

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2021

AT 4.30 P.M.

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

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 19th November 2020 (Pages 1 - 16)
4. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgets 2021/2022 - 2023/2024 (Pages 17 - 28)
5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April - December 2020 (Pages 29 - 36)
6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Service Plan 2021-2022 (Pages 37 - 74)
7. Activity & Performance Data - Quarter 1 to Quarter 3 (Pages 75 - 112)
8. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Information Report - Covid Advisors (Pages 113 - 116)

9. 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.

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

2nd February 2021

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

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

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

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

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

PRESENT: Councillors H. Dyke (Chairman), J. Squires (Vice-Chairman), A. D. Kent, H. J. Jones, J. Raine, N. Nazir, E. Stokes (during minute no's 20/20 to 26/20), D. Morris and P. Dyke

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

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

20/20 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T. Wells, Malvern Hills District Council and Councillor M. Johnson, Worcester City Council.

21/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

22/20 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 1st October 2020, were submitted.

RESOLVED that minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 1st October 2020, be approved as a correct record.

23/20 **INFORMATION REPORT - THE INCREASE IN CHARGES BY WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Members received an information report on the increase in charges by Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC).

The Head of Regulatory Services reminded Members that at the Board meeting held on 1st October 2020, during the presentation of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Budgets 2020/2021; Members had raised some concern with regard to the additional partner liabilities for 2020/2021 in respect of a £13k increase in accommodation

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charges and ICT hosting of WRS from Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC).

As requested by Members, the information report before Members provided some background information and the process that was followed leading to this increase.

In 2014/15, before the service moved to Wyre Forest House, a search for accommodation across the local government family in the county was undertaken, as Worcester City Council had decided to sell its accommodation that WRS occupied.

WRS was offered space in Redditch Library, Wyre Forest House and the old Police Station in Pershore. A review concluded that the Wyre Forest offer was the most cost effective and, with office space that was ready to move into without any additional work, it was the easiest to adopt. WRS moved into Wyre Forest House in March 2015.

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

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

Applying these figures on an annual basis looking backwards led to a compound figure of £50,000 per annum for IT provision (up from £44,000,) and £61,000 per annum for accommodation (up from £54,000.) These figures were rounded, so the overall increase to the nearest £1,000 was £13,000.

As Head of Service, he did express his concerns that coming at this point in the year made it difficult to incorporate these increases into the WRS budget as it had been set for the year already. WFDC officers apologised for this issue but as the Head of Service he had had to agree. This was not the first time that the need for the partnership to set a budget in November had caused an issue for one or other partner authorities in their own budget setting process.

The service provided by WFDC IT team was very good and, as part of the annual staff survey, staff still commented on how changing ICT host

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had improved their experience of work based IT solutions. The office accommodation at Wyre Forest House was also of an excellent standard, better than many other public buildings in the County.

As Head of Service, he further consulted with the officer members of the Board. Whilst they expressed their disappointment that WFDC had asked for an increase, they did not object outright and had reluctantly accepted that an inflation only increase was difficult to resist.

The potential availability of other suitable accommodation within the local government family, was carried out, however, it was clear that nothing suitable was available at that time with sufficient quantity of space and desk numbers, even before a consideration of cost was made. Only the old Police Station in Pershore remained available and that needed some work to bring it up to standard in order to be suitable. Worcestershire County Council were also approached regarding space at County Hall, but at this time, there was not sufficient available.

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

On balance, it was felt that the sensible solution was to pay the uplift and continue with the current arrangements. The increase in spend was within his remit for decision making.

In terms of the service's accommodation, the accommodation and the service received from WFDC ICT was excellent. The partnership was now on a rolling contract that would be reviewed annually.

One of the results of Covid-19 was the increasing ubiquitous nature of working from home and this should give Councils the opportunity to re-consider staff working practices and accommodation needs. This could lead to partner authorities having further capacity available that may be suitable for WRS.

However, with the current pandemic and the way in which resources were stretched, it would not be practical to consider this for 2021/22. From February 2021, the Management Team would certainly explore options for the following year and review the number of desks currently available / in use and realistically look to reduce those numbers.

The Head of Regulatory Services further commented that originally officer members of the Board had indicated that their preferred option was to simply include this increase in the income targets for the year. Given the current situation however, he had felt that it was worth asking Board Members to consider whether they would make an uplift to the budget to cover this.

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If the Board did not wish to agree to uplift the budget by this amount, the option of reverting to fund this with income remained.

Councillor A. D. Kent, Bromsgrove District Council, took the opportunity to thank the Head of Regulatory Services for his detailed report. However, he was still disappointed that the democratic process had failed and that he had had to make a decision. The Head of Regulatory Services had been put in a difficult position having to make such a decision so late in the day, and he fully understood the position that the Head of Regulatory Services had been put in.

In response to Councillor Kent, the Head of Finance and Customer Services commented that partner authorities based their budgets differently. Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC) did not use RPI Annual percentage, they tended to set their budgets using CPI and the actual costs of delivering a service.

The Head of Regulatory Services further commented that BDC, as the host authority for WRS had not increased their charges since the inception of WRS in 2010. The costs had originally included ICT costs, which had over time been reduced when WRS moved into their current accommodation in 2015/2016. Staffing numbers across WRS had reduced by half. Members stated that the costs of BDC hosting the shared service was something that needed to be discussed with all partner authorities and Board Members.

Members were in agreement and expressed their disappointment that very little notice of a 12% increase had been given to WRS. Members also commented that officers needed to assess the costs of disrupting the service against moving to other premises in the future. However, Members also agreed that a review of the office accommodation needs of WRS was definitely needed going forward.

The Chairman took the opportunity to inform the Board that, she had fed back the comments and concerns raised at the last meeting of the Board to her respective authority.

The Head of Regulatory Services further informed the Board that the current contract with Wyre Forest District Council was due to expire on 23rd March 2021; therefore, there had not been sufficient time to look at alternative accommodation; and realistically officers were dealing with the current pandemic. However, between now and February 2021 officers would look at the number of desks required; and that going forward his management team would conduct a rigorous review of the requirements of the service with a potential reduction for 2022/2023. The service had tried to keep as much of the hosting costs, as possible, within the local government family.

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RECOMMENDED that the additional partner liabilities for 2020/2021 in relation to the increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting from Wyre Forest District Council, be approved as follows:-

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

24/20

INFORMATION REPORT - COVID ACTIVITY COSTINGS

Members were provided with an information report on Covid Activity costings, as requested by Board Members at the last meeting of the Board on 1st October 2020. During that meeting Board Members had thanked officers for all of the hard work they were doing on Covid related activities and had suggested that they would like to see additional funding being made available to support the service.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that the WRS Management Team were giving active consideration to bidding to the Chief Executives for additional resources but that a paper would be brought forward to outline current spending levels on Covid related activity.

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

Bromsgrove District Council, the host authority had immediately asked all of its services to record all Covid related activity so that estimates of cost could be given to central government, in order that support payments might match the actual costs. WRS officers were already required to record the time taken on the majority of their activities, so it was a relatively simple exercise to add some additional coding into their

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time recording system and to ask officers to use these to record how much time was spent on Covid related activities.

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

The Head of Regulatory Services drew Members' attention to the table at Appendix A to the report, which contained the monthly totals, starting in April 2020 for the cost of undertaking Covid related activities on behalf of the six councils and the cost of the team embedded in the Local Outbreak Response Team.

Given the nature of the pandemic, WRS had not sought to allocate these costs geographically to individual partners. This would go against the "One Worcestershire" approach that all seven councils in the County had taken towards tackling the pandemic.

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

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

The Head of Regulatory Services highlighted that the Community Environmental Health team had been re-organised to deliver both Covid controls and an embedded unit within the Local Outbreak Response team, as detailed in the table on page 22 of the main agenda report.

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

Work in the Local Outbreak Response team was being funded by monies from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) that central government had already provided for the disease response. This

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covered the cost of the additional capacity brought in to deal with business as usual activities.

WCC was currently awaiting confirmation from central government on further funding bids to provide additional capacity for backwards contact tracing within the Local Outbreak Response Team, for delivery by WRS; and for dealing with referrals from the national contact tracing system to deal with those people who had a positive test but had not responded to calls from the national system. This was known as “lost to follow up.” WRS would pick up this work along with district colleagues to deliver this service aspect, including door knocking where local telephone calls did not lead to a response.

As Members will be aware, WRS had been entrusted with delivering the project referred to nationally as Covid marshals and locally as Covid Advisors. The district councils had pooled this funding for WRS to deliver this advisory work, but the funding was also earmarked for additional enforcement work. A proportion of the funding could be used to cover the cost of things like out-of-hours enforcement, so we avoided being short of capacity during the week and additional capacity generally. Work had commenced on recruiting this team and the first deployments took place over the weekend of 7th/ 8th November 2020.

This report should serve as a reminder to partners that, although many areas of local government are striving to move into Recovery phase, WRS remained an embedded part of the Response phase and would be for the medium term.

WRS would do its best to contribute to the Recovery phase as it did during last year’s winter flooding events.

Members thanked the Head of Regulatory Services for a really useful report and stated that WRS were really central to the response to the Covid pandemic.

In response to Members’ questions, the Head of Regulatory Services drew Members’ attention to the table of expenditure as detailed on page 23 of the main agenda report.

There were 6/7 FTE (full time equivalent) officers working on Covid compliance and 3/4 on outbreak response. So approximately 1/3rd of that amount £70k would be covered by the monies received from WCC, who had agreed to £162k of funding up to the end March 2021. £120k costs of Covid enforcement had been undertaken by the district councils.

In response to Members, the Technical Services Manager explained that Covid advisors were ‘paired up’ and spread out, with particular attention paid to any areas with high rates of infection that have been flagged up. Enforcement action could be taken if deemed necessary. Officers were responding where there were identified areas of concern and in areas with rising numbers. Marshalls were deployed to areas with the highest

number of reported cases. Covid Marshalls had been received well by businesses, shoppers and customers, who had welcomed the provision of face masks when they had forgotten theirs.

Members took the opportunity to thank officers and to recognise the good work that WRS officers were doing in order to help deal with the current pandemic.

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager further commented that officers took the approach 'engage, educate and encourage', enforcement was a last resort.

RESOLVED that the Information Report on Covid Activity Costings, be noted.

25/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - SEPT 2020

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

The Head of Finance & Customer Services, Bromsgrove District Council, introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 25 and 26 of the main agenda report.

Members were asked to note that the revised budget 2020/2021 was based on the recommended budget funding as stated in agenda item number 4, with regards to the increase in ICT and Rent at Wyre Forest House.

Members were further informed that the report showed a projected outturn 2020/2021 of £17k deficit. This was an estimation to the year-end based on the following assumptions:-

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

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

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Members' attention was drawn to the figures detailed in Appendix 1 to the report:

- Savings due to employees working on Local Outbreak Response Team.
- Essential calibration on noise monitoring.
- Reduction in dogs straying and the dog warden had been taken in house.
- Bereavement / Works in Default to be charged to relevant partners.

The Head of Regulatory Services further explained that with regard to the local Covid outbreak team, WRS had started with an estimate of £162k, for the year. The figures quoted in the table were up to the end of October, so there were four more months to go. Staff involved in local outbreak contact tracing work and look to follow up work would have to be included. Therefore, this could go above £181k, back filling of a certain amount of normal WRS business activities would also have to be factored in.

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager clarified that officers were not seeing a significant increase or trend in bereavement costs due to the current pandemic.

With regard to Pest Control, the Technical Services Manager stated that there were 3 partner authorities that currently provided a subsidised pest control service.

RESOLVED that

- a) the final financial position for the period April to September 2020, be noted;
- b) partner authorities be informed of their liabilities for 2020/2021 in relation to Bereavements as follows:-

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

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- c) partner authorities are informed of their liabilities for 2020/2021 in relation to Pest Control as follows:-

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

- d) partner authorities are informed of their liabilities for 2020/2021 in relation to three additional Technical Officers as follows:-

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	3	2	
Malvern Hills District Council	2	9	
Worcester City Council	2	2	35
Bromsgrove District Council	2	6	
Wychavon District Council	3	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	2	5	
Total	14	34	35

26/20

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET 2021/22 - 2023/24

The Head of Finance & Customer Services, Bromsgrove District Council, introduced the report and in doing so highlighted that the recommendations were caveated as starting point assuming that the base budget figure for 2020/2021 had been updated to include all of the increases mentioned at the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting in October 2020, including the additional funding for Wyre Forest District Council for accommodation and ICT costs.

The Head of Finance & Customer Services further drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 33 and 34 of the main agenda report.

Members were further informed that the following assumptions had been made in relation to the projections:

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

The unavoidable salary pressures were not able to be met currently by WRS making additional income, in the main due to the pressures created by the pandemic and the response to it. The normal sources of income (local authorities,) were not currently focused on the areas of work that WRS delivered for income generation purposes and WRS officers were at the heart of the response locally. Therefore, an increase to partner funding would be required, as detailed on page 35 of the main agenda report.

Clearly, should the situation with the pandemic improve in the second half of 2021/2022, WRS Officers would be looking to move forward with the programme of income generation and the benefits of this may be seen in an underspend that could be returned to partners at year end. Hence, an upfront investment this year would give certainty to the service and the partners in terms of cost, with the potential for a return on investment if the pandemic situation eased.

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

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RECOMMENDED that partner authorities approve the following for 2020/2021:

1.1 the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget of £3,739k as shown in Appendix 1.

1.2 the 2021/22 income budget of £529k as shown in Appendix 1.

1.3 the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2021/2022 onwards:

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

1.4 the additional partner liabilities for 2021/2022 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure.

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

1.5 the additional partner liabilities for 2021/2022 in relation to three Technical Officers.

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

27/20

ACTIVITY & PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTERS 1 AND 2

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager, WRS, presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarters 1 and 2, 2020/2021; and in doing so highlighted that the first half of the year had seen extraordinary circumstances with officers helping to control the pandemic.

Members' attention was drawn to the following:-

Activity Data

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

Numbers of licensing complaints and enquires began to grow during quarter 2, in line with the re-opening of licensed premises and the growth in wider licensed activities. Applications also began to rise to the kind of levels one might expect.

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

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more normal levels during this period.

As we always see during the summer months, nuisance/ pollution complaints showed their characteristic peak. Noise complaint numbers exceeded the number for the same period in the previous two years, this time by a significant proportion, 12% or more above the previous two year's equivalent periods.

Performance

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

Processing of taxi driver license renewals remained good with a county-wide average of 97.4% done within 5 working days.

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

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

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank officers for a comprehensive report.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1 and 2, 2020/2021, be noted and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

28/20

INFORMATION REPORT - IT UPDATE

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, presented the Board with an Information Report that provided an update on IT, following a request from the Board at the meeting held in October 2020.

The Technical Services Manager referred Members to the Gantt chart as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The first phase of replacement laptops had been completed. Officers continued to work on improving the look of the WRS website on Umbraco 8. Discussions were taking place with the host authority,

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Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) on whether WRS would be able to take payments on behalf of the other partner authorities.

Councillor A. D. Kent, BDC, thanked officers for the brilliant update and Gantt chart, as this detailed what had been delivered. Councillor Kent also took the opportunity to thank the Head of Regulatory Services for taking the time to have further discussions with him, regards the concerns he had raised at the last meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Information Report – IT Update, be noted.

29/20

THE NEW STATUTORY STANDARDS FOR TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

The Acting Licensing and support Services Manager, WRS, provided the Board with a report that detailed the new statutory standards for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles.

Members were informed that in July 2020, following a number of high profile enquiries into criminal offences involving taxi drivers, the Secretary of State for Transport had issued the long awaited, new 'Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards' to licensing authorities aimed at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The standards set out a range of measures to protect passengers and the Department for Transport would require an update from each licensing authority by January 2021.

The recommendations in the Standards were detailed on page 84 of the main agenda report.

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

RESOLVED that the new statutory standards for Taxis and Private Hire vehicles and the guidance as referred to in the report, be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.03 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Board 11th February 2021

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICE BUDGETS 2021/22 – 2023/24

Recommendation

It is recommended that the WRS Board:

- 1.1 Approve the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget of £3,726k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Approve the 2021/22 income budget of £529k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Approve the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 21/22 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	466	14.59
Malvern Hills District Council	410	12.82
Redditch Borough Council	562	17.57
Worcester City Council	530	16.58
Wychavon District	745	23.29
Wyre Forest District Council	484	15.15
Total	3,197	

Agenda Item 4

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

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

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

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

Introduction/Summary

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

Report

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

Agenda Item 4

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

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

WRS Budgets 2021/22

Following further discussion with the Chief Executive at Wyre Forest, our hosts for IT and accommodation providers have withdrawn their proposed £13k increase in charges for 2020/21 and also for 2021/22. This has necessitated seeking sign-off by members of the attached budget figures for the next year's budget as the total is now reduced slightly. Wyre Forest CEO has asked that officer members of the Board undertake a review of hosting charges looking forward so that some future changes can be agreed for 2022/23 onwards to reflect the costs of supporting shared services.

The remainder of the budgets have remained the same as recommended at WRS Nov Board.

- Appendix 1 shows the 2021-22 – 2023-24 budget breakdown for the district councils' partnership
- Total partner contribution as included in Appendix 2
- Income projections as included at Appendix 3.
- Pension back-funding will be paid by all partners.

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

Council	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
		-	-
		Cumulat	Cumulat
		ive	ive
Council	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	9	20	31
Malvern Hills District Council	8	18	28
Redditch Borough Council	10	23	36
Worcester City Council	10	22	34

Agenda Item 4

Wychavon District Council	14	31	48
Wyre Forest District Council	9	20	31
Total	60	134	208

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

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

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this paper

Contact point

Chris Forrester – chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

Account description	Revised Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employees				
Monthly salaries	2,848	2,935	3,012	3,090
Training for professional qualifications	0	0	0	0
Medical fees (employees')	2	2	2	2
Employers' liability insurance	25	25	25	25
Employees' professional subscriptions	2	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Employees	2,877	2,964	3,041	3,119
Premises				
Rents	52	52	52	52
Room hire	2	2	2	2
Trade Waste	1	1	1	1
Sub-Total - Premises	55	55	55	55
Transport				
Vehicle repairs/maint'ce	3	3	3	3
Diesel fuel	8	8	8	8
Licences	1	1	1	1
Contract hire of vehicles	4	4	4	4
Vehicle insurances	5	5	5	5
Van Lease	9	9	9	9
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5	5
Car allowances	70	70	70	70
Sub-Total - Transport	105	105	105	105
Supplies & Service				
Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	22	22	22	22
Materials	9	9	9	9
Clothing, uniforms & laundry	2	2	2	2
Training fees	23	23	23	23
General insurances	19	19	19	19
Printing and stationery	17	17	17	17
Books and publications	2	2	2	2
Postage/packaging	11	11	11	11
ICT	40	40	40	40
Telephones	21	21	21	21
Taxi Tests	22	22	22	22
CRB Checks (taxi)	26	26	26	26
Support service recharges	100	100	100	100
Support service recharges - ICT	44	44	44	44
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	356	356	356	356

	Budget 2020 / 2021 £000's	Budget 2021 / 2022 £000's	Budget 2022 / 2023 £000's	Budget 2023 / 2024 £000's
Contractors				
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	227	229	229	229
Advertising (general)	5	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	13	13	13	13
Sub-Total - Contractors	245	247	247	247
Income				
Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-370	-372	-372	-372
Funding approved for unavoidable Salary Pressures				
Sub-Total - Income	-370	-372	-372	-372
Income				
Funding from partners for Technical Officers	-70	-97	-100	-104
Sub-Total - Income	-70	-97	-100	-104
Additional Income				
Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures		-60	-134	-208
Sub-Total - Income	0	-60	-134	-208
DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET	3,197	3,197	3,197	3,197
21-23 Partner Percentages				
Bromsgrove District Council	14.59%			
Malvern Hills District Council	12.82%			
Redditch Borough Council	17.57%			
Worcester City Council	16.58%			
Wychavon District Council	23.29%			
Wyre Forest District Council	15.15%			
Total	100.00%			

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2021 / 22					
Bromsgrove District Council	466	11	477	9	486
Malvern Hills District Council	410	14	424	8	432
Redditch Borough Council	562	8	570	10	580
Worcester City Council	530	39	569	10	579
Wychavon District Council	745	16	761	14	775
Wyre Forest District Council	484	10	494	9	503
Total	3,197	98	3,295	60	3,355

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2022 / 23					
Bromsgrove District Council	466	12	478	20	498
Malvern Hills District Council	410	14	424	18	442
Redditch Borough Council	562	8	570	23	593
Worcester City Council	530	39	569	22	591
Wychavon District Council	745	18	763	31	794
Wyre Forest District Council	484	10	494	20	514
Total	3,197	101	3,298	134	3,432

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2023 / 24					
Bromsgrove District Council	466	12	478	31	509
Malvern Hills District Council	410	15	425	28	453
Redditch Borough Council	562	8	570	36	606
Worcester City Council	530	40	570	34	604
Wychavon District Council	745	18	763	48	811
Wyre Forest District Council	484	10	494	31	526
Total	3,197	103	3,300	208	3,508

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WRS Partner Contribution Breakdown 2021-22 to 2023-24

Council	WRS Budget 21-22	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity	Tech Officer Gull Control	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 21-22
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Malvern Hills District Council	410,008	4,060	9,924	0	7,705	431,697
Bromsgrove District Council	466,312	4,617	6,281	0	8,769	485,979
Wyre Forest District Council	484,314	4,796	4,774	0	9,106	502,990
Wychavon District Council	744,624	7,373	9,170	0	13,998	775,165
Worcester City Council	530,047	5,248	4,020	30,000	9,965	579,280
Redditch Borough Council	561,905	5,563	1,633	0	10,500	579,601
Total	3,197,210	31,657	35,802	30,000	60,043	3,354,712

Council	WRS Budget 22-23	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity	Tech Officer Gull Control	21-22 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	22-23 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 22-23
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Malvern Hills District Council	410,008	4,230	10,401	0	7,705	9,472	441,816
Bromsgrove District Council	466,312	4,811	6,583	0	8,769	10,780	497,255
Wyre Forest District Council	484,314	4,997	5,003	0	9,106	11,194	514,614
Wychavon District Council	744,624	7,682	9,611	0	13,998	17,208	793,123
Worcester City Council	530,047	5,468	4,213	30,000	9,965	12,250	591,943
Redditch Borough Council	561,905	5,797	1,711	0	10,500	12,982	592,895
Total	3,197,210	32,985	37,522	30,000	60,043	73,886	3,431,646

Council	WRS Budget 23-24	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity - For 12 months	Tech Officer Gull Control - For 12 months	21-22 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	22-23 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	23-24 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 23-24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Malvern Hills District Council	410,008	4,407	10,983	0	7,705	9,472	9,458	452,033
Bromsgrove District Council	466,312	5,012	6,951	0	8,769	10,780	10,763	508,587
Wyre Forest District Council	484,314	5,206	5,283	0	9,106	11,194	11,176	526,279
Wychavon District Council	744,624	8,003	10,149	0	13,998	17,208	17,181	811,163
Worcester City Council	530,047	5,697	4,449	30,000	9,965	12,250	12,231	604,639
Redditch Borough Council	561,905	6,040	1,807	0	10,500	12,982	12,962	606,196
Total	3,197,210	34,365	39,622	30,000	60,043	73,886	73,771	3,508,897

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgeted Income 2021/22

Appendix 3

Grant Income

Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting

£

14,000

14,000

Other Income

Employee - Income Generation - Rchg All Ptrns

31,656

Employee - Additional Gull Work - Rchg Worcs City only

30,000

Employee - Animal Activity - Rchg All Ptrns

35,802

Stray Dog Income

52,000

County - Mgmt / Admin / Legal etc

54,000

County - Petroleum Work / Safety at Sports Grounds

41,000

Education Case Work

6,000

Animal Re-Rating / Transcription Work

2,500

Contaminated Land Work / Planning Support work

65,000

Primary Authority work

42,000

Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered

15,000

Training

12,000

Health Certificates / Food Hygiene Re-Rating

15,000

Licensing - Pre-App Advice

7,000

Business - Pre-Opening Advice

6,000

MOD Contract

40,000

Unavoidable Salary Pressures

60,104

515,062

Total Income

529,062

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WRS Board 11th February 2021

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING April – Dec 2020

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

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

Council	Apr–Dec 20 Actual for Bereavements £000
Redditch Borough Council	9
Malvern Hills District Council	6
Worcester City Council	10
Bromsgrove District Council	5
Total	30

- 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	7
Wychavon District Council	6
Bromsgrove District Council	1

Agenda Item 5

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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	2	2	
Malvern Hills District Council	1	8	
Worcester City Council	2	3	35
Bromsgrove District Council	1	5	
Wychavon District Council	2	7	
Wyre Forest District Council	1	4	
Total	9	29	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 – Dec 2020.

Background

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

Report

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

Agenda Item 5

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

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. The revised budget 2020/21 excludes the increase in ICT & Rent at Wyre Forest as discussed in the previous budget agenda. This shows a projected outturn 2020/21 of £44k surplus. 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 either the Business & Relationship Manager and the Regulatory Apprentice for the current year.
- If April to Dec 20 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be an overspend on this service of £14k. 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	£7k
Wychavon District Council	£6k
Bromsgrove District Council	£1k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – Dec 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	£9k
Malvern Hills District Council	£6k
Worcester City Council	£10k
Bromsgrove District Council	£5k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- The current forecast out-run reflects a number of factors created by the pandemic that have meant some areas of expenditure have been more limited this year, particularly in the dog contracts and the spend on DBS checks in licensing. As has been explained in the Service Plan, the Food Standards Agency's suspension of the food inspection programme has led to a large backlog of inspection visits, which we are expecting to have to catch-up with at some

Agenda Item 5

point. The partners will need to give some consideration of this in the future and how these activities could be funded. Creating a special reserve for this may be an option for officer members of the board to consider.

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

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this report

Contact Points

Chris Forrester – chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2020/21

Total WRS Dec 20 / Period 9 - 20/21

Appendix 1

	Revised Full Year Budget 20-21	Revised Budget - Committed Apr - Dec 20	Expenditure Apr - Dec 20	Variance	Projected outturn	Projected Outturn Variance	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Direct Expenditure							
Employees							
Salary	2,851	2,139	2,040	-99	2,686	-165	Savings due to employees working on Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT)
Agency Staff	0	0	57	57	117	117	Backfilling for employees working on LORT
Employee Insurance	25	18	18	0	25	0	
Sub-Total - Employees	2,876	2,157	2,116	-41	2,828	-48	
Premises							
Rent / Hire of Premise	54	41	39	-1	53	-1	
Cleaning	1	1	0	-0	0	-0	
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sub-Total - Premises	55	41	40	-1	53	-1	
Transport							
Vehicle Hire	13	9	1	-8	13	0	
Vehicle Fuel	8	6	2	-4	4	-5	
Road Fund Tax	1	1	1	-0	1	0	
Vehicle Insurance	5	4	4	0	5	0	
Vehicle Maintenance	3	2	3	1	4	1	
Car Allowances	75	56	34	-22	51	-24	Due to change in working patterns
Sub-Total - Transport	104	78	45	-33	77	-27	
Supplies and Services							
Furniture & Equipment	32	24	17	-7	38	6	Due to essential calibration on noise monitoring equipment
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	1	0	-1	1	-1	
Printing & Photocopying	17	13	9	-4	13	-4	
Postage	11	8	9	1	11	0	
ICT	40	30	57	27	61	21	
Telephones	21	16	12	-4	16	-6	
Training & Seminars	23	17	7	-10	13	-10	
Insurance	20	15	15	0	20	0	
Third Party Payments	144	108	108	-0	144	0	£100k BDC hosting / £44k WFDC ICT hosting.
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	309	232	233	2	316	7	
Contractors							
Dog Warden	145	109	28	-81	55	-90	Due to reduction in dogs straying, OOH dog warden has been taken in house.
Pest Control	50	37	60	23	71	21	Due to additional costs relating to Gull Control & Pest Control which is charged to relevant partners and offset in the income line
Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	62	47	24	-23	45	-17	Delay in DBS checks due to Covid
Other contractors/consultants	3	2	3	1	4	2	
Water Safety	5	4	0	-4	1	-5	
Food Safety	1	1	0	-1	1	-1	
Environmental Protection	10	7	39	32	41	31	Bereavement / Works in Default to be charged to relevant partners, offset in Income
Grants / Subscriptions	13	9	12	3	15	3	
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	4	0	-4	1	-4	
Sub-Total	293	219	166	-54	233	-59	
Income							
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-440	-330	-290	40	-355	84	See Append 2
Sub-Total	-440	-330	-290	40	-355	84	
Overall Total	3,197	2,398	2,310	-88	3,153	-44	

Notes:-

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Income 2020/21

Income from Partners	April to Dec 20
	£
Budget	2,397,907
Bereavement / Public Burials	29,818
Marlpool - Redditch	1,428
Pest Control Overspend - Wychavon & Redditch	10,365
Taxi Tests Gemini - Worcs City	1,400
Employee for Animal Activity - Apr - Dec 20	25,776
Employee for Income Generation - Apr - Dec 20	5,033
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Apr - Dec 20 - Worcs City	28,891
Health & Safety Investigation - Malvern Hills	2,760
	2,503,378
	2,503,378
 Grant Income	
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	10,838
	10,838
	10,838
 Other Income	
Stray Dog Income	15,510
Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal & Admin Support	44,152
Planning Support Work	23,566
Contaminated Land Work	30,095
PPC Work	8,389
MOD Contract	20,000
Primary Authority work	1,287
Screening / Compliance Review / Nox Tubes	869
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	3,550
Pest Control	3,544
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	17,951
Licensing - Training / Taxi Admin	410
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening	4,351
	173,674
	173,674
 Total Income Apr - Dec 20	2,687,890
	2,687,890
 2020/21 Base Budget from Partners	-2,397,907
 Total Income Excluding Budget	289,983

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WRS Board

Date: 11th February 2021

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2021/22

Recommendations

That members of the Board:

- (i) Approve the WRS service plan for 2021/22
- (ii) They specifically note the level of work to be undertaken by the service this year in relation to the partners' roles as local food authorities.

Report

The Board signs off on the service plan for WRS each year. The process helps to make members aware of what the service is proposing for the relevant financial year and provides a sign off that some central government bodies like to see in relation to service delivery plans e.g. the Food Standards Agency.

The plan follows very much the pattern of previous years and has an Executive Summary to pick up the main points. Last year's plan was overtaken by events, with the response to the global pandemic. At the time of writing, the country remains in lockdown, with only a limited picture of how we will move forward. Government is clear that lockdown will be followed by a move back to a tier-based framework of controls that will stay in place for a period, whilst the vaccination programme is on-going. At the moment, the service is planning for some involvement in Covid controls for the first quarter of 2021/22 but it seems likely that could run well into quarter two as well. Flexibility will be necessary to reshape what is being delivered as the local environment changes during the first half of the financial year.

Away from the pandemic, the service will continue to shape its work around the long-standing strategic priorities for local authority regulatory services provided by BEIS, as these provide a framework that allows WRS to have a golden thread back to the priorities of the six partners and also to link to the

Agenda Item 6

requirements of the various national bodies that oversee our work.

A range of high level activities are identified within the plan so that members will be aware of the general focus of activity. Below this will sit a number of team plans that will be used to drive the actual business activities.

The plan has been devised in the face of on-going financial uncertainty in local government generally. Working with businesses and other partners is a key theme for both generating income to mitigate financial risk but also to ensure that outcomes are delivered that match the priorities of partners and stakeholders.

Delivery for other local authorities remains a key income generation strategy, supported by work for the private sector and specific grant monies. Whilst much of our work for customers fell off during the initial period of the pandemic response, most of our long-standing customers have come back to us. This year will see us re-tendering for the dog control contract with the district councils in the north of Gloucestershire. We hope to continue to deliver these services.

Following consultation with Board members, the performance indicators suite generated for 2017/18 are retained to give continued comparability of performance across the years. We will continue to use intelligence to drive the business forward and the embedding of this approach and its associated processes will continue.

The Risk Register has been updated to reflect the current position in areas like IT provision and development, staffing levels, and our reliance on contractual relationships for income. Our long-standing investment in mobile and flexible working found us well-placed to deal with the need for home working and the majority of our activities are now enabled for this working pattern. We will look at our wider needs for office space as part of this year's planned review of hosting costs.

As with previous years, members are asked to pay particular attention to the provisions for food hygiene delivery in the coming year. This is to meet one of the recommendations of the auditors from the Food Standards Agency who visited the service in May 2017. They were keen that members have a better understanding of the demand in this service area when they authorised the plan for this and future years.

Members are asked to note the proposed numbers of inspections and similar activities proposed for the new financial year that will be undertaken to discharge the

statutory duties of the 6 partners in relation to food control. This year will be different from previous years due to the impact of pandemic controls. The Agency has already decided that its moratorium on the normal inspection programme will remain in place until at least 30th June 2021. Having now had this in place for over a year will mean that there is a significant backlog of food related activity that would otherwise have been delivered. We are unclear at this stage as to what the Agency's expectations will be in relation to these businesses, whether the visit programme will simply be re-scheduled or whether some investment in resource to catch-up will be required. We will report further to the Board once the picture becomes clearer.

Financial Implications

None

Sustainability

NA

Contact Points

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Background Papers

Service Plan 2020/21 including Risk Register

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Service Plan 2021/22

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Vision

"That Worcestershire is a healthy, safe and fair place to live, where businesses can thrive"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The plan broadly follows previous years and outlines:

- How the service will operate over the following 12 months to deliver on both national and local priorities, some of which are highlighted in the plan
- What activities the service will carry out to achieve or address those priorities and how success will be measured

The Service will enter 2020/21 with a total agreed budget from the district partners of £3.197M. This includes a budgetary uplift to cover a pay increase of up to 2% and the cost of increased pension contribution by the employer, this latter amount being significantly less than last year. It also includes funding for a number of posts for specific work either in a particular function or for a particular partner. Partners have recognised that there is a ceiling to the potential for income generation with the current officer capacity and that the fight against the pandemic will limit the service's ability to bring in income from a wider range of sources in the immediate future. Hence, the uplift in budget is welcome.

Plans for 2020/21 were overtaken by the response to the pandemic. Members will be clear that WRS led the local authority enforcement response to business controls and engaged in a number of Public Health related work-streams whilst trying to balance this with the normal activities that did not go away. The whole team developed consummate juggling skills if they didn't have them already. Whilst at the time of writing, Government is pushing forward with the vaccination programme and promising that normality will be restored by Spring, the Director of Public Health has been clear with us that the impact of Covid 19 is likely to be felt for much of 2021/22 and we should plan for this to be part of our work in the immediate future.

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Alongside this, the Management Team have also been asked to review the financial platform for the service, particularly with respect to hosting costs. This work will commence during the summer so that we can present our IT and accommodation providing host with a financial settlement that takes some account of their increased costs since taking on these roles.

The service will also continue to pursue work for other local authorities going forward with a view to obtaining longer commitments from those buying our services to give some stability and certainty to the financial situation. In making decisions regarding service delivery, the service will continue to risk assess what it does taking into account the economic impacts and impacts on health and well-being. Whilst risk will remain a key criterion against which we deploy resources, using an intelligence-led approach continues to add an additional dimension to how the service works, allowing it to integrate better with other enforcement services. By gathering data and understanding issues, rather than simply rushing out to deal with problems, we will focus resources on where they deliver the best outcomes, with better long term solutions. This was a key part of our response to the pandemic and will remain at the heart of service delivery moving forward.

Simon Wilkes
Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Kevin Dicks
Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the eleventh formal annual service plan to be produced by Worcestershire Regulatory Services and follows a similar format to the previous plans with an Executive Summary and details in appendices that follow on from the main commentary. The financial information covers the three-year accounting period 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24 however the operational detail reflects the planned activities that the service will undertake in 2021/22.

2020/21 was a very testing year for WRS in terms of responding to the pandemic whilst keeping things moving in the day job and continue to deliver on income generation to support the budget. The service had to focus much of its resource on the compliance role for the various Covid control regimes that have been put in place over the year. We also had to put resources into the Local Outbreak Response Team, mainly focused on dealing with business outbreaks but dealing with other activities too. We also delivered the county wide programme of Covid Advisors and took on the Lost to Follow-up contact tracing of positive cases that the national system could not contact.

Many of our usual local authority customers decided to park some of the work we do for them, particularly during the first lockdown, although later some of this work came back on-line. Many of our Primary Authority (PA) businesses had a relatively quiet time, the opposite to Trading Standards colleagues whose businesses had to be supported with the switch to on-line trading. It looks like all of our PA business have so far survived the pandemic and we hope to get back to our usual work with them at some point during 2021/22. Likewise, it seems possible that the financial pressures all councils will be facing will help us with getting back existing customers and possibly some new ones too, as councils look for cost-effective alternatives to direct service delivery. One thing that didn't change last year was the need to investigate breaches of the law and a number of cases were put through to council legal departments. Full details of activity will be reported in the Annual Report to be produced at the end of May 2021 and reported to the Board in June.

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The coming year is likely to be dominated by:

- The on-going response to the pandemic
- Seeking new and maintaining existing income streams to help support local delivery
- The further development of the WRS website to better enable customer interactions and transactions
- Developing the self-service model further for wider service elements
- Continuing to develop and review practical procedures to maintain resilience and the benefits from service elements such as Legal Support the Intel Unit that provide operational support to both WRS and Trading Standards functions
- Supporting some of our businesses as they deal with the realities of BREXIT

The focus on income generation will be to target areas of greatest benefit in terms of economies of scale, the required resource intensity and income reward. It is important that only those opportunities meriting our focus are pursued as the scoping and drafting of tender documents are time consuming and onerous.

For existing partners, managers will continue to identify any changes that can be made to service delivery to either improve marginal efficiency or improve service. This is particularly relevant for areas of high demand such as planning referrals and areas of significant officer resource, such as long-standing complaints or enforcement action. This will require close working relationships to support and assist partner colleagues to

ensure that we are all working as effectively as possible together. Managers will also be looking at costs with Officer members of the Board to come to an agreed cost model for the hosting of various elements of the service. This follows from the issues generated by Wyre Forest DC's desire to increase its charges for hosting IT functions and accommodation.

Improvements to our website will continue. The focus has been the development of tailored information to enable the public to self-serve which will continue. Moving the website onto an updated version of the software platform on which it is built should also allow us to improve the look and functionality of the system.

2. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT: PESTELO Review

2.1 Political

The achievement of a deal with the EU just before New Year will take some of the uncertainty away from the current position but there is still significant uncertainty over the broader impacts. Whilst Government departments, business and the general public have been urged to prepare for Brexit, it is unclear how everything will work and businesses continue to ask for clarity in relation to their individual circumstances. The wider implications of Brexit also remain unclear, although much speculated upon; with reports indicating an adverse effect on the UK economy and a period of uncertainty or fluctuation. Furthermore, the future of the UK's laws is also uncertain, as it appears that the deal requires the UK to continue to have regulatory equivalence in many areas but government claims that divergence can and will occur. Only time will tell what the outcome will be.

Whilst Government has indicated an end to its austerity measures, the funding for local authorities remains uncertain with the move to business rates and council tax being the major funding streams at least a little opaque. The impact on the high street of the move to on-line trading is likely to be accelerated post pandemic, with the public unlikely to fully move back to their previous behaviours. This may cast doubt on the viability of this funding route, especially as many businesses are calling for an overhaul of the business rates model. There is also an increased number of local authorities now facing significant financial challenges due to the response to the pandemic, especially where this is alongside rising costs in areas such as social care and children's services.

2.2 Economic

As the UK seeks post-Brexit trade deals, particularly with countries outside the EU, food and drinks manufactures are expected to seek to export a greater volume of food and drink products. A greater volume of exports will result in a higher number of requests for export health certificates; something which has already been seen by WRS. With the UK now being outside of the single market and other EU bodies, the international food code set by the World Health Organisation and the United Nations, becomes the international food standard by which UK food producers, processors and national food control agencies will have to operate¹. Officers will work with businesses to understand any changes necessary.

Economic uncertainty and fluctuations in the value of sterling have an impact on the price of commodities. An increase in the price of goods, particularly food products and ingredients, means a greater risk of substitution and/or fraud. This becomes even more pertinent when considering

¹<http://www.ehn-online.com/news/article.aspx?id=16146>

the slow wage growth currently seen across the UK and the need for businesses to provide cheaper alternatives to consumers. Hopefully the EU deal will limit some of these issues but there is always a possibility that additional burdens and barriers to trade will increase costs that will feed through into prices. Nationally, some businesses are already complaining that there are already frictions and transaction costs are up significantly.

The Strategic Economic Plan and the Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands Combined Authority is likely to bring investment into the conurbation, which will influence developments in Worcestershire. Developments have been proposed in the South of Birmingham and around the airport that are likely to bring further business opportunities into the county along the M42 corridor. In addition, the development of Worcester Parkway and the electrification of the line through Worcestershire to Birmingham, providing a link to HS2 and shorter journey times to London, will also draw businesses to the area. Such developments are likely to lead to housing developments and the drive for affordable housing remains a national priority. As each of the Worcestershire districts strive to reach housing targets, developments are being considered on any available land including greenfield and brownfield sites. Any developments (commercial or residential) will impact upon the volume of planning enquiries that are referred to WRS.

The previous air quality analysis identified a significant increase in the number of planning enquiries received from Worcestershire authorities. Such increases however, have also been identified in relation to contaminated land and nuisance enquiries. The number of planning enquiries received have increased by more than 50% since 2016. Some of this increase is because a proportion of cases have been referred by authorities who have decided not to use the 'planning checklist' created by WRS to assist planning officers in determining whether a consultation should be made to Environmental Health. This does provide a safety net for applications that may have something unusual about them but, at a time when financial pressures are high, perhaps this needs further consideration.

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2.3 Social

Latest data suggests that there is a slight increase in the level of deprivation across Worcestershire; with a greater number of neighbourhoods within the top 10% of deprived areas nationally. Recent intelligence products have identified links between certain types of complaints (e.g. domestic noise) and deprivation therefore; an increase in the level of deprivation could result in a greater number and/or concentration of complaints or problematic areas.

On a biannual basis, the FSA publish the results of the public attitudes survey. The most recent survey was completed during May 2018 and encompassed 2,004 adults in England. The top food safety issues of concern were food hygiene when eating out, chemicals from the environment, food additives (29%) and food poisoning. Other key findings included; 45% of respondents being concerned about food safety in restaurants, pubs, cafes and takeaway, 82% being aware of hygiene standards in places they eat at or buy from and 15% being aware of specific rules about allergens². An increase in the level of public awareness is likely to lead to an increase in complaints, rightly or wrongly as other work has shown that the public are not very good at spotting unhygienic food businesses. We say rightly or wrongly as our own review of complaint data has indicated that, in general, the public are poor judges of when a food premise is not trading in a hygienic way. Only some 5% of premises subject to complaints about general hygiene matters we found to be so poor that their Food Hygiene Rating was downgraded. Hence, we try to use wider data before making visits to premises subject to such complaints.

² <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/biannual-public-attitudes-tracker-wave-16-final-270718.pdf>

2.4 Technological

The increased use of technology to commit or facilitate crime continues to pose a threat to local authorities, who are often ill-equipped to investigate such matters. Examples pertinent to WRS include the use of social media by persons or businesses to advertise services they are not legally allowed to offer. This includes using Facebook 'buy and sell' pages to advertise private hire or animal boarding services, and using social media feeds to find a lost dog or locate the owner of a dog found to be straying. The latter is problematic as, aside from an offence being committed, dogs can be held in potentially unsafe environments or returned to individuals who are not the actual owners.

App-based private hire booking systems are becoming more prevalent both locally and nationally. This brings regulatory challenges as the legislation governing the taxi trade, as highlighted by the Local Government Association in 2017, is outdated. App-based booking systems also facilitate more instant "pre-bookings" which blur the lines between the hackney carriage and private hire trades. Furthermore, booking systems working across a number of district council areas help facilitate "cross-border" hiring. The National Taxi Standards that the service will start to roll out this year should improve the public's experience of service and help level up across council areas but it may add to the financial burdens on operators, which could easily make app-based operating financially even more attractive.

Previous intelligence has suggested food safety offences could be being facilitated by third party websites such as Deliveroo, JustEat and Uber Eats through their provision of services to low scoring food takeaways. It was previously identified, for example, that non-complaint food businesses were trading via JustEat, with consumers being unaware of the low food hygiene rating. An intelligence product to assess the threat of such websites is scheduled for completion later this year and is due to encompass Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards functions.

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Whilst technology poses a threat to local authorities, it also provides opportunities as WRS can promote its services and circulate guidance to a wider audience through its website and social media feed. It can also operate more efficiently by accepting online payments and accepting demand through alternative channels. The ability for WRS to be able to take payments associated with licenses, environmental permits and stray dogs would improve the customer journey and could be considered by the partners.

2.5 Environmental

In July 2017, the government published its revised UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. This outlined, alongside existing measures, a number of additional actions to be undertaken by government departments and local authorities including; the creation of 'clean air zones', a focus on alternatively fuelled vehicles and electric vehicles, a potential taxation on diesel vehicles, additional testing of commercial vehicles and a greater emphasis on cycling and walking schemes³. In January this year, Government launched the Clean Air Strategy which aims to improve air quality by reducing pollution from a wide range of sources including transport, at home, farming and industry⁴.

The draft Environmental (Principles and Governance) Bill includes provisions to maintain the level of environmental protection once the UK leaves the EU. In particular, it proposes to establish an Office for Environmental Protection; to uphold environmental legislation and hold

³https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633270/air-quality-plan-detail.pdf

⁴<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/clean-air-strategy-consultation>

government and public bodies to account over environmental standards. This includes receiving complaints that may relate to weak enforcement of environmental law which, from a WRS perspective, could include complaints from residents living in air quality management areas. The bill also proposes the inclusion of 'environmental principles' into domestic legislation, and giving the 25 Year Environment Plan' statutory status. Environmental Groups have expressed concerns that the powers of the new body have been significantly watered down as the legislation has moved through Parliament, Time will tell as to what impacts this new body will have on local authorities discharging their responsibilities.

Climate change continues to impact upon Worcestershire, like all areas of the UK. Mild winters and, in particular, hot summers are likely to result in a greater volume of nuisance complaints as residents spend greater time in outdoor spaces. As outlined previously, this is especially pertinent for areas with higher population densities. Flooding may also have wider impacts on local businesses.

2.6 Legal

The deal with the EU cements the current regulatory position linking us, for now, to shared EU standards for products. Government ensured, as part of the Withdrawal Act, that the current regulatory framework would be re-enacted into UK law where necessary. Legislation previously given effect by use of the European Communities Act 1972 remains in place by virtue of these provisions. The key questions will begin to arise when government chooses to move away from the framework or where it enters into new deals with third countries that require regulatory recognition of their standards that would otherwise not pass EU controls. The United States and its food products like hormone-fed beef and chlorine washed chicken are the kind of products that would not be allowed under the current legal framework, but they may appear (with or without labelling,) if the US regulatory regime was given regulatory equivalence with our own as part of a trade deal.

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The European Commission put forward its EU Data Protection Reform in January 2012 to make Europe fit for the digital age. More than 90% of Europeans said they wanted the same data protection rights across the EU – and regardless of where their data is processed⁵. As a result, the General Data Protection Regulation entered into force during May 2016 and was applied in May 2018. Whilst broadly similar to existing data protection laws, the regulation places an emphasis on consent, lawful bases for processing data and individual rights such as those to erasure and access⁶. It is realistic such regulations will lead to a greater number of enquiries from the general public. In spite of BREXIT, this system remains in place until the UK choses to deviate from it.

The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 received Royal Assent towards the end of 2016 and, from a WRS perspective, consolidated existing powers available to law enforcement to obtain communications and data about communications. It also overhauled the way these powers were authorised and overseen and created an Investigatory Powers Commissioner to oversee how powers are used⁷. Whilst Regulatory Services have historically had restricted access to communications data, access is now confined to cases such as food fraud where the threshold for 'serious organised crime' can be met.

The Food Standards Agency is, of our associated regulatory bodies, furthest down the road to reform and, although there were concerns that this could lead to dramatic changes to inspection regimes or other programmes where accredited, private sector, third party audit replacing inspection

⁵http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/reform/index_en.htm

⁶<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr>

⁷<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/investigatory-powers-bill#investigatory-powers-bill>

by local authority or government officials, some of these fears have been allayed. Currently, the more radical proposals previously tabled have been withdrawn, however an amended code of practice that will be launched this year is likely to give more strength to 3rd party accreditation systems and require local authorities to take these into account when conducting their own inspections and audits. There is also a proposal to integrate the delivery of food hygiene and food standards which, at a local level, is understood to mean food safety regulation will become the sole responsibility of Environmental Health⁸, has also been removed. Agency spokespersons have said they see a clear role for Trading Standards in food law enforcement moving forward and the revised code of practice is likely to take a much more intelligence-led approach to food standards law enforcement, which fits with the Trading Standards operating model.

2.7 Organisational

Since its inception, the budget for WRS has primarily comprised of contributions from its strategic partners. With local authorities facing significant financial challenges however, future budgets for the service are continually 'subject to potential change'. This has been highlighted by one of the host authorities last year in terms of their costs for providing those services.

The on-going challenge for WRS is to offset any future reductions through income generation whilst being able to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. With an intelligence led approach now preferred, the level of risk and the known intelligence picture should be considered throughout decision making processes. A failure to understand, and therefore undertake, such processes risks undermining the effectiveness of future enforcement activity.

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Analysis undertaken for this assessment has identified a number of 'gaps' which could hinder future intelligence analysis. Most notable is the absence of temporal data, specifically the hours when incidents occur, which is critical for the assessment of functions such as nuisance and alcohol licensing. A further limitation, outlined previously, is the limited number of intelligence reports generated in relation to tactical activity. This, in turn, raises further questions as to which sources of information and intelligence are being utilised during investigative processes. The service will look to improve recording practices in these areas this year.

3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2011, the Government tasked what was then the Local Better Regulation Office (now the Office for Product Safety and Standards, part of BEIS,) with developing Priority Regulatory Outcomes for England for local authorities to consider when undertaking their service planning processes. These are outlined below:

1. support economic growth, especially in small businesses, by ensuring a fair, responsible and competitive trading environment
2. protect the environment for future generations including tackling the threats and impacts of climate change
3. improve quality of life and wellbeing by ensuring clean and safe neighbourhoods
4. help people to live healthier lives by preventing ill health and harm and promoting public health
5. ensure a safe, healthy and sustainable food chain for the benefit of consumers and the rural economy

⁸<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/rof-paper-july2017.pdf>

Whilst these are now years old and no longer used by OPSS, they still provide a useful framework with which WRS can link back into key partner priorities without having to list things six times. All of our partners have priorities around supporting economic growth, protecting the environment, residents and neighbourhoods and improving health and well-being in communities. As long as our work meets one or more of these aims we know we are delivering what partners want.

Work by our Intelligence Officer on creating our Strategic Assessment, the key document that helps us determine priorities has demonstrated that these 5 priorities also remain at the heart of what the data is saying we should focus on. The Strategic Assessment looks at a broad swathe of local, regional and national data, and this is used to help identify the key issues to be tackled over a 2-year period, with an annual sense check to ensure the environment has not changed significantly. The priorities identified in the Strategic Assessment are reflected in the detail of operational activities later in the plan.

The service will be faced with a challenging financial situation for the foreseeable future. In the past this was addressed through transforming how things are done. Moving forward, with the financial environment continuing to be difficult, for the service to continue to deliver against national and local priorities there is no question that further changes will be an inevitable consequence. We will need to prioritise what is delivered, to whom and how. To assist in this decision making, the service will continue to use 3 key criteria to consider when making decision on service provision:

- a) Are vulnerable people impacted?
- b) Are there Health and Well Being issues involved?
- c) Is there a positive/negative impact on economic activity?

We will also continue to develop our use of intelligence to support this. There remains a risk that demand which can no longer be met by WRS is simply re-directed to partners in other ways e.g. via complaints. At this stage, with the reductions we have seen so far, the risk of district partners facing challenges relating to whether or not they are meeting their statutory obligations are low and the position remains defensible.

4. PURPOSES

Following its Systems Thinking work, WRS adopted 3 purposes to underpin service delivery and provide a common thread to run through all of its functions.

- 1. Help me resolve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else,
- 2. I want to assume everything is ok
- 3. Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same.

These purposes are expressed in terms a customer (member of the public or a business,) might use, provide a focus for staff and were agreed by the previous Joint Committee. These purposes, combined with the priority outcomes encapsulate the Service's contribution to the wider community agenda, reflecting as they do the broad themes relevant to all partners.

5. FINANCE

A summary of the budget position for 2021/22 is shown at Appendix B, along with the proposed budgets for the following two years. A more detailed breakdown will be available to the Joint Board in its regular financial reports. Income levels are difficult to estimate but we have set ourselves income targets going forward in order to maintain a greater resilience than would otherwise be possible.

6. AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

The Internal Audit Service will be provided under the current arrangement by Worcester City Council to the Host Authority. No audits took place during 2020/21. The participating authorities S151 Officers consider the Audit Plan of the Host to ensure adequate arrangements are in place. Changes to the level of funding mean that WRS accounts no longer need to be audited separately, so they will be done within the accounts of the host Authority and the Joint Board will be provided with relevant report information to give them the necessary assurances. The deadline for this remains the end of June.

Where broad and in-depth scrutiny of the service is requested, member Authorities are requested by the legal agreement liaise about requests from their Overview and Scrutiny Committees and should use reasonable endeavours to agree joint scrutiny arrangements with a view to avoiding duplication of effort. Historically, WRS developed good working relationships with several of the district partners' Overview and Scrutiny Committees, leading to the positive re-enforcement of performance in those areas. It has been some time since we were asked to speak to any of these committees.

The service's ability to provide bespoke support to individual partners is highlighted by the work done with task and finish groups of the City Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Committee, particularly the ones on Air Quality and the Taxi Strategy. Whilst the service could not support this kind of activity for all partners at the same time, we do hope to be able to offer this type of work more widely when it can be scheduled. Engaging with the City in this way and with projects like the future vision for Worcester has helped to build and maintain relationships with officers at the City Council and helped to highlight the important role of regulation when looking at wider, long term policy development.

7. ACTIVITIES & OUTCOME MEASURES

The service's IT system allows accurate reporting on activities. The service has continued to work with members to demonstrate the service's performance and the service's current core performance indicators are listed as Appendix C. Over time, with one or two notable exceptions, we have seen improvement or maintenance of most of these indicators, which we hope will continue in 2021/22. Whilst the non-business customer satisfaction figures have improved in the past 12-18 months, work will continue to try to better understand the issues and improve performance during the coming year. A number of internal performance indicators have been introduced that should help with some of the issues raised by customers. Given the impact of Covid last year it has been difficult to fully review and embed these new internal measures but this will continue this year.

The activities outlined below are examples of what is planned by the service. We believe that activity data combined with the core performance indicators will give Members the confidence that the Service continues to perform well, given the current financial constraints, and it continues to contribute to the wider local agenda. The approach is very much in line with Government thinking in terms of reducing burdens on and

supporting local businesses, whilst tackling rogues who would ignore their responsibilities and criminals who use business as a model for generating criminal assets. It also addresses the significant demand that comes into the service as complaints/ service requests, covering a wide range of issues and concerns from residents, visitors, businesses and the other departments of partner authorities within Worcestershire.

There is a specific section for pandemic related activity but it is difficult to know specifically what will be asked of us and how this will impact on resources. Currently, we have dedicated capacity in the Local Outbreak Response Team undertaking a range of duties, we are delivering the Covid Advisor project county-wide, are leading on the “lost to follow-up” activity where we try to contact positive cases missed by the national system and dealing with enforcement of the various business controls. With the roll-out of vaccines planned for the coming months and already seeing some delayed from the originally planned timescales, we will have to plan for similar input to the current levels at least for the first quarter of the year and possibly the second too. That means a commitment of around 15FTE from the existing WRS staffing cohort and, whilst some of the activity will hopefully still be funded and allow the service to bring in additional capacity, the enforcement activity is unlikely to be funded from external sources.

	OUTCOME	WHAT WE WILL DO	PURPOSE	NATIONAL PRIORITY	MEASURES
1	Response to the Covid 19 pandemic Page 53	<p>Provide enforcement capacity to tackle non-compliance with any control regime remaining in place</p> <p>Be part of the local Outbreak Response Team, focused on dealing with outbreaks on business premises and undertaking backwards contract tracing to establish infection patterns and causes within communities.</p> <p>To deliver other Covid related activities either to support contact tracing or community compliance such as Covid Advisors or Local Contact Tracing systems</p>	<p>I want to assume everything is ok.</p> <p>Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same</p>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of cases handled on behalf of the LORT leading to breaches • Number of formal actions undertaken • Number of formal warnings
2	Businesses are supported to become economically successful and compliant with the law (Pollution, H&S, Food Safety, Licensing)	<p>Provide businesses with advice and assistance using a range of channels.</p> <p>Conduct risk based/ intelligence-led interventions with businesses;</p>	<p>I want to assume everything is ok.</p> <p>Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same</p>	1, 2, 3 and 5	<p>% food businesses broadly compliant at first visit/ inspection</p> <p>% of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction</p>

		targeting resources towards potentially non-compliant businesses.			% of food businesses scoring 0,1,2* at 1 st April each year
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3	Ensuring that nuisance and other pollution related issues are tackled	Respond to complaints and take appropriate action Provide relevant advice and information, available through a range of channels.	Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same	2, 3 and 4	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population
4	Protecting the environment and the public through monitoring air quality, and ensuring that contaminated land is suitable for development. Controlling environmental emissions leading to reduced environmental damage and better health	Conduct risk based/ intelligence-led interventions with businesses, especially permitted premises Air quality monitoring & responding to contaminated land issues Supporting the planning system	I want to assume everything is ok	2 and 4	% permitted businesses broadly compliant at first visit/ inspection Monitoring of the County-wide Air Quality strategy is delivered % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction
5	Licensed premises cause no significant alcohol-fuelled crime/ disorder and ASB.	Respond to complaints regarding alcohol and similar licensing related issues e.g. underage sales, breach of conditions, poor conduct of licence holders, etc. Provide businesses with advice and assistance Monthly alcohol profile to be shared with partners, reviewed and suitable work tasked	I want to assume everything is ok Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same	1 and 3	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives
6	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licence applications are processed in a timely manner and that all	Safeguard and ensure that all licence applications are processed in a timely manner and those granted meet the fit and proper	I want to assume everything is ok Help me to solve my	1 and 3	% of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days.

	drivers and operators granted licenses meet the fit and proper test. Vehicles in use by the Taxi trades are fit whilst in service	test. Undertake a number of enforcement interventions to test compliance	problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same		Vehicles requiring work or taken off the road following intervention (Number and % of the total fleet.)
7	Consumers able to make informed choices on where to eat or purchase food through published food hygiene ratings.	Implement and promote the FHRS and publish hygiene ratings and accrediting those which improve health and wellbeing of their workforce. Incentivise maintaining star ratings through the Healthy Eating Award and Triple 5 Award Support food exporters through the BREXIT process	I want to assume everything is ok Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same	4 and 5	% businesses meeting purpose at first assessment/ inspection Number of 4* and 5* business signing up for the Healthy Eating Award
8	High levels of customer satisfaction	Respond to complaints and take appropriate action Building our ability to resolve issues or re-direct callers on their first contact with us Maintain a register of compliments and complaints with actions taken	I want to assume everything is ok Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same	1, 2, 3 and 5	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction
9	Having engaged and satisfied staff who have the right skills, tools and support	Ensure necessary training is identified and delivered Undertake annual staff survey. Undertake annual staff performance reviews with regular feedback sessions from supervisors and managers	All officers must be able to undertake a range of activities that address our strategic priorities focusing on ensuring that the three purposes are met by/ for customers	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	Staff sickness and absence at public sector national average or better % of staff who enjoy working for WRS

10	Maintained preparedness for response to emergencies, including disease outbreaks.	Maintain links with county-wide TCG. Take part in partner exercises to test plans, as appropriate Respond to disease notifications and outbreaks	I want to assume everything is ok	1 2, 3, 4 and 5	Disease response plans are maintained, reviewed and updated on a regular basis Business Continuity plans are maintained, reviewed and updated on a regular basis
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As well as the table above, the Strategic Assessment has made a number of recommendations for activity which will form part of the detailed plan that will sit below this. Many of these could not be taken forward during 2020/21 due to the pandemic so this year should see them being delivered, assuming the pandemic is under control. With a number of intelligence gaps or limitations identified, it is recommended these are considered and, where necessary, action taken to address them. This could include the introduction of several 'intelligence development' days where resources from across the service will conduct a range of activities in relation to an agreed function and/or theme. Specific recommended activities included the things listed below. Some are from last year and will be carried forward into this:

- **A monthly assessment of alcohol premises**

This was delivered and now forms part of the non-domestic section of the routine, bi-monthly tactical assessment.

- **Review investigative processes in relation to the retail sector, particularly where complaints relate to the night time economy and/or food premises**

Following on from the previous recommendation, it is suggested that processes are reviewed to ensure cross service breaches are considered before part of a problem is investigated. This is specifically recommended for certain sectors (pubs, clubs, restaurants, takeaways etc.) but is of course dependent on the level of risk. This still needs to be looked at, following a discussion about cross team action and triaging complaints, which may free up capacity but also lead to a greater consideration of intelligence products by team managers/SPs.

- **A project focussing on microchipping and dog ownership**

With a significant proportion of stray or lost dogs having no means of identification, particularly where there are welfare concerns, it is recommended that a promotional project is undertaken to inform and/or remind dog owners about their responsibilities in terms of microchipping and updating ownership information. This is on the work plan for the Technical Services team during 2021/22.

- **An intelligence product relating to the welfare of stray/lost dogs**

With the rate of welfare cases for stray and lost dogs increasing, albeit slightly, it was recommended that intelligence analysis is undertaken to assess any similarities between cases and identify opportunities for prevention and/or enforcement action. This was completed and led to the inclusion of the micro-chipping project in this year's plan.

- **A food safety project targeting takeaways**

With takeaways consistently identified throughout the assessment of food safety data, it is recommended that a project is undertaken to provide advice to relevant businesses owners on commonly identified issues. It is also suggested that a project should include, or be considered by,

Worcestershire Trading Standards Service. This work needs to carry on into 2021/22. The Trading Standards team have started following up on intelligence from Environmental Health and Licensing activities so the results will be followed up during 2021/22.

- **A combined food safety/health and safety project targeting residential care homes**

With residential care homes identified within the analysis of food safety interventions and health and safety accidents, it is recommended that a dual project should be considered to assess the level of compliance. Given the impact of Covid on the Care sector, at this stage we have parked this project. It may be picked up at a later date once the impacts of the pandemic have come out of the system.

- **Review the domestic noise profile**

With a significant proportion of nuisance complaints relating to domestic noise, and an intelligence product recently completed, it is recommended the key findings, assessments and intelligence gaps are reviewed, and appropriate measures taken forward. This is a piece of strategic work that we will look to take forward in 2021/22 as it may inform alternative approaches to tackling persistent nuisance issues

- **An intelligence product relating to taxi licensing**

With a potential inconsistencies identified in relation to taxi licensing complaints and officer enforcement visits, it is recommended that an intelligence product is completed in order to explore incident locations and identify opportunities for intervention. The key elements of this are now picked up in the bi-monthly tactical assessment so should lead to more consistent interventions.

- **An intelligence product relating to illegal puppy breeding**

Worcestershire Regulatory Services officers and Worcestershire Trading Standards Service are known to receive/obtain a range of information relating to the sale/ownership of dogs. Such information is likely to identify illegal breeding activity and this requirement would aid the collation of this information to identify and analyse where this maybe apparent.

FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY

One of the outcomes from the Food Standards Agency audit of the service in relation to the work done on behalf of Wyre Forest was the suggestion from Agency colleagues that the service needed to be clearer with members on what work the service faced each year. Whilst the Agency had no significant concerns regarding what the service was doing, they felt that members should be more aware of what the service intended to deliver each year so that, when approving the service plan, members were also giving their approval to the level of commitment in relation to food law enforcement.

The pandemic has led to the Agency deferring the majority of proactive work that would normally take place within food control. A list of areas that we needed to remain engaged with was provided and the service has endeavoured to discharge these. However, it does mean that there is a significant back log of work to be undertaken and the Agency has yet to outline how it expects local authorities to deal with this. Initial estimates indicate around 1939 visits will be overdue from last year and this will add to the overdue visits from the previous year. Clearly this creates an issue but it is one that the majority of local services will find themselves with.

We are unlikely to know what the Agency is going to ask for until after members have signed off this plan. Hence, there will be a significant number of overdue visits, beyond what could be delivered without significant additional resources and at this stage we cannot tell members what the Agency's intentions are. The Agency has already taken the decision to extend its moratorium on the usual work programme until 30th June 2021, so it seems likely that both members and officers will need to wait for a clear picture of what the Agency's future expectations will be. In terms of resource, the service normally commits 8-12 FTE between October and March to deliver the bulk of the food work programme each year, so an annualised equivalent of 4-6 FTE posts. This is the level of investment that may be needed to catch up but it may be possible to spread this over several years, depending on what the Agency asks. Given the breadth of local authorities that will be in the same situation and the limited availability of agency staff, it is doubtful that the Agency will be able to require the catch up to be achieved within 12 months. The team is looking at what resource can be carved out but until Covid demands abate, it will be difficult to allocate resource to this area, especially going into the Summer when nuisance demand peaks.

The table below is our best estimate currently of where we will be in terms of visits due and what we will be able to discharge with current resource based on the assumption that visits can be delivered normally from September onwards.

Element of Food plan	Visits that would otherwise be scheduled	Visits deliverable with existing resources assuming normality is restored by the end of Q2
Estimated number of Food Hygiene visits scheduled for 2021/22 (based on the Food Hygiene rating system.)	1900, of which about 1000 will be in the higher risk bands A, B, or C.	If we are able to resume 'full' service from June we could achieve half and would only do higher risk visits 950
Estimated number of premises scheduled for alternative approaches to inspection during 2021/22	1100	500
Estimated number of new registrations/ unrated premises that will require inspection during 2021/22	800, of which about one-third will be low risk and can be dealt with by questionnaires	400
Estimated number of overdue premises assessed as requiring a visit during 2021/22	1939 from last year plus those previously identified on the system that would otherwise have been picked up during 2020/21	With existing resource, capacity could cover 250, depending on when visits can re-commence

These figures should give members a reasonable picture of the volume of pro-active food hygiene related activity that should take place during 2021/22, depending on the on-going impact of the pandemic.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Performance against outcomes will be reported to the WRS Board, quarterly, six-monthly or annually, depending on the individual measure. The IT platform enables the collection and analysis of data which is both accurate and robust and recent improvements in data extraction have increased the frequency with which a number of measures can be reported. The service's ability to provide activity data has continued to improve as the benefits of the IT platform have been implemented. Use of time recording to give a better understanding of how much it costs to undertake particular activities is continuing to be refined. Members participated in a session in October 2019 with officers, part of which was to consider the suite of current measures and it was agreed that no changes were required currently. These are listed as appendix C.

9. STRUCTURE

In terms of posts, the Management Team structure implemented in October 2015 is retained with one minor change which is included in the chart outlined at Appendix A. The WRS team's functions are as follows:

- 1) The Community Environmental Health team provides Food Hygiene, Health and Safety at Work, Public Health and Nuisance functions using three teams. Three teams operate on a geographical split covering Redditch/ Bromsgrove, Wychavon/Malvern Hills, Worcester City/ Wyre Forest. The teams rotate around the three geographical areas on a quarterly basis so officers experience and become familiar with the whole county. The geographical teams are organised to reflect the balance of demand across the County. The legal support role also sits in this team as the majority of casework emanates from here.
- 2) The Technical Services team provides all environmental health support around planning matters, delivers IPPC inspection, Air Quality and Contaminated Land Regime work, manages the pest control contracts and directly delivers the Dog Wardens service. The internal IT support and system management roles, due to the complex technical nature of the work and the in-house first-contact team of Duty Officers also sit within this team.
- 3) The Licensing and Support Services unit delivers all WRS licensing administration and licensing enforcement, along with the wider in-house clerical/ administrative support that is required.
- 4) Business and Relationships Management: Supports the Head of Service and Team Managers in their efforts to bring in new business and maintain existing contracts, provides Line Management to our Intelligence Officer.

The arrangement has successfully provided the necessary management cover and support, as well as promoting income generation in many areas of the service.

The Trading Standards element has been retained in the structure chart as, since October 2016, the Community EH Manager and the Head of Regulatory Services have been providing management support to the Trading Standards team. This will continue through 2021/22 with the County Council being very happy with the arrangement. The support of management across the Trading Standard functions by WRS provides additional benefits with cross team working and knowledge, especially in areas of income generation and business support, to the benefit of both WRS partners and the County Council. The County Council last year asked the service to deliver the Safety at Sports Ground function and this

will continue through 2021/22. WRS is also delivering petroleum licensing activities for the County Council alongside the petrol vapour recovery work of the Environmental Permitting team.

10. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Changes to the legal framework occur reasonably frequently and the increased income generation work requires highly competent individuals. To maintain the competence of its staff, meet contractual obligations and ensure that the partner's statutory duties are correctly discharged, the service must maintain a training budget for its staff. Over the life of WRS this has been massively reduced reflecting the financial realities that the service faces and the service uses various approaches to ensure the money is spent wisely. Developing staff to ensure there are opportunities to plan succession is also essential.

In recent years, there has been a focus on enabling staff to work across the Environmental Health professional areas. Few officers only remain competent for one of the professional disciplines. This paid dividends in the pandemic response as it allowed us to move people into either directly servicing the pandemic response or to backfill that capacity in high demand areas like nuisance. At one point, 3 members of the Technical Services team were moved into the Community E.H. Team to deliver our normal Environmental Health work whilst some of that team joined the Local Outbreak Response Team.

Within Licensing, the pandemic gave the opportunity to review administrative processes and reduce the burden of several paper systems. This has allowed officers to look proactively at enforcement across the districts and this will be a focus for the next 12 months. There are some disciplines within licensing that our competent qualified technical officers require training within such as caravan licensing and animal health and this will be the focus to ensure that no officer only has experience of just a single local licensing regime.

In pursuit of this, a competency framework for Technical Officers was developed and it will continue to be used with the aim of identifying training needs and developing the competency of officers more widely. Broader competencies will allow a wider range of people to deliver technical work and enable the service to tender for such contracts outside of the existing Partnership arrangements.

The size of the officer cohort in the service makes buying in trainers to deliver technical training to our teams economically viable for the service. A lot of aspects of professional practice and process are common across the enforcement professions so we can continue to offer this as an option to colleagues within Trading Standards and some of our neighbours where we have spaces available on the courses that we arrange. We ran a number of food forums and other training sessions during last year that were attended by officers from outside of the County.

The regional Heads of Trading Standards Group (CEnTSA,) run a significant number of training courses through its regional co-ordination unit which we will use where we can and the regional Heads of Environmental Health Group (CEnEHMB,) is set to start working with the CEnTSA Co-ordination unit to offer more bespoke professional courses. WRS has been approached by CEnTSA, due to our proactive and innovative intelligence led approach to Environmental Health work, to deliver regional training on their behalf. Engagement with colleagues across the region remains essential to ensure co-ordinated responses to government and a common approach to businesses, thus ensuring the level playing field for competition.

11. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

There is no doubt that the Covid 19 pandemic has tested the business continuity plans of the service and it has risen to the challenges. The decision by the six districts to have a single Environmental Health service has paid dividends in terms of the service's ability to balance pandemic controls with business as usual activities. It is doubtful that six separate services, subject to similar levels of financial reduction over the past 10 years could have responded as well as the shared service.

Business continuity plans for the service were developed and have been shared with the relevant Emergency Planning teams in the partner authorities. If the impact of the on-going financial constraints is that partners require reductions that are not currently envisaged, this will threaten our ability to maintain the full range of interventions across these functions whilst responding to large scale events and delivering contractual obligations. Priorities have therefore been established as part of the Business Continuity Planning process so the service is clear what will stop and what will continue in event of an emergency and how the service would respond to incidents such as the potential destruction of our office base or at least it temporarily being out of action. Additional consideration is required where reductions are suggested to ensure the impact on income generation is understood and this item is included in the current Risk Register, discussed below.

Despite Trading Standards returning to County Council control, the Community Environmental Health team and the Trading Standards and Animal Health unit will continue to work closely together to ensure that, in event of an emergency or capacity shortage, officers can support each other when necessary. Having the teams managed by the same Manager on a day to day basis, together under one roof and in one office space will continue to allow both teams to utilise pairs of hands, extra eyes and ears and boots on the ground, to tackle any incident or alteration to work demands that may require additional resource or a different workforce allocation. In event of a significant issue like an animal disease outbreak, the County Council has previously agreed that any support required from WRS staff will be paid for.

12. LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

The service remains engaged with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership with the aim of improving our relationships with local businesses and identifying their needs with a view to contributing to the growth of the local economy. Throughout the pandemic, the service has engaged with the "One Worcestershire" approach to recovery and business support, engaging with Economic Development colleagues as part of the recovery group. Things like the Business Charter for Regulators, launched during 2012, will continue to inform how we engage with the business community in Worcestershire and we hope that the LEP and others will continue to champion the service and our balanced approach to regulation and enforcement. We wait to see how government's "levelling up" agenda will interface with the LEP-led local Industrial Strategy. Previously, Government has seen this as a way of translating national policy on creating economic growth into local action and, where possible, we will look to support this.

13. OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

The service continues to need to work closely with a range of partners to deliver what is required against a number of agendas. The importance of the six local authority partners is recognised and we will continue to maintain our existing interfaces with other elements of these organisations e.g. Planning, Worcestershire Growth Hub, Economic Development teams, etc.

With the County Council having taken back direct control of Trading Standards functions, it has been essential to retain the strong links between both groups of staff. This is facilitated by the current co-location of teams, with Trading Standards and Animal Health continuing to occupy a section at Wyre Forest House for the foreseeable future. This is particularly relevant for the two Intelligence Officer posts that are split between the two organisations.

Customer demand will have a significant impact on the nature of our interactions with partners as we move the service forward. Close partnership working with a range of professional and community groups is essential to ensure deliver of the outcomes required by partners. Key partners for engagement include:

- West Mercia Police & West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Environment Agency
- The Health and Safety Executive
- Public Health England
- Local Partnership bodies e.g. Community Safety Partnerships, Safer Communities Board, Health and Well-being Board
- Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards
- Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service
- Citizens Advice Consumer Service, local Citizens Advice Bureaux and other 3rd sector organisations
- County Council Public Health team
- Regional Regulatory Partnerships and National Bodies (CIEH, MJAC, CEnEHMB, CEnTSA, CTSI, ACTSO, NTSB,).

Existing links to these bodies will be maintained. Additionally, to ensure WRS provides an attractive product for external clients, engagement with equivalent partners in other geographical regions will be pursued, which will include the collation/interpretation and review of intelligence data in such areas.

Locally, the service has made a good commitment to engaging with the agenda around organised crime. Serious Organised Crime groups are a key target for policing at regional and national level. Business premises are a good way of providing a vehicle for the laundering of money as are property purchases in general. Modern day slavery and other forms of exploitation are now part of what officers are asked to keep an eye out for when visiting businesses. This goes well beyond what Trading Standards colleagues have traditionally dealt with in doorstep crime and scams and builds on the work of licensing colleagues in relation to addressing CSE. The service has seats at the Serious and Organised Crime Joint Actions Groups (SOCJAG,) in the county and regularly contributes to Multi-Agency Tasked Enforcement (MATES,) interventions with the police and other enforcement partners from various agencies.

14. CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

In relation to national consultations on legislative changes, we address these through the relevant professional channels at local, regional and national level. We will continue to engage local members in relation to local policy issues, especially around licensing matters. For general engagement with the wider community of elected members, we will provide a number of Member Newsletters per year so that all are updated on the various activities that the service undertakes across the County. We will try to make this information specific to districts where it is relevant, to

reassure members that our activities are seeking to protect everyone and support businesses across the whole of Worcestershire. It is hoped that the Activity Data reports that will continue to be provided to the WRS Board will provide elected members on the Board with sufficient information to also feedback to the wider membership in their respective authorities.

In terms of business engagement, we will continue to work with colleagues at Worcestershire LEP and Worcestershire Business Central on engaging with our business customers to improve our ability to address their needs. The approach outlined in our business charter will provide the basis for our interactions with the business community.

For members of the public, we will continue to survey customers who have used the service to look at how we dealt with their issues, not only from a satisfaction point of view, but also to see if they feel better equipped to deal with future problems. We will look at ways of making this more efficient using digital channels but previous experience showed a drastic fall in responses when this was used as the only route for getting feedback. For now, we will have to continue with a mixed model of paper surveys and digital feedback.

Helping people to help themselves is at the heart of model of public service engagement we are pursuing and it is essential we move people down this route and reduce the expectation that we will always do it for them. This idea is now developing further with all partners signing up to the “digital first” concept that, where possible, initial contact with partners will always be via a digital channel rather than necessarily requiring either telephony or face-to-face interactions. The new format of the WRS website is being tailored to suit the various digital devices used to access services on-line.

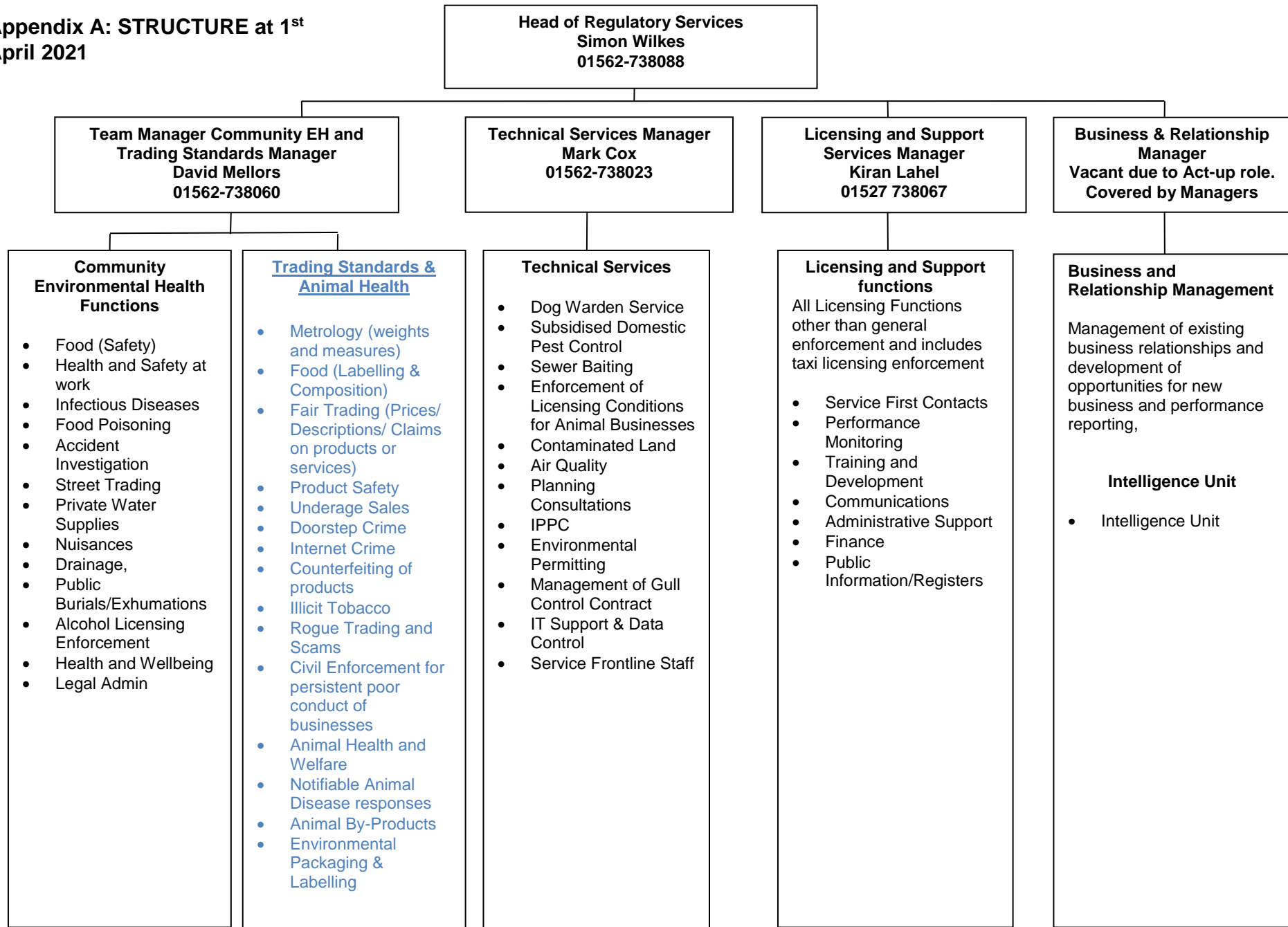
15. GOVERNANCE

The current arrangements came into force on 1st April 2016 following the departure of the county Council from the formal partnership. The original legal agreement indicated that partners would pursue the shared services model for a period of at least 10 years. The 2016 agreement re-iterated this but it contains no formal end date. Officers have asked the Legal Officers from the partner councils to look at this and the view from the majority of Legal Officers is that review is not required and that the current agreement can, in theory continue in perpetuity. Officer members of the Board will need to keep a watching brief on the service and perhaps look at reviews every few years to ensure the service is continuing to deliver. A review of funding, focused on hosting costs will be undertaken during 2021/22.

16. RISKS

A copy of the current Risk Register is appended at Appendix D and has been reviewed and updated for this plan. The impact of the pandemic has created some risks around whether all customers will come back, but so far we have had positive news from most. The number of commercial contracts and obligations increases still carries risk, particularly where sub-contractors or skilled technical staff are involved. This recognises the wider geographical area that the service now covers and level of technical expertise that has to be maintained. The good news is that the pandemic has confirmed our preparedness for a number of the eventualities identified and we have been able to continue to function well in most work areas throughout.

Appendix A: STRUCTURE at 1st April 2021



Appendix B: 3 years of budgets (figures in £000's)

Account description

	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employees			
Monthly salaries	2,935	3,012	3,090
Training for professional qualifications	0	0	0
Medical fees (employees')	2	2	2
Employers' liability insurance	25	25	25
Employees' professional subscriptions	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Employees	2,964	3,041	3,119
Premises			
Rents	52	52	52
Room hire	2	2	2
Trade Waste	1	1	1
Sub-Total - Premises	55	55	55
Transport			
Vehicle repairs/maint'ce	3	3	3
Diesel fuel	8	8	8
Licences	1	1	1
Contract hire of vehicles	4	4	4
Vehicle insurances	5	5	5
Van Lease	9	9	9
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5
Car allowances	70	70	70
Sub-Total - Transport	105	105	105

Supplies & Service

Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	22	22	22
Materials	9	9	9
Clothing, uniforms & laundry	2	2	2
Training fees	23	23	23
General insurances	19	19	19
Printing and stationery	17	17	17
Books and publications	2	2	2
Postage/packaging	11	11	11
ICT	40	40	40
Telephones	21	21	21
Taxi Tests	22	22	22
CRB Checks (taxi)	26	26	26
Support service recharges	100	100	100
Support service recharges - ICT	44	44	44
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	356	356	356

Contractors

Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	229	229	229
Advertising (general)	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	11	11	11
Marketing/promotion/publicity	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Contractors	247	247	247

Income

Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-372	-372	-372
Sub-Total - Income	-372	-372	-372

Income

From partners for Technical Officers	-97	-100	-104
Sub-Total - Income	-97	-100	-104

Additional Income

Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures

Sub-Total - Income

DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET

	-60	-134	-208
	-60	-134	-208
	3,197	3,197	3,197
21-22 Partner Percentages			
Bromsgrove District Council	14.59%		
Malvern Hills District Council	12.82%		
Redditch Borough Council	17.57%		
Worcester City Council	16.58%		
Wychavon District Council	23.29%		
Wyre Forest District Council	15.15%		
Total	100.00%		

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Additional costs for posts for new or additional activities will be allocated using this formula unless the work is requested by either one partner or a group of partners, in which case the relevant partners will agree a formula for cost allocation.

The table below covers off the additional payments that are likely to flow from the current allocations of additional funding for the additional Technical Officer capacity required for a number of pieces of work and also to cover the salary and pension pressures going forward. The latter elements may need to be addressed on a year by year basis.

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2021 / 22					
Bromsgrove District Council	466	11	477	9	486
Malvern Hills District Council	410	14	424	8	432
Redditch Borough Council	562	8	570	10	580
Worcester City Council	530	39	569	10	579
Wychavon District Council	745	16	761	14	775
Wyre Forest District Council	484	10	494	9	503
Total	3,197	98	3,295	60	3,355
	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2022 / 23					
Bromsgrove District Council	466	12	478	20	498
Malvern Hills District Council	410	14	424	18	442
Redditch Borough Council	562	8	570	23	593
Worcester City Council	530	39	569	22	591
Wychavon District Council	745	18	763	31	794
Wyre Forest District Council	484	10	494	20	514
Total	3,197	101	3,298	134	3,432
	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution
	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024	2023 / 2024
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2023 / 24					
Bromsgrove District Council	466	12	478	31	509
Malvern Hills District Council	410	15	425	28	453
Redditch Borough Council	562	8	570	36	606
Worcester City Council	530	40	570	34	604
Wychavon District Council	745	18	763	48	811
Wyre Forest District Council	484	10	494	31	525
Total	3,197	103	3,300	208	3,508

Appendix C: Performance Measures Relating to Outcomes

	Measure	Reporting Frequency	Background
1	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly	Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of members of the public who use the service.
2	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly	Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of businesses inspected or otherwise contacted by the service.
3	% businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	Based on the proportion of businesses meeting the key purpose from a regulatory perspective i.e. food businesses produce safe food.
4	% of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	Based on proportion of businesses scoring 0 1 or 2 star on a national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme assessment (2 stars and below is deemed to be at risk of not producing safe food.)
5	% of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days.	6-monthly	Based on the proportion of drivers licence renewals issued within 5 working days of receipt of application. Note new applicants all require DBS checks and time frames for these fall outside of WRS control, hence they are not included.
6	% of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service	6-monthly	Percentage of vehicles stopped during enforcement exercises that are required to be removed from service for remedial work before being allowed to carry on operating.
7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly	Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of members of the public and businesses who have used the service.
8	Review of register of complaints and compliments	Quarterly	All are recorded Increasing compliments/ Reduced complaints

9	Staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly	Sickness recorded using host processes. The last figure obtained by the host's HR team was that the Public sector average was 8.75
10	% of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	Taken from the staff survey.
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	Indicator, linked to Crime & Disorder agenda, looking at performance of premises license holders and control on their activity.
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	Place indicator, potential link to quality of life and health and well-being.
13	Total income	6-monthly	Expressed as a % of the base district contributions to the revenue budget for this year
14	Cost of regulatory services per head of population	Annually	Will be total spend divided by the total population, based on the most recent mid-year estimate available at the time of publication. NB: Calculation will offset income against revenue budget to account for external income sources

Appendix D: Risk Register 2019/20

Risk Description	Consequences	When is this likely to happen	Current Position			Control measures
			Likelihood	Impact	Matrix RAG Status	
Loss of Data through IT failures	Disruption to Service Provision. Inability to produce records and data.	On-going	Low	High	Green	Wyre Forest ICT has effective processes and business continuity plans in place. WFDC upgraded relevant systems including Windows. The service is in the process of moving to Office 365 during 2021/22, which will provide better access to a range of provisions including Microsoft Teams and Power BI
Issues with the WRS database system	Impact on work planning. Self-help may not enable savings required	On-going	Low	High	Green	The contract has been retendered and awarded through the CCS framework for a two-year term with a view to moving to a cloud based system via a tendering process at that point. This will begin to be investigated next year.
Effective and efficient Business Continuity arrangements in place	Disruption to service if e.g. Major Power failures or other reasons that access to Wyre Forest House is not possible.	On-going	Very Low	Medium	Green	The pandemic has shown that we were well prepared for the need to maximise working from home and now all staff, including some previously regarded as office based can now do this. Touchdown stations remain available in partner council locations. Working from WFDC new depot was not required in 2020 because of the other steps taken. Managers can look at whether a further reduction in space occupied is feasible once the end of pandemic controls is reached.
Maintain our capacity to achieve service delivery	Disruption to service e.g. Major staff sickness (e.g. flu pandemic) or Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified staff.	On-going	Low	Medium	Amber	The pandemic response has shown that the service was well-placed to respond and less than a handful of officers have themselves suffered the illness. Consultants are available to provide short term cover

						<p>and, whilst this worked well in peace-time to cover peak demand periods, the pandemic has revealed the limits to this type of capacity. These pressures will only be resolved in the longer term by local and central government investing in additional capacity and additional training to bring more people into the regulatory professions.</p> <p>Having taken on contracts with additional authorities the demand has increased and neighbouring authorities have lost the ability to assist with some technical specialisms. This is the double edged sword of effectively operating as a centre of excellence. Whilst we have good resource of our own, in event of an issue, there are limits to who we can ask for help. Regional and sub-regional groups are in place so can provide shared resources for local authorities if required.</p> <p>Effective training and development processes are in place to ensure recruitment and retention of staff. There is increased training budget pressure, reduced technical knowledge in neighbouring authorities and increased importance in maintaining heightened skills for contractual obligations and commercial edge.</p> <p>Regular inventory and maintenance of equipment is undertaken. In the future, budget for replace may be an issue but would be a relatively small amount for partners to share.</p>
Pest contractors cease operations.	Disruption to service. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Green	The Pest control framework contract has multiple pest control suppliers so the loss of one allows work to be moved to the others. This should limit or eliminate risk, although the unlikely loss of multiple companies might create capacity issues.
Effective and efficient contract arrangement for dog control	Disruption to service if no kennels available. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Green	The Out of Hours and Kennelling contracts are currently being tendered to enhance the existing arrangements and provide resilience.

Hosting support does not deliver necessary financial and HR support to ensure efficient management	Efficiency of management reduced; staffing issues remain unaddressed and performance suffers	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Issues around access to the financial system from Wyre Forest House should be relieved with new BDC finance system procurement. Workarounds remain in place in the interim.
One or more partners continue to be under great financial pressure and may consider alternatives to the partnership to deliver their service	Creates reputational issues for remaining partners and increases the need to manage overheads. Difficulties in delivering highly varied levels of service	On-going	Medium	High	Amber	New legal agreement limits variations in contribution before partners have to move to contractual relationship but this is quite high before it kicks in (20%.) Leanness of organisation minimises overheads and focuses resource at the front line. Growth strategy should generate income to support partners in the future but there are limits to this without additional capacity being added to the system. Invest to save capacity has been committed by partners to see if this achieves the necessary outcomes.
Robust arrangements in place in relation to obtaining legal advice and monitoring legislative changes.	Loss of cases is costly and damages reputation.	On-going	Low	Medium	Green	Continued close working with BDC legal team and other partners who don't use BDC for advocacy. Technical and legal training days for staff. Difficulty in keeping informed of Case Law developments. Membership and attendance of Officer Technical Groups outside the County does assist.
Service provision complies with Government requirements	Adverse comments following audits e.g. FSA Intervention by Government bodies i.e. FSA, whilst highly unlikely, is damaging to reputation.	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Limited detail of what statutory minima are can make decision making difficult around what is required in law as a minimum. LGA clearly aware of impact of budget reductions on regulation and has made it clear Government cannot expect what it had previously. Fewer interventions/ audits by government. Service has developed systems that follow the principles of the requirements of bodies like FSA so can show some level of compliance but service isn't operating to the letter of the current Code. The Code is however currently going through major changes and likely to move to a point where it is closer to the WRS model of

						operation. Environmental reporting for Local Air Quality Management, Pollution Prevention and Control and Private Water Supply Inspection reports to Defra and DWI have received positive responses with no issues of concern raised by these bodies.
Failure to deliver external contract work at the level expected by the business or local authority with whom we have the contract	Damage to reputation, loss of future income streams, financial impact of paying damages	On-going	Low	High	Green	Ensure contract negotiations are clear on performance criteria and these are clearly recorded in the final documentation. Monthly reviews against performance criteria. Select staff to ensure competence of those undertaking work outside Worcestershire. Maintain strong links with the customer's monitoring staff. Intervene early with corrective action

Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board

Date: 11th February 2021

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 and 3 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 the first 3 quarters of 2020/21 but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

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

Report

Activity Data

The third quarter of 2020/21 featured a second mini-lockdown and the area working its way through Central Government's Covid control tier system. Officers dealing with Covid have had to respond to and adjust activities twice in this period to accommodate a rapidly changing regulatory framework. This was whilst managing business as usual activity which delivered an unexpected flurry of statutory nuisance work during November.

The Food Standards Agency suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this continued throughout the second quarter. In the third quarter the Agency returned to local authorities providing a slight amendment to their expectations. The service will be expected to deliver on a range of activities, focused only on the highest risk businesses and, in some cases, this will be tackled during Q4 alongside Covid control visits. Numbers of interventions for the year will inevitably remain low, reflecting that the service was engaged mainly with new entrants to the sector, those wanting re-rating and those that posed the highest hygiene risk locally. All allegations of serious non-compliance have been and will continue to be followed up but thankfully these have

been relatively few in number as a proportion of the total number of food complaints.

On the Health and Safety at Work front, we saw a reversal of last quarter with accident numbers up and a fall in complaints and enquiries. However, two lengthy and complex investigations were concluded in Q3 with prosecution files being submitted to the relevant partner legal teams. These relate to serious injuries sustained at a workplace and a fatality in connection with leisure activities.

Stray dog numbers continued to follow their downward trend and numbers of complaints/ enquiries about dogs followed their cycle around their own downward line. Both remain indicative of improved conduct of owners however concerns remain that the economic difficulties that will ultimately follow from the pandemic might lead to a spike in dog abandonment. Time will tell.

Although numbers increased into quarter 3, the number of licensing cases received in the year to date represents a reduction of approximately 31% and 24% compared to previous years. This is hardly surprising with the hospitality sector and night time economy significantly affected by COVID-19 restrictions and overall we have seen a significant reduction in the volume of alcohol licensing applications, for particularly temporary event notices. Overall, approximately half of cases dealt with by the team have been applications and registrations; with 37% of these cases relating to hackney carriage vehicles and 11% relating to premises licences.

In general terms, licensing receives a higher number of enquiries (generally requests for advice or information) compared to complaints about the conduct of a license-holder. Based on the 380 cases recorded in the year to date, 28% have related to taxis, 22% have related to alcohol licensing and 17% have related to animal licensing.

Quarter 3 saw planning application numbers continue to rise, following the trajectory predicted by our historical data. Information Requests, often associated with the planning and development process also continued on an upward trajectory during this period, supplemented by requests for information about the Covid response.

Following the usual summer peak, overall numbers of nuisance complaints fell during quarter 3 although unusually there was a further spike in activity in November providing a challenge to resources. The number of pollution cases received in the year to date represents an increase of approximately 7% and 23% compared respectively to the previous 2 years. Approximately 44% of cases have related to domestic noise, whilst 21% have related to smoke nuisance. A significant proportion of the latter has related to domestic bonfires which have often been discussed with Board members as something that the law allows but the public find difficult to accept, especially given the current pandemic restrictions. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions are a notable factor in the level of domestic nuisance, good weather still remains the major driver behind numbers.

As we have reported previously, our business as usual services continue to be delivered against the background of the service having a significant staff commitment to the pandemic response. Your Officers responding to the challenging pandemic and equally those who continue to manage and deliver the normal day to day activities on the front line deserve a huge amount of praise at a time when things are far from normal and they are continually tested beyond anything the professions have encountered in our lifetime.

Covid related activities

Covid Advisor work is covered in a separate report that forms part of this meeting's agenda.

Covid Enforcement

WRS investigated 873 Covid related requests Q3 with an approximate 70/30% split between complaints and advice being sought by businesses. This includes service requests made by the Police for joint operations, demonstrating our close working relationship.

The following is a breakdown of the formal actions taken:

	Prohibition Notices	Written/Verbal Warnings
Bromsgrove	-	5
Malvern Hills	1	10
Redditch	2	22
Worcester City	2	5
Wychavon	3	8
Wyre Forest	1	26

	Prohibition Notices	Written/Verbal Warnings
Restaurants/Cafes	-	23
Pubs/Clubs	2	22
Takeaways	-	28
Other Food Premises	-	3
Non Food Premises	7	-

Local Outbreak Response Team

WRS, with Officers embedded within the Local Outbreak Response Team, dealt with a total of 190 referrals Q3. 25 were general complaints about Covid controls, 4 seeking advice. 161 were regarding outbreaks though 70% related to one or two cases only.

Backward Contact Tracing

WRS commenced backwards contact tracing during this period whereby the Public Health team identify a District and sometimes specific age groups for WRS to follow up on contacts. The purpose is to conduct do in depth interviews (30 mins to 1 hour) with positive cases and identify any links to workplaces, schools, etc or whether just unknown community transmission. We contacted some 560 parties Q3 with several significant links and unreported incidents being reported back to PH/PHE for further investigation.

Lost to follow-up

This is the term used to describe individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19 but not engaged with National NHS Track and Trace teams and so have been 'lost to follow-up calls'. WRS and Partner Councils have been providing local support to the NHS since the end of November. The process is different for each local authority area, but for all WRS try to contact the individual with three calls in three hours. The aim is to confirm they are self isolating, establish whether others have been in contact with them and obtain their contact details.

Where contact can not be established alternative locally held contact details are checked by District Council teams and then additional calls are made. In Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcester City these calls are made by their own employees during the week with follow up door knocks to encourage them to engage with the callers. For all Districts at weekends and for Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Wyre Forest during the week WRS make the additional calls and undertake door knocking.

District	% allocated reached locally by WRS (and partners*)	% reached by national team
Bromsgrove	48.3*	40.2%
Wyre Forest	44.8	37.0%
Malvern Hills	36.4	38.9%
Worcester	48.7*	39.5%
Wychavon	54.3	39.2%
Redditch	47.3*	40.2%

For the few individuals who are identified as not self isolating referrals are made to the police as the relevant enforcing authority.

Performance

Quarter 3 is a period in the year where reporting against the suite of indicators is more limited. The year continues reasonably well from a

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customer satisfaction perspective with the non-business customer measure at 73.6% and business customers at 98.1%. Given the demands and pressures on the service this year, this has to be seen as impressive. At the same point last year, customer satisfaction was at 73.5% and business satisfaction at 97%.

People who felt better equipped to deal with issues has fallen slightly from 72.3% to 67.5%, however it is still above the 62% that it was this time last year.

As Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have intermittently been open for business, there is still no meaningful data to show the % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service.

9 RBC, 1 BDC and 1 WFDC vehicles were suspended in Q2. The WFDC vehicle was suspended after an accident rather than being found defective in service. 5 vehicles were recorded as non-compliant in Worcester in Q3 (4 in Oct, 1 in Nov), all for over ranking.

Compliments outnumber complaints by around 4:1 (31:120). Staff sickness is up but still looking good at 1.65 days per FTE. This includes additional staff taken on for pandemic response. This is better than last year's figure at Q3 (3.82 days per FTE.)

Other indicators are not reported in this period but we thought members might be interested in our engagement with licensed premises as they have featured heavily in our Covid related activity. We report each year on the proportion of premises subject to allegations of failing to uphold the 4 licensing objectives. It is debatable in legal terms whether the Covid controls do indicate a failure to comply with the objectives and so in the last quarter we left Covid allegations out of the report. However, we have seen one review under the 2003 Act come forward in the County as a result of Covid breaches and the summary review process has been used elsewhere to help deal with such non-compliances.

The table below shows the levels of allegations that our normal indicator would yield up until 31st December 2020 and alongside these, the same figure if Covid breaches are included in the calculation.

District	Normal Measure	With Covid Breaches
Bromsgrove	4.9	15.8
Malvern Hills	3.0	8.3
Redditch	8.3	19.9
Worcester City	4.5	10.7
Wychavon	3.3	14.0

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Wyre Forest	4.5	23.0
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This reflects the hugely increased level of engagement with the licensed trade that we have seen during the pandemic. It is important to say that the vast majority of breaches identified have been minor and that the vast majority of pubs and restaurants with alcohol licenses have worked incredibly hard to achieve compliance and protect the health of customers. Now that premises can only operate as takeaways and alcohol sales have to be only by delivery, we should see these figures fall dramatically.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

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

Appendix B: Performance indicator table

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	75.4	73.6	
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	99.3	97.7	98.1	
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3	Bromsgrove 98.6 Malvern Hills 98.6 Redditch 97.7 Worcester City 98.3 Wychavon 99.1 Wyre Forest 98.2 Worcestershire 98.5	98.4	
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.7	1.5	1.6	
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 100 Malvern Hills 85.7 Redditch 97.9 Worcester City 93.9 Wychavon 97.9 Wyre Forest 100 Worcestershire 97.4	NA	
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this	6-monthly	NA	As Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have only recently re-opened for business, at this stage there is no meaning full data for this measure. Enforcement capacity is	NA	

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	represents of the fleet county-wide			currently focused on Covid compliance in licensed premises so no taxi stop checks.		
7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	63.2	72.3	67.5	
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/18	24/ 78	31/120	
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.61 days per FTE	0.95 days per FTE	1.65 days per FTE	
10	% of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 4.0 Malvern Hills 3.0 Redditch 8.3 Worcester City 4.5 Wychavon 3.3 Wyre Forest 4.5 Worcestershire 4.3	NA	
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.98 Malvern Hills 0.84 Redditch 1.20 Worcester City 1.16 Wychavon 0.64 Wyre Forest 0.86 Worcestershire 0.94	NA	
13	Total income expressed as a % of	6-monthly	NA		NA	

district base revenue budget (16/17)					
14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	

Complaint Breakdown

	BDC	MHDC	RBC	WC	WFDC	WDC	Other	Total
Q1	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	6
Q2	0	1	3	2	1	3	6	16
Q3	2	0	0	0	1	1	5	9
Q4								
Total	4	1	4	4	3	4	11	31

Compliment Breakdown

	BDC	MHDC	RBC	WC	WFDC	WDC	Other	Total
Q1	4	2	4	2	2	3	1	18
Q2	5	9	4	15	7	16	8	64
Q3	10	6	7	4	1	9	1	38
Q4								
Total	19	17	15	21	10	28	10	120

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Worcestershire
Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2020-21



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
*making
a
difference*
www.redditchbc.gov.uk



Worcester
CITY COUNCIL



WYCHAVON
DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value



Wyre Forest
District Council

Foreword

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

The third quarter of the year was again dominated by Covid 19 related activity and officers had to get to grips with transitions between a number of different control arrangements, from re-opening to mini-lockdown to the tier system and then from Tier 2 to Tier 3 and now back to another November-style lockdown. As ever, there remained a significant volume of our normal day-to-day work to do, creating further pressures that the service had to bare.

The pattern of dog control complaints fell from a peak in Q2 back towards the normal levels and stray dog numbers still followed the historical downward trajectory. Food complaints maintained more normal levels as food businesses remained open to the public, albeit with more controls and, in some cases, limitations on hours of operation. Proactive food visits remained low as the FSA continues to put a hold on the usual inspection programme. This has now been extended to the end of June 2021. Health and Safety complaints and enquiries returned to more normal levels, however, accident reports increased, most likely due to reports of workplace Covid 19 transmission.

Number of Licensing complaints and enquiries returned to the normal trajectory line by the end of Q3 and numbers of applications were tracking slightly above the trajectory line, although not by a significant amount.

Requests for planning support remained up in Q3, continuing to follow the upward trajectory previously established. Environmental Information and similar requests also continued to rise during the quarter.

Nuisance and public health complaints show their usual Autumn decrease from very high levels during the Summer, with noise complaints for the period being virtually the same as the equivalent period the previous year. If the usual pattern follows and particularly with lockdown, numbers should increase during quarter 4. Although it does not show up in the granularity of the figures, there was a spike in domestic nuisance issues during the November lockdown. This is likely to be for reasons previously explained.

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

Many thanks



Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory Services

Community Environmental Health

COVID-19

The CEH team of four officers, dedicated to supporting Worcestershire Public Health with investigations in workplaces, dealt with 190 service requests from the LORT (Local Outbreak Response Team). These involved a wide range of premises from the hospitality sector seeking advice about good practice, the Tier system and November lockdown to complaints about lack of adequate Covid controls. We also investigated links to outbreaks across a whole range of business settings. During September, October and November positive cases reported tended to be low numbers but as we moved into December we started to receive reports of multiple numbers affected. In early December, we sent out information to all our registered 'wet bars' advising them of Covid controls required and how they needed to comply with food law now they were required to offer a 'substantial meal' with alcohol service. As the Board will be aware, many struggled to comply with this requirement leading to much negative publicity.

Officers continue to interpret the ever-changing legislation and guidance in order to support businesses to operate in a COVID secure manner. Advice has been well received and the business sectors affected by closure or significant adaptations to their operating models have in the vast majority of cases acted positively and appropriately to achieve compliance. Where businesses have failed to comply with the legislation, officers have issued prohibition notices. Challenges from traders and their solicitors have been forthcoming but in each case the service has maintained a robust position to protect the public health.

Food Safety

We continue to receive new Food Premises Registrations. In our third quarter, 215 new businesses registered; the majority being small home enterprises although we also continue to receive new high street applicants. In accordance with FSA guidance we are not carrying out routine food visits other than where we have identified there to be a major public health risk either from previous history, a complaint or through our intel systems. We also assess risk by sending a questionnaire to all new businesses to help us identify type of food being produced. This system also continues to be used for maintaining contact with our very low risk businesses and we continue to receive a good response to questionnaires. In many cases we are able to give a business a hygiene rating from the information provided, in others we will verify information by phone or a visit. We have continued to carry out remote inspections of some premises but the demand on resources from Covid work has limited this work. In December we were able to recruit the equivalent of one FTE to solely concentrate on food work going forward.

Food officers also spent time working with NeoKare Nutrition (Redditch) a new food factory producing processed human baby milk. The company, who have a factory in India, were recommended to the county by the FSA/DTI. It is the first private business of this type to operate in the UK and has been a learning curve for all parties. Their long term plan is to export the produce throughout Europe.

In December we welcomed two new Primary Authorities – Alimenti (Malvern) a small food consultancy and Mindful Chef (Redditch) a web based healthy meals provider who have trebled their business in the past year. Our Food Lead also became heavily involved in Brexit preparations for food businesses attending various webinars and having to deal with a constantly changing landscape of information.

Nuisance

Whilst demand for nuisance investigations usually falls significantly during Q3, this year we experienced a further spike in demand, believed to be due to lockdown leading to more people working from home where they are then noticing a variety of issues including noise, smoke from bonfires and from log-burners, and light nuisance from security lighting and in one case from a large animated advertising display screen. Lockdown appears also to have led to reduced tolerance of some unavoidable noise sources such as construction site noise, even where this is taking place during normal daytime working hours. We have also seen significant numbers of complaints about rodent activity, possibly exacerbated by the relatively mild weather conditions during Q3.

An appeal against an abatement notice relating to noise from a large distribution centre was lodged, and we have prepared a case for the appeal hearing, however the company appears to have decided to take steps instead to comply with the notice, and has employed an acoustic consultant to assist them with this with whom our officers are working to achieve a resolution. The legal process is currently on hold pending the outcome of the works, and we are optimistic that a satisfactory noise reduction can be achieved by the measures proposed.

Two prosecution files in relation to noise from barking dogs are awaiting trial dates – the first has been adjourned a number of times already due to large backlogs of cases in the courts due to covid-19 restricting courts ability to deal with cases.

A number of notices have been served during the period in relation to such diverse issues as noise nuisance, accumulations of waste causing pest problems, light nuisance and inadequate drainage systems

Health and Safety

Two lengthy and complex investigations were concluded in Q3 with prosecution files being submitted to the relevant partner legal teams. These relate to serious injuries sustained at a workplace and a fatality in connection with leisure activities.

An investigation into a serious accident at a hotel in Droitwich was concluded by the company accepting a Simple Caution. This is an admission of guilt which is placed on record and may be considered by a Court in the event of any future contraventions.

Regulated premises across the County have been contacted with guidance regarding the controlling of crowds being issues in relation to COVID security.

Licensing

The quarter commenced with the majority of licensed premises being able to open including those that required personal licenses as the relaxation of restrictions in quarter two followed through into quarter three.

Many district buildings re-opened allowing licensing appointments to commence allowing new driver applications and knowledge and skills test to also re-commence even though be it was only for a short time as in November we were plunged into tier restrictions which meant some of these duties once again had to be parked.

Work commenced on the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards that were introduced by the DFT earlier this year and reports were circulated to all committees where appropriate and the WRS Board. Whilst the focus of these standards is on protecting children and vulnerable adults, all passengers will benefit from the recommendations, which aim to better regulate the taxi and PHV sector.

Page 39
October, there was a national Scrap Metal week of action and on Thursday 15th October the team supported the Police, environment agency, VOSA and the civil enforcement team at Wyre Forest District Council to help out with a day of action. Roadside checks for collectors and visits to known scrap metal sites were undertaken. Encouragingly there were no significant issues found and good links were made with a number of agencies for future work and investigations.

The Licensing team launched a intelligence operation looking at illegal puppy breeding and are using a intelligence based approach engaging with a number of other departments and agencies to look pragmatically at illegal puppy complaints including illegal breeding, noise and the illegal selling of puppies.

Throughout quarter three licensing officers have been supporting Community Environmental Health colleagues and West Mercia Police with the night time economy enforcement response as part of the WRS workstream specifically focusing on licensed premises and will continue to do so whilst COVID-19 restrictions remain in place.

Technical Services

Dog Control

The third quarter was fairly consistent with the second quarter, with the service having received vcontact in relation to 325 dog related matters; including enquiries for assistance or advice and complaints. Of the 306 dogs that were reported lost or found, 23 were lost and an additional 5 were reported as being loose. We were successful in reuniting 152 dogs with their owners, and rehoming 28 with recognised animal rehoming charities. In addition to this a number of press releases were issued in relation to warning potential new owners to take care when looking to buy a new dog from private sellers.

Air Quality

Air Quality monitoring work resumed in July and has now been fully established nevertheless, it is expected that the data collected for 2020-21 will not be representative of a normal year due to the lockdowns experienced to date. Road traffic statistics provided by the County Council confirm that traffic levels are consistency below average declining from 80% down to 60% between November and the end of 2021. On a more positive note, officers have been able to re-commission a gas analyser in Kidderminster which provides continuous accurate data for urban NO2 emissions. The data collected from this unit can be observed in real time and downloaded from;

https://ukairquality.net/Dashboard/Index_?dashboardName=Dashboard_2&id=284&stationInfoConfigKey=stationinfolpage&DeviceType=desktop&FromAdmin=false&showHiddenElements=false&isPopup=false

<https://www.ukairquality.net/home/map>

The data will be used to provide unofficial monthly corrected data for diffusion tube analyses that takes place in other parts of the County that previously was only available as annual averages and provided retrospectively at the end of April the following year.

Officers have also completed a detailed air quality model for Comberton Road in Kidderminster and will be consulting the Council on the outcomes of this work in Q4.

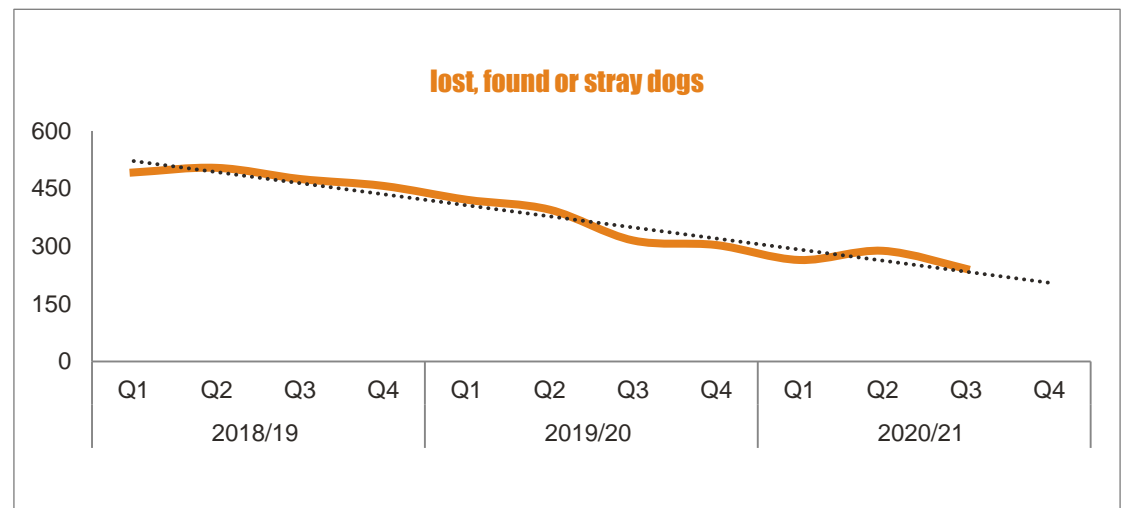
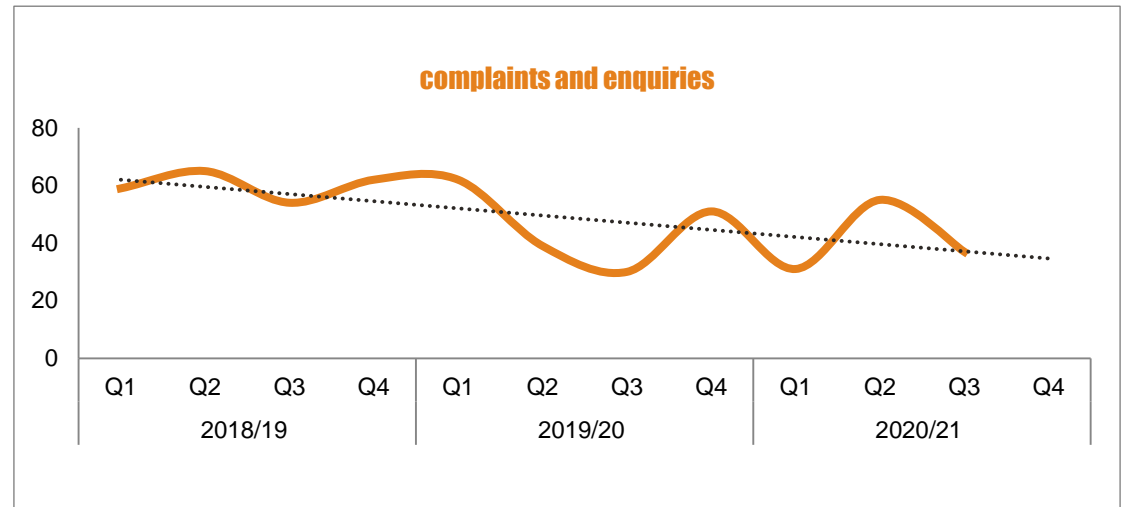
Contaminated Land

Along with Legal Services at Redditch Borough Council Officers have recently been reviewing the status of Part IIA contaminated land declarations at Marlpool Drive following several enquires by local residents. The joint review confirmed that the status of the determinations should remain unchanged due to the nuances associated with the method of landfill gas mitigation until further notice.

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

Despite a minor increase the previous quarter, the number of stray or lost dogs reported to WRS continues to decline. The total number of cases recorded in the year to date is a reduction of approximately 46% and 29% compared to previous years. The nature of the cases recorded remains consistent however, with 64% relating to 'contained' stray dogs. This means the dog was found and held by, for example, a member of the public. Approximately 77% of stray dogs have been returned to their owners whilst 14% have been rehomed.

In general, the service receives a low number of dog control complaints. Based on the 92 cases recorded in the year to date, 45% have related to fouling and persistent straying, whilst 43% have related to dangerous dogs.

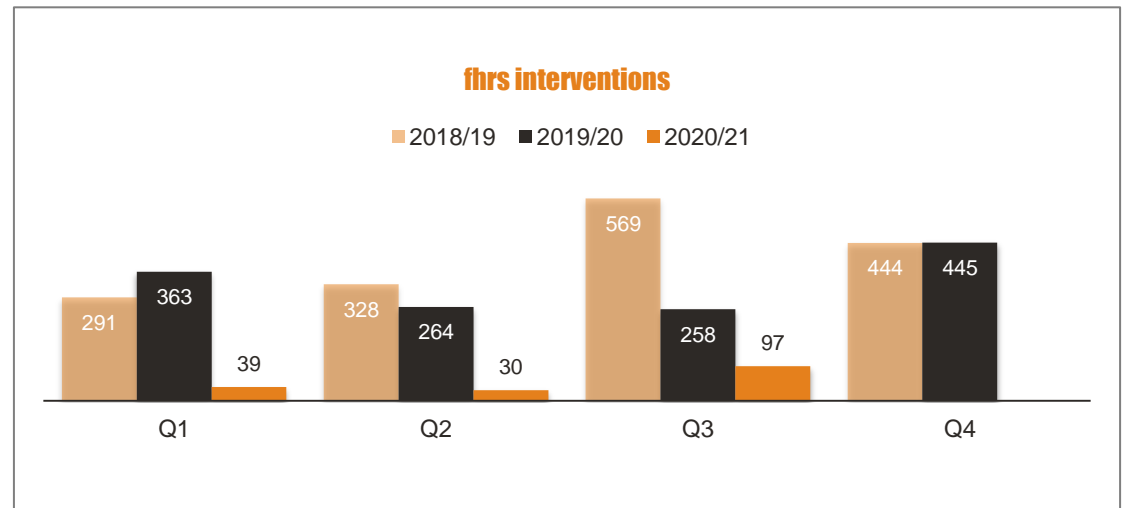
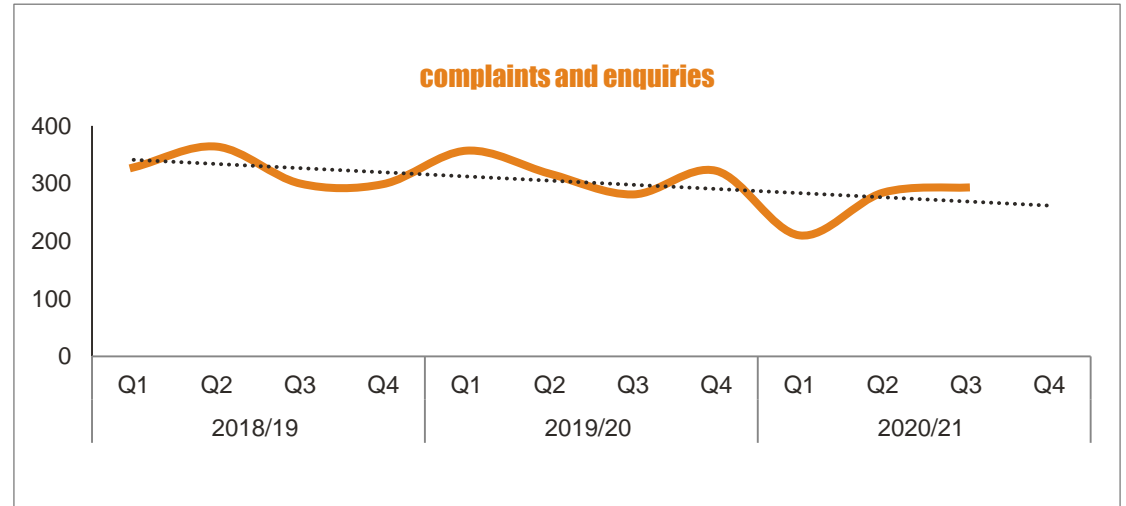


Work in this area of regulation has been hampered severely by national lockdowns and officers have been securing compliance through the application of blended inspection work (Site visit only when permissible and necessary, video conferencing and documentation audits). It is envisaged that this will continue through Q4 which provides the County with the best balance of regulation and support for business under the circumstance.

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

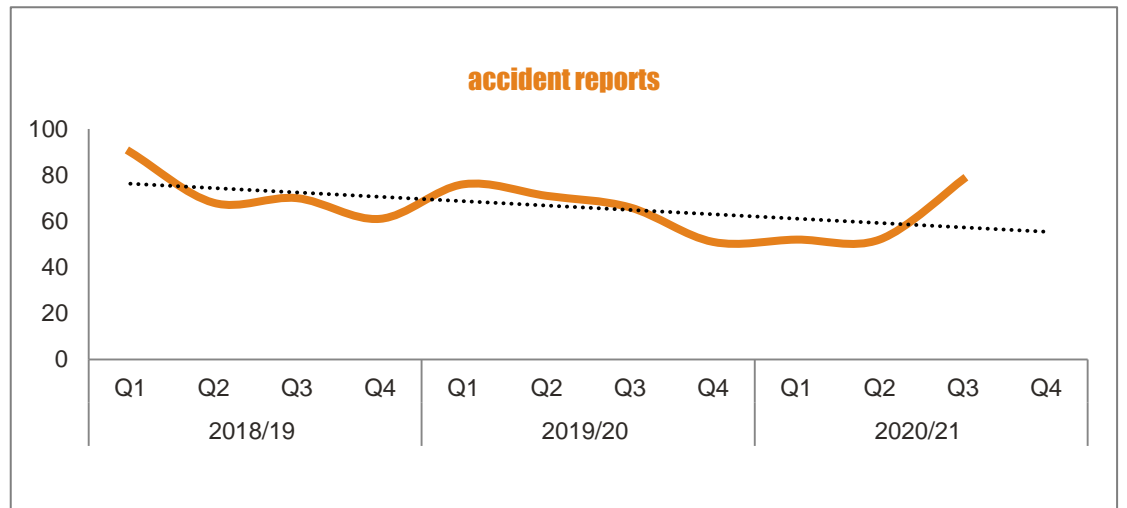
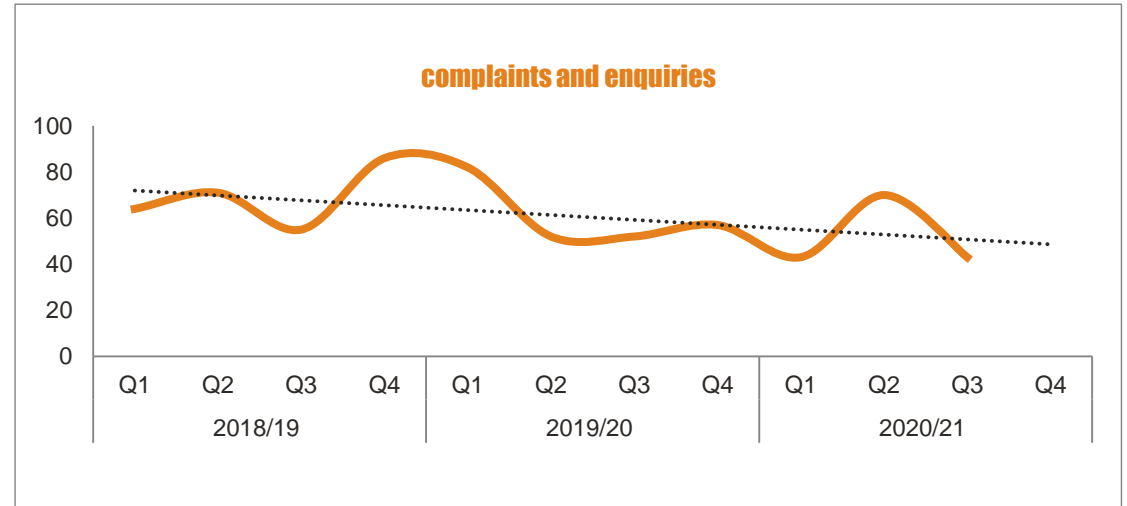
The number of food safety cases received in the year to date is a reduction of approximately 17% and 20% compared to previous years. This reduction, particularly during quarter one, coincides with the closing of the hospitality sector due to restrictions implemented as a result of COVID-19. Based on the 353 complaints received, 76% have been related to products purchased from food premises, whilst 24% have related to hygiene standards and practices.

A total of 4 interventions conducted in the year to date have resulted in a non compliant (0, 1 or 2) rating being issued. A significantly lower number of interventions have been undertaken this year however due to COVID-19 restrictions.



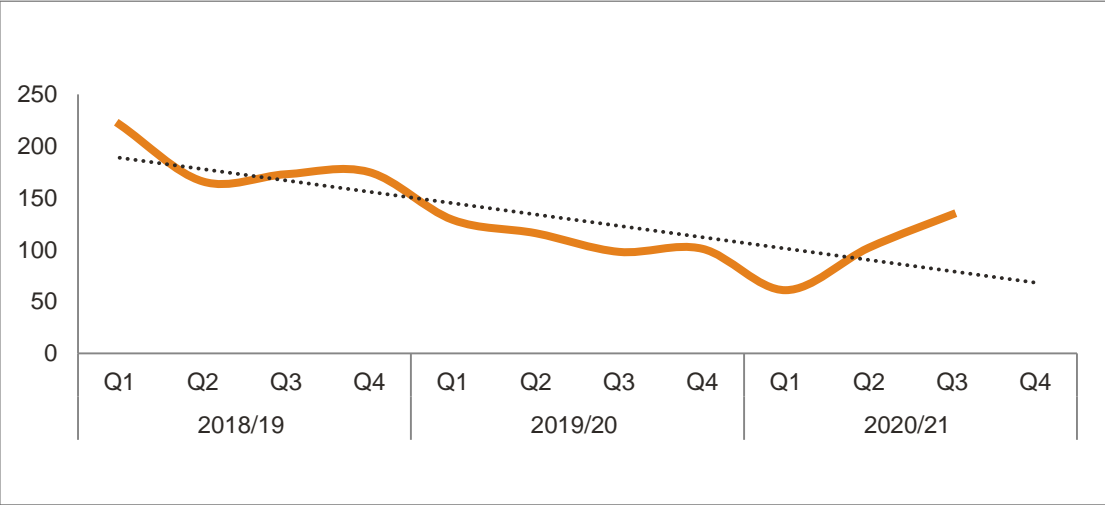
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to health and safety at work. This includes requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of notifications received by WRS relating to accidents.

The number of health and safety at work cases received in the year to date is a reduction of approximately 19% and 15% compared to previous years. Approximately 53% of cases have been reports of accidents; with 37% of these reports relating to injuries where a worker is incapacitated for more than seven days. A further 28% have related to viruses and diseases; specifically positive COVID-19 tests in permise such as residential care homes.



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

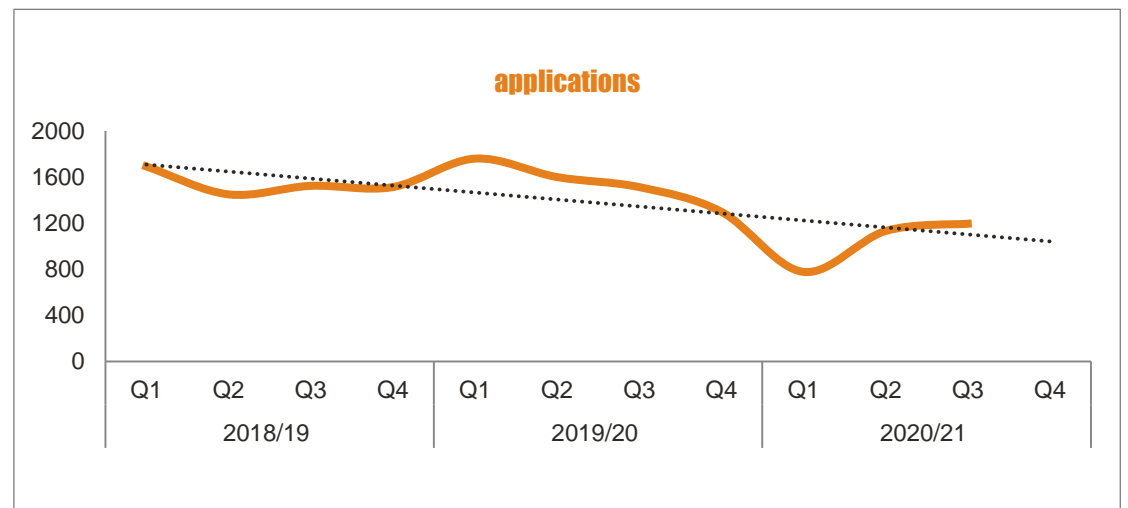
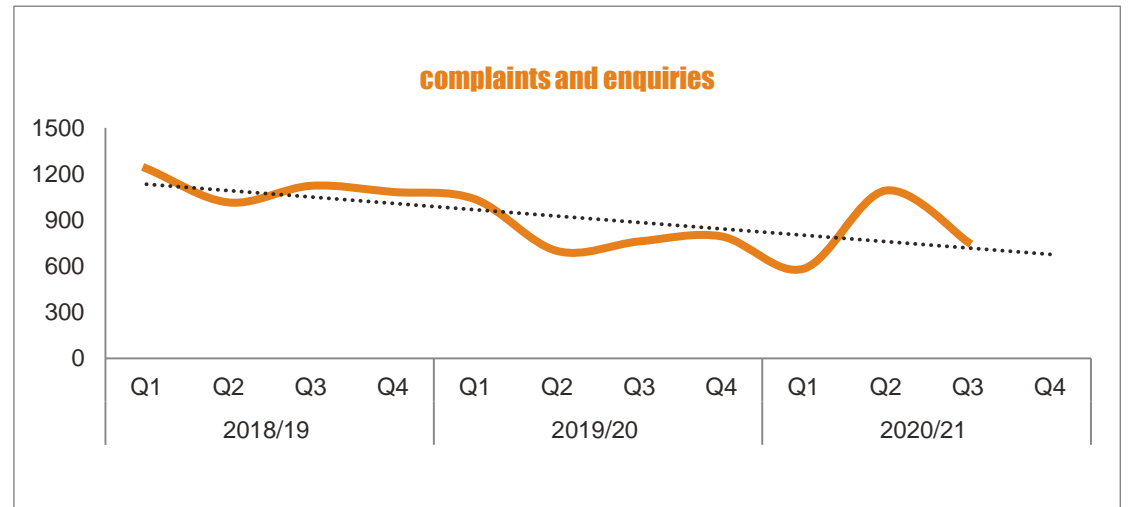
Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

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

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The number of licensing cases received in the year to date is a reduction of approximately 31% and 24% compared to previous years. With the hospitality sector and night time economy significantly affected by COVID-19 restrictions however, this has led to a significant reduction in the volume of alcohol licensing applications - particularly temporary event notices. Approximately 56% of cases have been applications and registrations; with 37% of these cases relating to hackney carriage vehicles and 11% relating to premises licences.

In general terms, licensing receive a higher number of enquiries compared to complaints. Based on the 380 cases recorded in the year to date, 28% have related to taxis, 22% have related to alcohol licensing and 17% have related to animal licensing.



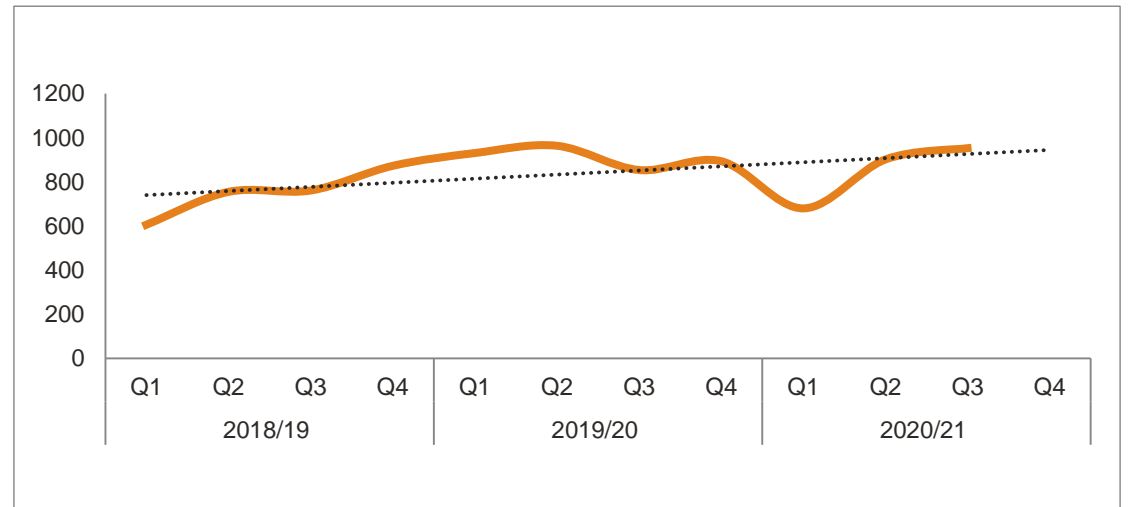
The chart (right) shows the number of planning enquiries completed by WRS over a three year period. The majority of these requests are consultations but can also include requests to discharge conditions.

Planning requests relate to the following;

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

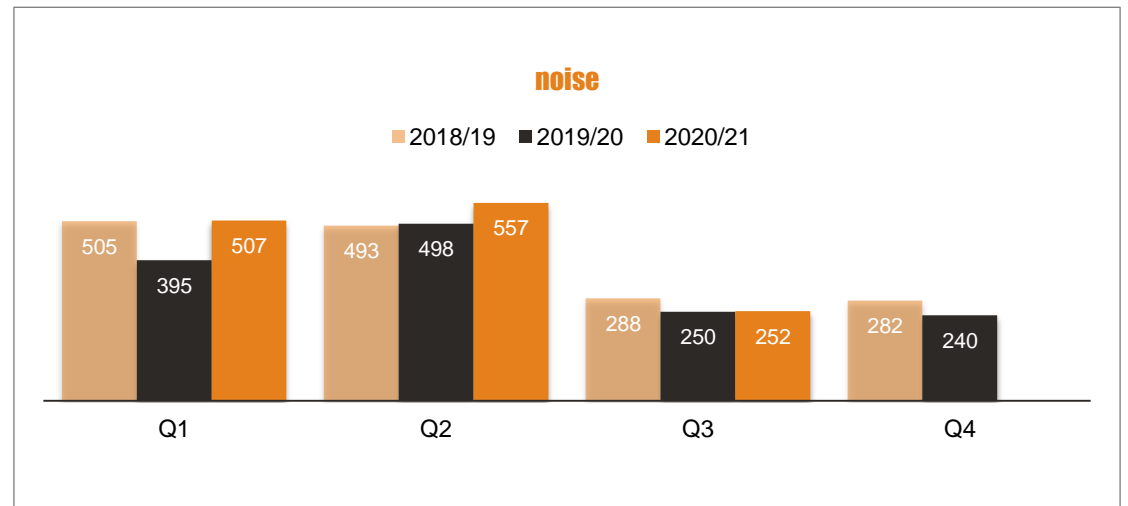
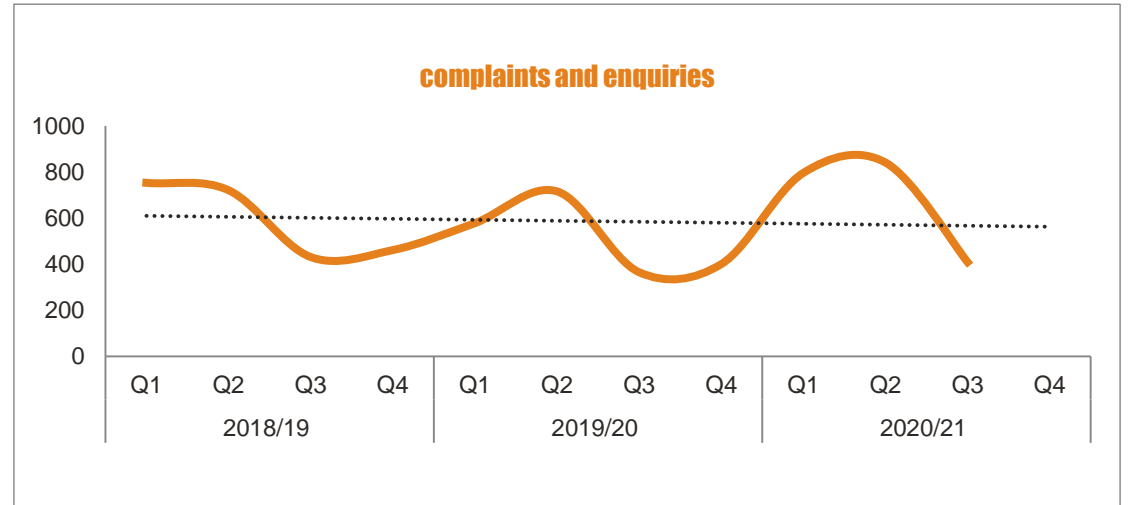
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The number of planning enquiries received in the year to date is an increase of 19% compared to 2018/19 but a reduction of 7% compared to 2019/20. Approximately 91% of planning enquiries have been consultations, whilst 53% have related to contaminated land. A fifth of planning enquiries are completed on a contractual basis on behalf of other local authorities.



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

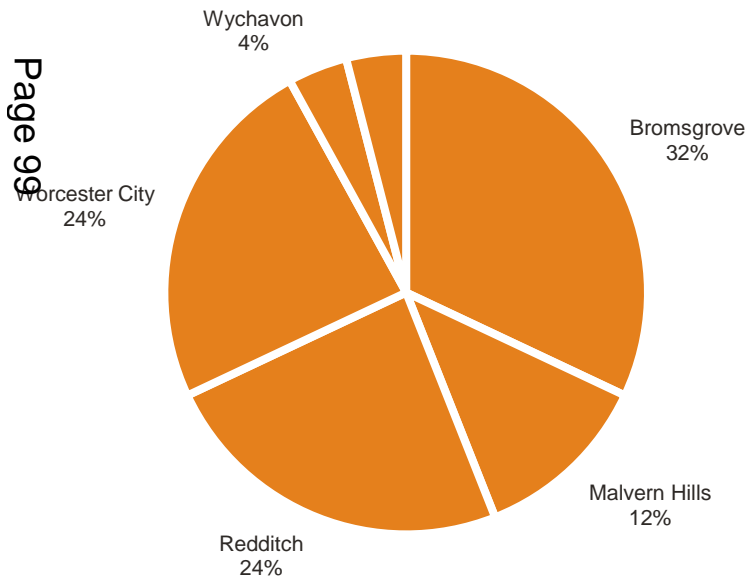
The number of pollution cases received in the year to date is an increase of approximately 7% and 23% compared to previous years. Approximately 44% of cases have related to domestic noise, whilst 21% have related to smoke nuisance. A significant proportion of the latter has related to domestic bonfires. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions are a notable factor in the level of domestic nuisance, meteorological factors also have a significant impact.



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.

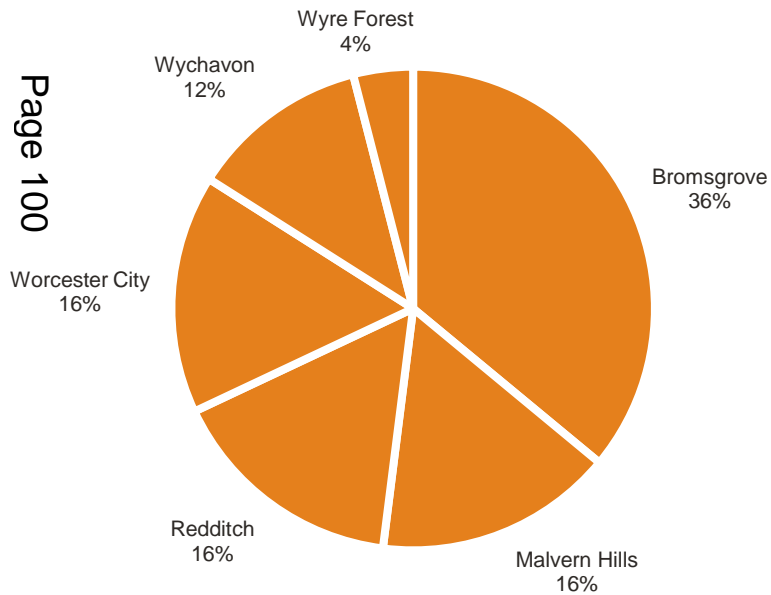
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Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Wribbenhall And Arley	26	5,444	4.78
Perryfields	7	1,501	4.66
Norton	15	3,707	4.05
Avoncroft	12	3,300	3.64
Abbey	23	6,620	3.47
Lowes Hill	10	2,903	3.44
Chase	21	6,217	3.38
Rubery South	10	2,984	3.35
Sanders Park	12	3,651	3.29
Central (Redditch)	22	6,844	3.21
Warndon	18	5,669	3.18
Saint John	28	8,836	3.17
Lindridge	7	2,261	3.10
Charford	11	3,665	3.00
Crabbs Cross	16	5,647	2.83
Bedwardine	23	8,167	2.82
Winyates	23	8,184	2.81
Lodge Park	15	5,591	2.68
Link	17	6,438	2.64
Gorse Hill	15	5,839	2.57
Cathedral	30	11,763	2.55
Hill Top	6	2,382	2.52
Church Hill	20	8,062	2.48
Claines	20	8,076	2.48
Evesham South	13	5,423	2.40

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.

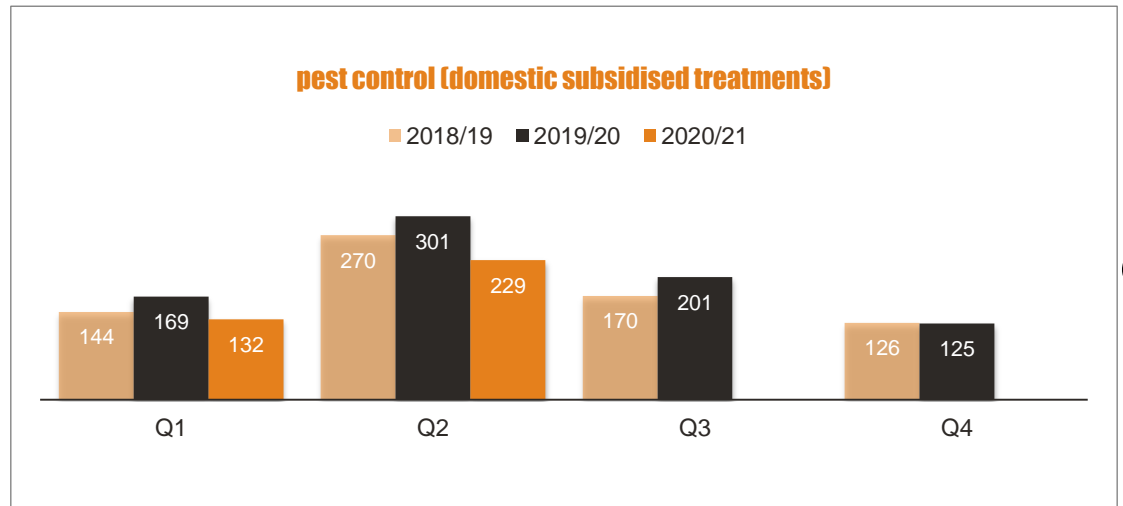
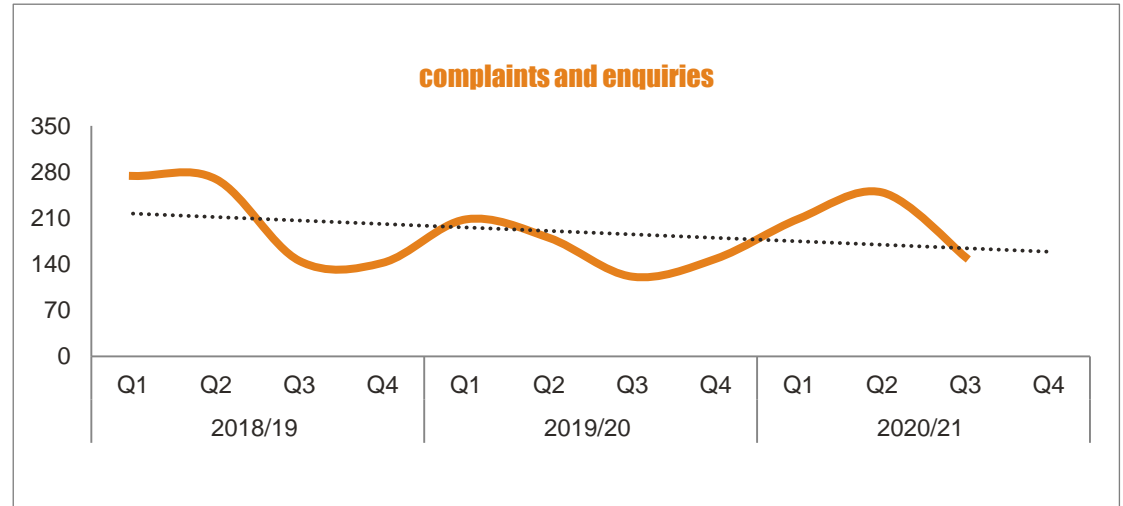


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Droitwich Central	13	2,570	5.06
Cathedral	54	11,488	4.70
Upton And Hanley	18	4,153	4.33
Rainbow Hill	23	5,525	4.16
Lowes Hill	12	2,888	4.16
Charford	15	3,670	4.09
Charford	15	3,670	4.09
Catshill North	11	2,818	3.90
Offmore And Comberton	35	9,726	3.60
Barnt Green And Hopwood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

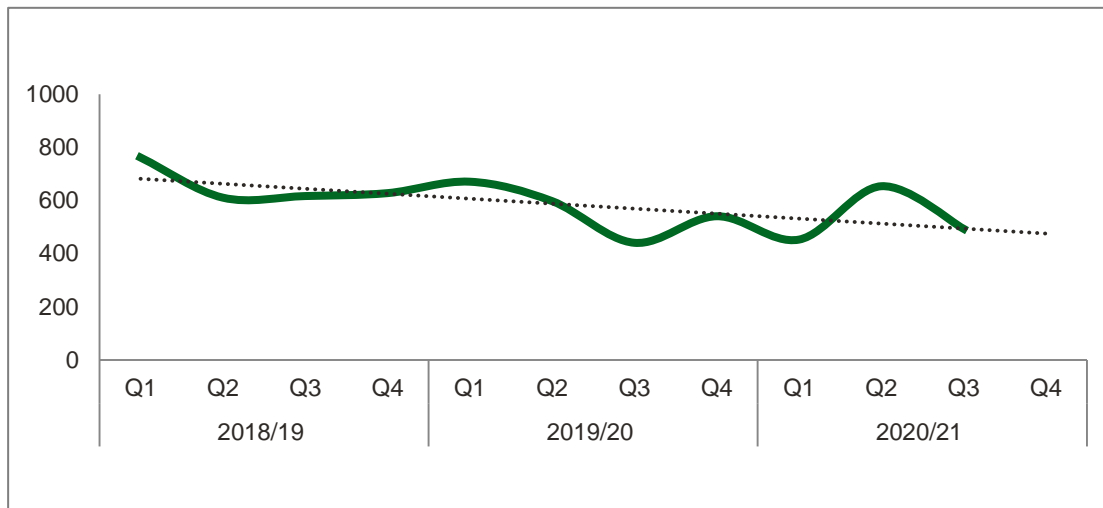
The number of public health cases received in the year to date is a reduction of approximately 11% compared to 2018/19, but an increase of 19% compared to 2019/20. Approximately 64% of cases have related to pest control; whether enquiries about treatments or sewer baiting, or complaints about pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses.

The lower total of subsidised treatments is actually an increase, as only three districts are offering a service compared to four in previous years. Anecdotally the pest control companies have reported increases in rat complaints with reduced commercial opportunities for them to feed forcing them into gardens and contact with humans. This is despite this being a traditionally quiet time for rat treatment requests. Of the 154 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter three, 66% were due to the presence of rats, whilst 44% were in relation to properties located in the Wychavon district.

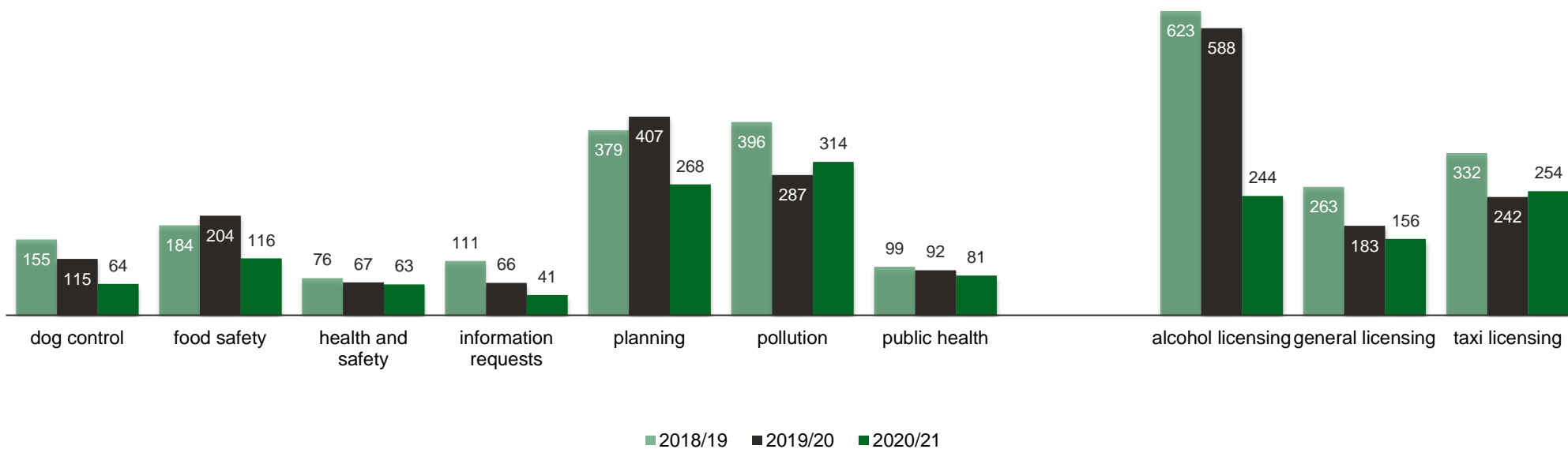


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Bromsgrove district.

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.



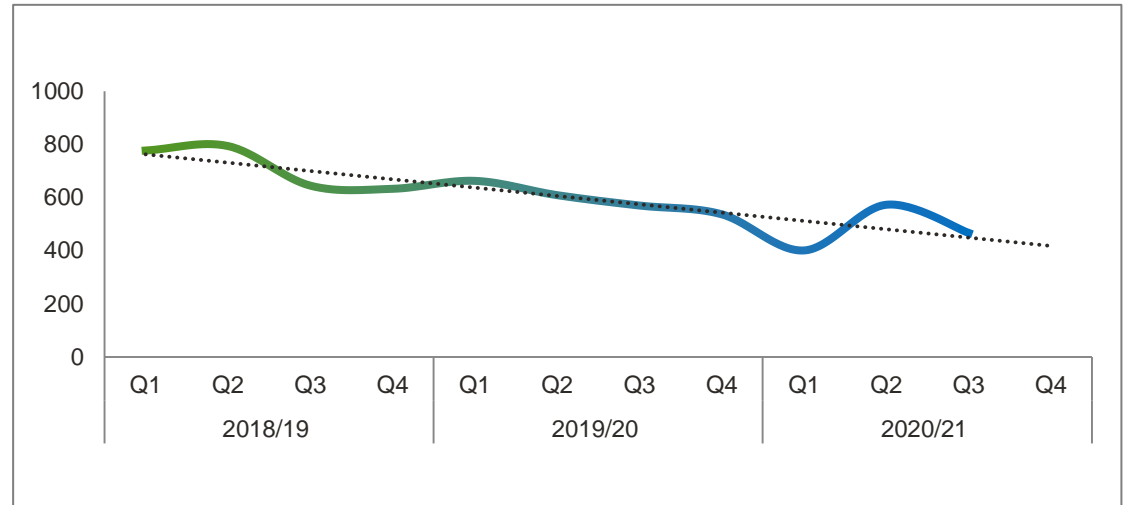
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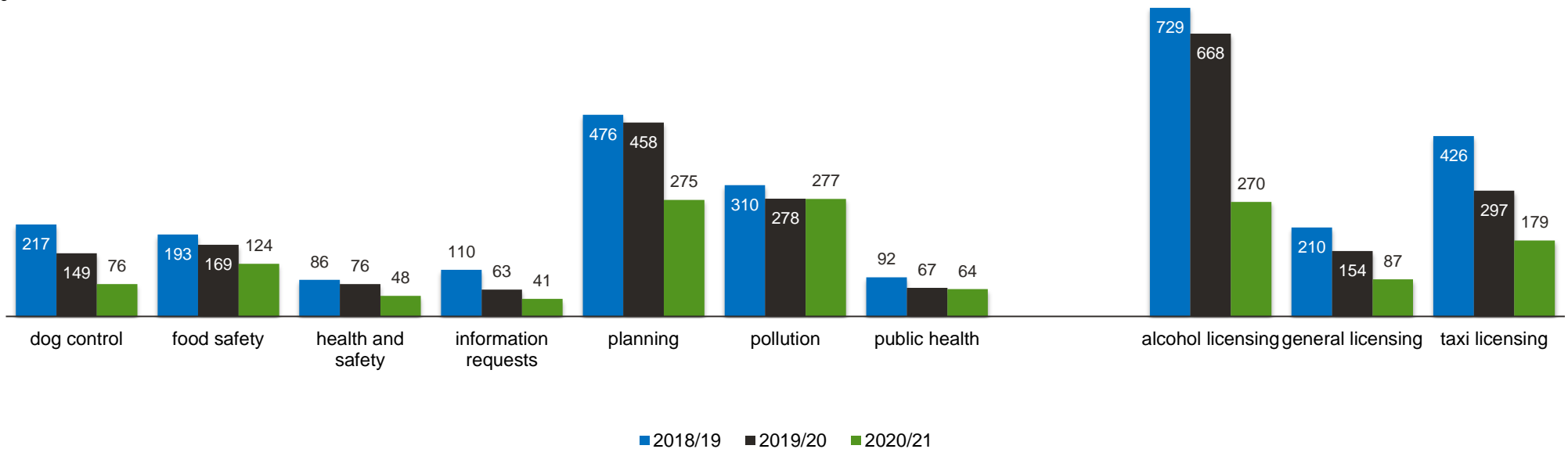
Agenda Item 7

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 Malvern Hills district.

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



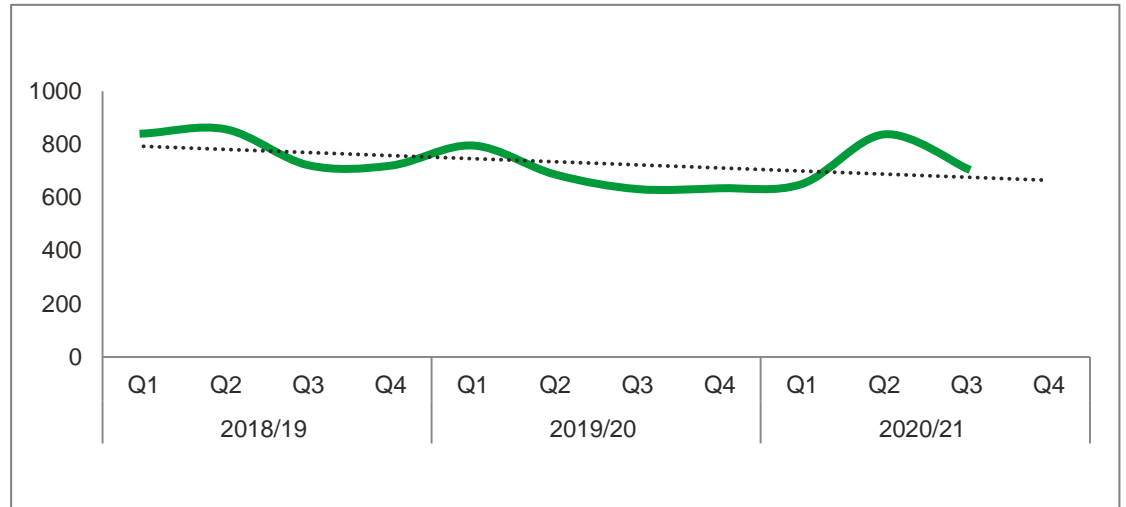
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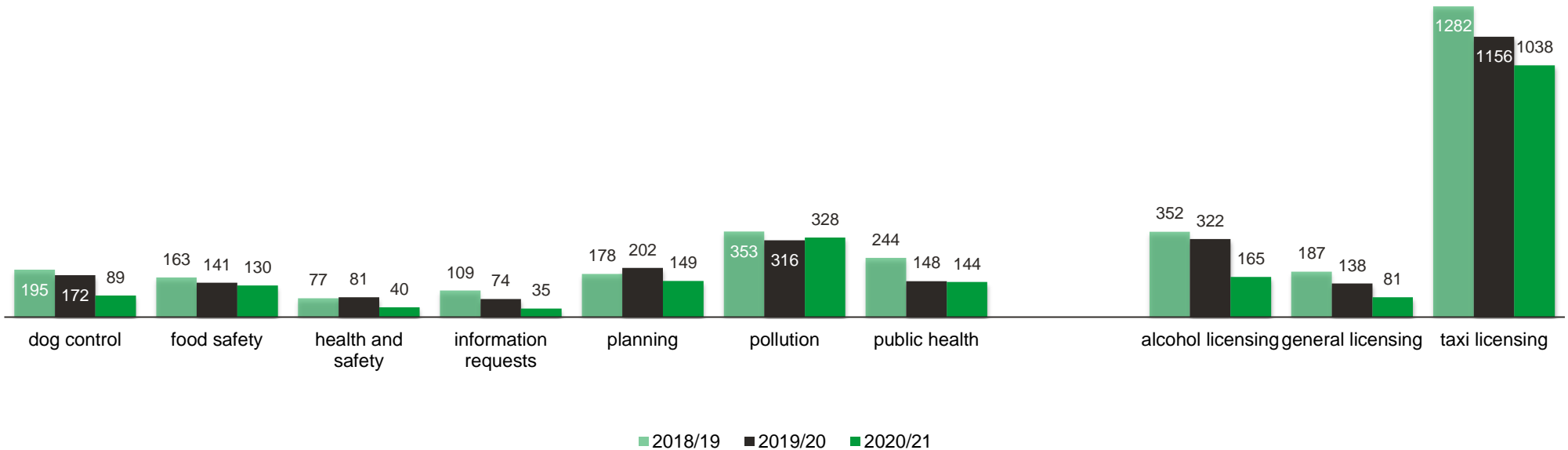
Agenda Item 7

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 Redditch district.

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



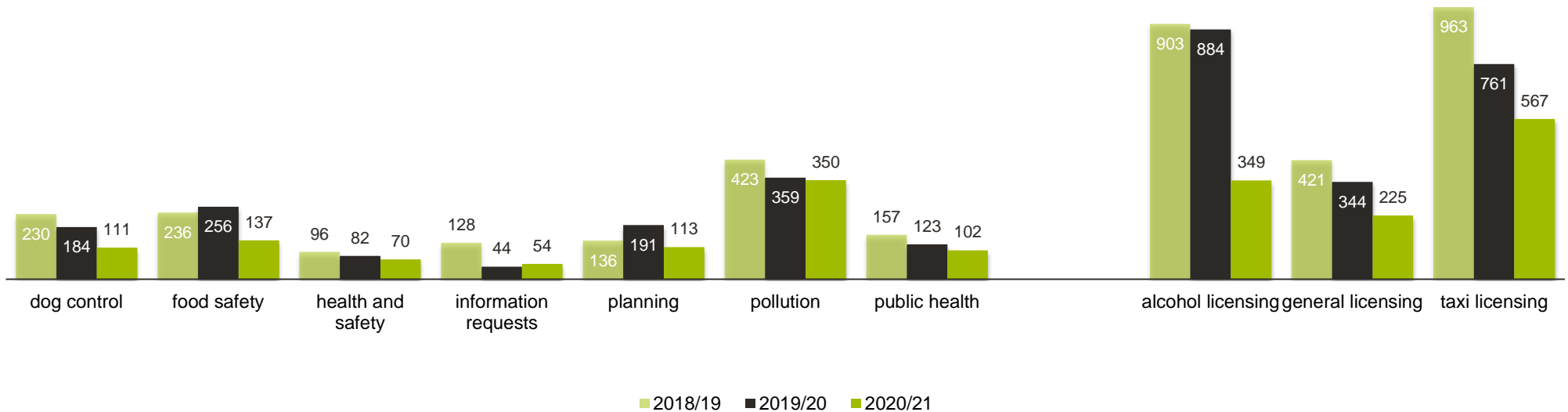
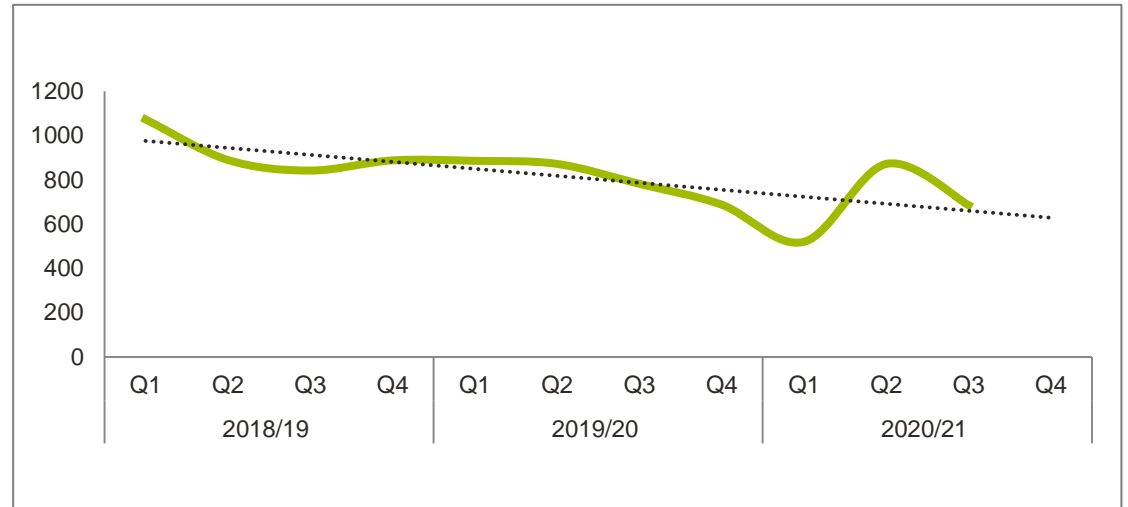
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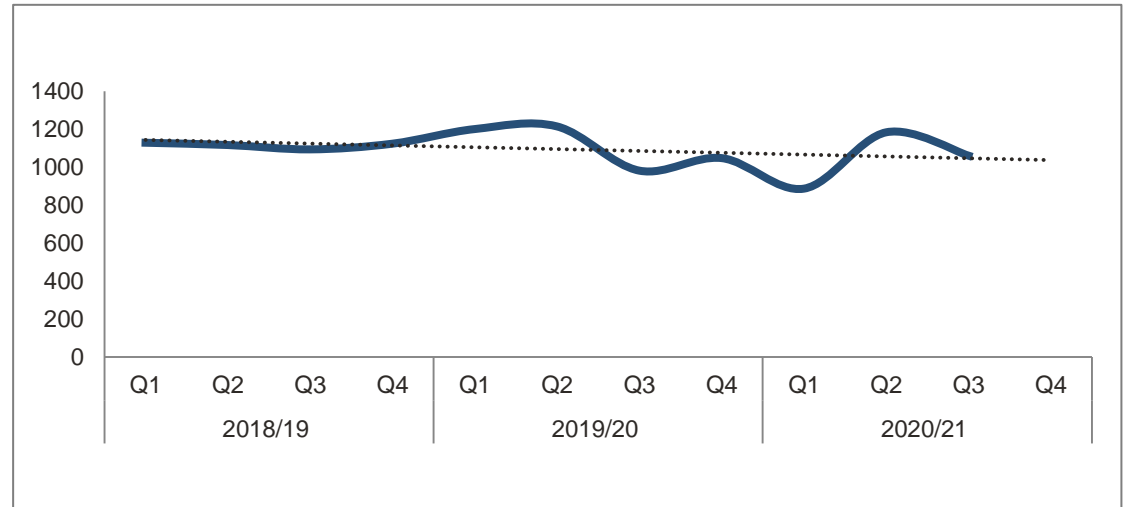
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Worcester City district.

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

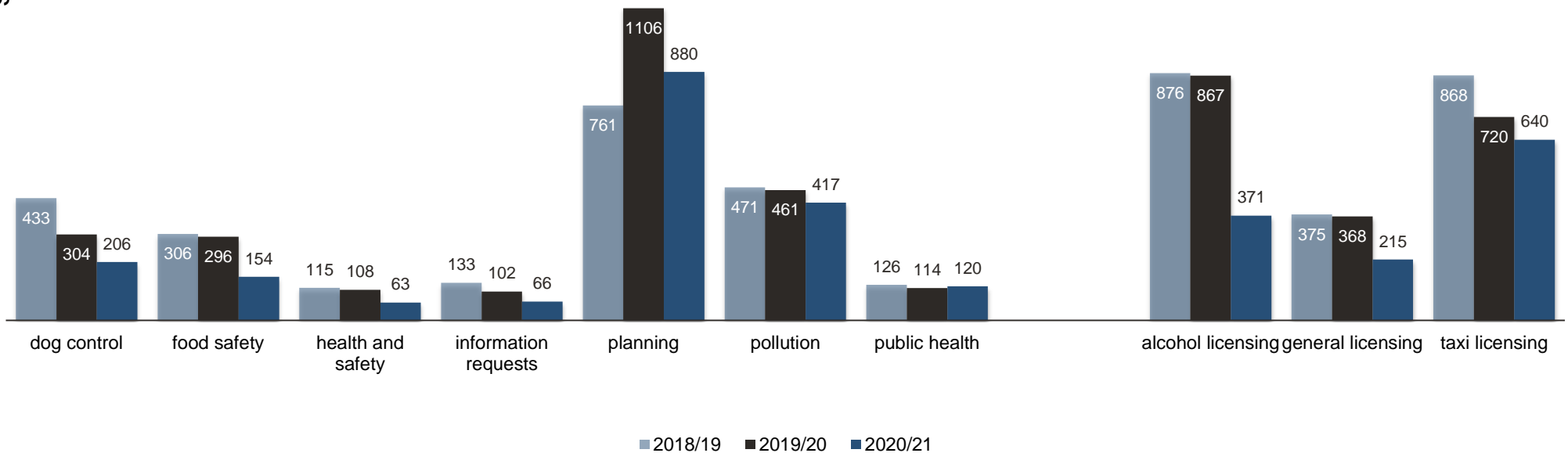


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wychavon district.

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



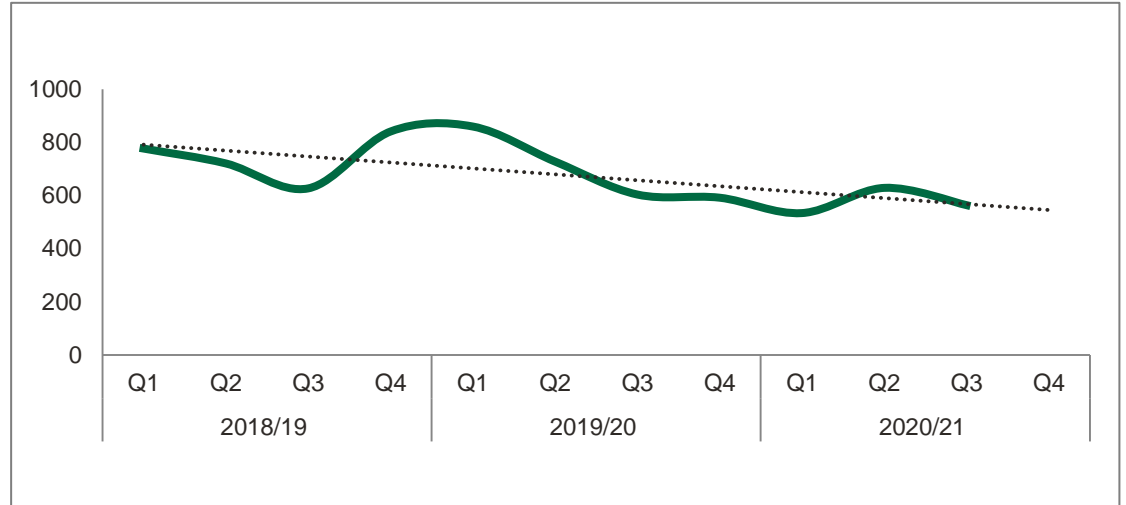
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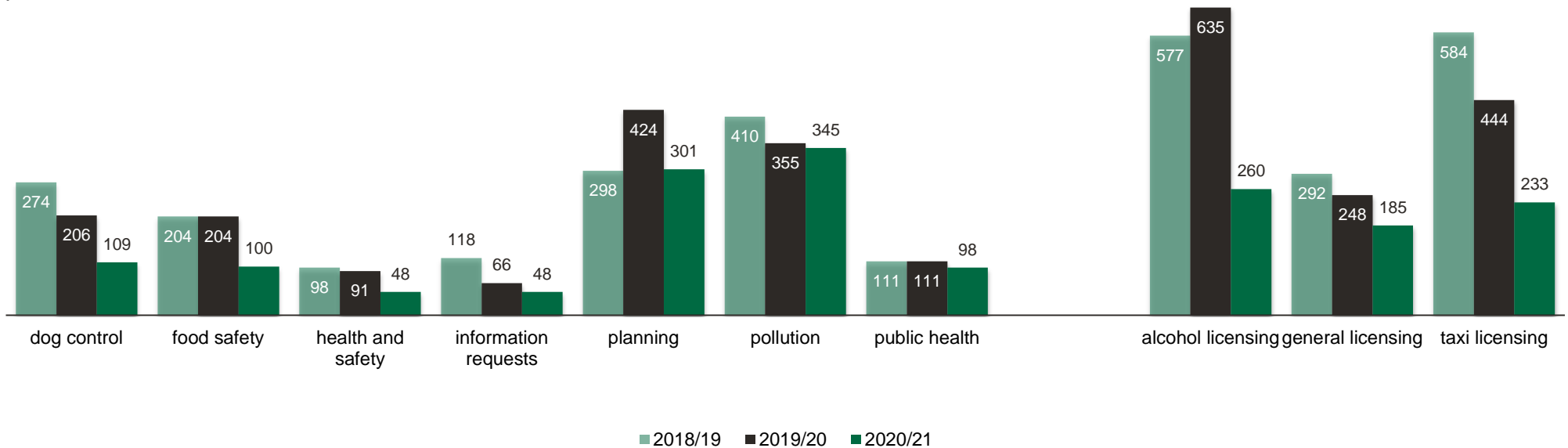
Agenda Item 7

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.

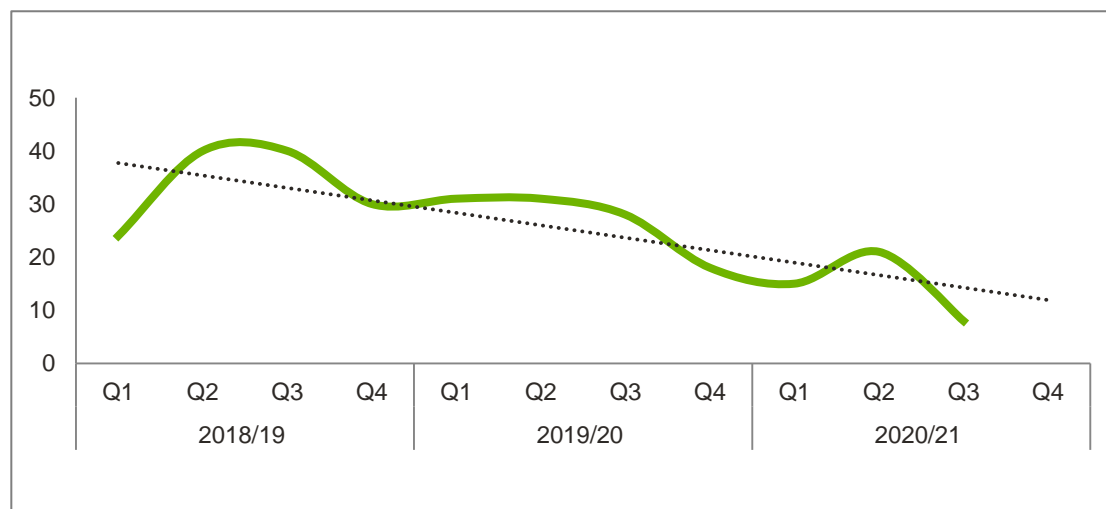


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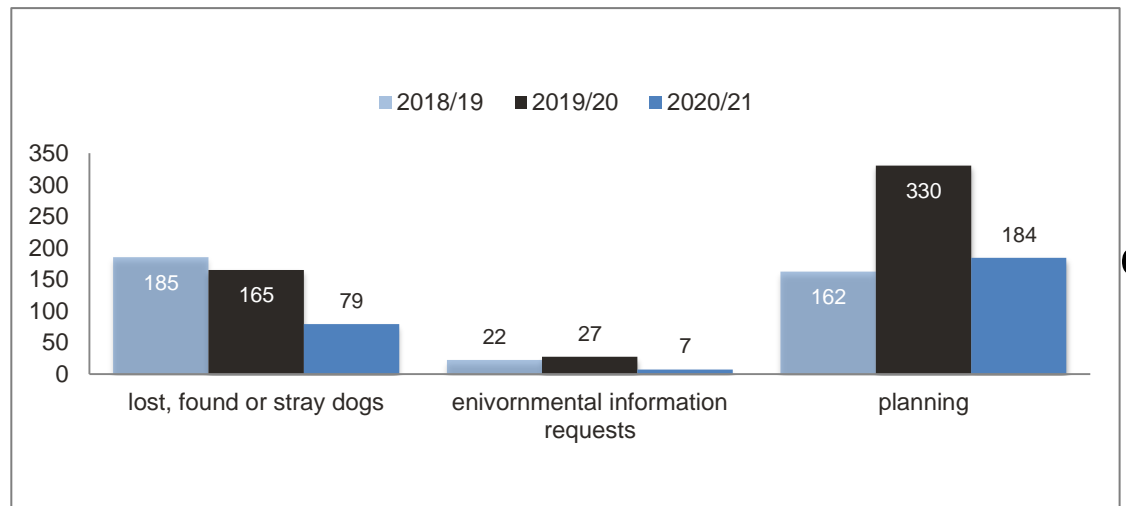
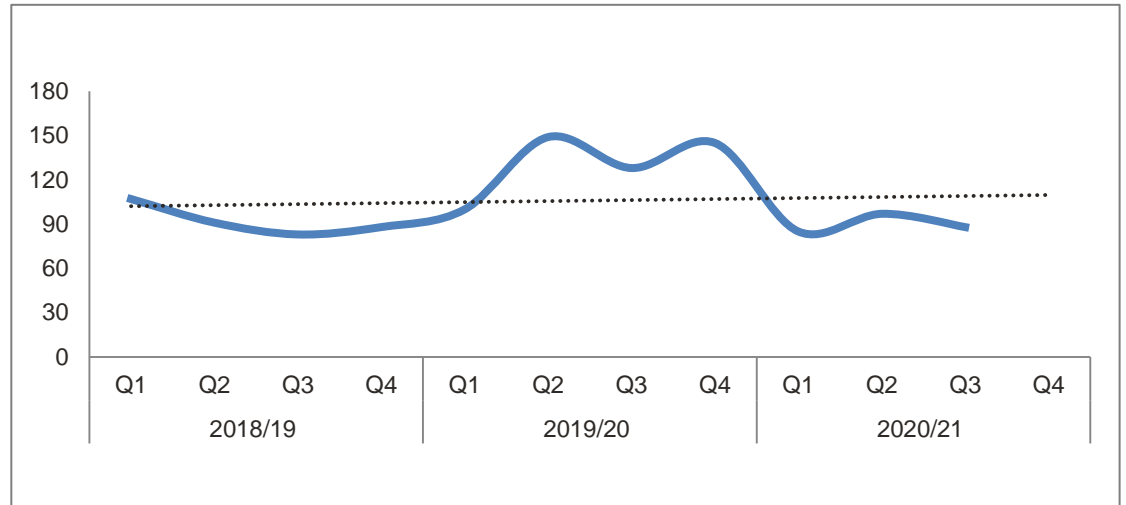
Agenda Item 7

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

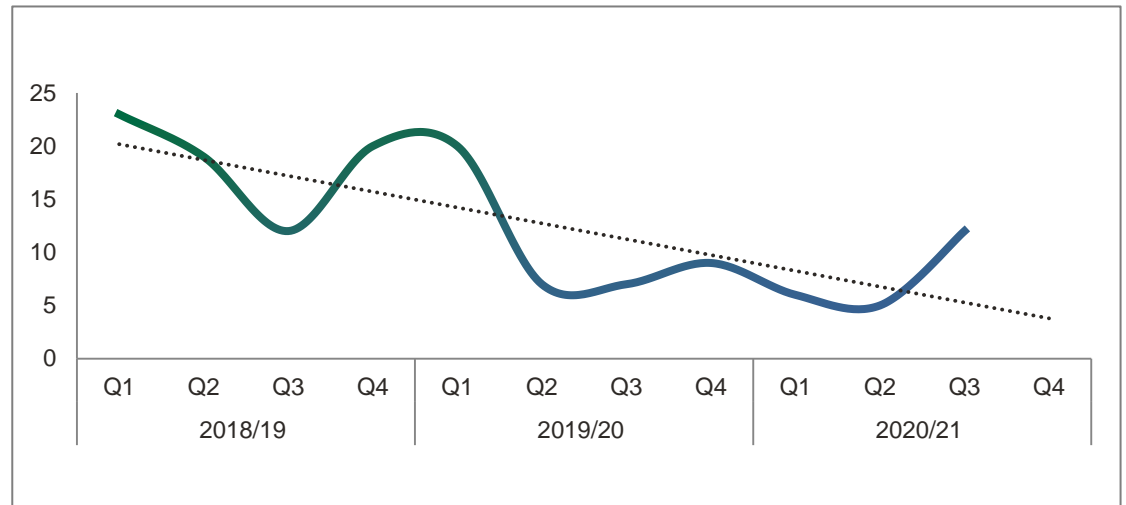


The dog control work WRS undertake for Gloucester City Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by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

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

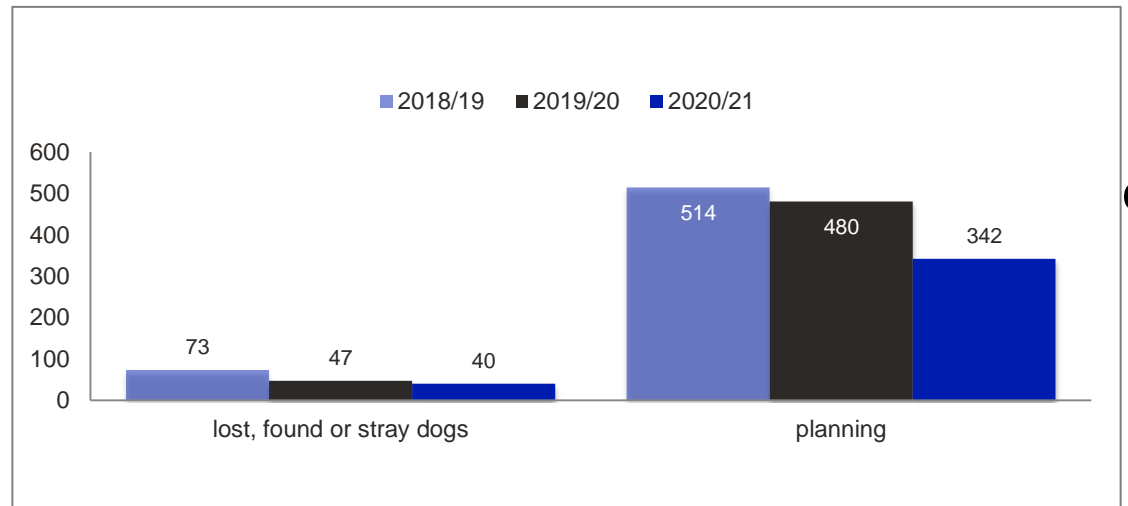
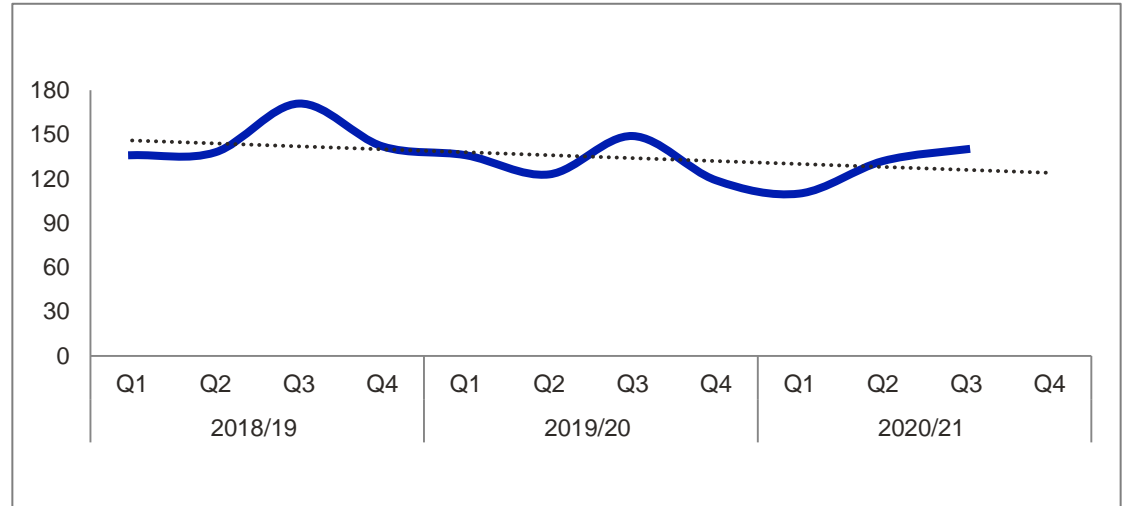


South Gloucestershire being located on the outskirts of Bristol was subject to significant contaminative industries and activities historically. Pressures on brownfield development recently have presented the authority with a large volume of planning applications on significantly contaminated and complex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



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

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



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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board: 11th February 2021

Information Report – COVID Advisors

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

Background

On 22nd September the Prime Minister announced £60 million would be made available to local authorities and the police to support additional compliance and enforcement activities. The Worcestershire district councils received a letter on 8th October setting out their grant allocation to fund compliance and enforcement work for a four month period commencing November 2020. WRS put a proposal together to deliver COVID Advisors and Enforcement Officers to operate across the six Worcestershire district council areas that would be intelligence led and deployed where there was greatest priority. The district Chief Executives approved the proposal on 20th October.

The proposal set out the deployment of COVID Advisors to provide guidance to businesses and encourage appropriate behaviour by the public. They were to be supported by a smaller enforcement team focusing tackling businesses identified as failing to comply with the restrictions.

Report

Recruitment

The proposal initially set out to deliver 20 COVID Advisors as soon as they could be put into post for four months. The team started with 12 individuals who were able to demonstrate the level of communication skills that would be required. You will also be aware, there were significant changes that occurred during that time with the new Tier restrictions introduced on 14th October and 'Lockdown 2' between 5th November and 2nd December which meant many businesses were forced to close.

During Lockdown 2 preparations were made for reopening of the Night Time Economy by attempts to recruit Security trained personal (bouncer types) through recruitment agencies. It was envisaged that they would be able to provide support to the existing COVID Advisors employed for their communication skills by providing people management experience. As well as being more expensive due to agency fees, the supply and quality was generally not good and only one of the seven recruited lasted more than 3 shifts and that individual has shown to be a competent and valuable member of the team. The night time economy has continued to be largely closed and the need for SIA accreditation is largely no longer considered necessary.

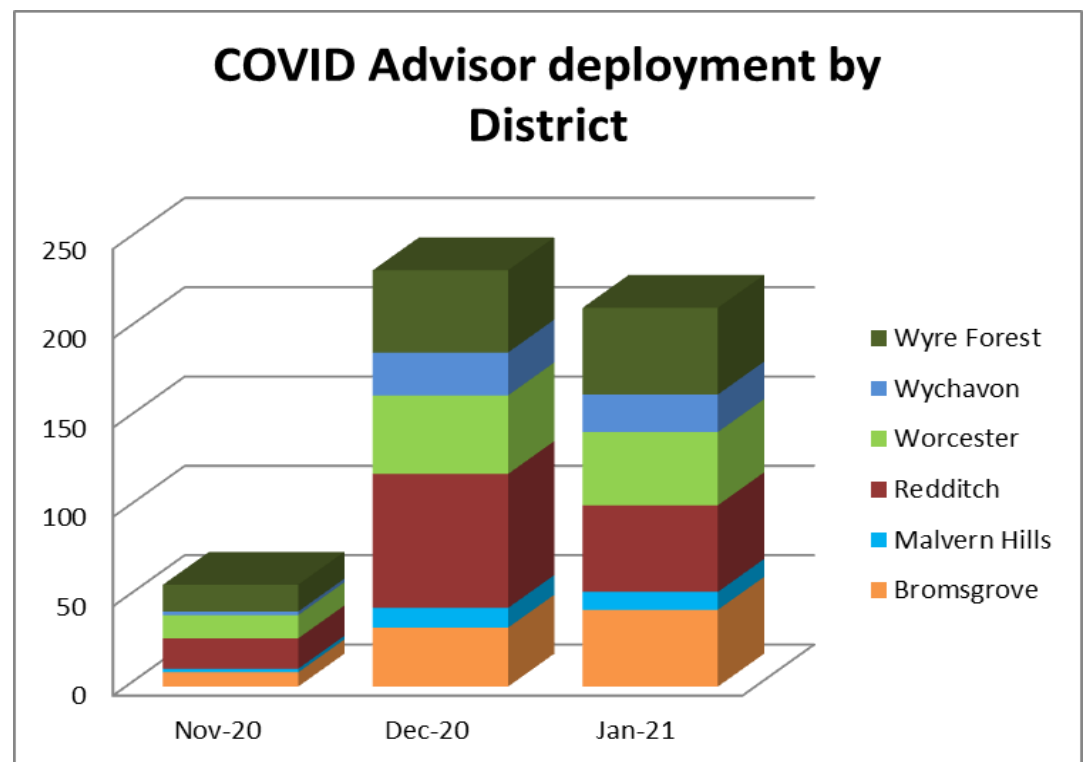
A second recruitment campaign commenced in December to fill vacancies and incorporate specific needs identified in the Redditch/Bromsgrove and Worcester City Incident

Management Teams for specific resource. The initial grant was for 4 months, however an extended period of enhanced COVID Advisor deployment has been possible and the current contracts are in place until the end of April 2021.

Deployment

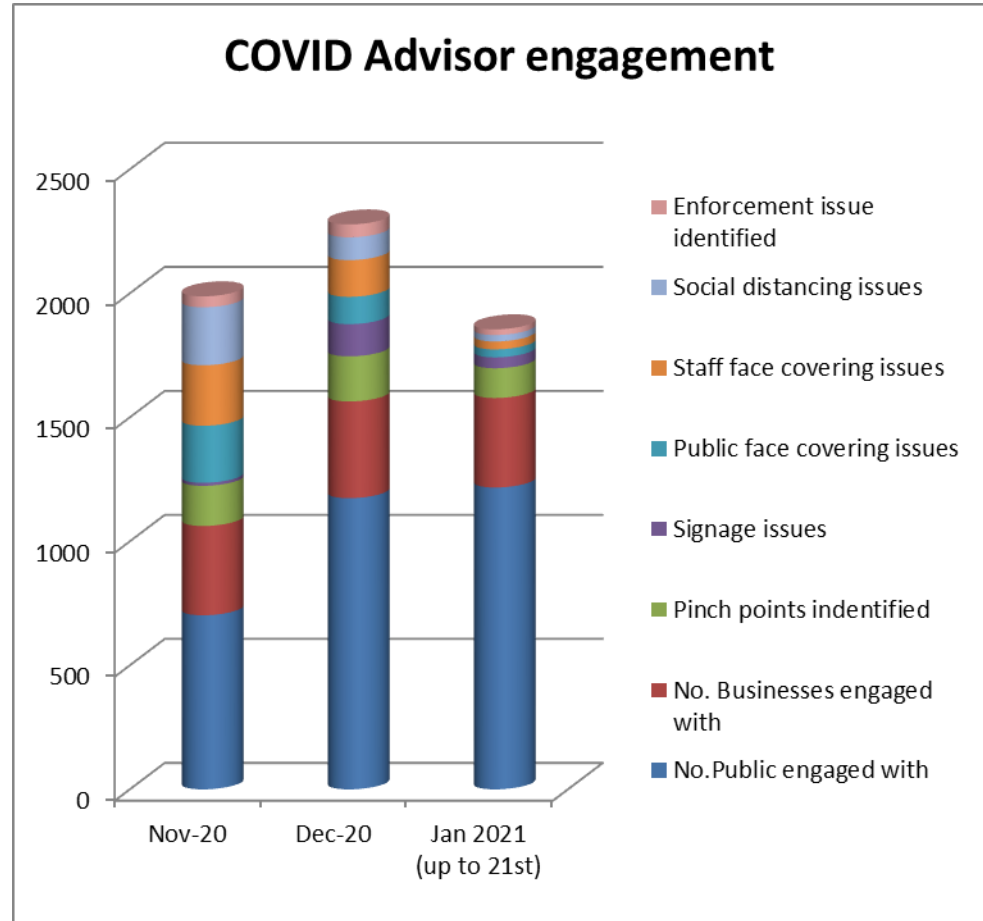
As set out in the proposal document, WRS have and continue to deploy COVID Advisors based on priority following review of PHE infection rate data, LORT (Local Outbreak Response Team) feedback on employment setting outbreaks, concerns raised by Incident Management Teams, reports of compliance concerns, Police reports of COVID related issues or others (such as youth congregations) and requests for assistance from partners (for example assisting schools that struggled to maintain social distancing amongst parents at school gates). The priority issues at any one time are referred to on the weekly deployment report provided to all Board Members.

The following table shows the number of COVID Advisor deployments per District per month.



Observations

COVID advisors maintain records of their engagements and issues identified. The graph below shows the number of interactions with the public and businesses they have had by month. Also shown are the numbers of the main issue types we have identified during our visits. Please note January's data is only up to 21st of the month and the visits and action undertaken by the Enforcement Officers are in addition to these records.



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Contact Point

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