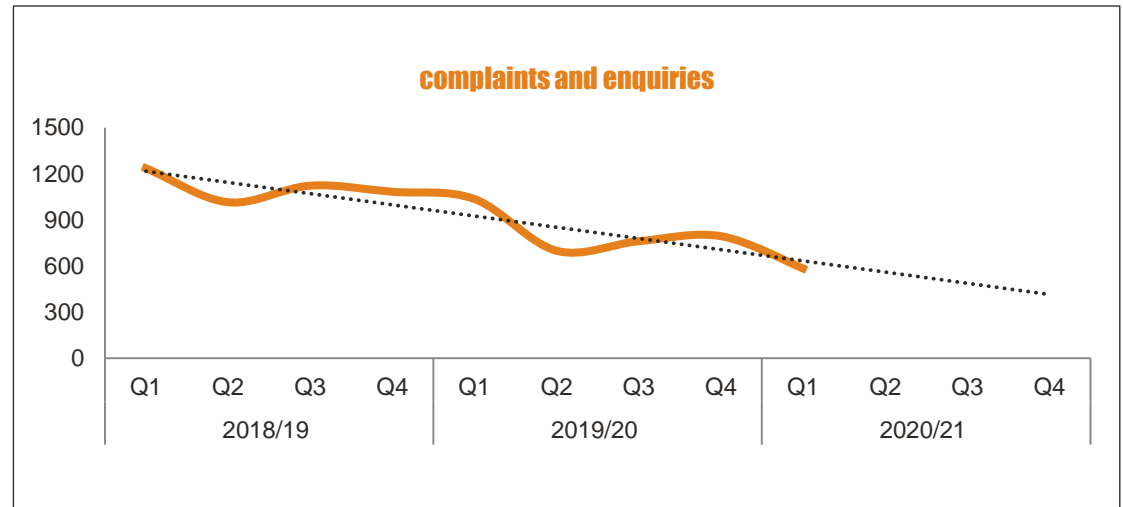
Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

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

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The volume of licensing cases recorded during quarter one is a reduction of 51% compared to the previous year. 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, 17% of applications related to alcohol licensing whilst 46% related to private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

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



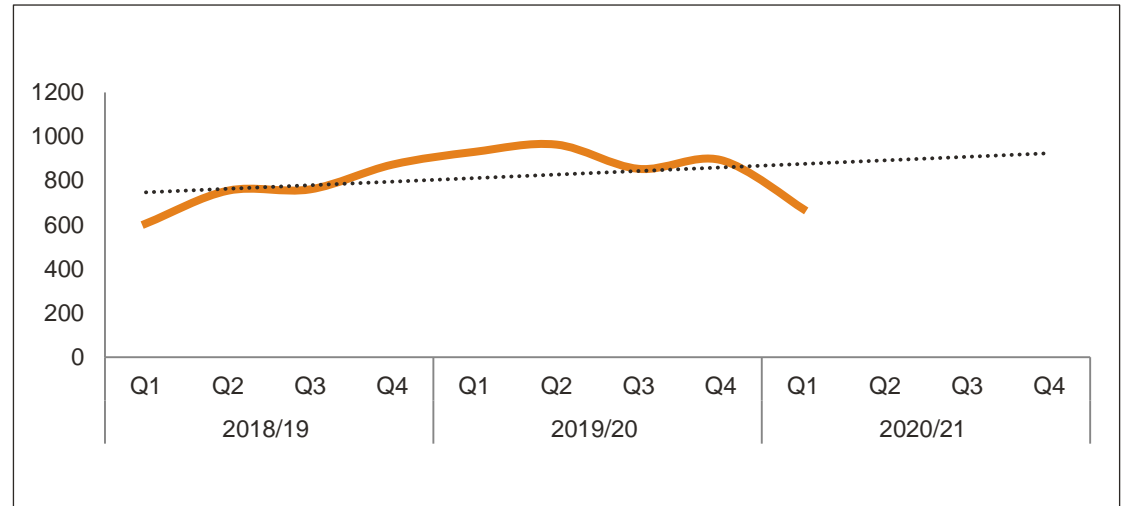
The chart (right) shows the number of planning enquiries completed by WRS over a three year period. The majority of these requests are consultations but can also include requests to discharge conditions.

Planning requests relate to the following;

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

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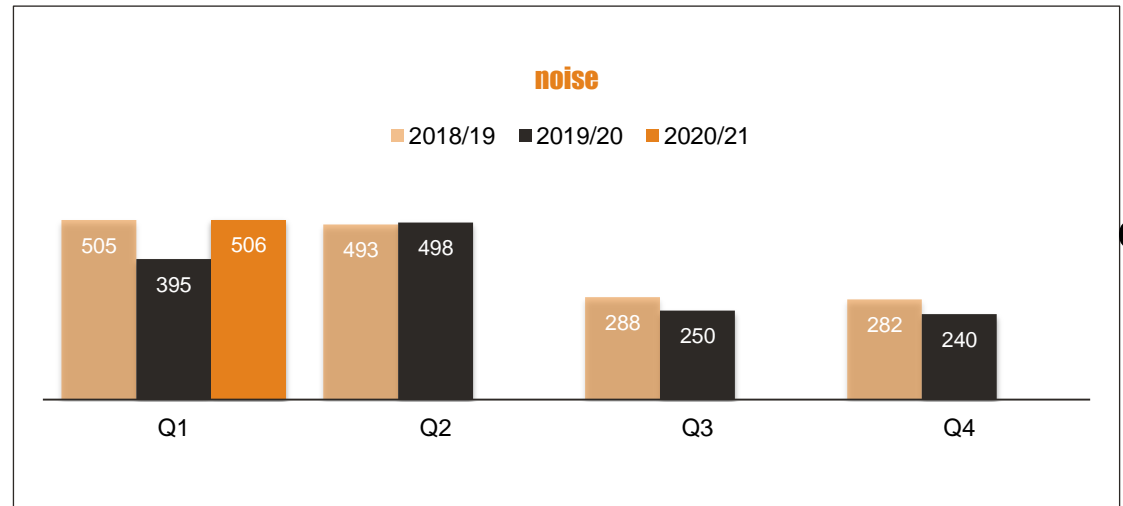
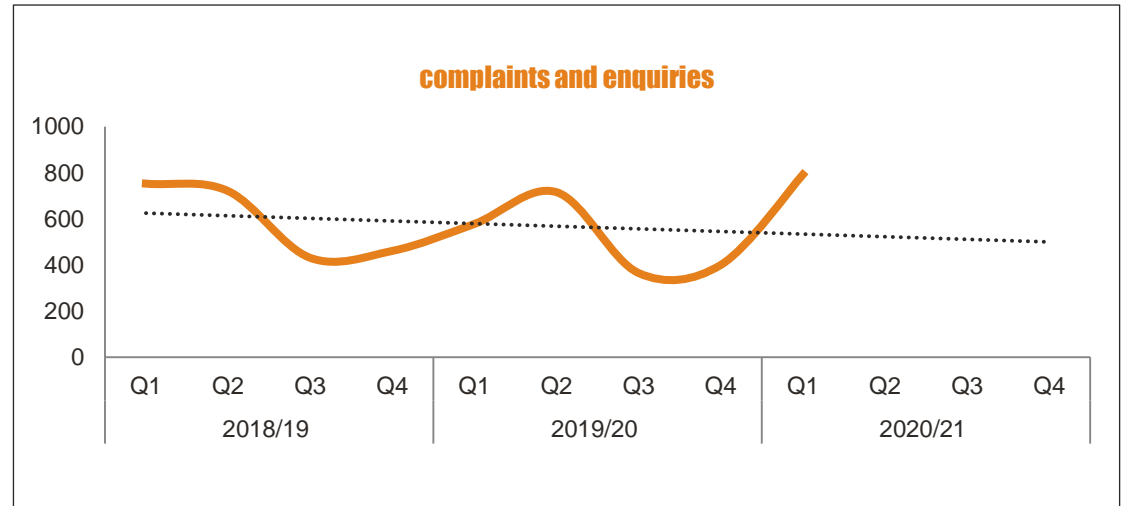
Despite an upward trend in the level of planning enquiries, the total recorded during quarter one is a reduction of 24% compared to the previous quarter.. The type of enquiries however, has remained consistent; with 91% being consultations and 51% relating to contaminated land.



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 has increased by 98% compared to the previous quarter; with the number recorded at its highest level for several years. This is largely due to the volume of domestic noise and smoke incidents - particularly bonfire incidents - which accounted for 80% of the cases received during quarter one. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions are a notable factor in the level of domestic incidents, meteorological factors also have a significant impact.

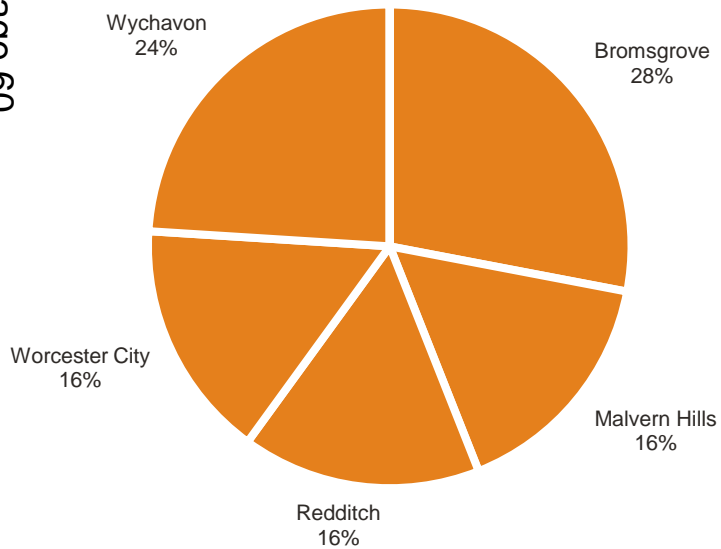
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The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. It also shows the relative population and the number of cases recorded. The chart (below) shows the top 25 wards by district.

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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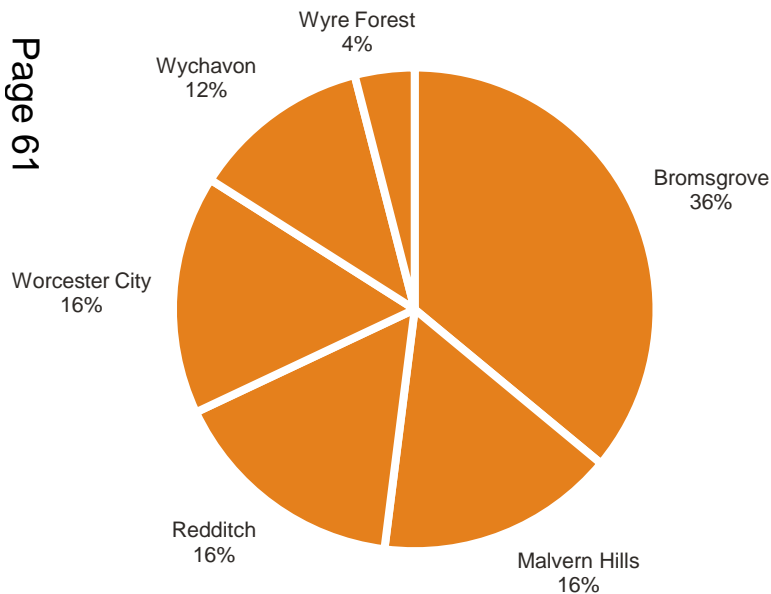


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Perryfields	4	1,498	2.67
Lindridge	6	2,269	2.64
Rubery South	7	2,996	2.34
Lowes Hill	6	2,921	2.05
Broadway And Wickhamford	9	4,748	1.90
Avoncroft	6	3,270	1.83
Winyates	15	8,225	1.82
Badsey	6	3,320	1.81
Abbey	11	6,425	1.71
Link	11	6,427	1.71
Church Hill	13	8,072	1.61
Warndon	9	5,689	1.58
Droitwich Central	4	2,572	1.56
Evesham South	8	5,419	1.48
Saint John	13	9,004	1.44
Barnt Green And Hopwood	4	2,897	1.38
Battenhall	7	5,230	1.34
Pinvin	4	3,021	1.32
Dyson Perrins	6	4,701	1.28
Lodge Park	7	5,598	1.25
Bedwardine	10	8,316	1.20
Lovett And North Claines	7	5,974	1.17
Alfrick And Leigh	4	3,519	1.14
Sanders Park	4	3,576	1.12
Alvechurch Village	3	2,933	1.02

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.

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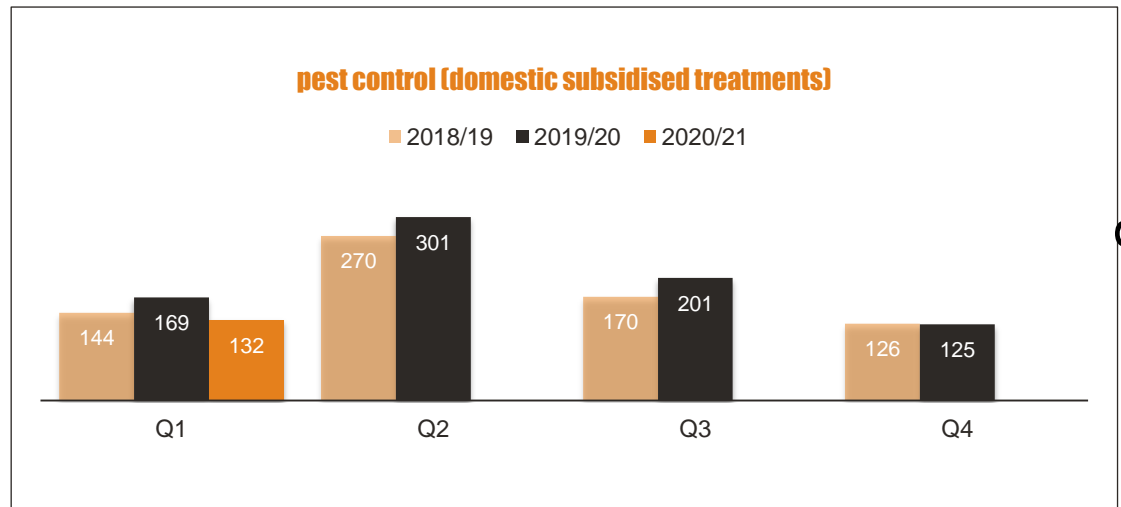
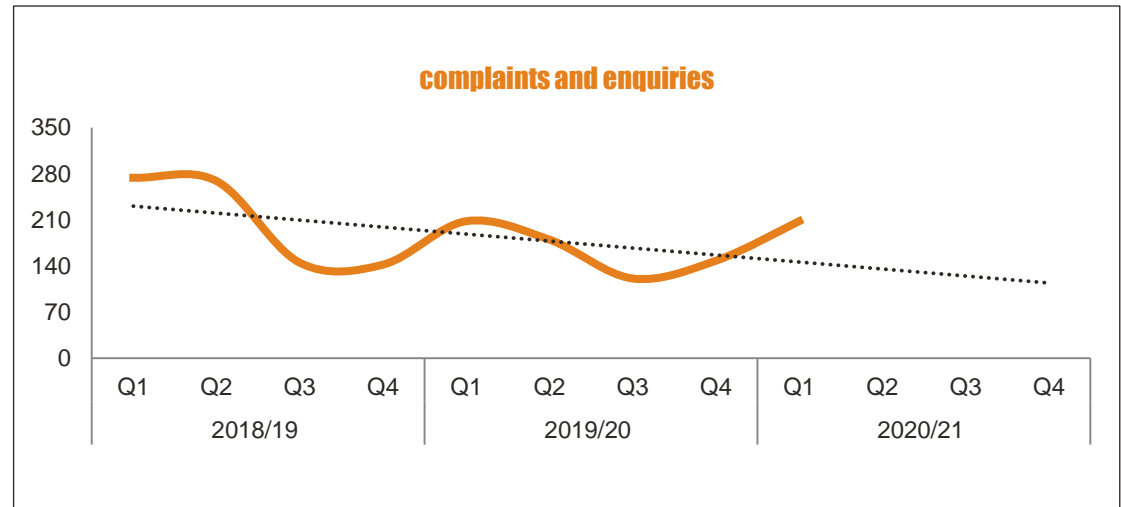


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Droitwich Central	13	2,570	5.06
Cathedral	54	11,488	4.70
Upton And Hanley	18	4,153	4.33
Rainbow Hill	23	5,525	4.16
Lowes Hill	12	2,888	4.16
Charford	15	3,670	4.09
Charford	15	3,670	4.09
Catshill North	11	2,818	3.90
Offmore And Comberton	35	9,726	3.60
Barnt Green And Hopwood	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

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.

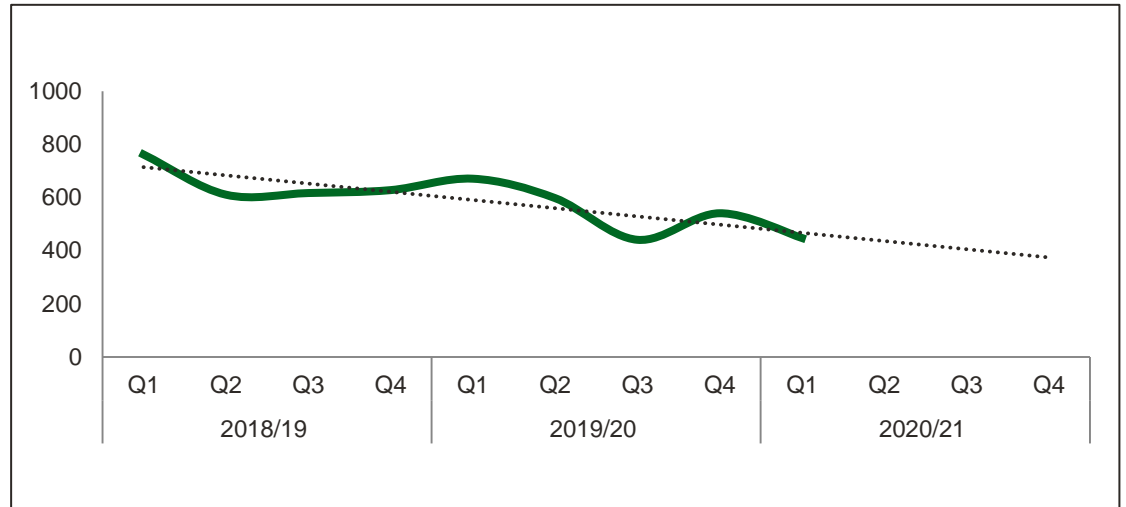
The number of public health cases received during quarter one is in line with the previous year, but an increase of 40% compared to the previous quarter. Two thirds of cases have related to pest control, with 43% of cases complaints about pests from neighbouring areas or properties.

The lower total of subsidised treatments is actually an increase, as previous years were split across four districts but this year it is only three that are offering the service. 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 132 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter one, 57% were due to the presence of rats.

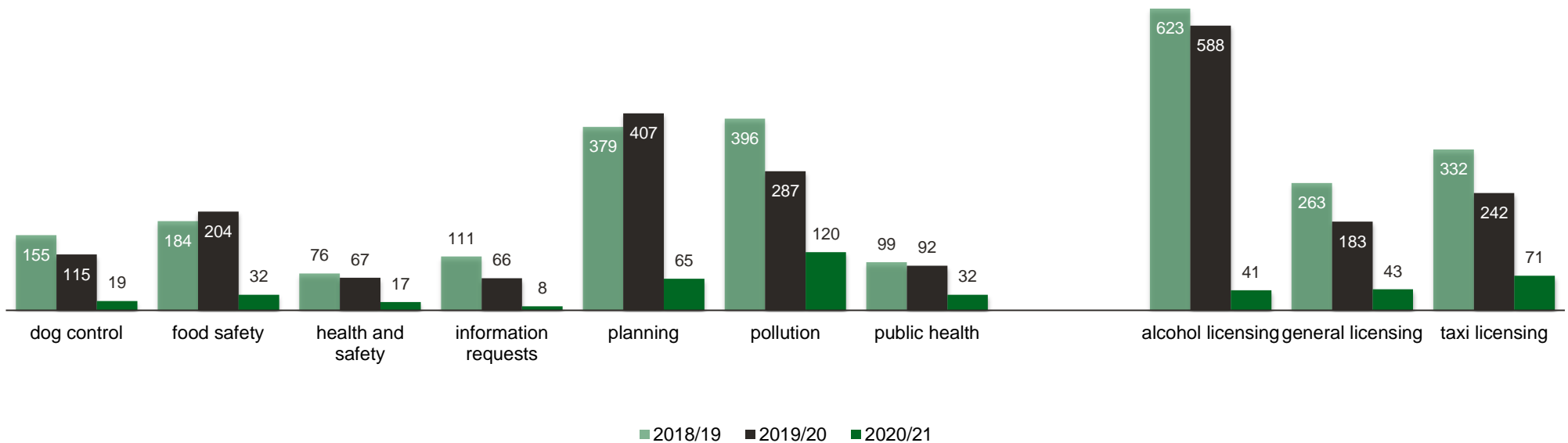


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Bromsgrove district.

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.



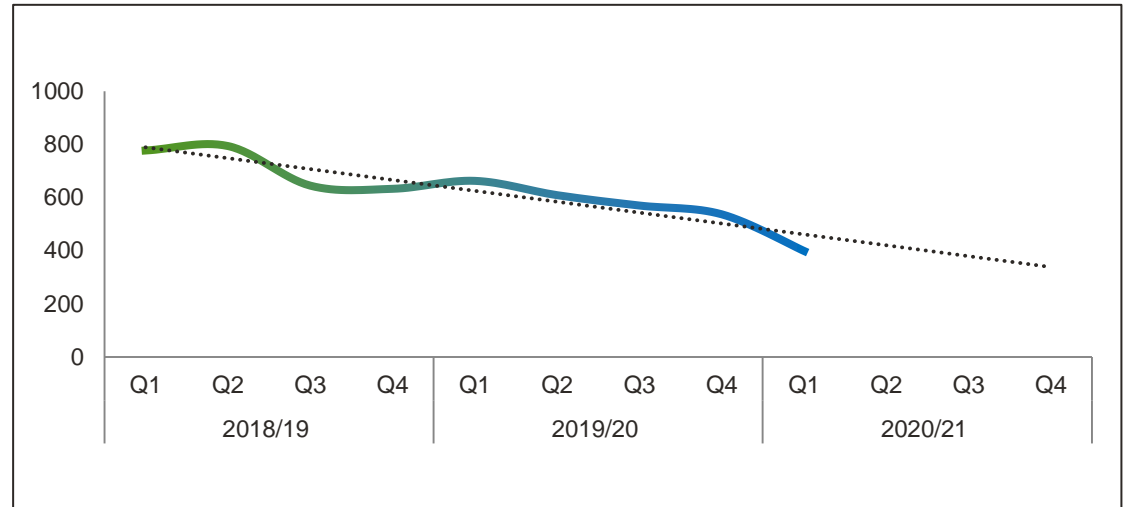
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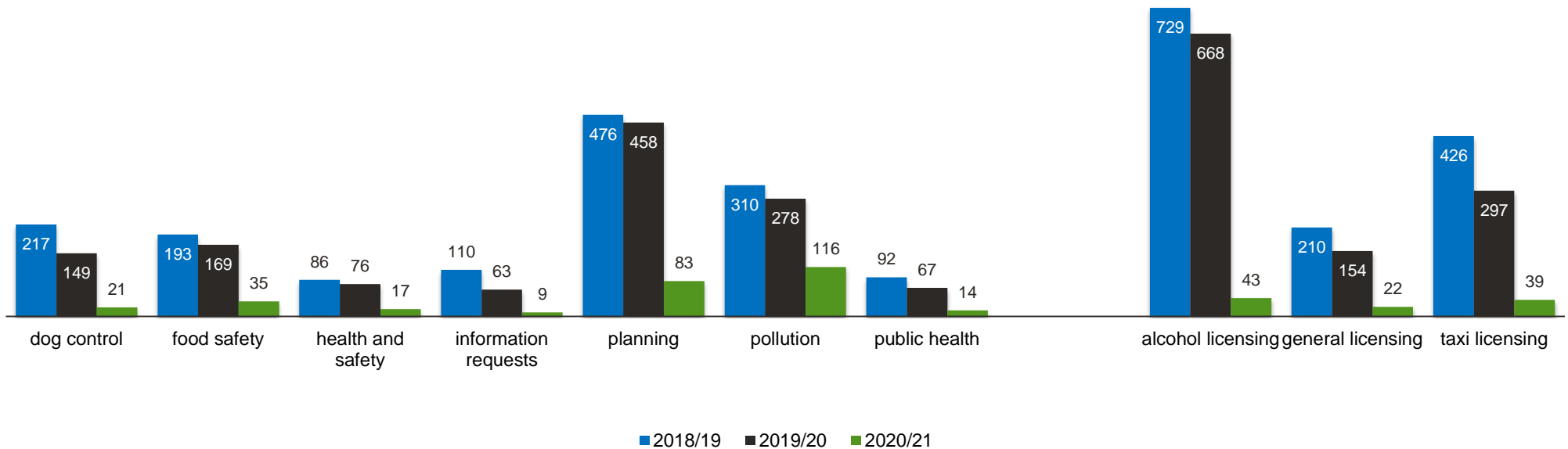
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The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Malvern Hills district.

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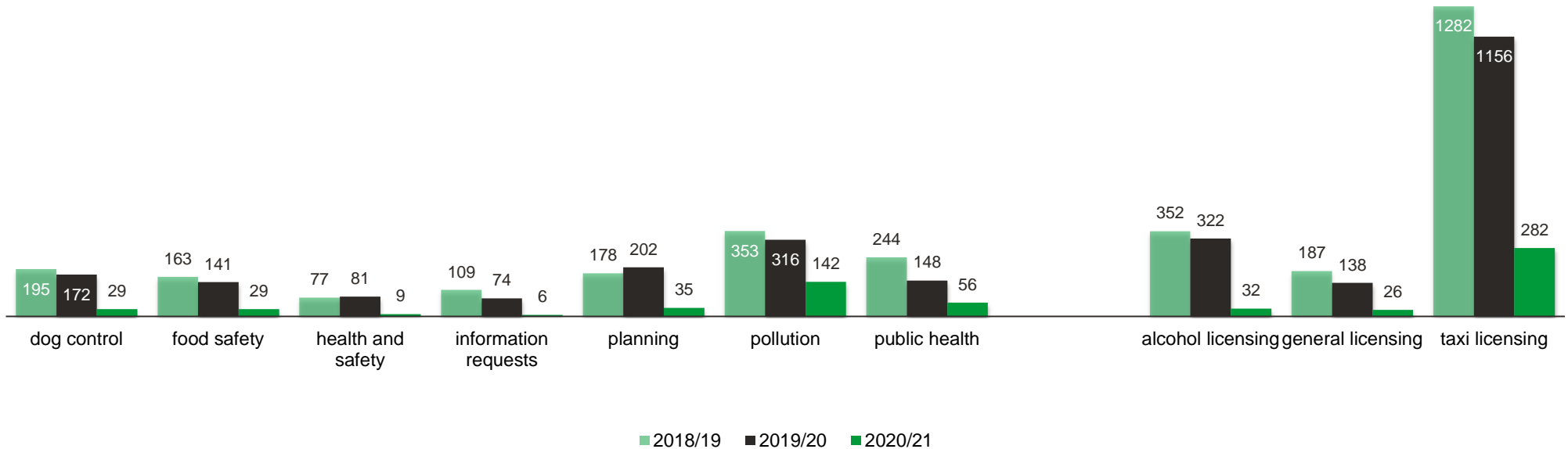
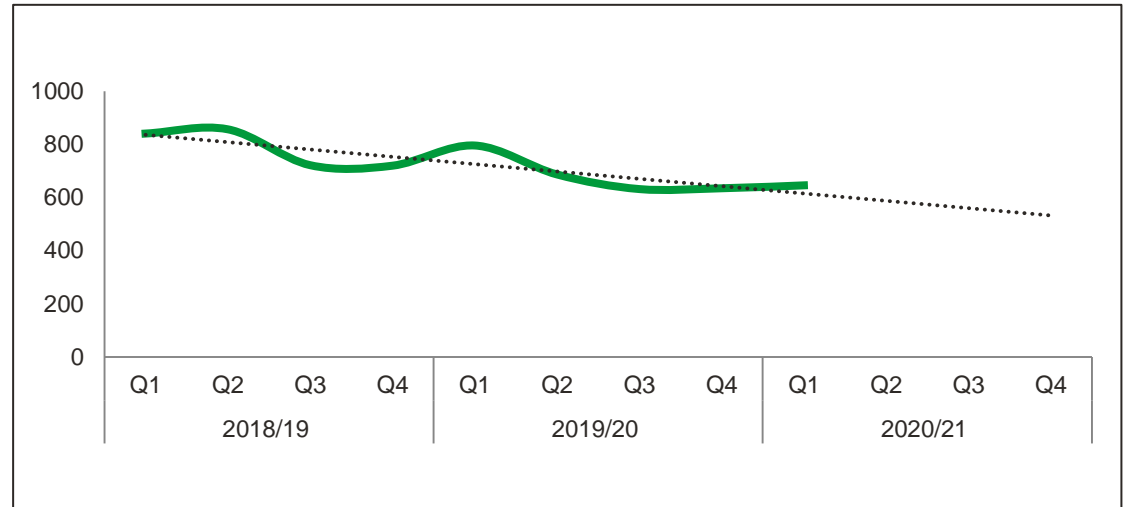
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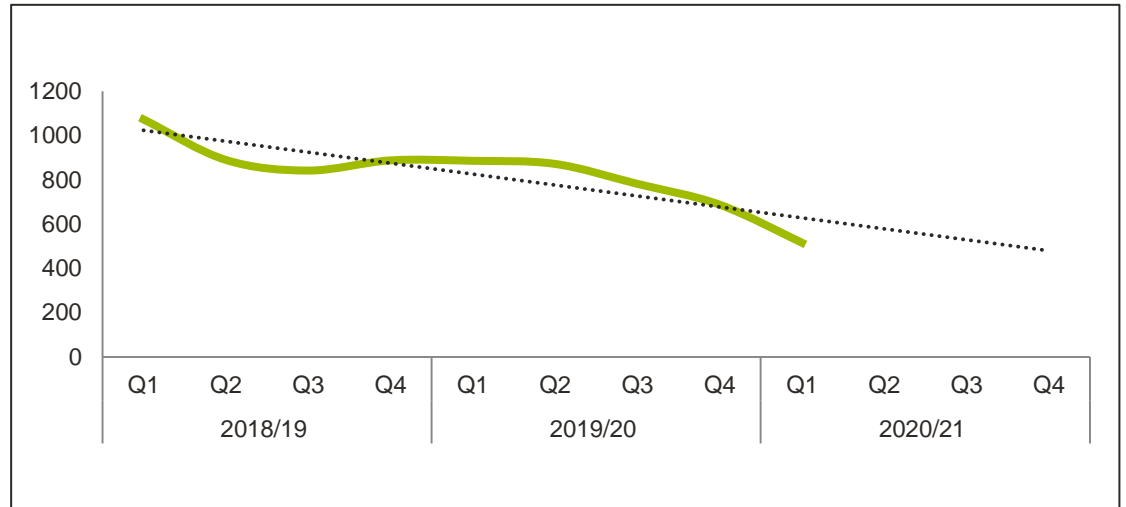
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Redditch district.

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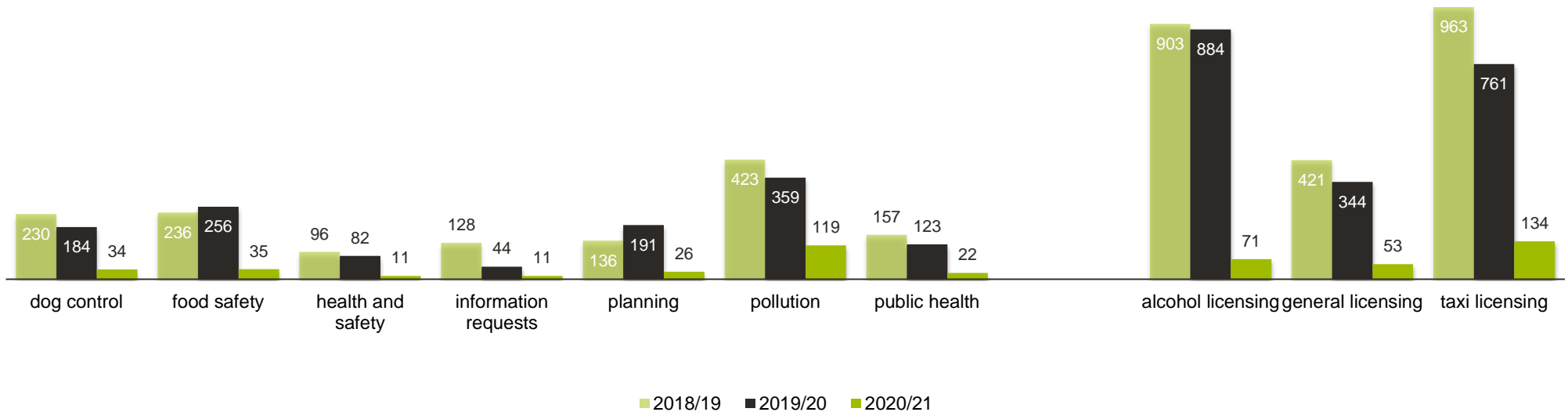


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Worcester City district.

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.



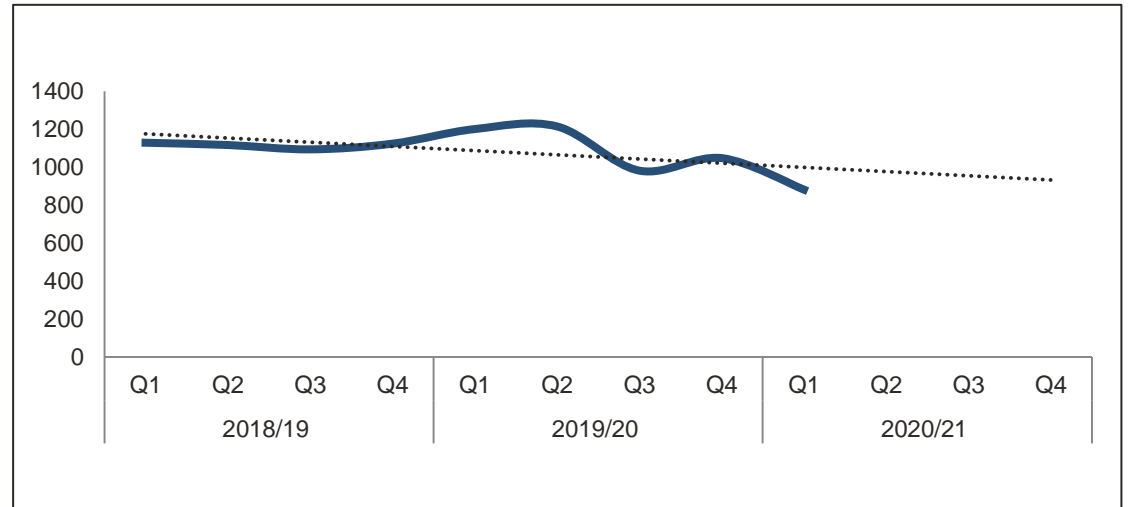
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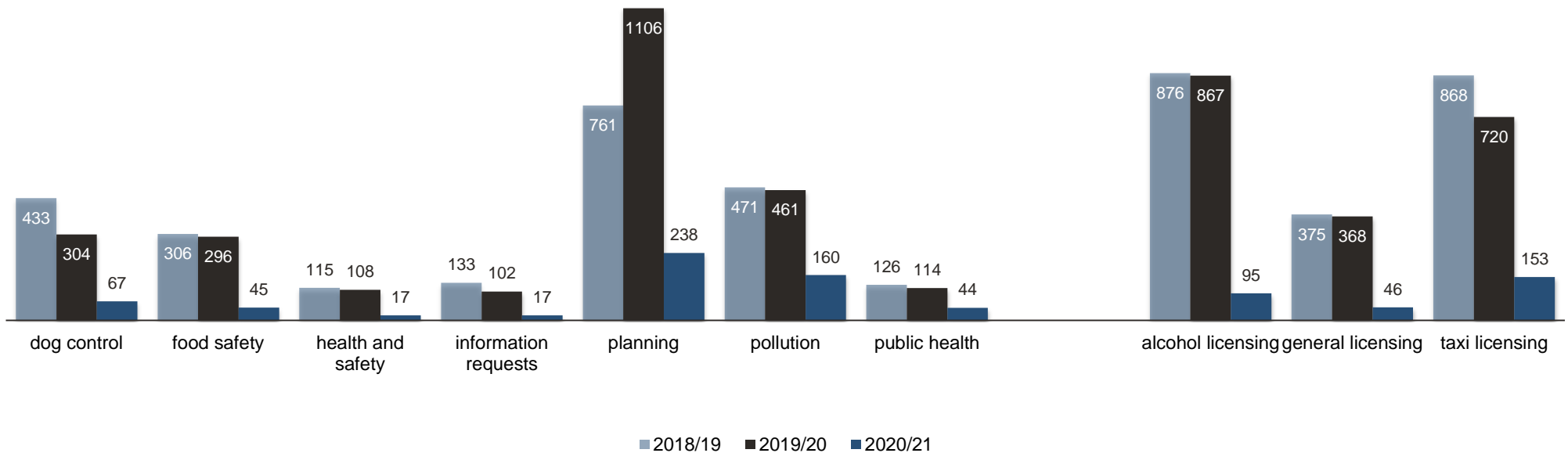
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The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wychavon district.

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.



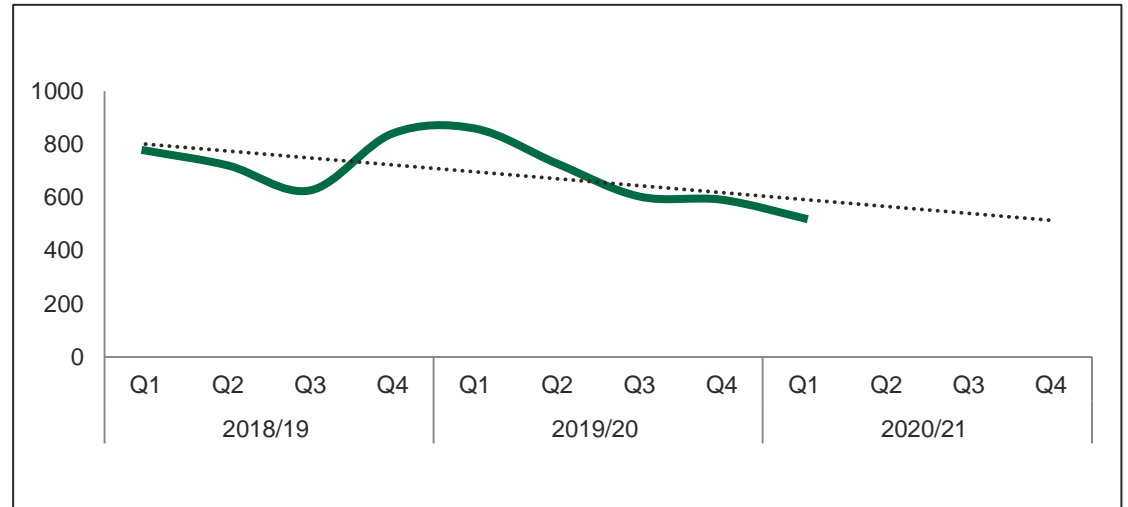
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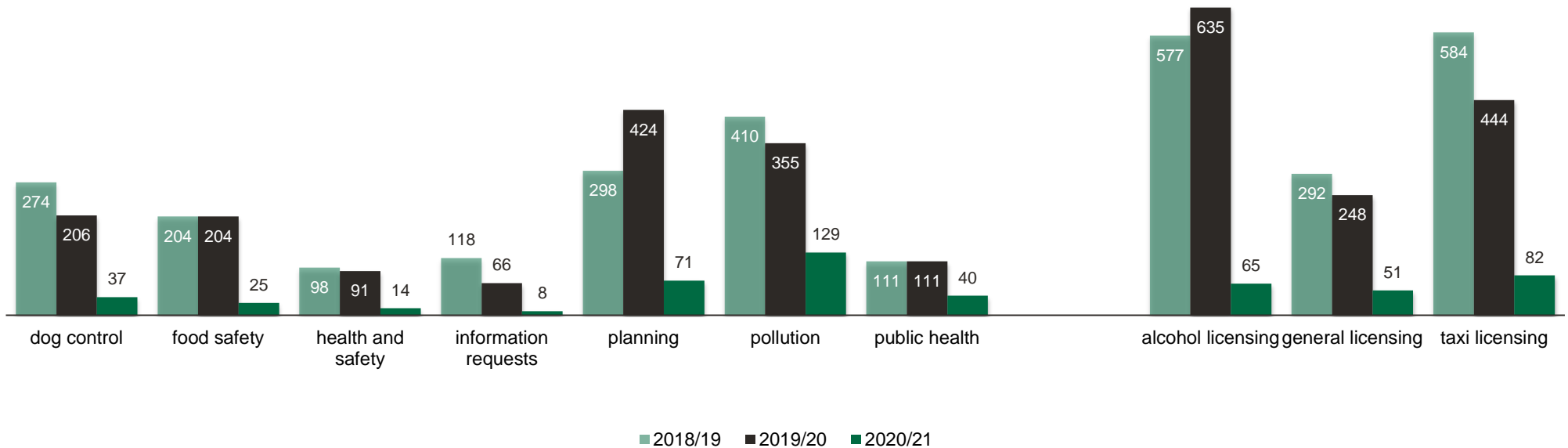
Agenda Item 7

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.

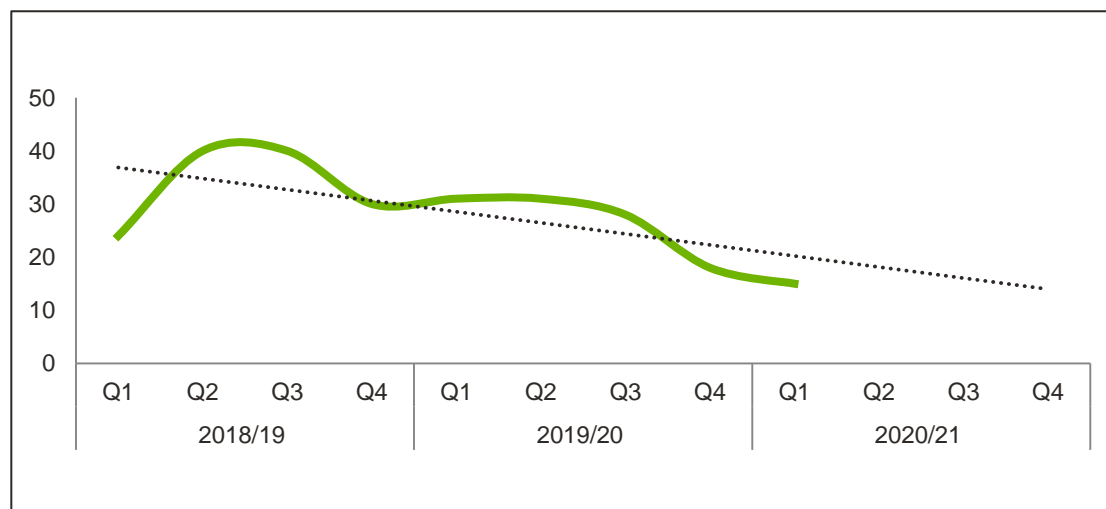


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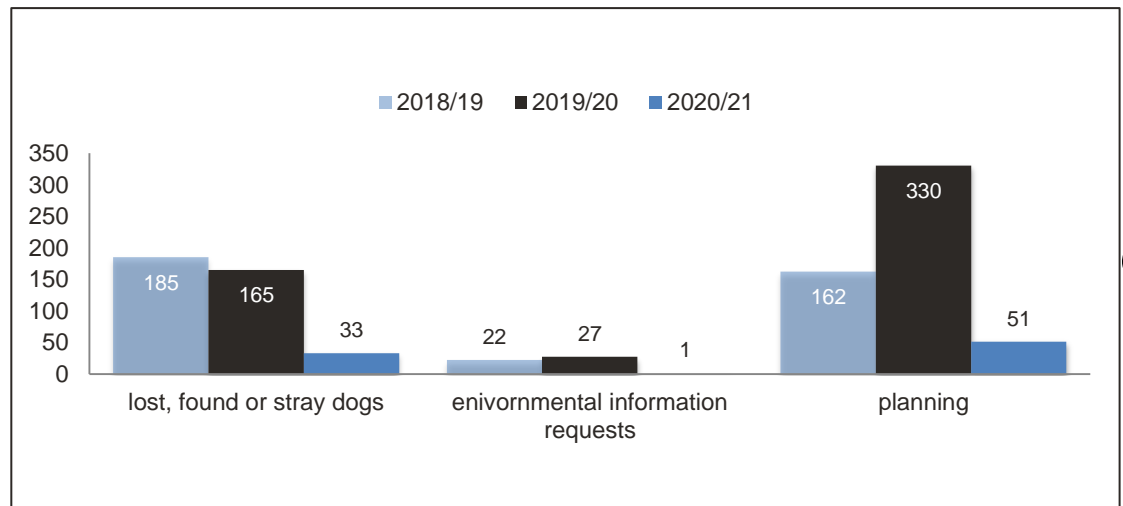
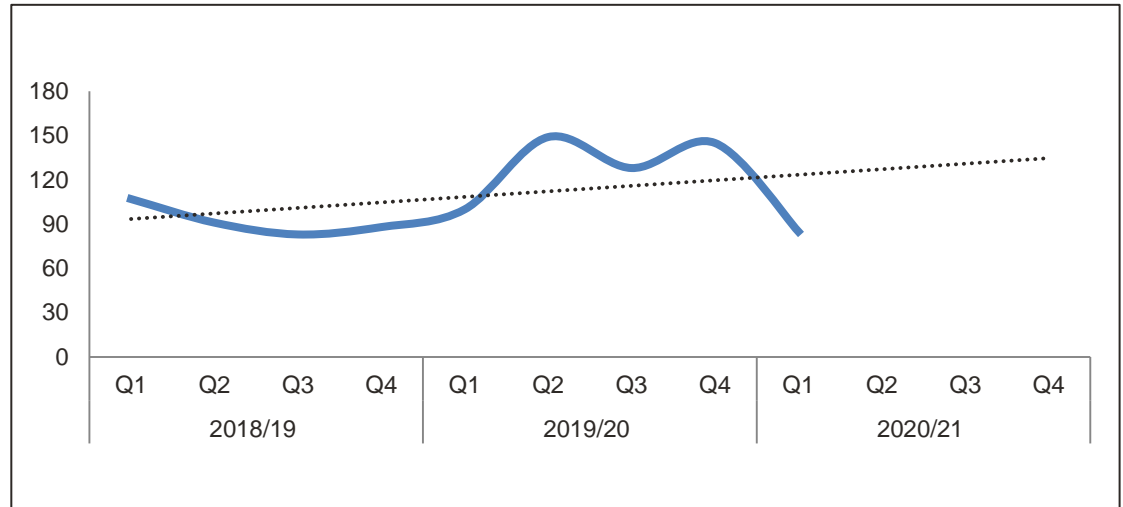
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The dog control work WRS undertake for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. 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

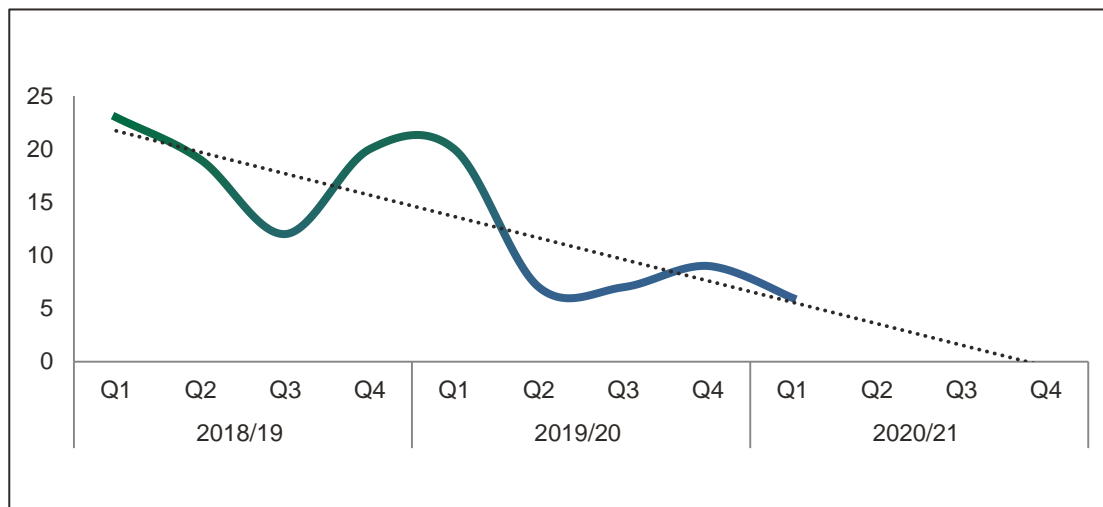


The dog control work WRS undertake for Gloucester City Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by 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.

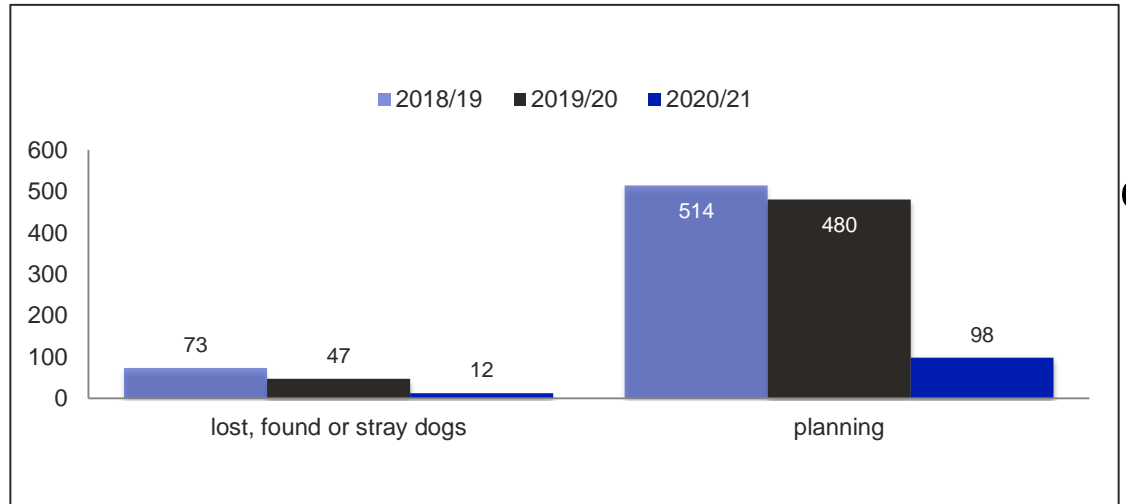
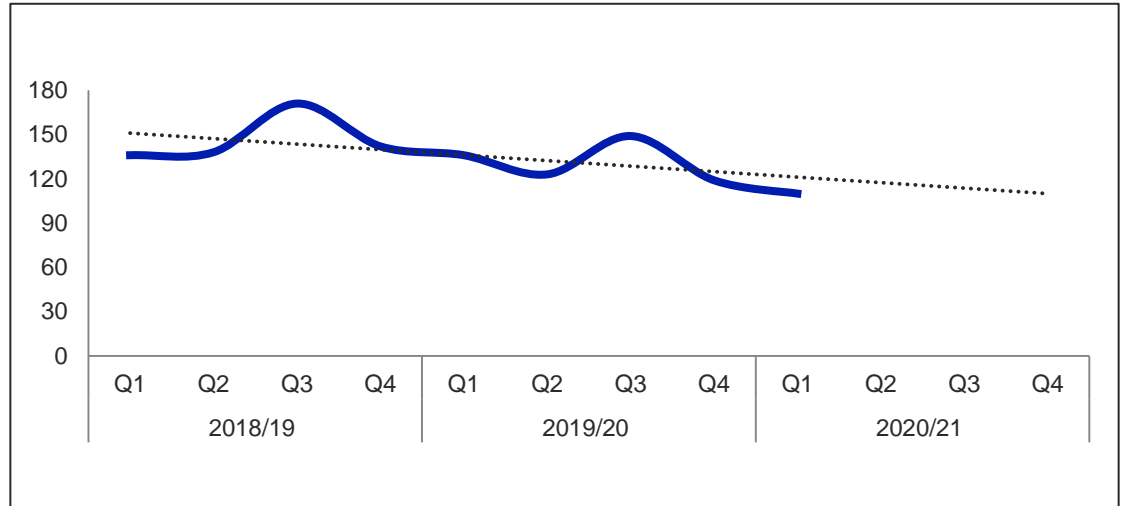


South Gloucestershire being located on the outskirts of Bristol was subject to significant contaminative industries and activities historically. Pressures on brownfield development recently have presented the authority with a large volume of planning applications on significantly contaminated and complex 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.



Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board: 1st October 2020

Information Report – IT Update

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

Background

Worcestershire Regulatory Services IT support and infrastructure is provided by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) under contract. A small number of elements of our 'IT' remain with Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) where there was little benefit or actual negative impacts in moving it to the contract with WFDC.

When WRS was created in 2010 we were using 14 different databases to store and manage our information and workload. In 2013 we started using IDOX UNIFORM database and migrated historical records across. The UNIFORM database has a linked electronic document management system (EDRMS) and case management system (Enterprise).

We have 2.2 FTE supporting the wider WRS cohort with management and delivery of all digital and electronic systems and equipment. All significant demands or scheduled works are prioritised in line with the principals followed by all WRS teams in managing resource and conflicting demands.

Report

The current work programme lists 18 projects of which the more significant are outlined below:

Reliable and secure digital management systems and infrastructure

As reported in a previous Activity Report, we have regularly upgraded our Oracle Database which is the underlying platform on which UNIFORM and the EDRMS are built. Our next update will be this month.

The WRS records are 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, our EDRMS system was included in this process.

A programme for updating our IT equipment was commenced in late 2019. At that time a large number of our laptops were from 2013 with the remainder from 2015. A trial of UDC laptops (effectively 'dumb' terminals linking directly to the network) where appropriate was completed. Whilst it was identified that UDC laptops are not suitable for staff who regularly present or attend webinars for example, where appropriate they were significantly cheaper than replacement new laptops and resolved security issues of remote staff not synchronising their passwords following prolonged breaks from the office. Therefore, the proposed programme for 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



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either again a UDC re-build or retain the laptop and upgrade it to the Windows 10 operating system. The conversion of 2013 laptops to UDC devices commenced and was completed by early 2020. The next phase of upgrading 2015 and replacing the remaining 2013 laptops with new ones was put on hold in March due to Covid.

Remote working capabilities

Prior to March the majority of our 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 our IT Host to focus on enabling remote working (from home) for the remaining officers. This was eventually achieved by a combination of new laptops, recycling redundant equipment and use of CITRIX Connect links on Officer's personal equipment. This situation continues currently, although plans are in place for a full equipment revamp, which we will come on to.

One of the last groups to be enabled to work remotely was the five Duty Officers, usually based in Wyre Forest House. The stumbling block was access to the Bromsgrove payment system to take payments for stray dog release, WRS commercial work and supporting the District teams with licensing and permitting payments. A simple but inconvenient workaround has been achieved to enable payments to continue to be.

In 2019 Bromsgrove and Redditch Borough Council upgraded their Microsoft licence to include Microsoft Office 365 and enable access to Microsoft Teams. WRS had remained on Bromsgrove and Redditch's Microsoft Office licence even after we moved to the Wyre Forest network. Unfortunately, Bromsgrove and Redditch did not include WRS in this licence upgrade. This was further complicated by Bromsgrove CMT indicating that internal meetings should only be conducted by Skype or Teams without WRS staff necessarily having access to these.

However, the Service can make decisions not to follow the host's corporate policies where it does not support service delivery. As a consequence, a combination of using personal equipment, Zoom, Skype App, Teams App, telephone conference software, WhatsApp video and one to one telephone calls has been used to ensure each staff member is in communication with at least their Line Manager regularly since March. This situation was further complicated by the roll out of UDC devices as they have no camera function or desktop to which a remote camera could be attached.

To bring clarity to the situation and because it is becoming clear that Covid controls will likely be in place for an extended period, WRS has now purchased its own Microsoft 365 licence via Wyre Forest IT for installation on all the new laptops and, because UDC laptops cannot be used for video conferencing, these will now also be replaced by new laptops. In addition, as a number of the 2015 laptops scheduled to be upgraded have also begun to fail, we are replacing all of these with new kit. Microsoft Teams will then become the method of communicating effectively across the WRS workforce.

The new laptops have been tendered and secured. They are due to be configured and delivered to staff during October 2020.

Website Development

The WRS website is 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



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significantly more functionality. In May 2019 work commenced on arranging digital certificates to make our website https in readiness. A working group was set up last October to identify the requirements of our website, review other examples and consider options for enhancement.

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 has been completed with training notes and an agreed WRS style guide. Unfortunately, Umbraco 8 is significantly different to our current version and Covid 19 has meant that familiarisation/training has been slow and difficult for the two Officers leading on developing the first few pages.

In the meantime, focus has shifted to our current website to enable compliance with the new accessibility regulations for public service web sites that came into force on 23rd Sept for both new and existing web sites. Whilst the new website is under development we will continue with the existing website and so have fixed all the straightforward accessibility issues as far as possible and issued an accessibility statement to highlight where we are not compliant and provide a timeline for migration to the new website.

Lead Officers from within WRS are invited to attend a training session on Umbraco 8 this month to formulate a detailed project plan. Following this, a decision will be taken by managers as to whether outside support will be 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 Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils to change their finance system. As Bromsgrove District Council host WRS, we use their HR, procurement and finance system. Unfortunately, direct access to the current system is not possible for WRS staff from their Wyre Forest Citrix working environment. Where necessary, officers access the internet based system either from their laptop desktop or one of two dedicated PCs in Wyre Forest House.

As reported at Joint Board in June, the new Finance Project was due to go-live in October 2020. That has now been pushed back to November. WRS Managers were invited to participate and be involved with the project working group in September to ensure that our requirements are satisfied by the new set up and enable WRS Officers to continue working in their Wyre Forest Citrix environment but still take payments, approve requisitions and authorise invoices.

WRS will continue to contribute to the development of the project to ensure our processes are included and can be used effectively.

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Contact Point



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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board: 1 October 2020

Information Report – Joint working with Public Health to control Covid-19 Outbreaks in work settings

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.**

Background

As Members are aware COVID-19 poses a serious and imminent risk to public health and has been declared a global pandemic. On 5 March 2020 the first death from coronavirus in the UK was confirmed.

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

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

WRS Environmental Health expertise and resources have been focussed on outbreak investigation, proactive advice and enforcement to supplement the National contact tracing programme. This is a key role in effective disease control and prevention and your Officers have the essential experience, professional and legislative tools required to manage and control any outbreaks that do occur.

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.

The team's responsibilities are to ensure:

- Daily management of Covid-19 outbreaks;
- Availability Monday to Sunday 9am to 6pm with additional provision for out of hours working, as required;
- Standard Operating Procedures are developed and working effectively for different settings and situations;
- A single point of contact by email or telephone to respond to complex situations, provide additional capacity in outbreak management and to provide a local perspective to settings and communities.
- The LORT will also support settings in the prevention of outbreaks



Report

Since July a team of WRS Environmental Health Officers has been working directly with the Worcestershire County Council Public Health Team and other partners to support Covid control in workplace settings. WRS has committed to having four officers and a team leader available to support the Director of Public Health on a daily basis. The WRS Environmental Health Officers are embedded with the Public Health Practitioners in the Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT).

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. Two WRS officers in full personal protective equipment spent several days on site undertaking activities ranging from conducting interviews and information gathering to assisting those quarantined on the farm in obtaining food and essential provisions.

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.

At the packaging firm many overseas workers were living on site but it was established that infection had been brought into the business from workers travelling in daily by coach from the Sandwell area. WRS worked closely with Public Health consultants and Public Health England experts to control the outbreak whilst keeping both businesses operational. WRS maintained a constant presence at the packaging site from initial investigation into the source of the infection, assisting the Army with a Mobile Testing Unit and monitoring food safety when workforce restrictions were in place.

The outbreak at the food manufacturing premises was a smaller outbreak affecting one of the production lines rather than the whole site. Again the source of the virus was found to be workers from the West Midlands. For safety reasons the business asked that food checks were made at the factory by remote contact, the Food Standard Agency's new default position for recommencing food inspection work in the Covid era.

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.

Following the outbreaks the team has also undertaken a survey of over 100 food businesses from farmers to major producers across the county to identify their workforce makeup and provide Covid advice and reassurance.

The important learning for businesses has been a need to appreciate and understand where their workforce comes from, their external activities and method of travel to the workplace. Officers have also worked with the businesses to promote the wider use of working in site 'bubbles', so that if a part of the workforce is infected the rest can continue working and not have to self-isolate.

The management of Covid safety in businesses is a health and safety requirement. WRS has also had to take into account in giving advice, that many of the businesses at highest risk



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of Covid are HSE enforced. This was identified as a potential barrier early on and consequently the WRS Team Lead for Covid contacted the area HSE Principal Officer and entered into a mutual work arrangement between the organisations. We believe this to be the first of its kind in the country, whereby the HSE allows qualified WRS officers to undertake an initial investigation and provide basic Covid advice, with the HSE issuing more formal advice or taking legal action where serious risk assessment gaps are identified. This has saved considerable resource for all involved and reduced potential time delays for our businesses.

The team is investigating an increasing number of daily Covid notifications in workplaces and also complaints from the public who have contacted the County Health Protection Team with concerns about Covid non compliance.

WRS is also delivering a training programme to temporary local contact tracers who will be employees of the County Council and potentially other partners on standby to assist should the county face an increase in reported cases and need more short-notice investigative capacity.

Going forward WRS will be working closely with the County Team to shape and improve the new local track and trace system to ensure it is effective locally whilst facing the prospect of further operational changes when Public Health England ceases to exist in early 2021 and becomes part of a new agency.

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