

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2021

AT 4.30 P.M.

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

MEMBERS: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor H. J. Jones
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor A. D. Kent
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor J. Raine
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor T. Wells - Chairman
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor A. Fry
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor N. Nazir
Worcester City Council: Councillor J. Carver - Vice-Chairman
Worcester City Council: Councillor R. Udall
Wychavon District Council: Councillor D. Morris
Wychavon District Council: Councillor E. Stokes
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor P. Dyke
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor N. Martin

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 24th June 2021 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Previous Agenda Papers 30th September 2021 (Pages 11 - 12)
5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April to September 2021 (Pages 13 - 20)
6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgets - 2022/2023 - 2024/2025 (Pages 21 - 34)
7. Information Report - Covid related activity (Pages 35 - 42)
8. Activity & Performance Data - Quarter 2 (Pages 43 - 80)

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.

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

9th November 2021

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

**Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA
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GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Bromsgrove District Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant social distancing arrangements for holding face-to-face meetings at a local authority.

Please note that this is a public meeting.

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

GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON

In advance of the Board meeting, Members are strongly encouraged to consider taking a lateral flow test, which can be obtained for free from the NHS website. Should the test be positive for Covid-19 then the Member should not attend the Committee meeting, should provide their apologies to

the Democratic Services Officer and should self-isolate in accordance with national rules.

Members and officers are strongly encouraged to wear face masks during the meeting, unless exempt. Face masks should only be removed temporarily if the Councillor/ officer requires a sip of water and should be reapplied as soon as possible. Refreshments will not be provided by the venue, therefore Members and officers are encouraged to bring your own supply of water.

Hand sanitiser will be provided for Members to use throughout the meeting.

The meeting venue will be fully ventilated and Members and officers may need to consider wearing appropriate clothing in order to remain comfortable during proceedings.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Members of the public will still be able to access the meeting in person if they wish to do so. However, due to social distancing requirements to ensure the safety of participants during the Covid-19 pandemic there will be limited capacity and members of the public will be allowed access on a first come, first served basis. Members of the public in attendance are strongly encouraged to wear face-masks, to use the hand sanitiser that will be provided and will be required to sit in a socially distance manner at the meetings. It should be noted that members of the public who choose to attend in person do so at their own risk.

In line with Government guidelines, any member of the public who has received a positive result in a Covid-19 test on the day of a meeting should not attend in person and should self-isolate in accordance with the national rules.

Notes:

Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY, 24TH JUNE 2021, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. J. Jones, J. Raine, T. Wells, A. Fry, N. Nazir, J. Carver, S. Cronin (substituting for Councillor R. Udall), E. Stokes, A. Coleman (substituting for Councillor P. Dyke) and N. Martin

Officers: Mr. J. Howse, Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr. R. Keyte, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr M. Cox and Mrs. P. Ross

Partner Officers (via Microsoft Teams) – 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

1/21

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor T. Wells, Malvern Hills District Council be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chairman opened the meeting by acknowledging that this was probably the first meeting that some Members may have attended in person in over 12 months. Members were advised that arrangements had been made to ensure that the meeting was held in accordance with social distancing requirements and Government guidance in respect of holding meetings at a physical location.

The Chairman suggested that Members and officers briefly introduced themselves.

2/21

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

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

3/21

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

The following apologies for absence were received: -

Councillor A. D. Kent, Bromsgrove District Council, Councillor R. Udall, Worcester City Council, Councillor S. Cronin was in attendance as the substitute Member, Councillor D. Morris, Wychavon District Council and Councillor P. Dyke, Wyre Forest District Council, with Councillor A. Coleman in attendance as the substitute Member.

4/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5/21 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 11th February 2021, were submitted.

RESOLVED that minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 11th February 2021, be approved as a correct record.

6/21 **CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD 2020-2021 - REVIEW REPORT**

The Head of Regulatory Services informed Members that under the new legal agreement that came into effect on 1st April 2016, it was envisaged that the new operating arrangements for the partners would be reviewed at the end of 12 months to ensure that the arrangement was working. Officers and Members of the Board had felt that it was appropriate that this review was presented by the Chairman of the Board who oversaw this period.

In the absence of the previous Chairman, the newly elected Chairman briefly introduced the previous Chairman's report, which provided an overview of the highlights which the Board covered from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

The Chairman expressed his sincere thanks to Councillor H. Dyke, Wyre Forest District Council in her role as Chairman of the Board during 2020/2021.

RESOLVED that Members note the report.

7/21 **INFORMATION REPORT - FOOD SAFETY RECOVERY PLAN JUNE 2021**

Members received an Information Report on the Food Safety Recovery Plan.

The Technical Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so informed the Board that, the six district councils were responsible for delivering official food safety controls and related activities in most food establishments in Worcestershire.

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These control activities included inspections, audits, surveillance, sampling and other types of interventions such as projects and questionnaires.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, local authorities were expected to undertake all official controls and related activities prescribed in specific legislation and those contained within specific Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance and Code of Practice.

At the beginning of the pandemic response the FSA suspended the routine food hygiene intervention programme in recognition of the challenges local regulatory services faced in protecting our communities from Covid-19. The suspension also reflected the changing business landscape, with many food businesses closing or changing operations due to the Covid control regime. WRS responded by continuing to target limited resources at the highest risk establishments while deferring planned interventions. This approach was extended by the FSA nationally until the end of June 2021.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendices A and B which detailed the two phases of the plan which would run from 1st July 2021 until April 2023 and beyond.

The plan focused on re-starting the regulatory delivery system in line with the Food Law Codes of Practice for the highest risk establishments while providing greater flexibility for lower risk establishments.

Members' attention was further drawn to the recovery roadmap detailed on page 20 of the main agenda report.

The Technical Manager, WRS stated that in common with all local authorities, the backlog of interventions across Worcestershire was very challenging in terms of number, but he would assure Members that throughout the pandemic officers had continued to address poor performing businesses, who would be starting from a very high base of 98% broadly compliant operations.

Officers would restart the planned interventions in as risk-based manner, focussing resources where they added the greatest value in providing safeguards for consumers and securing compliance. The FSA would closely monitor that food safety programmes were reinstated and brought up to date within the relevant timescales.

The service had requested an additional £25,000 from the 2020/2021 underspend to be carried forward in order to supplement the funding from Worcestershire County Council to support Phase 1 of the recovery plan. Food competent agency Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) were in short supply and £25,000 would buy around 17 weeks of competent officer time.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that, so that partners did not face any shocks, funding from Worcestershire County Council that pays for the EHOs embedded within the local outbreak response team would be used to pay for some additional capacity, but that may not cover all costs and the service needed to look at the extended period, so £25,000 was a reasonable contribution at this stage.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to questions with regard to new businesses and informed the Board that, new businesses had had a paper exercise to review their potential risk and non-compliance for a food safety rating, with virtual video inspections, as an initial approach, in order for new businesses to trade. These would be followed up with a proportion receiving a physical intervention during the next few months to test the veracity of the virtual approach. The vast majority had complied really well and officers were not anticipating any huge difficulties.

In response to some concerns raised by Members with regards to staff welfare during the pandemic and the increase in workload, the Head of Regulatory Services referred to the Staff Survey, which was detailed at Agenda Item 8, the WRS Annual Report 2020/2021.

The Head of Regulatory Services stated that a staff survey was carried out annually. 50 out of 68 staff had responded to the survey. Senior officers had, during the pandemic, communicated with staff regularly and had been very concerned to check staff welfare during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that the Information Report – Food Safety Recovery Plan, be noted and that Members use the contents of the information report provided in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

8/21

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Board considered a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Annual Report 2020/2021. The report covered the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

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

The Head of Regulatory Services highlighted that the global Covid-19 pandemic had required a significant resource input from WRS. This had meant that some areas of work were more limited during 2020/2021 and the Food Standards Agency had actually suspended the routine food hygiene programme, so figures for these premises were more limited this year and could not be compared to previous years.

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In spite of this, performance had remained good. Food business compliance rates remained high. Taxi licence renewals had been dealt with in a reasonable time in the main. The taxi fleet appeared to be generally in good order, although with council and other garages being closed for a significant period of time and with some drivers/operators taking vehicles off the road for a period of time, it was impossible to compare this year with previous years.

Page 26 of the main agenda report detailed the main issues for complainants related to people.

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

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

In response to Members questions with regard to compliments, the Head of Regulatory Services informed the Board that these related to officers and how they had handled people, issues and had supported businesses and advice offered. Officers first thoughts were 'How can I help you to comply / trade well'. Which was good for customers and businesses. Officers took a positive approach but would also use their legal powers where necessary. Interventions were seen as helpful. The quality of officers carrying out the work really drove those compliments.

In response to further questions, the Technical Services Manager, WRS, informed the Board that, the number of straying dogs was significantly down last year, which was likely due to the number of people working from home or on furlough and therefore around more for their pets. Plus, there were more people around who had helped reunite owners with their stray dogs.

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

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

- (a) that a copy of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2020/2021 be forwarded to the Chief Executive, Managing Director and Members of the six partner authorities.

9/21

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - MARCH 2021 AND ANNUAL RETURN 2021/2022

The Executive Director of Resources, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC), introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on page 73 of the main agenda report.

The Executive Director of Resources confirmed that the report covered the period April 2020 to March 2021 and also included the Annual Return 2021/2022.

The detailed revenue report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. This showed a final outturn refund of £148k, which represented 4.6% of the actual budget and was mainly due to:-

- A significant underspend on the stray dog contracts due to the service dealing with fewer straying incidents. Which was likely to be related to people working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A number of aspects of planned expenditure also fell foul of the Covid-19 pandemic, e.g. purchase replacement vans.
- The deferment of some expenditure in licensing to help the trade manage financially during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Any grant funded expenditure was shown separate to the core service costs as this was not funded by the participating Councils.

As requested by the Board, Appendix 1 to the report, provided detailed explanations relating to the variances.

It was proposed that the £148k be allocated as follows:-

- I. To transfer to WRS Reserves:
 - £30k to purchase a stray dog van
 - £15k for DBS checks
 - £25k for Food Inspections
- II. The remaining £78k, be refunded back to partners as below:-

Bromsgrove District Council	£11,323
Malvern Hills District Council	£9,950
Redditch Borough Council	£13,636
Worcester City Council	£12,868
Wychavon District Council	£18,075
Wyre Forest District Council	£11,758

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The refund to partners had taken into account the adjustments for the overspend on Pest Control and all other charges to partners.

All partners were advised of all recharges and refunds for completion of their statement of accounts.

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

The Executive Director of Resources explained that Appendices 2 and 3 were presented in a different way, they were now being presented on a statutory accounting basis.

The Executive Director of Resources responded to questions from Members and clarified that the S151 officer for the partnership had been made aware of the refunds to partners and was happy with those refunds.

RESOLVED that

- a) the final financial position for the period April 2020 to March 2021, be noted;
- b) that the transfers to WRS Reserves of £30k to purchase a dog warden van, £15k for DBS checks and £25k for Food Inspections, be approved; and
- c) the refund of £78k to the participating Councils, be approved as follows:-

Council	Refund from 2020/2021 £'000
Bromsgrove District Council	11
Malvern Hills District Council	10
Redditch Borough Council	14
Worcester City Council	13
Wychavon District Council	18
Wyre Forest District Council	12
Total	78

10/21

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTERS 1 TO 4, 2020/2021

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 2020/2021; and in doing so highlighted that, the final quarter of 2020/2021 featured a third lockdown, based on the same legal framework as the one for November, so not akin to lockdown 1 at the beginning of the financial year.

ACTIVITY DATA

As highlighted by the Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this had continued throughout the year. The service was now planning to follow the FSA's roadmap back to normal food controls.

Even with the increase in reported issues during quarters 3 and 4, 2020/2021, it was relatively quiet for new Health and Safety interventions.

Although quarter 4 showed an increase in dog related complaints. overall, it was a quiet year for this work and the downward trend in stray dog numbers had continued.

The quarter 4 lockdown had led to a plateauing of license applications.

Following the drop in quarter 3, quarter 4 saw an increase in numbers of nuisance complaints despite the cold weather. A similar pattern in domestic nuisance reporting was seen during lockdown, so it was likely that people had experienced more issues at home than they would normally, as they would be at work. Approximately 43% of cases related to domestic noise, whilst 21% related to smoke nuisance.

COVID RELATED ACTIVITIES

Covid related enforcement activities continued through the quarter. EHO's embedded within the Local Outbreak Response Team had remained busy tackling business outbreaks and undertaking detailed backwards contact tracing exercises in areas with high case numbers.

PERFORMANCE

The Licensing and Support Services Manager explained that performance had been covered by the Head of Regulatory Services when he presented the WRS Annual Report 2020/2021 to Members of the Board, however, she was happy to answer any questions.

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The Chairman expressed his thanks the Technical Services Manager, WRS, for the weekly Covid updates that he provided to Members of the Board, it was very informative and greatly appreciated.

Members took the opportunity to raise questions with regard to the varying taxi tariffs across the six districts. The Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, commented that each district had a different fee structure.

It was agreed that the Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, would provide an Information Report on each district's taxi tariffs, licensing fee structure and the number of licenses held, to the next meeting of the Board.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 for 2020/2021, be noted and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

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The meeting closed at 5.44 p.m.

Chairman

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board: 18th November 2021

Board Papers from 30th September

Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That members note this report, and2. that members also note the relevant recommendations in each of the reports attached as the background to this paper
Report	<p>Members will recall that the scheduled meeting of the Board on 30th September was cancelled due to the fuel crisis that was at its height at the time. This cancellation caused no significant issues as there were no papers requiring discussion and a formal vote for decision; all were simply for noting. Within the email circulated to members cancelling the meeting, a note was included informing members that, if they had any questions in relation to the papers, officers would provide written responses that would be circulated to all members. A paper would have been used to formally introduce the questions and answers into the Board's record of business, however, no questions were addressed to the Head of Service.</p> <p>In order to address the outstanding business, this paper introduces those previously scheduled papers as background documents to enable members to address their contents and ask any questions there may be. The Head of Service points out that both the Activity Data Report and the Revenue Monitoring Report were snapshots of the position at the end of June 2021 and members may feel that the contents are now of less relevance given that papers for today's meeting will address the financial position at the end of September 2021 and the activity data for the second quarter of this financial year, however if there are any questions officers will address them. Clearly the paper on taxi licensing may generate some discussion and members may have questions which officers will be happy to answer.</p> <p>Taking this approach will provide an opportunity to cover any matters arising whilst also helping to limit the impact on members' valuable time that may result from tabling papers individually.</p>
Contact Point	Simon Wilkes Head of Regulatory Services Email: simon.wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk Tel: 01562 738088
Background Papers	Papers scheduled for meeting on 30 th September 2021 that was cancelled



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WRS Board 18th November 2021

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING April – September 2021

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – September 2021
- 1.2 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2021-22 in relation to Bereavements

Council	Apr–Sept 21 Actual for Bereavements £000
Malvern Hills District Council	8
Worcester City Council	2
Bromsgrove District Council	2
Total	12

- 1.3 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2021-22 in relation to Pest Control

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2021/22 Pest Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	11
Wychavon District Council	12
Bromsgrove District Council	7
Total	30



Agenda Item 5

1.4 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2021-22 in relation to three additional Technical Officers

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2021/22 Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2021/22 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2021/22 Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	4	1	
Malvern Hills District Council	3	5	
Worcester City Council	4	2	68
Bromsgrove District Council	4	6	
Wychavon District Council	6	11	
Wyre Forest District Council	4	6	
Total	25	31	68

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 – September 2021.

Background

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

Report

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

- Revenue Monitoring - April – Sept 21 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown - April – Sept 21 – Appendix 2



Agenda Item 5

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. This shows a projected outturn 2021/22 of £48k refund to partners. It is appreciated this is an estimation to the year end based on following assumptions:-

- A number of employees are working on grant funded covid related work and a small amount of work in other grant related areas. This in incurring agency staff costs due to backfilling of these employees. However due to the difficulty of recruiting agency staff this is resulting in a savings within salaries.
- If April to Sept 21 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be an overspend on this service of £30k. WRS officers will continue to monitor and analyse this spend and advise of final recharges for 2021/22 as soon as possible. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners is:-

Redditch Borough Council	£11k
Wychavon District Council	£12k
Bromsgrove District Council	£7k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – Sept 21 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:-

Malvern Hills District Council	£8k
Worcester City Council	£2k
Bromsgrove District Council	£2k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – Sept 21
- 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



James Howse – james.howse@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Contact Points

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case



WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2021/22
Total WRS Sept 21 / Period 6 - 21/22

	Revised Full Year Budget 21-22	Revised Budget - Apr - Sept 21	Committed Expenditure Apr - Sept 21	Variance	Qtr 2 - Projected outturn	Qtr 2 - Projected Outturn Variance
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct Expenditure						
Employees						
Salary	2,968	1,469	1,259	-210	2,550	-418
Agency Staff	0	0	124	124	315	315
Employee Insurance	25	12	12	0	25	0
Sub-Total - Employees	2,993	1,482	1,395	-86	2,890	-102
Premises						
Rent / Hire of Premise	54	27	26	-1	53	-1
Cleaning	1	0	0	-0	1	1
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total - Premises	55	27	26	-1	54	-0
Transport						
Vehicle Hire	13	6	6	-0	13	0
Vehicle Fuel	8	4	2	-2	6	-3
Road Fund Tax	1	1	0	-0	1	0
Vehicle Insurance	5	2	2	0	5	0
Vehicle Maintenance	3	2	1	-1	3	0
Car Allowances	75	38	15	-23	55	-20
Sub-Total - Transport	105	52	26	-26	82	-23
Supplies and Services						
Furniture & Equipment	32	16	17	1	68	36
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	1	0	-1	2	-0
Printing & Photocopying	17	9	12	3	21	4
Postage	11	6	10	5	18	7
ICT	40	20	34	14	58	18
Telephones	21	11	9	-2	22	0
Training & Seminars	22	11	4	-7	23	0
Insurance	20	10	10	0	20	0
Third Party Payments	144	72	72	0	144	0
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	309	154	168	13	375	66
Contractors						
Dog Warden	140	70	30	-40	70	-70
Pest Control	52	26	70	44	115	63
Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	65	32	30	-2	68	3
Other contractors/consultants	3	1	1	-1	2	-1
Water Safety	5	2	2	-0	5	0
Food Safety	1	1	0	-0	1	0
Environmental Protection	12	6	20	14	25	13
Grants / Subscriptions	13	6	13	7	21	8
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	3	0	-3	5	-1
Sub-Total	295	147	166	18	311	16
Income						
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-498	-234	-263	-29	-503	-5
Sub-Total	-498	-234	-263	-29	-503	-5
Overall Total	3,257	1,629	1,518	-110	3,209	-49

Savings due to employees working on grant funded covid related work and a small amount of work in other grant related areas
 Backfilling for employees working on covid related work

Due to change in working patterns

Essential calibration on noise monitoring equipment.
 Purchase of Noise Monitoring equipment to replace obsolete equipment greater than 10 years old.

£100k BDC hosting / £44k WFDC ICT hosting.

Underspend due to number of stray dogs reducing, relating to change in working conditions, numbers of stray dogs are beginning to increase
 Additional costs relating to Gull Control & Pest Control which is charged to relevant partners and offset in the income line

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

See Append 2

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Income 2021/22

Income from Partners

April to Sept 21

£

Budget	1,628,627
Bereavement / Public Burials	12,013
Pest Control Overspend - Bromsgrove, Wychavon & Redditch	8,355
Pest Control - Malvern	2,310
Employee for Animal Activity - Apr - Sept 21	17,238
Employee for Income Generation - Apr - Sept 21	12,740
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Apr - Sept 21 - Worcs City	42,308
Reimbursement of costs - Zety Ltd - Wyre Forest	4,697
	1,728,288
	1,728,288

Grant Income

Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	6,993
	6,993
	6,993

Other Income

Stray Dog Income	15,812
Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal & Admin Support	26,600
Worcester County - Safety at Sports Grounds	10,000
Planning Support Work	54,691
Contaminated Land Work	11,568
PPC Work	2,072
Primary Authority work	3,257
Screening / Compliance Review / Nox Tubes	180
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	1,053
Pest Control	4,900
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	13,199
Licensing - Pre-App Advice	522
Taxi Database	3,583
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening	9,153
	156,590
	156,590

Total Income Apr - Sept 21

1,891,871

2021/22 Base Budget from Partners

-1,628,627

Total Income Excluding Budget

263,244

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WRS Board 18th November 2021

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICE BUDGETS 2022/23 – 2024/25

Recommendation

It is recommended that the WRS Board:

- 1.1 Approve the 2022/23 gross expenditure budget of £3,891k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Approve the 2022/23 income budget of £634k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Approve the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 22/23 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	475	14.55
Malvern Hills District Council	418	13.03
Redditch Borough Council	572	17.53
Worcester City Council	540	16.54
Wychavon District	759	23.24
Wyre Forest District Council	493	15.11
Total	3,257	

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1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure.

Council	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	12
Malvern Hills District Council	11
Redditch Borough Council	14
Worcester City Council	13
Wychavon District Council	19
Wyre Forest District Council	12
Total	81

1.5 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 in relation to increase in hosting costs.

Council	Increase in Rent £000	Increase in ICT Hosting £000	Increase in Support Hosting £000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	2	1
Malvern Hills District Council	1	2	1
Redditch Borough Council	1	3	2
Worcester City Council	1	3	2
Wychavon District Council	2	4	2
Wyre Forest District Council	1	2	2
Total	7	16	10

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1.6 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 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	7	
Malvern Hills District Council	4	10	
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	
Worcester City Council	5	4	70
Wychavon District Council	8	10	
Wyre Forest District Council	5	5	
Total	33	38	70

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 2022/23 – 2024/25 in relation to Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

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

- WRS Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 – Appendix 1
- WRS Partner Contributions Breakdown 2022/23 – 2024/25 – Appendix 2
- WRS Income Budget Breakdown 2022/23 – Appendix 3

WRS Budgets 2022/23

Appendix 1 shows the 2022-23 – 2024/25 budget breakdown for the district councils' partnership.

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

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- 2% pay award across all staff for 2022/23 – 20224/25. 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.
- Increase in Rent of £7k
- Increase in ICT Hosting of £15.5k
- Increase in Support Hosting of £10k
- Total partner contribution as included in Appendix 2
- Income projections as included at Appendix 3.
- No inflationary increases in supplies and services, premises or transport.
- Pension back-funding will be paid by all partners.

The unavoidable salary pressures are not able to be met currently by WRS making additional income, therefore, an increase to partner funding will be required of:

Council	2022/23	2023/24 - Cumulative	2024/25 - Cumulative
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	12	23	34
Malvern Hills District Council	11	21	30
Redditch Borough Council	14	28	40
Worcester City Council	13	26	38
Wychavon District Council	19	37	53
Wyre Forest District Council	12	24	35
Total	81	159	230

Bromsgrove has hosted the service since its inception in 2010. This year is the first time the council has sought an increase in this charge. We have calculated that salary pressures since 2015 applied year on year amount to approximately the £10,000 increase in hosting fee. This seems sensible as the key provisions for hosting, things like HR, Finance, Legal and Payroll are very much people focused so this is the key cost pressure for these aspects of hosting

The larger than anticipated increase in ICT hosting cost is down to a combination of the changes in technology used by the service and the additional support provided to meet the needs of wider hybrid (mobile and flexible) working across the service. Within this specific factors include:

- greater home working and the increased use of collaboration software like Microsoft Teams has shifted the arrangements away from “thin clients” where the council’s servers do most of the processing;

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- Laptops require updating individually for software changes and upgrades and require greater levels of maintenance;
- the growth of the threat from hackers and the need to increase cyber security measures to protect the partner's data and to meet PSN standards set by Government;
- The increased numbers of complex devices in use also leads to an increase in support calls and the length of those calls.

It should also be noted that the pandemic has seen a significant increase in staff numbers within WRS to deliver a range of new pieces of work and the Wyre Forest ICT team has supported all of these. The new cost calculations are made on the assumption that, as funding for Covid work is scheduled to cease in April 2022, WRS will return to its normal activities. WFDC have not made any allowance for significant additional staffing numbers in the calculating the new costs.

With regard to the above changes in rent, ICT hosting & support hosting, it should be noted that officer representatives of each Council have met to check & challenge the reasonableness of the proposed increases.

These pressures are not able to be met currently by WRS, therefore, an increase to partner funding will be required of:

Council	2022/23 Increase in Rent	2022/23 Increase in ICT Hosting	2022/23 Increase in Support Hosting
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	2	1
Malvern Hills District Council	1	2	1
Redditch Borough Council	1	3	2
Worcester City Council	1	3	2
Wychavon District Council	2	4	2
Wyre Forest District Council	1	2	2
Total	7	16	10

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

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Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

Account description	Revised Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employees				
Monthly salaries	2,935	3,015	3,093	3,166
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	2,964	3,044	3,122	3,195
Premises				
Rents	52	59	59	59
Room hire	2	2	2	2
Trade Waste	1	1	1	1
Sub-Total - Premises	55	62	62	62
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	55	55	55
Telephones	21	21	21	21
Taxi Tests	22	22	22	22
CRB Checks (taxi)	26	26	26	26
Support service recharges	100	110	110	110
Support service recharges - ICT	44	60	60	60
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	356	397	397	397

	Budget 2021 / 2022 £000's	Budget 2022 / 2023 £000's	Budget 2023 / 2024 £000's	Budget 2024 / 2025 £000's
Contractors				
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	229	266	229	229
Advertising (general)	5	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	13	13	13	13
Sub-Total - Contractors	247	284	247	247
Total Expenditure Budget	3,726	3,891	3,932	4,005
Income				
Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-372	-372	-372	-372
Funding approved for unavoidable Salary Pressures				
Sub-Total - Income	-372	-372	-372	-372
Income to be approved - funded by partners				
Technical Officers	-97	-141	-104	-106
Malvern Hills District Council - Pest Control		-8	-8	-8
Increase in Rent		-7	-7	-7
Increase in ICT		-16	-16	-16
Increase in Hosting Charges		-10	-10	-10
Unavoidable salary pressures		-81	-159	-230
Sub-Total - Income to be approved	-97	-262	-303	-376
Total Income Budget	-469	-634	-675	-748
DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET	3,257	3,257	3,257	3,257
22-23 Partner Percentages				
Bromsgrove District Council	14.55%			
Malvern Hills District Council	13.03%			
Redditch Borough Council	17.53%			
Worcester City Council	16.54%			
Wychavon District Council	23.24%			
Wyre Forest District Council	15.11%			
Total	100.00%			

	Budget	Contribution Pest Control	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Contribution Increase in Rent, ICT & Hosting Charges
	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	475		11	486	5
Malvern Hills District Council	418	8	15	440	4
Redditch Borough Council	572		7	579	6
Worcester City Council	540		80	620	5
Wychavon District Council	759		17	776	8
Wyre Forest District Council	493		10	503	5
Total	3,257	8	141	3,405	33

	Budget	Contribution Pest Control	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Contribution Increase in Rent, ICT & Hosting Charges
	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	475		12	487	5
Malvern Hills District Council	418	8	15	441	4
Redditch Borough Council	572		8	580	6
Worcester City Council	540		40	580	5
Wychavon District Council	759		18	777	8
Wyre Forest District Council	493		10	503	5
Total	3,257	8	104	3,368	33

	Budget	Contribution Pest Control	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Contribution Increase in Rent, ICT & Hosting Charges
	2024 / 2025	2024 / 2025	2024 / 2025	2024 / 2025	2024 / 2025
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2024 / 25					
Bromsgrove District Council	475		12	487	5
Malvern Hills District Council	418	8	16	441	4
Redditch Borough Council	572		8	580	6
Worcester City Council	540		40	580	5
Wychavon District Council	759		19	778	8
Wyre Forest District Council	493		11	504	5
Total	3,257	8	106	3,371	33

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WRS Partner Contribution Breakdown 2022-23 to 2024-25

Council	WRS Budget 22-23	Pest Control	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity	Tech Officer Gull Control	Increase in Rent	Increase in ICT Support	Increase in Hosting Charges	Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 22-23
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Bromsgrove District Council	475,081		4,800	6,583		1,019	2,256	1,455	11,725	502,918
Malvern Hills District Council	417,713	7,500	4,296	10,401		912	2,019	1,302	10,495	454,637
Redditch Borough Council	572,405		5,783	1,711		1,227	2,718	1,753	14,127	599,725
Worcester City Council	540,012		5,456	4,213	70,000	1,158	2,564	1,654	13,328	638,384
Wychavon District Council	758,622		7,664	9,611		1,627	3,602	2,324	18,723	802,172
Wyre Forest District Council	493,420		4,985	5,003		1,058	2,343	1,511	12,178	520,497
Total	3,257,253	7,500	32,983	37,521	70,000	7,000	15,500	10,000	80,576	3,518,333

Council	WRS Budget 23-24	Pest Control	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity	Tech Officer Gull Control	Increase in Rent	Increase in ICT Support	Increase in Hosting Charges	22-23 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	23-24 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 23- 24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Bromsgrove District Council	475,081		5,001	6,951		1,019	2,256	1,455	11,725	11,354	514,841
Malvern Hills District Council	417,713	7,500	4,476	10,983		912	2,019	1,302	10,495	10,162	465,561
Redditch Borough Council	572,405		6,025	1,807		1,227	2,718	1,753	14,127	13,680	613,743
Worcester City Council	540,012		5,684	4,449	30,000	1,158	2,564	1,654	13,328	12,906	611,754
Wychavon District Council	758,622		7,985	10,149		1,627	3,602	2,324	18,723	18,130	821,161
Wyre Forest District Council	493,420		5,194	5,283		1,058	2,343	1,511	12,178	11,792	532,778
Total	3,257,253	7,500	34,365	39,621	30,000	7,000	15,500	10,000	80,576	78,023	3,559,838

Council	WRS Budget 24-25	Pest Control	Tech Officer Income Generation	Tech Officer Animal Activity - For 12 months	Tech Officer Gull Control - For 12 months	Increase in Rent	Increase in ICT Support	Increase in Hosting Charges	22-23 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	23-24 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	24-25 Unavoidable Salary Pressures	Total Partner Contribution 24- 25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Bromsgrove District Council	475,081		5,210	7,094		1,019	2,256	1,455	11,725	11,354	10,351	525,544
Malvern Hills District Council	417,713	7,500	4,663	11,209		912	2,019	1,302	10,495	10,162	9,264	475,239
Redditch Borough Council	572,405		6,277	1,845		1,227	2,718	1,753	14,127	13,680	12,471	626,503
Worcester City Council	540,012		5,922	4,540	30,000	1,158	2,564	1,654	13,328	12,906	11,765	623,849
Wychavon District Council	758,622		8,319	10,358		1,627	3,602	2,324	18,723	18,130	16,528	838,232
Wyre Forest District Council	493,420		5,411	5,392		1,058	2,343	1,511	12,178	11,792	10,750	543,855
Total	3,257,253	7,500	35,802	40,438	30,000	7,000	15,500	10,000	80,576	78,023	71,130	3,633,222

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgeted Income 2022/23

Appendix 3

Grant Income

	£
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	14,000
	<u>14,000</u>

Partner Funded Income

Employee - Income Generation	32,983
Employee - Additional Gull Work - Worcs City only	70,000
Employee - Animal Activity	37,521
Pest Control Service - Malvern Hills only	7,500
Increase in Rent	7,000
Increase in ICT Hosting	15,500
Increase in Support Hosting	10,000
Unavoidable Salary Pressures	80,576
Total Partner Funded income	<u>261,080</u>

Other Income

Stray Dog Income	50,000
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	1,500
Contaminated Land Work / Planning Support work	120,000
Primary Authority work	25,554
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	20,000
Training	9,000
Health Certificates / Food Hygiene Re-Rating	20,000
Licensing - Pre-App Advice	6,000
Business - Pre-Opening Advice	6,000
Total Other income	<u>359,054</u>

634,134

Total Income

WRS Board: 18th November 2021

Information Report – COVID related activity

Recommendation	That the Board notes the Report and that members use the contents of the information provided in their own reporting back to fellow members of the partner authorities.
Background	<p>WRS has been at the heart of the response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Initially, back in March 2020, the then Minister, Matt Hancock designated both Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers automatically as those responsible for enforcing business restrictions. This continued until July 2021 while controls remained in place under various iterations of regulations made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, which has been a mainstay of district council measures for many years. A dedicated team was carved out of the Community Environmental Health division, supplemented with others from around the service to deliver controls on the ground, whilst the Trading Standards team focused its very small resource on scams, which grew massively and the issues around fake and non-compliant PPE entering the market.</p> <p>As well as this, we embedded a group of Environmental Health Officers in the Local Outbreak Response team, where the skills they have for dealing with outbreaks like TB, Legionella and Food Poisoning, could be put to good use addressing issues that arose on business premises and generally providing support to what was bound to be a relatively inexperienced team built from scratch.</p> <p>WRS also picked up responsibility for delivering a coordinated Covid Marshal scheme across the County, although given marshal sounds like someone with an enforcement role, we designated them Covid Advisors, to better fit their role. This led onto the service picking up responsibility for delivering “Lost to Follow-up” activity, attempting to contact those infected people who the national NHS Test and Trace service had failed to contact, and this of itself led to the service being asked to run the local contact tracing telephone system when Government decided it wanted to start handing responsibility down to local areas and allowing “lost to follow-up to become directly integrated into this operation.</p>
Report	<p>Finally, we have been able to appoint a part-time communications officer to help report on all of these activities and also to keep our day to day activities in the public eye. This report will highlight where we are now with these different work-streams.</p>

COVID Advisors

Members will recall an Information report presented in February 2021 on COVID Advisors activity, and weekly updates provided to Board Members up until the end of the restrictions in late Spring this year. Since that time COVID Advisors have continued to be heavily involved with supporting the public, businesses and organisations with COVID related matters.

Deployment has included door knocking in support of the contact tracing work (explained below) and undertaking risk assessment checks for all businesses following relaxation of the restrictions to ensure businesses were still undertaking action required to keep staff and the public safe from COVID-19 infection.

During July, assistance was also provided to support the Guildhall Vaccination Centre Pop-up to encourage the public to attend, as well as providing support promoting good practice and COVID safe behaviour during events at Worcester Racecourse, the County Cricket Club, Redditch Vintage Fair, Headless Cross and Sanders Park.

Most of the risk assessment checks for businesses were concluded during August, but support was also provided to the vaccination clinics at Brickfields, Worcester, Kidderminster Medical Centre and How College, Worcester.

With schools starting back COVID Advisors assisted Public Health with rolling out mass Lateral Flow Testing at schools between 2nd and 10th September. Support was also provided with vaccination centres at Redditch, Kidderminster and Evesham. Advisors were also trained in basic food hygiene to assist and support newly registered food premises. This allowed new businesses to be contacted or visited to provide COVID risk assessment advice and also provide information to enable prioritisation of risk in relation to food hygiene. This has enriched the work of the COVID Advisor but also allowed resource to be effectively prioritised with Food Hygiene specialists inspecting those premises representing greatest risk first.

During October, engagement with newly registered food premises continued, but support was also given to vaccination clinics at Ronkswood, Warndon and the Horizon Outreach Hub vaccination clinics.

Contact Tracing and Lost to Follow Up

Since November 2020, WRS staff have been involved with assisting the NHS in contacting individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. Once someone receives a positive test result they are asked to complete an online form to confirm where they had been and who they have been in contact with and confirm that they are self-isolating (some exemptions now apply). Where someone fails to complete this within 24 hours, they are sent reminders and a National NHS team would call the individual to encourage completion of the online form or complete the form with them over the phone.

Early on it was recognised that using a local number increased likelihood of engagement with the contact tracer and local knowledge about venues and events improved efficiency of getting necessary information accurately. Working with the County Council's Public

Health team, WRS and the District Councils agreed to provide the contact tracing for those cases where National NHS contact tracers had failed to complete the contact tracing within 24 hours.

The service provider varied across Worcestershire depending on the District and between week and weekend days. The provider has also changed over time for some activities; however, the process has generally included three locally made calls attempted within 24 hours as well as emails and text messages. Then local databases are checked for alternative numbers, with follow up calls made on alternative numbers found. Any cases still not engaging were then door knocked by COVID Advisors who attempted to encourage completion of the contact tracing online or by accepting the phone calls. Following this, a final two calls would be attempted in the next 48 hours.

WRS have developed and recruited to a team of contact tracers to provide this service, supported by the COVID advisors who undertake the door knocking for all Districts, which now is for every day of the week.

In August, WRS took on the role of National NHS in relation to contact tracing for Worcester and Redditch (known as Local 4,) so that from the outset residents who tested positive would be contacted by WRS contact tracers rather than the National team. The contact tracing team increased in number to support this work and in September Malvern Hills was included in the Local 4 process. Contact tracing is completed more quickly where Local 4 is in place and it is hoped to have sufficient resource to extend that to Bromsgrove, Wychavon and Wyre Forest Districts in the next few months.

Recruitment has been an ongoing task because of the team expansion. And whilst it has been relatively successful possibly because of the ability to work remotely in the contact tracer role, we have lost some staff and we are not yet up to the full cohort of 42 FTE contact tracers.

There have been a few instances each month where we have identified someone is likely to be breaching the requirement to isolate, either through information provided by the case on the telephone or by others when knocking their door. Such cases are referred to the police.

Covid Business Enforcement (including Events and Large Capacity spaces)

Throughout the pandemic WRS has been a central player in joint intelligence, coordinating, tasking and economic recovery groups comprising the Police, local authority representatives and others. WRS also chaired the Trading Liaison Partnership, the purpose of which was to share intelligence and co-ordinate the work of WRS, Police and relevant partner Departments in ensuring that appropriate Covid controls were being implemented on the ground whilst supporting economic activity to the maximum extent allowed by regulation. We also added value in helping businesses to fully comply so as to protect public safety. This included horizon scanning to ensure that businesses, local authority managers and promoters/organisers were supported and advised in respect of Covid safety surrounding proposed events and the use of large capacity spaces.

Agenda Item 7

Seven officers led by a Principal took on the role of Business Compliance during the period to provide advice and enforce the various legislative requirements including the service of Prohibition Notices on businesses that failed to comply with the restrictions. The constant changes to legislation as the pandemic progressed presented challenges both to officers and business, moving from enforcement to advice as Step 4 approached, but compliance in Worcestershire remained high throughout.

In August, your Officers went to trial on one of the few cases for business non-compliance of the Covid regulations that ended up before a Court. The trial took place before District Judge Strongman and involved a card and bookshop in Droitwich that had continued to trade during the lockdowns by allowing the public to enter the premises despite multiple verbal and written warnings, prohibition notices and the issue of fixed penalty fines. Businesses of this type were only supposed to trade by orders that could be delivered or collected at the premises' door.

In summing up, the Judge confirmed for the court that there were seven offences falling under different regulations. He summarised briefly the events, namely that the local authority (WRS) were notified by Police that the shop was open and trading during lockdown despite being advised to close, and that subsequently the owner was served with two prohibition notices across different regulations, directing him to close. The owner paid little notice to the prohibition notices beyond marginal changes to their offer and continued to be physically open to the public throughout the lockdowns.

Considering the law, the Judge referred to the regulations as "relatively simple". Businesses must close unless they fall into the list of businesses that could remain open. He confirmed that the only way to make sense of the legislation is to apply the "principle purpose" test to the exempted categories. The predominant offering of the business was celebrations and birthday items. Selling newspapers and food items was not the principle purpose of this business, he stated.

In conclusion the Judge commented that the Council was entirely right to issue the prohibition notices and that no reasonable excuse could exist, regardless of the beliefs of the defendant at the time. He continued, stating in relation to changes in the goods offered that "this was a fig leaf. The proprietor was trying to pitch his shop as a newsagents or food retailer and it clearly was not that. He brought the prosecution on himself by trying to shoehorn his business into a different category".

The Judge noted that other people risked going out of business because of the regulations, but they had complied with the law as required. The sentence was a fine of £35,000 (£5,000 for each offence), costs of £8986 and a victim surcharge of £190. The proprietor has subsequently appealed.

Funding received by WRS has helped to deliver a supporting function to businesses post Covid Regulations. Previously, WRS's role was to ensure compliance with the Covid legislation. However, the lifting of restrictions has required a channel shift and the team has been supporting businesses allowing them to trade fairly and thrive within the night time economy.

Although COVID restrictions were lifted in July, there remain requirements under Health and Safety and Public Health legislation to provide a safe environment for employees by managing the risk associated with COVID in the workplace. The Night-time Economy (NTE) team have been supporting businesses in the following key areas:

- Areas of the district that have been identified by Public Health England to have the highest COVID infection rates in the County will form the weekly focus.
- Through a proactive intelligence lead approach, the team have focused on district's priorities in the night time economy to aid economic COVID recovery and offer business support. This has been achieved through active engagement with businesses and partnership organisations to deliver measured outcomes.
- Through looking at a broader picture of non-compliance in a range of compliance areas that WRS cover. WRS have targeted areas of the County steered by high COVID infection rates and / or previous non-compliance issues.
- Project work has been implemented to cover sector specific activities where COVID infection has been of concern.
- Once information is collated this has been fed back into WRS for further action or an improvement action plan will be discussed with partner organisations or the districts themselves.
- It is recognised that whilst investigating the wider issues faced by WRS and the NTE, inadequate risk assessments in workplaces have surfaced which has generated actions for both the NTE team and CEH colleagues.
- The team have been actively supporting the Licensing and CEH functions across the NTE including undertaking observations, providing advice, and warnings where offences are committed.

Follow up work

- The information gathered by the team has been recorded and fed back to partner organisations such as the district councils to assist in achieving their objectives in relation to the NTE.
- Through attending town centre management meetings, pub watch groups, the BID, joint licensing and policing meetings, public health infection meetings feeding information that has been gathered back to parties to ensure a joined-up approach.
- Relevant information has been recorded and forwarded to the correct teams within WRS to ensure that compliance work that requires attention is followed up. All relevant information will also be fed back into our intelligence database to create informed decision

The Night-time Economy team were predominantly set up to look at enforcement and compliance on weekend evenings between 6pm - 12am/1am across the County. The districts they visit are determined by several factors and information including:

- Intelligence from both the WRS intelligence team and Public Health
- Complaints
- Police Briefing issues highlighted
- Proactive licensing enforcement (suspended licences/taxi related work)
- Covid infection rates
- Information from Covid Advisors evidencing that no risk assessment is in place at

a particular premise,

- Business Visitor infections from the LORT team
- Tactical Assessments

Since Mid-July, the team have undertaken

Total visits	277
Covid risk assessment template sent out	138
Noise visits	10
Food issues identified	23
Licensing issues identified	16
Successful suspended license payments	13
TEN's attendance and advice given	4
Taxi enforcement patrols	14

Local Outbreak Response Team

As part of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, a dedicated team of four Environmental Health Practitioners and a Manager was created to support the County Public Health LORT (Local Outbreak Response Team) from Spring 2020. This team was strengthened to six in July to provide the required resilience and capacity.

WRS Environmental Health expertise and resources have been focussed on outbreak investigation, proactive advice and enforcement to supplement the National contact tracing programme and this role continues until end of March 2022.

The main purpose of the team is providing advice to businesses about Covid legislation and infection control, the latter always having been a key element of environmental health work. The peak of our activity was during the first and third lockdowns when factories, food premises and transport providers continued to be at work alongside emergency services and other health professionals. Many of them were hit with large Covid outbreaks. Officers intervened in outbreaks at several major premises, often working on behalf of HSE, with whom we have a continuing arrangement to carry out a health check where Covid cases reported and then refer back if further action required.

During 2021 the picture has gradually changed. The economy has been allowed to fully re-open and the majority of the population has been vaccinated, although the vaccination of the younger age groups has only just been introduced (please note that WRS team does not have a role in school outbreak management).

From July all legislative controls were dropped by the government, other than the requirement of businesses to have suitable and sufficient risk assessments. This has severely limited the interventions we can make. In recent months it has been noticeable that the public are taking less and less precautions and as we move into the high risk winter period, many businesses also seem to be dropping precautions they had continued to have in place. Yet Covid numbers continue to be high, primarily in the younger, unvaccinated age groups.

At WRS, as the year has progressed, we learned about the new high-risk areas and were able to revise our role to support the County Public Health team. The success of WRS in

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supporting businesses is perhaps shown in the reduced reports of infection in this sector. Cases are now reported across all sectors and almost entirely random in nature reflecting the presence of Covid in the community rather than poor controls leading to workplace transmission and a potential intervention under health and safety law. In more recent months we have also started to receive

- Venue Alerts generated by the national contact tracing system, following up as necessary.
- New Variant listings of people affected by emerging variants, although we have not yet been required to carry out further detailed investigations related to sources

The team have dealt with 356 enquiries in the period. Some highlights:

- Supporting a vaccination initiative directly delivered to some businesses where outbreaks had occurred. The focus of this programme was on the sectors with incoming overseas worker communities.
- Encouraging businesses to adopt appropriate testing regimes
- Dealing with an outbreak in an Indian film crew filming at Severn Manor who were forced to isolate at Stourport Manor Hotel. This included several site visits to try and improve compliance.
- An outbreak affecting all staff at a badly ventilated Sports Direct store
- Supporting a school in Bewdley hit by both Covid and a norovirus outbreak
- Working with PH team on setting up a Red List hotel at Holiday Inn, Bromsgrove.
- Investigating outbreak at Worcester night club
- Investigating Covid related death linked to a public house in Kidderminster
- Taking part in weekend programme of advisory visits to licensed premises to check risk assessments
- Participating in District IMTs
- Sending letter to Licensed sector re lifting of controls
- Dealing with flurry of cases in catering in midsummer as the return to work started and the 'pingdemic' hit.
- Chasing businesses who had not responded to Public Health request for information

The dedicated Local Outbreak Response Team remains in place to assist Public Health with Covid advice and outbreak investigations. Our relationship has matured over the period and as the year progressed, cases have become more random in nature and we continue to find that businesses have adapted well to the new Covid risk assessment requirement with low risk of workplace transmission. In recent weeks, we have seen increased numbers of workplaces mentioned in relation to outbreaks, however often numbers involved are small and there is little evidence of transmission occurring on business premises. Rather it is the high levels within local communities that have been driving the spread, which is eventually seen as cases appearing in ones and twos at business premises

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board

Date: 18th November 2021

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2 2021/22

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 second quarter of 2021/22 but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

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

Report

Activity Data

The second quarter of 2021/22 saw us leaving the Covid control regime completely with government replacing statutory controls with basic guidance on what business ought to do. Businesses are required to have regard to the advice given because of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 but because the guidance is not statutory guidance under the Act, officers are limited as to what they can now ask. More details of this will be covered in the report on Covid related activity that the Board will receive at the meeting when this report is also presented.

Quarter 2 saw the formal launch by the Food Standards Agency of its roadmap to restoring the provisions of the current food control regime. A timetable has been set that required councils to address businesses of a particular risk by a particular date, with April 2023 being set as the final date by which all relevant businesses would have been visited (the lowest risk ones being left out of the re-start programme,) and a new approach to food law enforcement would be introduced. The Agency is currently running pilots for Food Standards (Trading Standards function in Worcestershire,) and will be talking in more detail to unitary and district councils about a



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potential new approach in the coming months.

The number of food safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 37% compared to quarter one. It is also a significant increase compared to previous years. Based on the 234 complaints recorded, 84% related to products purchased from food premises, whilst 16% related to hygiene standards and practices. Also, of the 342 interventions conducted during quarter two at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 30 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2). Approximately 73% of these ratings were issued to takeaways or restaurants. At almost 9% of the businesses visited, this might cause some concerns given we usually see over 95% compliance levels, however officers are targeting the highest risk businesses first so one would expect slightly higher numbers of 0-2 rated premises. Also, as members will see from the table in the appendix, these failures are having a limited impact on the overall rates of compliance.

The number of health and safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 30% compared to quarter one. It is also a notable increase compared to previous years. Approximately 37% of cases were reports of accidents; with 49% relating to injuries where a worker is incapacitated for more than seven days. The remaining cases related to injuries to members of the public, accidents where major injuries were sustained and a single dangerous occurrence. Last year saw an increase in accidents, beginning in Q2 and running into Q3 before declining into Q4. It will be interesting to see if we have a similar pattern this year.

The number of licensing cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 4% compared to quarter one. A reduction in the number of complaints and enquiries was offset by a 19% increase in the number of applications. Approximately 63% of cases recorded were applications and registrations; with 30% relating to private hire and hackney carriage vehicles, 17% relating to temporary events, and 8% relating to personal licences. Performance in terms of turning around driver renewals is reported below and was excellent this quarter.

In general terms, WRS receives a higher number of enquiries about licensing matters than complaints about licensed or unlicensed activity. Based on the 151 complaints recorded during quarter two, 31% related to taxis, 30% related to alcohol and entertainment, and 19% related to animal licensing. This pattern, with around 80% of complaints and enquiries relating to these 3 areas seems quite constant now.

The number of planning enquiries completed by WRS during quarter two is a reduction of 15% compared to quarter one, but is broadly consistent compared to previous years. Approximately 90% of enquiries were consultations, while 45% related to contaminated land. A fifth of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities. This reduction is quite welcome given how busy the team has been, however work remains on a generally upward trajectory when the trend is taken into account. We will see if the respite continues into Q3.

In spite of the high workload, the Technical Services team has recently



found time to update its technical guidance note for planning applicants, agents and consultants which ensures that developments are undertaken to the highest standards with regard to environmental protection and the delivery of sustainable and desirable homes across the County.

The number of pollution cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 36% compared to quarter one. It is also a significant increase compared to previous years, but is consistent with seasonal variations. Approximately 35% of the cases related to domestic noise, whilst 26% related to noise from commercial premises (including hospitality premises). A further 14% of the cases related to smoke nuisance and the burning of domestic or commercial waste. Smoke nuisance remained an issue during the summer, presumably as people disposed of garden waste rather than visiting household recycling centres. There were a few issues with some building sites burning materials, the public are unaware that this is permitted in relation to natural products like waste wood or materials like brushwood cleared from sites as long as the site registers with the Environment Agency.

As members will see, noise features strongly again and it now seems reasonable to conclude that, whilst some noise is new, for example where some pubs are trying out live music for the first time, much of the increase is down to the public having acclimatised to a somewhat quieter environment during the pandemic control period. The large increase in numbers in this work area has created significant pressure and we have had a backlog of complaints to address. It seems likely that this is the reason for the fall in non-business customer satisfaction this quarter.

The number of public health cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 13% compared to quarter one. Approximately 60% of the cases related to pest control; whether enquiries about treatments and sewer baiting, or complaints about pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 16% of cases were complaints relating to accumulations at domestic properties.

Of the 249 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter two, the largest proportion at 49% were due to the presence of wasps, and overall 67% of treatments were in relation to properties located in the Wychavon or Redditch districts.

Covid related activities

Are covered in a separate report this quarter.

Performance

The non-business customer measure at 63.5%, significantly down on the last quarter and on the 74% out-turn from last year. Having reviewed the data, the falls have occurred against the questions relating to speed of response and speed of resolution. This is almost certainly linked to the backlog of nuisance work the team was dealing with during the summer. In spite of attempts, it proved impossible to bring in additional staff resource to support this work area as most of the agency Environmental



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Health resource is already committed to the pandemic response. Officers have explained the reasons for delays but clearly this has had a negative impact on perceptions of the service. Likewise, numbers who felt better equipped to deal with future issues was also down at 60.8%.

Business customer satisfaction remains good at 97.7%.

Overall numbers of compliant and non-compliant food businesses were at 98.6% and 1.4% respectively. This remains good and on a par with previous years. As we have said above, the focus currently is on those higher risk businesses that have historically had a low score. Hence, the overall change is limited as these businesses are more likely to have been part of the 1.4% at their last intervention.

If seen, a significant fall in these measures would suggest our better performing businesses had let standards slip and we are not likely to know this until much further into the process of re-starting the inspection programme, assuming of course that this is the case. It may well be that such businesses have been able to maintain standards or will be able to re-establish them ahead of being visited.

Generally, compliments outnumber complaints by around 3 or 4 to 1 and so far this year is no different (15:52). In this quarter, one complaint relates to an animal licensing inspection of a premise, another relates to a food business unhappy at its Food Hygiene rating, and some to the time taken to respond to nuisance issues, however the other complaints have been about Covid Advisors and mainly the difficult job around establishing if someone is self-isolating when infected. Officers do try to be diplomatic when looking at this but obviously sometimes people do get upset at the fact someone has come to check, although this only occurs from a WRS perspective, when someone has failed to respond to a number of telephone calls from either the national or our local contact tracing teams. The compliments about Covid Advisors and other members of the team still far outweigh the complaints so members can be happy that, on balance, our role as either enforcers or advisors is performed in a thoughtful and sympathetic way, wherever it can be.

Performance on processing complete driver license renewals was at 100% for all authorities. This is great work by the team. Members should remember that we are reliant on those applying providing us with the required data necessary to process applications. Some fail to do this, in spite of being informed of requirements. These applications either remain pending or are returned to the applicant who would be asked to re-submit once they have all of the required information.

As ever, the number of defective vehicles found whilst potentially in service was relatively small at 13, which is a small proportion of the total fleet, which post Covid sits at 1435. Hopefully, now that the council garages and others that deliver the vehicle tests are operating with more capacity, we should be able to return to normal reporting on this measure. Members may remember we had to suspend this measure at one point as garages were closed or not offering all services. More



details appear in the table in appendix 1.

Members may have seen recent national press coverage regarding falls in the numbers of licensed drivers and vehicles on the road. Councils across Worcestershire have seen some falls in numbers of vehicles although not to the extent reported elsewhere. Looking back, the fall during the Covid pandemic is probably around 100 vehicles as numbers do fluctuate over time, with some variations between districts.

Staff sickness has increased from 0.9 days per FTE to 1.55 days per FTE cumulative for the year. A very minor IT glitch has meant these figures needed updating but in WRS's case the change had little impact. Current sickness levels are higher than last year (0.95,) but lower than the figures for 2019/20 (2.91,) and 2018/19 (2.77) at the same point in the year.

The rate of noise complaints against population is 1.08. This is above the rate at the same point in the previous 2 years (0.94 and 0.85 respectively,) and heading towards the previous high in 2018/19 (1.7, although a quiet Winter meant overall this year was on trend.) This clearly indicates a return to normal or above levels, suggest 2021/22 may be a busy year for nuisance issues, especially as the spike continued into the Autumn. This supports officers anecdotal view that people have become less tolerant of noise following the relative quiet of the pandemic period.

The rate of hospitality businesses not upholding the 4 licensing objectives is 6.7%. This is significantly above the previous three years' figures at this point (4.3%, 4.9% and 2.8% respectively.) Whilst one or other district hitting above 8% at this point is not unusual, Redditch had a similar figure in 2020/21, it is unusual for the lowest district to be over 5%. In the previous 3 years this was 3%, 3.6% and 2.4% respectively. This again supports officer's anecdotal view that more premises are trying new things like live music to bring people in, combined with the fact that people have enjoyed the quiet that the pandemic controls brought to their localities.

Income brought in during the first half of 2021/22 is £163,583, which is significantly up on last year that this point (£131,901) and at a similar level to the figure quoted at the end of September 2019 (£163,534.) Using the historic budget figure for 2016/17 (£3,017,000) to maintain the comparison with previous years, this comes out at 5.4%. Hopefully this shows we are starting to see more normality returned in the areas that generate our income streams.

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 Pls 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	71.3	63.5%		
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	96.8	97.7		
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.8	Bromsgrove 99.6% Malvern Hills 98.8% Redditch 98.1% Worcester City 98.7% Wychavon 98.2% Wyre Forest 98.3% Worcestershire 98.6%		
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.2	Bromsgrove 0.4% Malvern Hills 1.2% Redditch 1.9% Worcester City 1.3% Wychavon 1.8% Wyre Forest 1.7% Worcestershire 1.4%		
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	100%	NA	
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of	6-monthly	NA	13 = 0.91% of 1435 vehicles on the road county-wide	NA	



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vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this represents of the fleet county-wide			BDC 1 MHDC 0 RBC 7 WC 4 WDC 1 WFDC 0		
7 % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	69	60.8		
8 Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	5/ 12	15/52		
9 Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.90 days per FTE	1.55 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 5.2% Malvern Hills 5.6% Redditch 5.5% Worcester City 8.0% Wychavon 6.7% Wyre Forest 8.2% Worcestershire 6.7%	NA	
12 Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.67 Malvern Hills 0.69 Redditch 1.23 Worcester City 1.55 Wychavon 1.05 Wyre Forest 1.15 Worcestershire 1.08	NA	
13 Total income expressed as a % of	6-monthly	NA	£163,583, which is 5.42% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue	NA	



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district base revenue budget (16/17)			budget figure (£3,017,000)		
14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	



Worcestershire
Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2021-22



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 second activity data report for 2021/22.

Summer has come and gone, the leaves are turning and everyone is preparing for the long dark nights of Winter. So far, we seem to be blessed with higher than average temperatures and, while this has been good for us gardeners, it has meant that our busy period for nuisance has extended into Quarter 3, which you should see in the next report. But looking at Q2, the stand-out figure is the summer nuisance spike, it being well above the previous two years in terms of numbers, although we know we always see an increase during Summer. We think this has been down to a number of factors including businesses in the hospitality sector looking at live music as a way to bring people into their premises where this has not featured before but also possibly down to the public having had 18 months of relative quiet, with the night time economy being closed for much of it and many businesses working in a more limited way. It seems many members of the public have got used to the reduced level of disturbance and many would like to retain it. This has created a massive pressure on the team and has made responding in a timely fashion difficult as we have been unable to pull in additional resource as it is all committed in the covid sphere. This seems to account for our drop in customer satisfaction as response times and time to resolve are the two areas impacted. We have been able to bring in a small number of contractors to start to tackle the back-log of food work created by the Food Standards Agency's decision to suspend the food inspection programme. As you'll see numbers of visits are up for the last quarter but we need to do more. David and the team are looking at ways to keep us on track with the Agency's timetable. Food safety complaints were up and we are using a triage process to help identify which ones need intervention and which can simply be treated as intelligence to support future visits. This allows us to retain the focus on catchup work. On general health and safety work, numbers of both complaints and reported accidents were up on the first quarter, possibly as more businesses get back to fuller operations.

licensing, a small fall in complaints and enquiries was more than off-set by a significant increase in applications, led by both the taxi trade and the hospitality sector. More applications were coming through for taxi related activity showing the trade moving back towards more normal levels as the economy re-opens and temporary events continued to feature strongly as many businesses and others used the Summer to reintroduce events and similar activities to increase footfall. In Technical Services, planning applications was one of the only areas where we saw a fall in numbers, but only back towards the normal trend line from the earlier peak, so this area of work remains busy. Also, whilst numbers of dog-related complaints fell slightly, the number of dogs straying was up, possibly linked to more people returning to work during the day, which is something the team anticipated.

Finally, Covid has not gone away. We still have a number of EHOs embedded in the Local Outbreak Response Team; we still have a small team looking at Covid compliance in the night time economy, our Covid advisors continue to provide business support and act as the door knocking service where contact tracing does not elicit a response from infected individuals and we have continued to grow our local contact tracing unit, which has now taken calls from the national team for cases in Worcester, Redditch and Malvern Hills. The plan is to expand this work to cover the whole of Worcestershire in time. All of this is supported by funding from the County Council.

So, there is still never a dull moment for the staff of WRS. We hope you find the report interesting and if you've any questions please do contact myself or one of the Management Team.

Simon Wilkes

Head of Regulatory Services

Community Environmental Health

Statutory Nuisance

The surge in nuisance demand continued throughout the summer, with high numbers of complaints about noise from licensed premises remaining a notable feature. This was particularly challenging for CEH with several team members being re-assigned to cover Covid related work, leaving fewer than usual to deal with the summer peak of nuisance cases. This resulted in an unprecedented backlog of cases, peaking at over 200 nuisance cases pending allocation plus around 800 cases under investigation. Abatement Notices were served for issues including noise nuisances from amplified music on licensed premises, barking dogs, accumulations, and insufficient drainage arrangements.

The Team have started to receive a number of complaints in relation to noise from recently installed air-source heat pumps, which is a concern given how few have currently been installed and the national push for their wider adoption. Magistrates heard an appeal against a noise abatement notice served upon licensed premises concerning noise from amplified music. The appeal was dismissed, the court finding that the notice was properly served and entirely justified. A prosecution case relating to breach of a noise abatement notice in respect of barking dogs was due to go to trial but was adjourned following application by the defence due to ill health.

A significant number of private water supply samples were undertaken in the period to catch up on those missed during lockdown. This has reduced the backlog with further steps being taken to manage the claw back.

Local Outbreak Response Team

The dedicated Local Outbreak Response Team remains in place to assist Public Health with Covid advice and outbreak investigations. Our relationship has matured over the period and the need to meet daily is no longer required. As the year progressed cases have become more random in nature and we continue to find that businesses have adapted well to the new Covid risk assessment requirement with low risk of workplace transmission.

Covid Business Enforcement

Seven officers led by a Principal took on the role of Business Compliance during the period to provide advice and enforce the various legislative requirements. The constant changes to legislation as the pandemic progressed presented challenges both to officers and business, moving from enforcement to advice as Step 4 approached.

In August, your Officers went to trial on one of the most nationally significant cases for business non-compliance of the Covid regulations. The trial took place before District Judge Strongman and involved a card and bookshop in Wychavon, Grace Cards and Books, which had continued to trade during the lockdowns despite multiple verbal and written warnings, prohibition notices and the issue of fines.

In summing up, the Judge confirmed for the court that there were seven offences falling under different regulations. He summarised briefly the events, namely that the local authority (WRS) were notified by Police that the shop was open and trading during lockdown despite being advised to close, and that subsequently the owner was served with two prohibition notices across different regulations, directing him to close. The owner chose to defy the prohibition notices and continued to open throughout the lockdowns. Considering the law, the Judge referred to the regulations as “relatively simple”. Businesses must close unless they fall into the list of businesses that could remain open. He confirmed that the only way to make sense of the legislation is to apply the “principle purpose” test to the exempted categories. The predominant offering of the business was celebrations and birthday items. Selling newspapers and food items was not the principle purpose of this business, he stated. In conclusion the Judge commented that the Council was entirely right to issue the prohibition notices and that no reasonable excuse can exist, regardless of the beliefs of the defendant at the time. The Judge continued stating that “this was a fig leaf. The proprietor was trying to pitch his shop as a newsagents or food retailer and it clearly was not that. He brought the prosecution on himself by trying to shoehorn his business into a different category”. The Judge noted that other people would be going out of business because of the regulations, but they had complied with the law. The sentence was a fine of £35,000 (5k for each offence), costs of £8986 and a victim surcharge of £190. The proprietor was subsequently appealed.

Food Safety Interventions

The summer months brought a gradual return to more ‘business as usual’ with officers able to increase their food inspection work in line with the Food Standards Agency’s recovery programme. New premises remain our priority with many food business operators making enquiries as to why they are having to wait so long for their all-important FHRs score. We prioritise this seemingly never-ending challenge as we continue to receive around 90 new registrations a month, proving that there is still an appetite out there to set up a new business. The good news is that most of the new business are highly compliant.

Members should be aware that we face the same problems as many businesses post Covid, unable to backfill dedicated public health roles with appropriately competent and skilled officers to carry out food safety (and nuisance) work, although we have been successful in retaining 3 of the 4 previously recruited. We continue to find slippage in standards in businesses following the lockdown with many dropping a Food Hygiene Rating (FHRs) level and a few receiving Level 0-2 ratings resulting in several appeals. The understanding of allergen law continues to be an issue across all sectors. We also had an increase in demand for re-rating, perhaps showing the value that our food businesses now place on having a good FHRs score. This is a charged for service and the return visit can be delayed for up to three months if it is deemed necessary to provide sufficient evidence of improved compliance and confidence in management controls

In additional work we receive a steady flow of export certificate requests from two companies, Microferm and Dawn Foods, and the CEH team also continued to deliver the

Operation Corona Fries

This project commenced during the first week of March 2021 and continued throughout quarter one and quarter two.

A team of Officers were tasked with inspecting targeted premises for food hygiene, health and safety, COVID control measures and Licensing compliance. The premises targeted were those food businesses with a food hygiene rating score of 2 and below, namely those not compliant under the Food Standard Agency's Food Hygiene Rating System. WRS Intelligence had identified a direct correlation between those poor performing food businesses and poor COVID control measures. There were approximately 35 premises at start of project, with additional premises being added as further intelligence was received. 41 inspections have been carried out to date.

Following the inspections various types of enforcement action have been taken, namely two red files opened for potential prosecutions, 21 Food Hygiene Improvement Notices served and 4 Health & Safety Improvement notices served.

Premises which were scored at Level zero to Level two (non-compliant businesses) were added to the Intelligence Database (IDB) for other Agencies including Trading Standards, Fire Service, and Immigration to action as they deem appropriate. The work to bring premises scoring less than Level 3 FHRS up to the standard of broadly compliant continues as a priority.

Licensing

The steady increase in enquiries and applications at the end of quarter one carried through into quarter two at a much faster pace in line with previous years prior to the pandemic. The changes made to Gov (online applications portal) centrally by government has had an impact on the processes of the team as now a high number of applications are requiring manual processing which has been a challenge and the team are working with partners to look at how we work around this.

There has been a natural increase in TENs applications, Taxi queries and premises licence queries back to normal levels expected for this time of year.

The consultations for all districts in relation to the Statutory Taxis Standards continue with the implementation on track for 2022. WRS have used a number of channels to communicate to a wide range of stakeholders and look to go through all responses before final proposals are put presented to partners.

The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of a site to be a fit and proper person) Regulations 2020 guidance was published so the team have been busy putting together an application process and fee structure so applicants can now submit applications for determination to WRS.

The Pavement Licence regulations under the Business and Planning act 2020 was extended in the summer until September 2022 and partners agreed that the process will continue to run the same as it has done previously.

Animal Activity has started to plateau with officers now caught up with the backlog of inspections. The team have also noted a reduction in dog related complaints. The operation that the team have been working on over the last 6 months has now drawn to a close on the information gathering stages with the second phase of investigations now starting to commence.

Enforcement and Compliance activity has continued throughout the quarter with officers taking weekly visits across districts both during the day and evening/night time work concentrating on suspended licences, Taxi ranks and general observations of licences holders whether they are street traders, peddlers or premise licence holders. There were just under 300 visits conducted across the districts through Q2 by the NTE team alone with a calling in of 138 Risk Assessments.

To complement the work WRS are doing as part of Covid funding projects we welcomed a new Communications Officer to the team who will be raising the profile of WRS and working across all of the districts to further integrate WRS comms with the objectives of partners going forward.

Page 55 Technical Services

IT Development

Quarter two has continued to be a very busy period. This has been largely because of the extra demands on our support services due to the unprecedented staff levels we now have in response to the COVID pandemic (COVID Advisors and Contact tracers). We have worked closely with our staff and host IT to help meet the additional requirements of equipment, software licences, training and support.

The start of the quarter saw the culmination of much work with the release of our website that has been built on a new content management system (CMS). Going forward this modern CMS has the potential to meet the growing and changing needs of our service.

Extensive preparation work has also gone into a series of upgrades and improvements to various areas of our back-office systems. This series of work should be completed before the end of quarter 3 and are designed to increase the resilience and efficiency of our back-office systems to support all aspects of the work our service undertakes.

COVID Advisors

Early in quarter two, the Government introduced Stage 4 of its roadmap. This lifted COVID restrictions on the 19th July, with no limits on how many people can meet or attend events, and face coverings only recommended in some spaces but not required by law. This obviously changed the focus of the COVID Advisors role, so they visited businesses across the County to discuss which of the restrictions they were keeping in place (if any) and to see if they required any further advice or support. As part of this, businesses were also asked if they had COVID Risk Assessments in place.

Early August saw the Advisors kept busy with assisting vaccination centres, including the one at Brickfields (Worcester) and Kidderminster Medical Centre walk-in. The vaccination pop up clinics have been a huge success with an uptake of 1300 in Worcester and 400 in Kidderminster. Covid Advisors have received a lot of praise for this. Further assistance was provided at vaccination centres through September including Redditch, Worcester and Evesham pop-ups. With children returning to schools, and the requirement to complete lateral flow tests for pupils, Advisors assisted schools with completing this task. A total of 495 newly registered food businesses were supported by Advisors to ensure they had appropriate controls in place and 30 clinically extremely vulnerable residents have been visited to provide support as required during this period.

Contact Tracing

We have seen a steady increase in positive cases requiring tracing throughout the second quarter, although over the past week there does seem to have been a slight decrease. We continue to undertake Lost to Follow Up work for half the County with Local-4 being in place for the other half (which is where we undertake the all the calls for those Districts rather than National NHS doing it). Across the County we are successfully tracing around 80% of cases. For 10% of cases we have been able to reach them but for varying reasons have not been able to fully complete the tracing call, examples of why this may be is the individual refusing to engage or inability to successfully identify all contacts, this is particularly relevant in school aged children. The remaining 10% we have not been able to successfully reach despite phone calls, emails and visits being undertaken.

Dog Wardens

The second quarter has remained steady, with the service having received contact in relation to 320 dog related matters; including enquiries for assistance or advice and complaints. We were successful in reuniting 202 dogs with their owners, and rehoming 44 with recognised animal rehoming charities. Unfortunately 2 dogs were found deceased. In the region of 60% of dogs collected were without the correct microchip details. In addition we have looked after two client dogs for owners who have had an extended stay in hospital, we have also re-homed another client dog for an owner who agreed to handover the dog as they were struggling to provide the appropriate

Air Quality

During quarter two we have seen the return of road traffic back to pre-covid levels throughout Worcestershire and it is likely that the gains in air quality improvements we observed during the last 18 months will be lost over the latter part of the year. Officers have consequently been working to further develop our air quality monitoring capabilities by seeking commitment from partners to fund continuous gas analysers. This equipment provides a distinct advantage over passive diffusion tube deployment and enhances our monitoring capability by providing real time information for Nitrogen dioxide and Particulates. The information harvested will also provide the public with real time local information about air quality in their area and when to avoid certain locations when the air is poor.

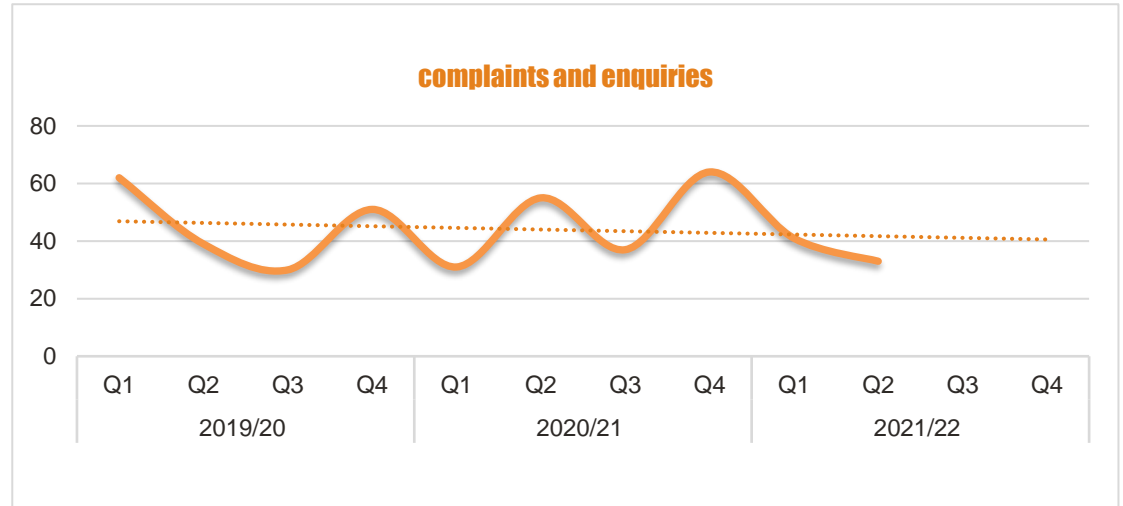
Contaminated Land

Following detailed consideration by WRS officers formally requested that the Environment Agency investigate the old fire station/county buildings at Winsor street Bromsgrove as a Special Site due to suspected PFAS contamination and its potential to contaminate the drinking water aquifer. The Environment Agency has formally agreed to investigate the site and WRS will be liaising with the site owners as the investigation develops.

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

The number of stray or lost dogs recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 8% compared to quarter one, but is consistent with the previous year. Approximately 70% of cases related to 'contained' stray dogs; which means that a dog was found and held by, for example, a member of the public. Approximately 76% of stray dogs were returned to their owners, whilst 20% were rehomed.

In general terms, WRS receives a low number of dog control complaints. Based on the 48 complaints recorded during the year to date, 21 have related to fouling and persistent straying, 17 have related to dangerous dogs, and 10 have related to welfare concerns.



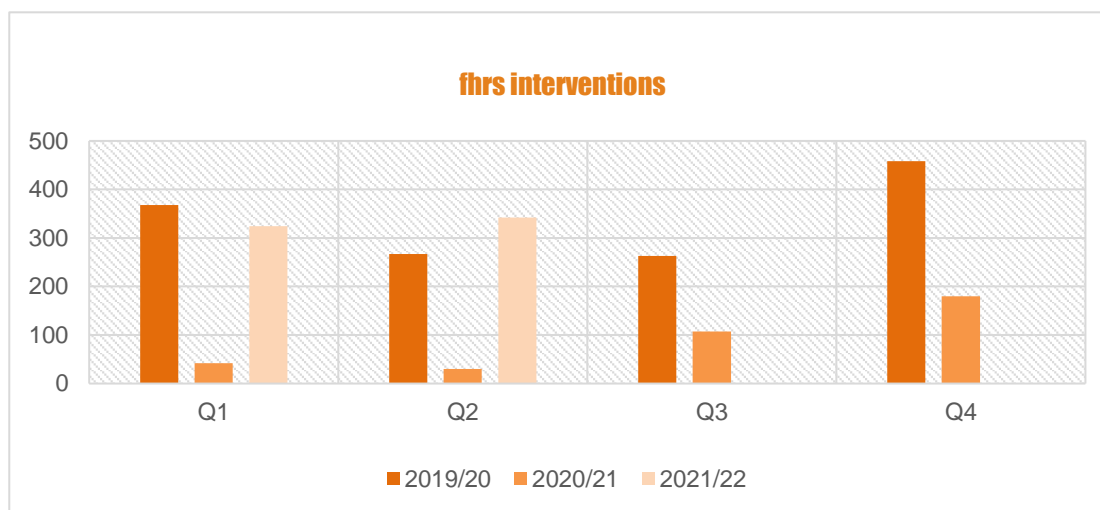
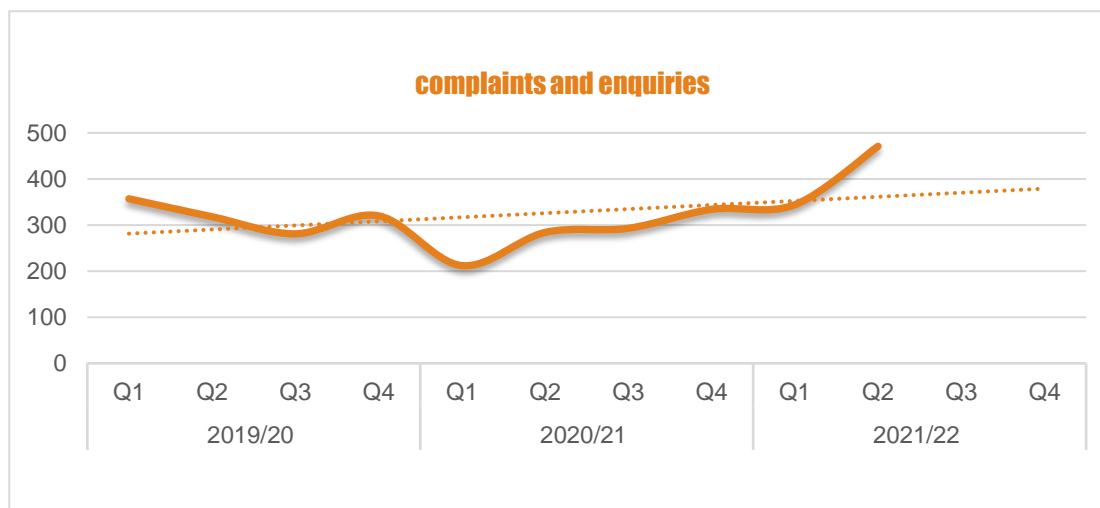
During September, Technical Services officers were very busy dealing with two major incidents where they have regulatory responsibility for pollution control. A serious pollution incident at Frith Common occurred following an accident at Forest Garden's timber treatment facility. Approximately 7,000 ltrs of Timber preservative was lost to ground following a pressure vessel explosion. The company has since instigated clean up. In Kidderminster a severe fire broke out at Stephen Betts metal processing facility in park street. Technical Services officers were involved in the Major Incident response and assisted the HSE and the EA in the investigation.

Both sites are cooperating with our officers and are subject to ongoing investigations.

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

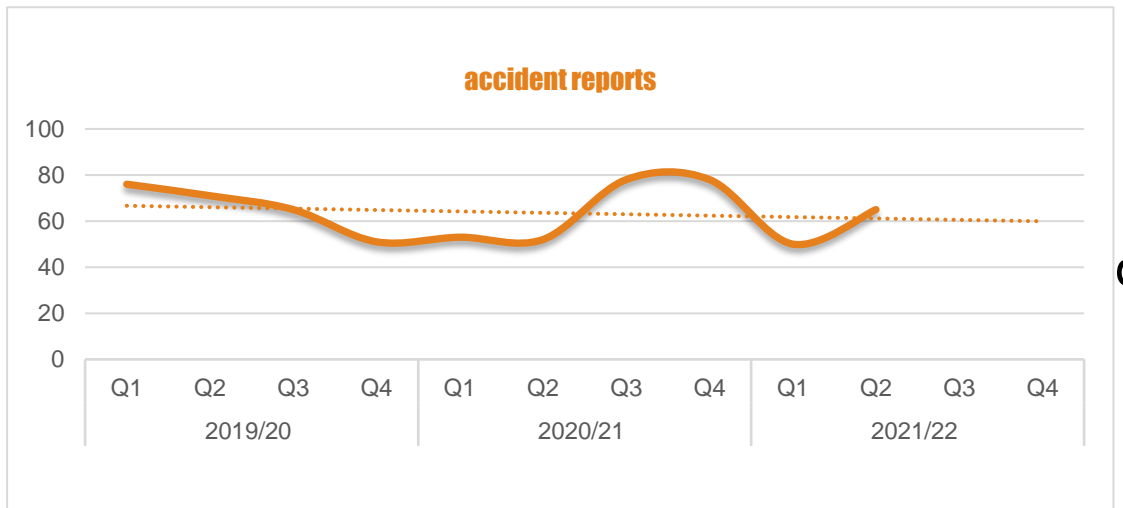
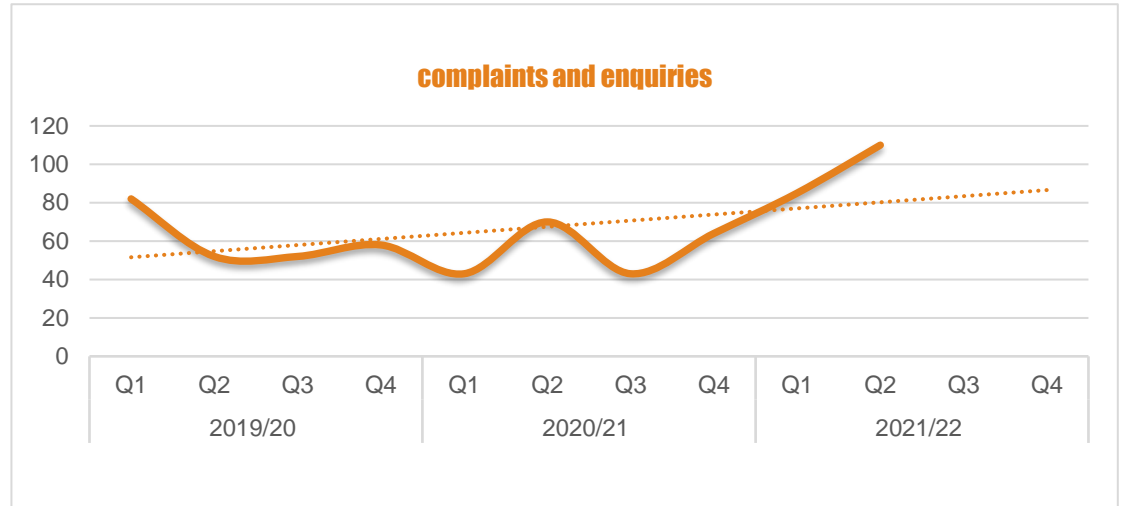
The number of food safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 37% compared to quarter one. It is also a significant increase compared to previous years. Based on the 234 complaints recorded, 84% related to products purchased from food premises, whilst 16% related to hygiene standards and practices.

Of the 342 interventions conducted during quarter two at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 30 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2). Approximately 73% of these ratings were issued to takeaways or restaurants.



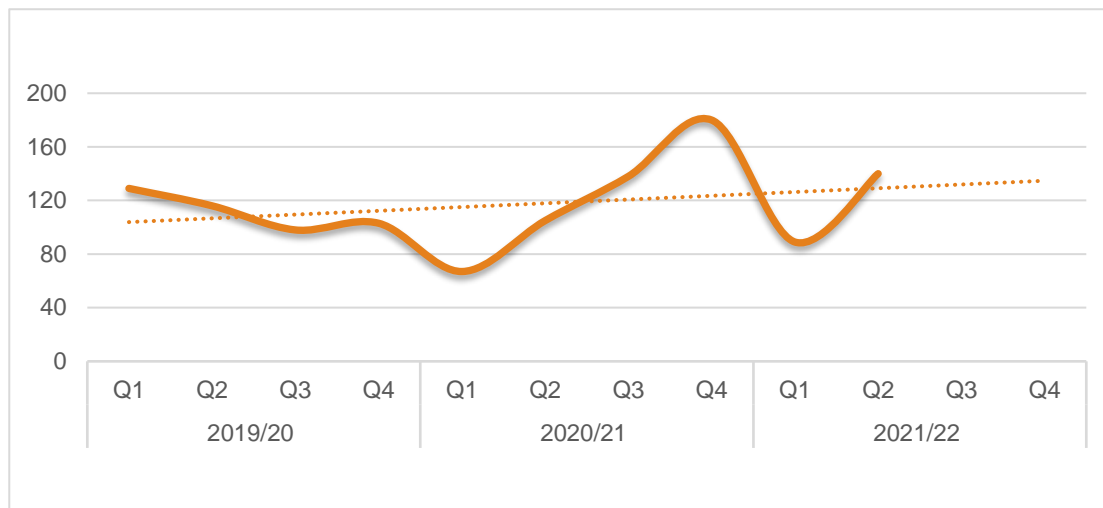
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to health and safety at work. This includes requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of notifications received by WRS relating to accidents.

The number of health and safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 30% compared to quarter one. It is also a notable increase compared to previous years. Approximately 37% of cases were reports of accidents; with 49% relating to injuries where a worker is incapacitated for more than seven days. The remaining cases related to injuries to members of the public, accidents where major injuries were sustained and a single dangerous occurrence.



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

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



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

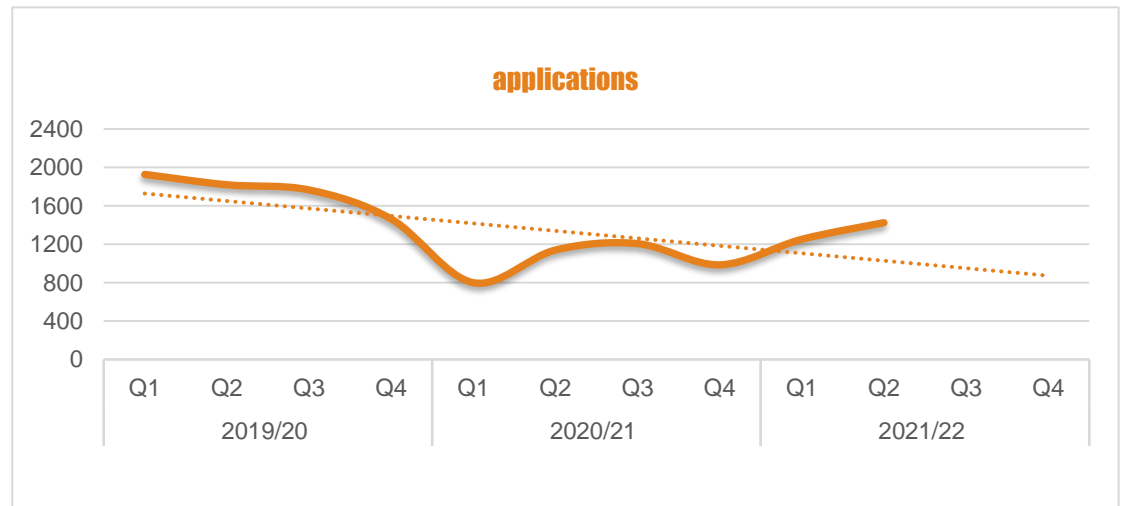
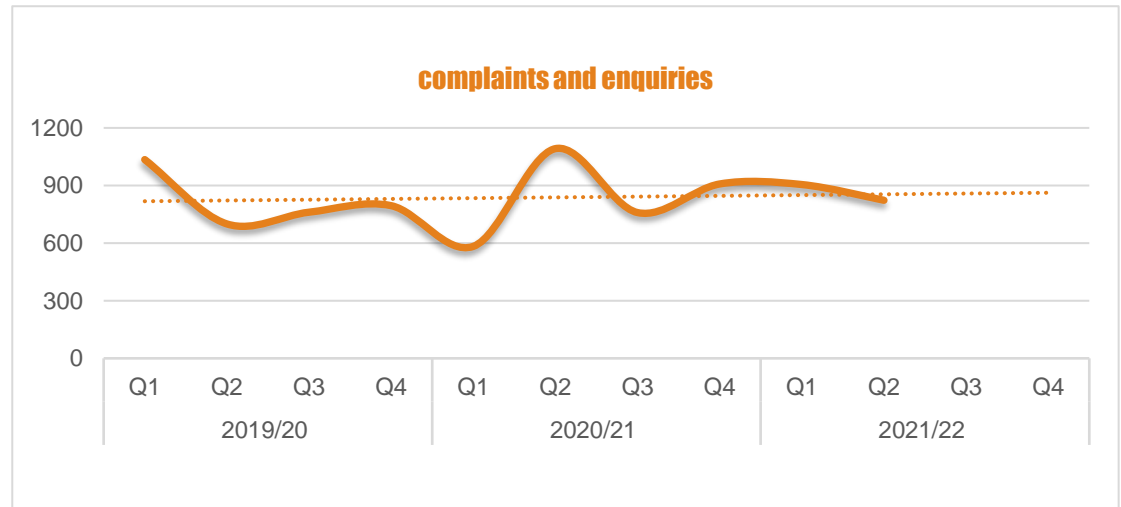
Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

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

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The number of licensing cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 4% compared to quarter one. A reduction in the number of complaints and enquiries was offset by a 19% increase in the number of applications. Approximately 63% of cases recorded were applications and registrations; with 30% relating to private hire and hackney carriage vehicles, 17% relating to temporary events, and 8% relating to personal licences.

In general terms, WRS receives a higher number of enquiries about licensing matters than complaints about licensed or unlicensed activity. Based on the 151 complaints recorded during quarter two, 31% related to taxis, 30% related to alcohol and entertainment, and 19% 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

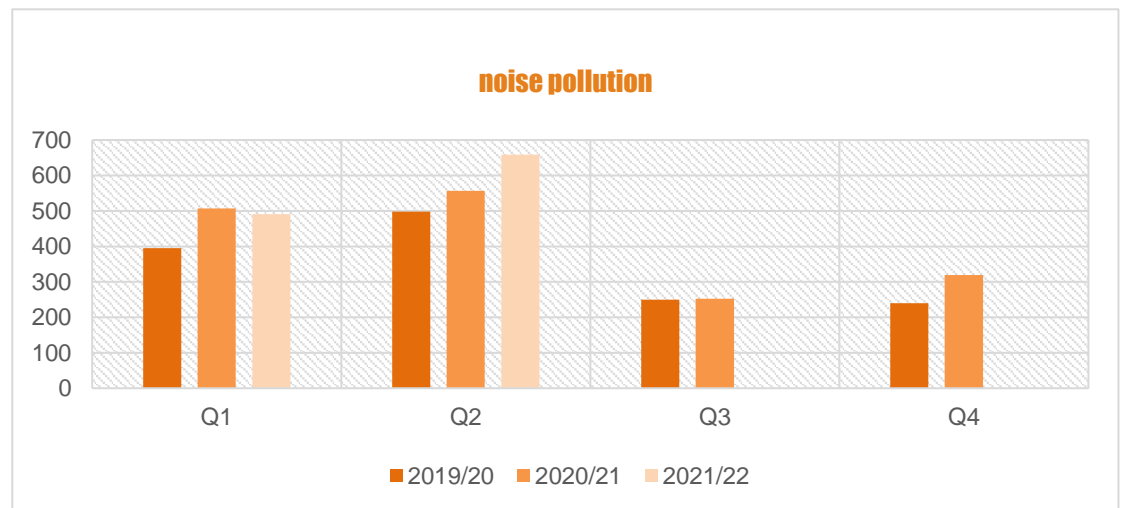
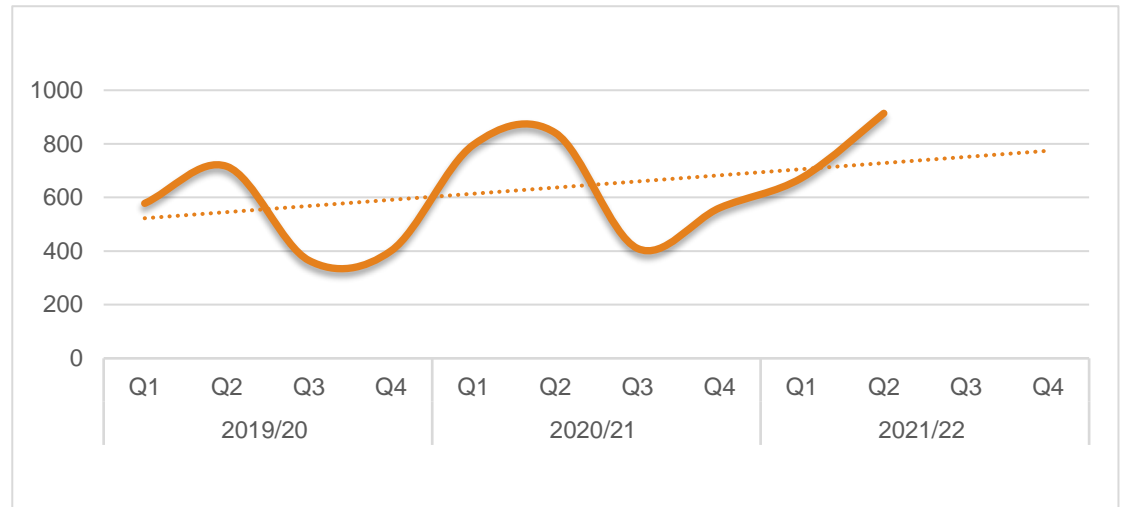


The number of planning enquiries completed by WRS during quarter two is a reduction of 15% compared to quarter one, but is broadly consistent compared to previous years. Approximately 90% of enquiries were consultations, while 45% related to contaminated land. A fifth of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.

WRS has recently updated its technical guidance note for planning applicants, agents and consultants which ensures that developments are undertaken to the highest standards with regard to environmental protection and the delivery of sustainable and desirable homes across the County.

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

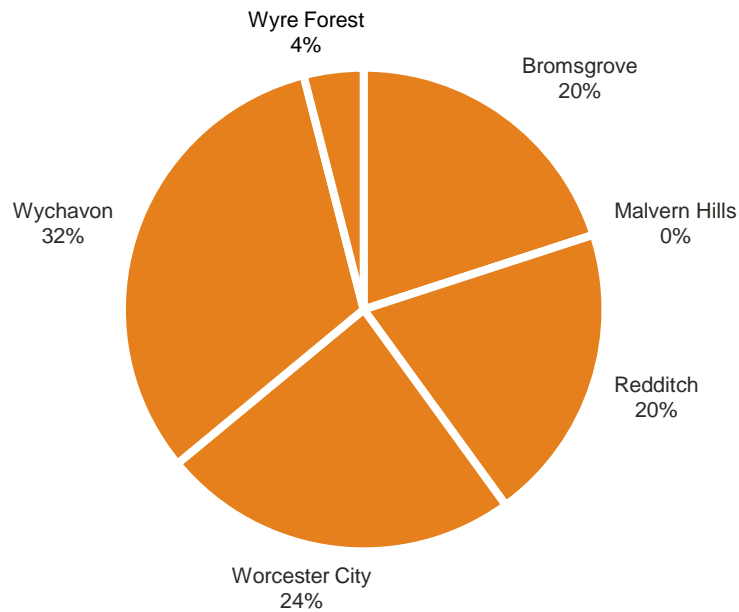
The number of pollution cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 36% compared to quarter one. It is also a significant increase compared to previous years, but is consistent with seasonal variations. Approximately 35% of cases related to domestic noise, whilst 26% related to noise from commercial premises (including hospitality premises). A further 14% of cases related to smoke nuisance and the burning of domestic or commercial waste.



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

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

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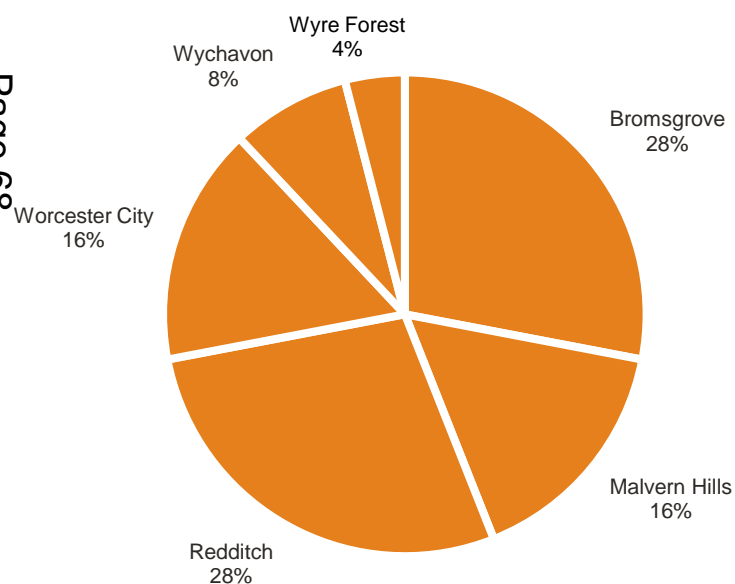


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Eckington	22	2,669	8.24
Bedwardine	30	8,167	3.67
Sanders Park	12	3,651	3.29
Norton	12	3,707	3.24
Pinvin	10	3,105	3.22
Arboretum	18	6,233	2.89
Marlbrook	8	2,890	2.77
Avoncroft	9	3,300	2.73
Claines	22	8,076	2.72
Rainbow Hill	15	5,511	2.72
Drakes Broughton	7	2,577	2.72
Cathedral	30	11,763	2.55
Evesham South	12	5,423	2.21
Winyates	18	8,184	2.20
Harvington And Norton	6	2,756	2.18
Greenlands	20	9,329	2.14
Mitton	21	10,047	2.09
Central (Redditch)	14	6,844	2.05
Elmley Castle And Somerville	5	2,499	2.00
Lovett And North Claines	13	6,499	2.00
Perryfields	3	1,501	2.00
Church Hill	16	8,062	1.98
Batchley And Brockhill	17	8,783	1.94
Battenhall	10	5,221	1.92
Hartlebury	6	3,140	1.91

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

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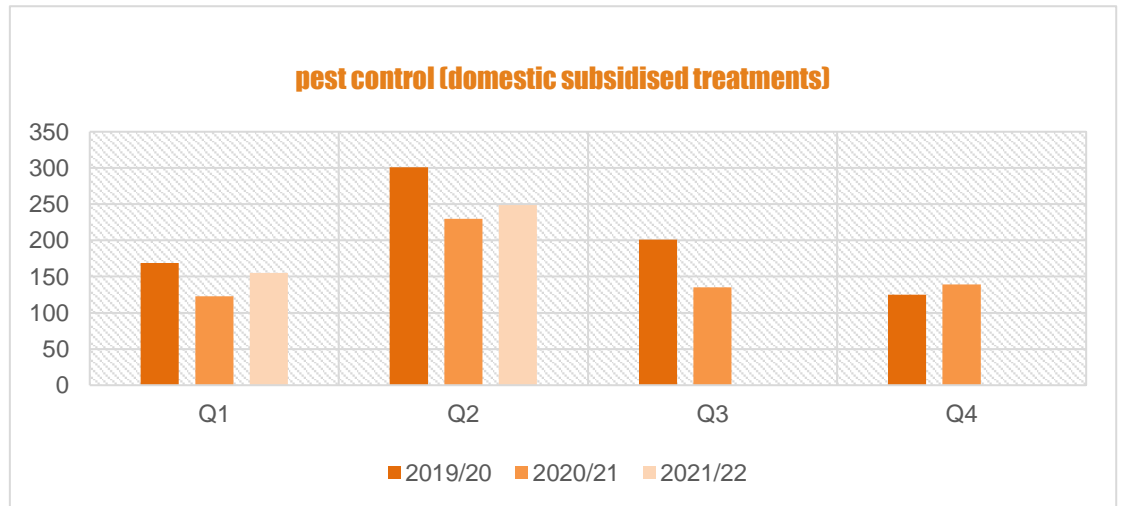
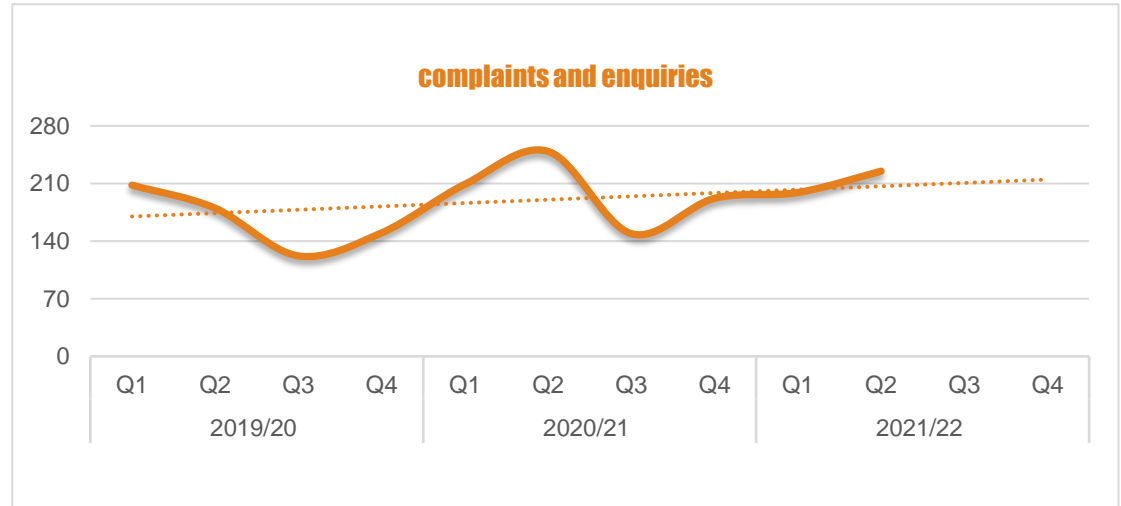


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Wribbenhall And Arley	34	5,444	6.25
Perryfields	8	1,501	5.33
Abbey	31	6,620	4.68
Norton	17	3,707	4.59
Avoncroft	15	3,300	4.55
Lowes Hill	13	2,903	4.48
Warndon	25	5,669	4.41
Sanders Park	16	3,651	4.38
Charford	15	3,665	4.09
Central (Redditch)	28	6,844	4.09
Rubery South	12	2,984	4.02
Saint John	34	8,836	3.85
Lodge Park	21	5,591	3.76
Bedwardine	29	8,167	3.55
Chase	22	6,217	3.54
Lindridge	8	2,261	3.54
Greenlands	32	9,329	3.43
Winyates	28	8,184	3.42
Church Hill	27	8,062	3.35
Hallow	6	1,840	3.26
Gorse Hill	19	5,839	3.25
Crabbs Cross	18	5,647	3.19
Evesham South	17	5,423	3.13
Pickersleigh	20	6,397	3.13
Droitwich Central	8	2,621	3.05

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

The number of public health cases recorded by WRS during quarter two is an increase of 13% compared to quarter one. Approximately 60% of cases related to pest control; whether enquiries about treatments and sewer baiting, or complaints about pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 16% of cases were complaints relating to accumulations at domestic properties.

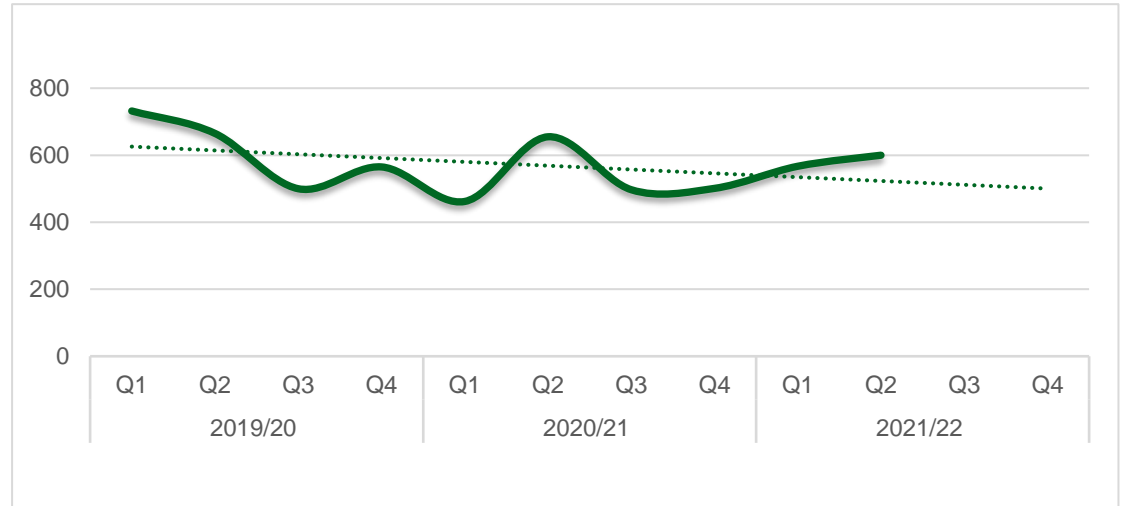
Of the 249 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter two, the largest proportion at 49% were due to the presence of wasps, and overall 67% of treatments were in relation to properties located in the Wychavon or Redditch districts.



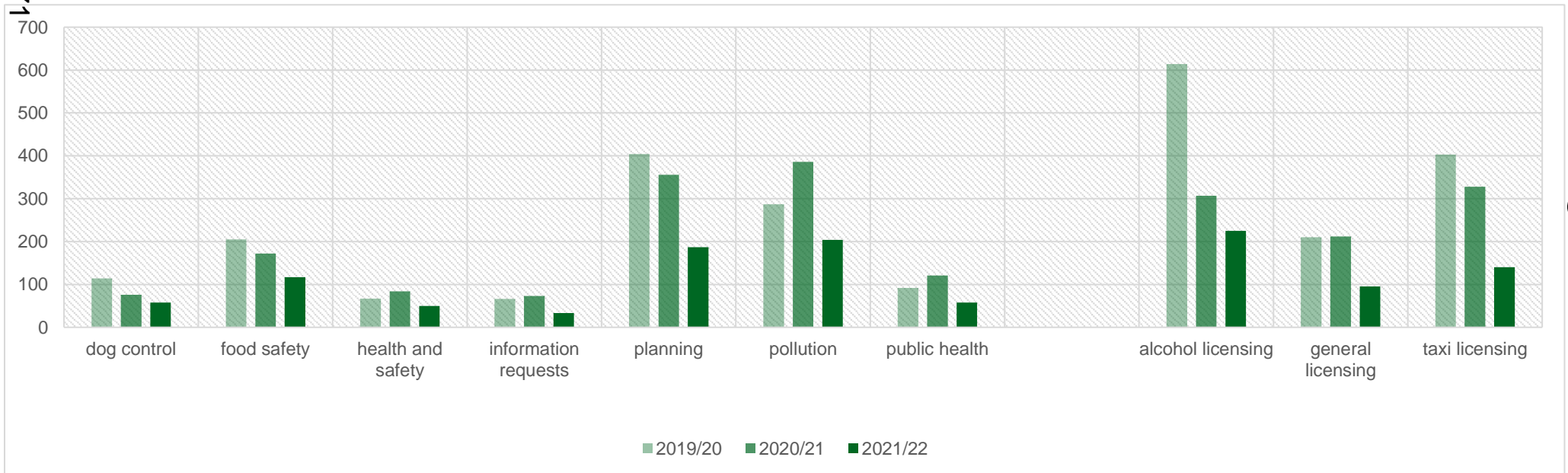
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The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Bromsgrove district.

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.

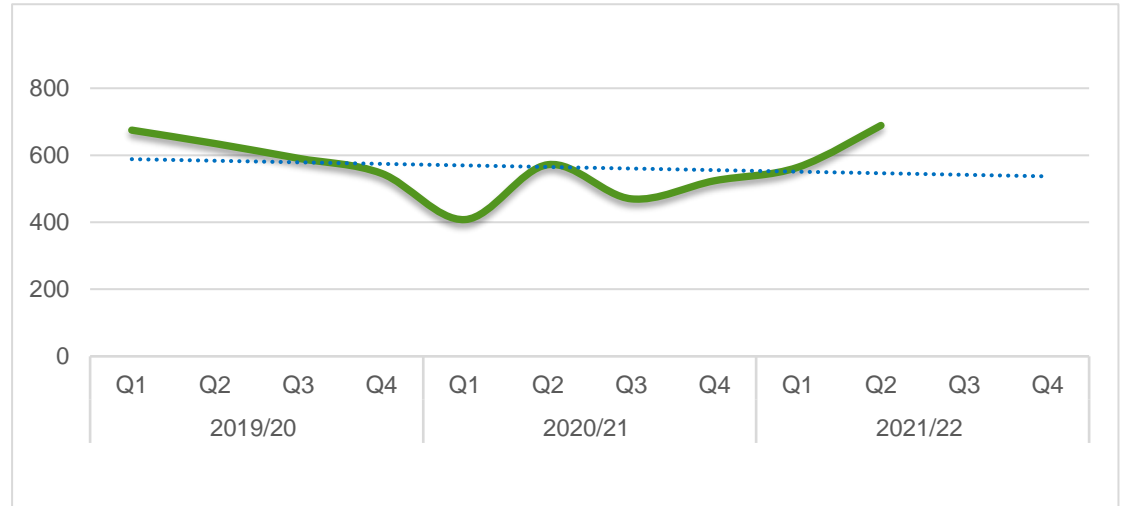


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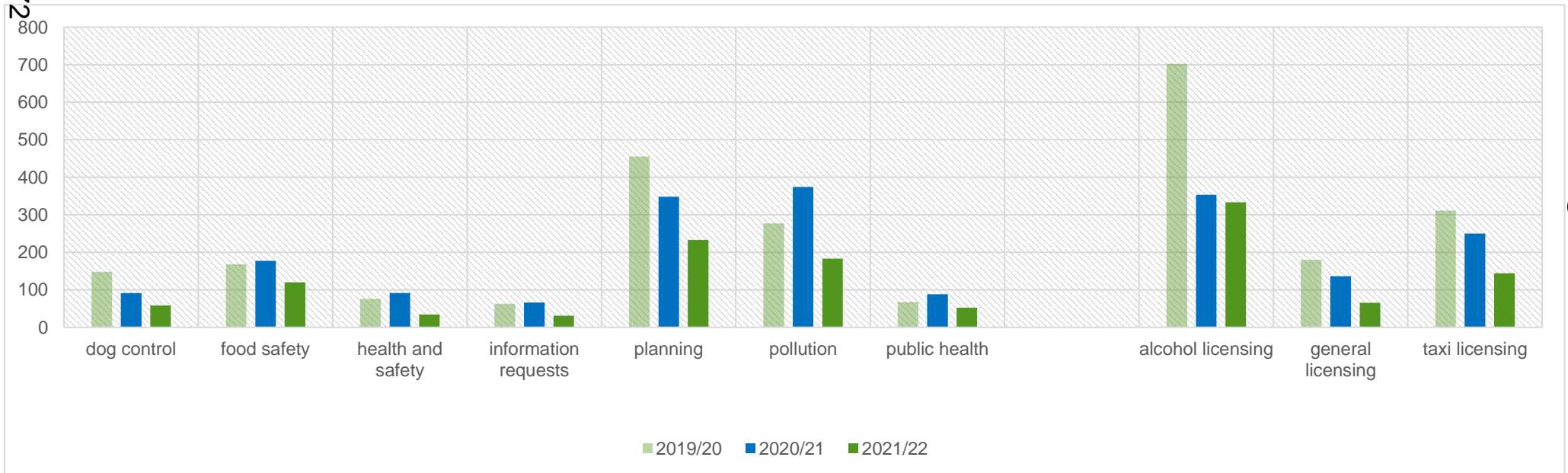


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Malvern Hills district.

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.

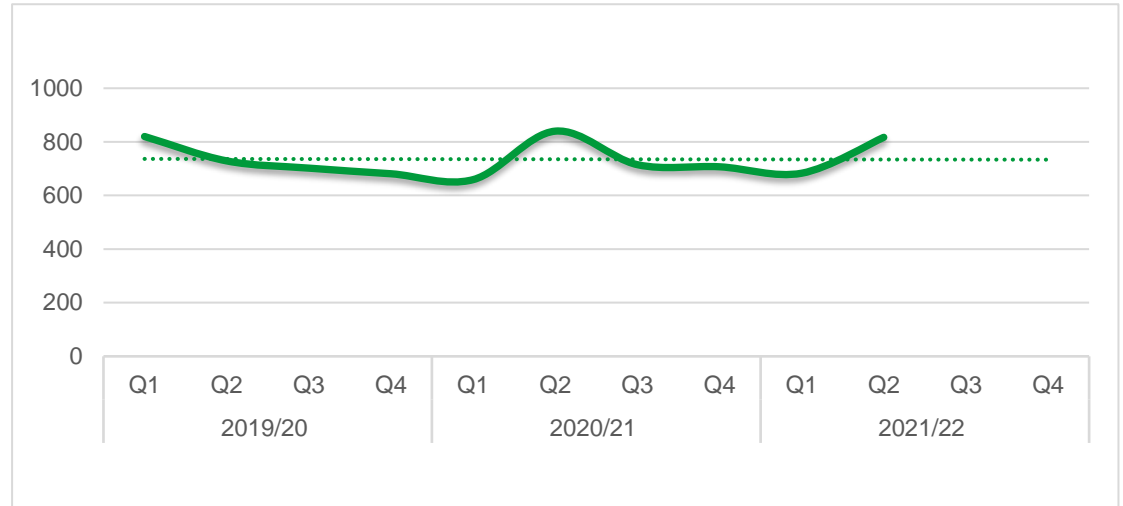


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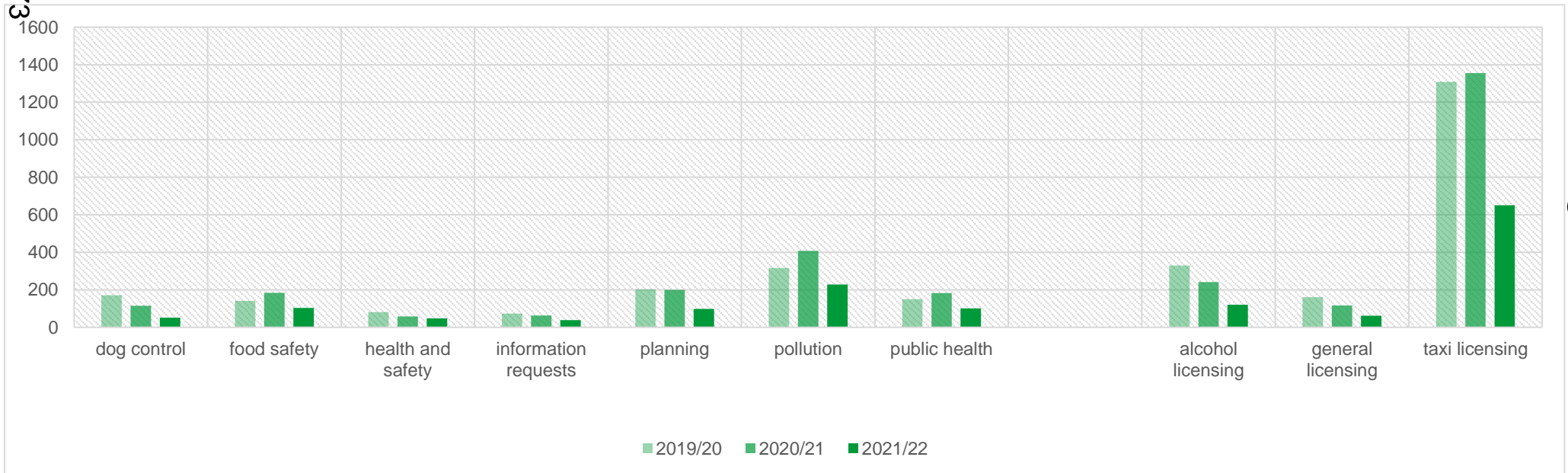


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Redditch district.

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.

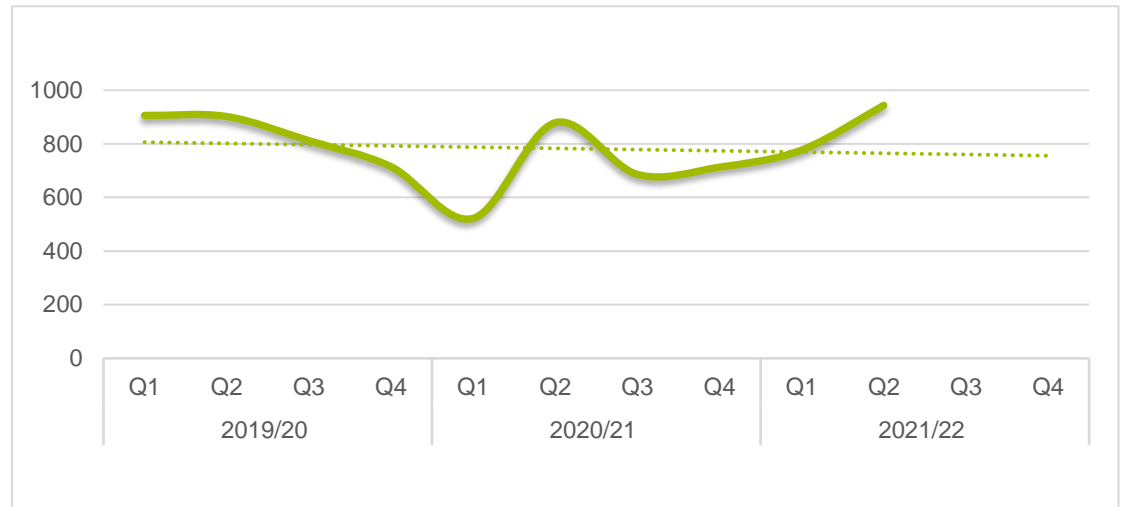


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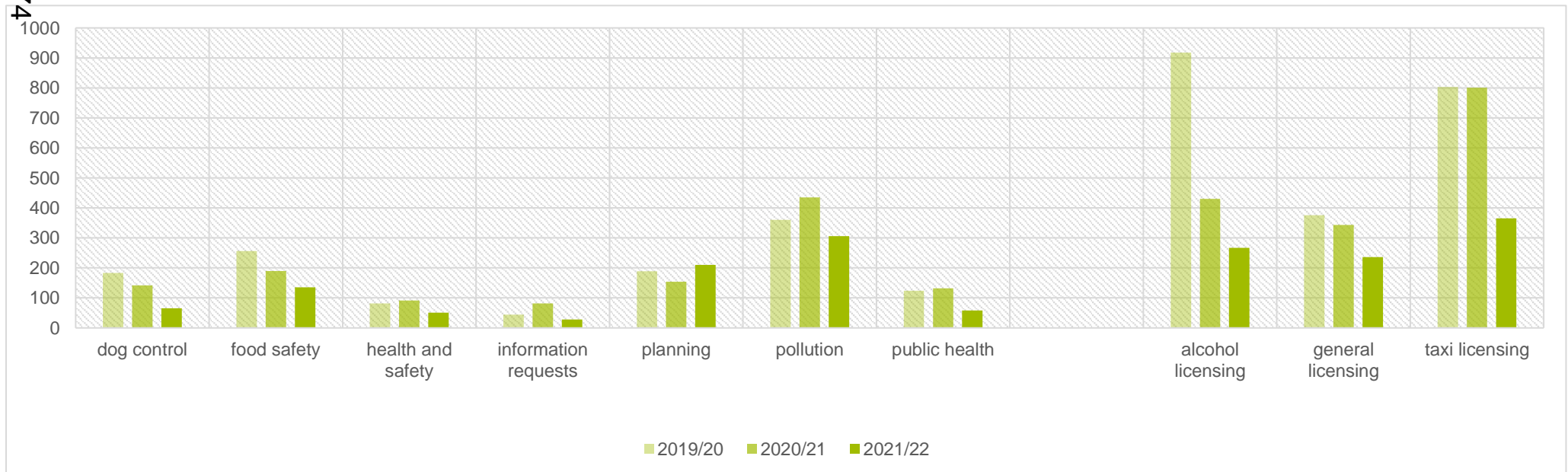


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Worcester City district.

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.

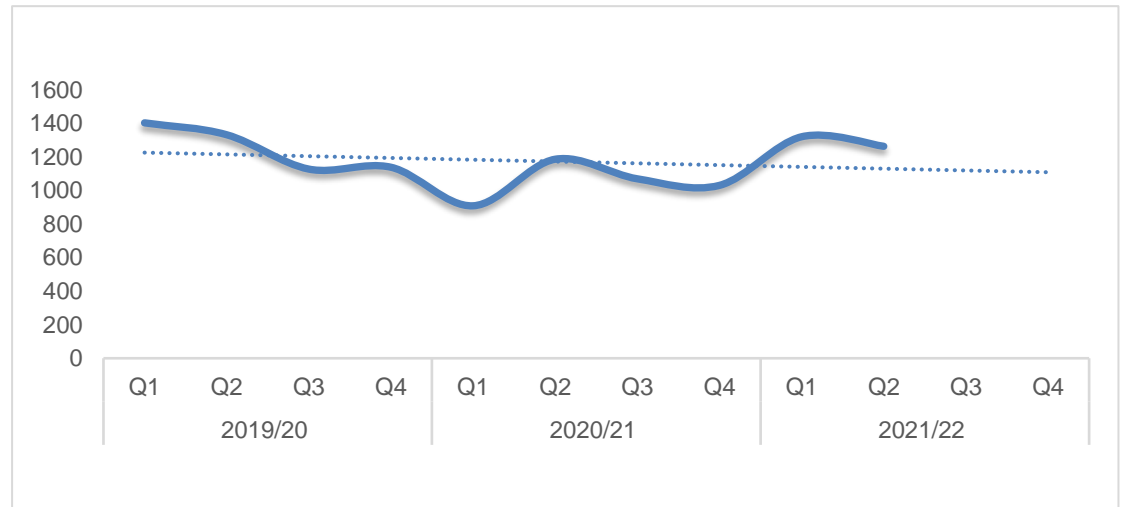


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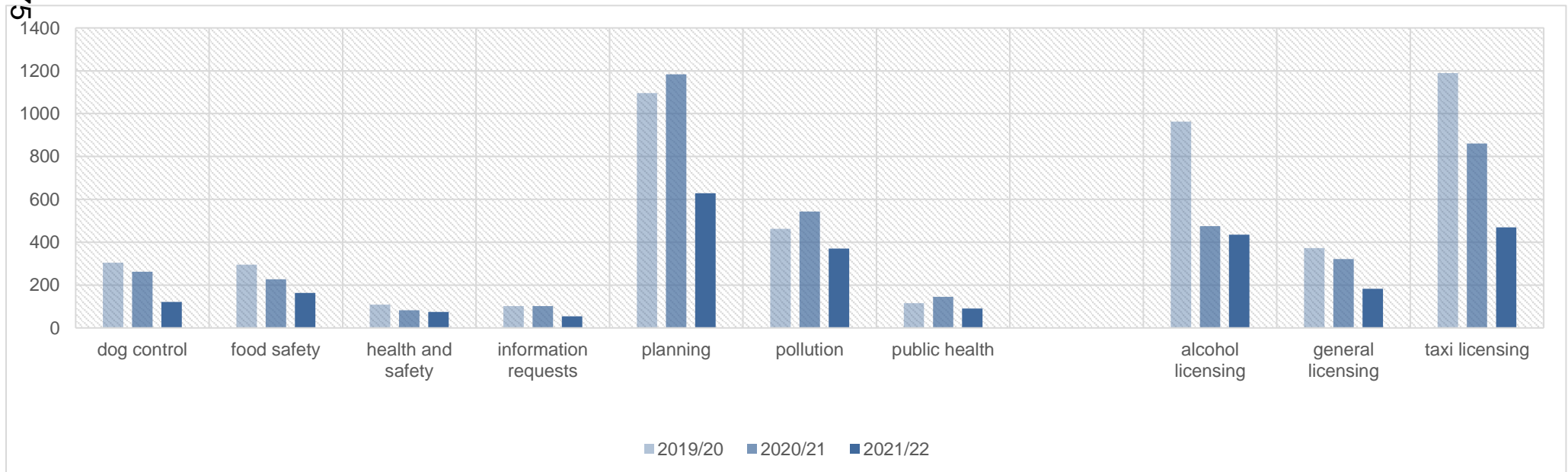


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wychavon district.

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

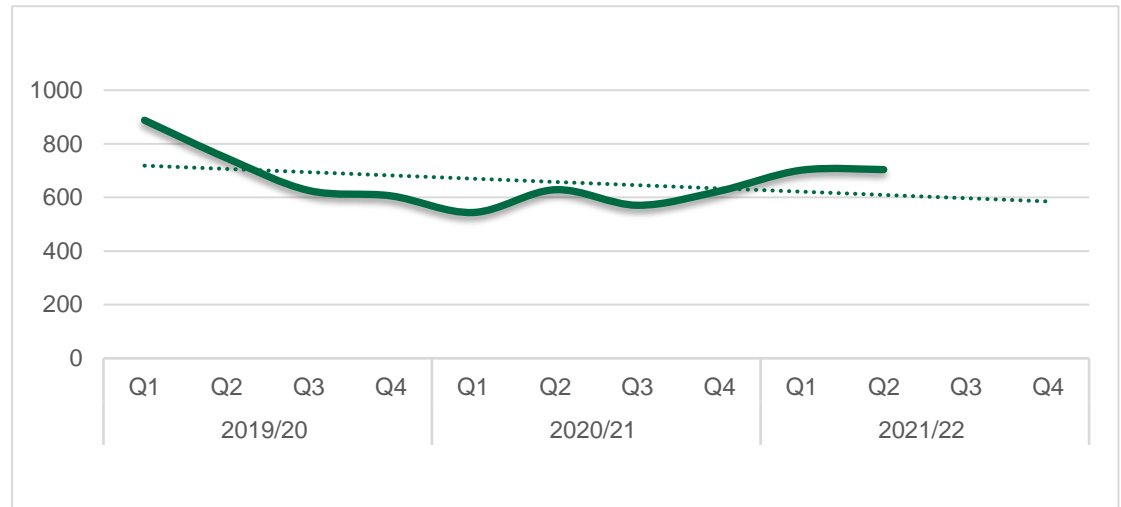


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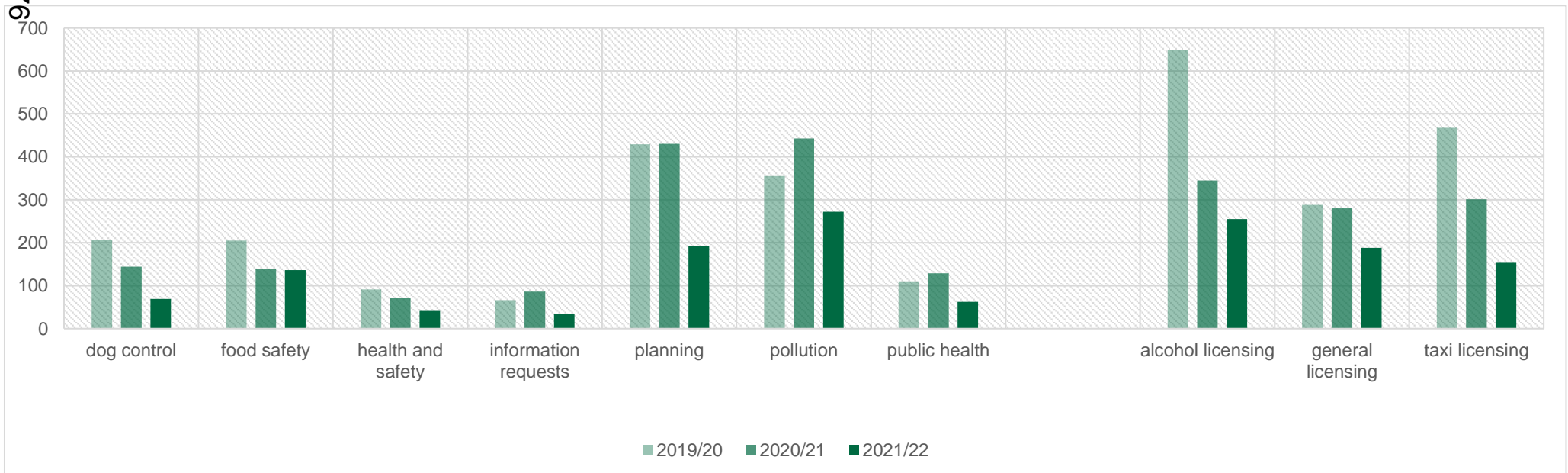


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wyre Forest district.

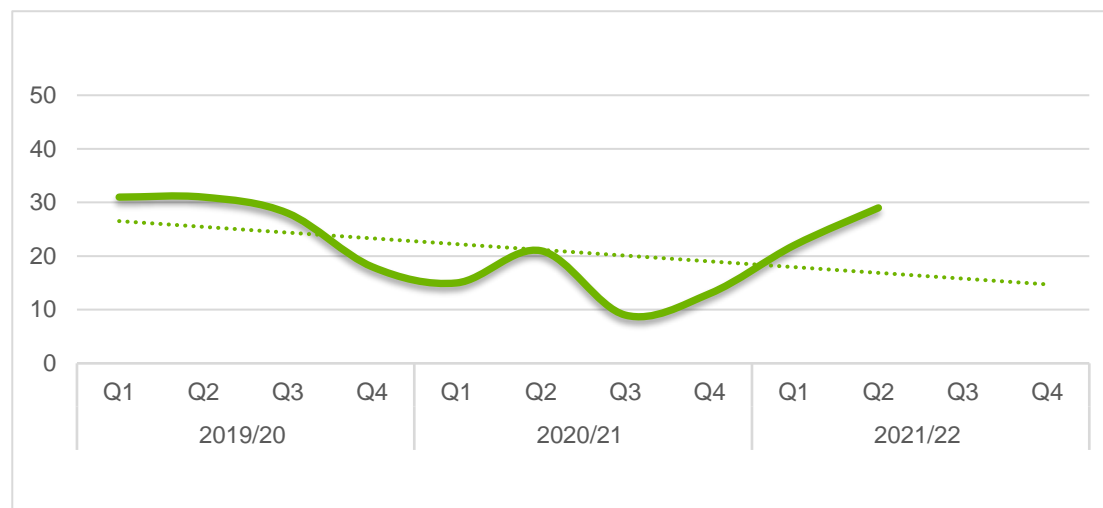
Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



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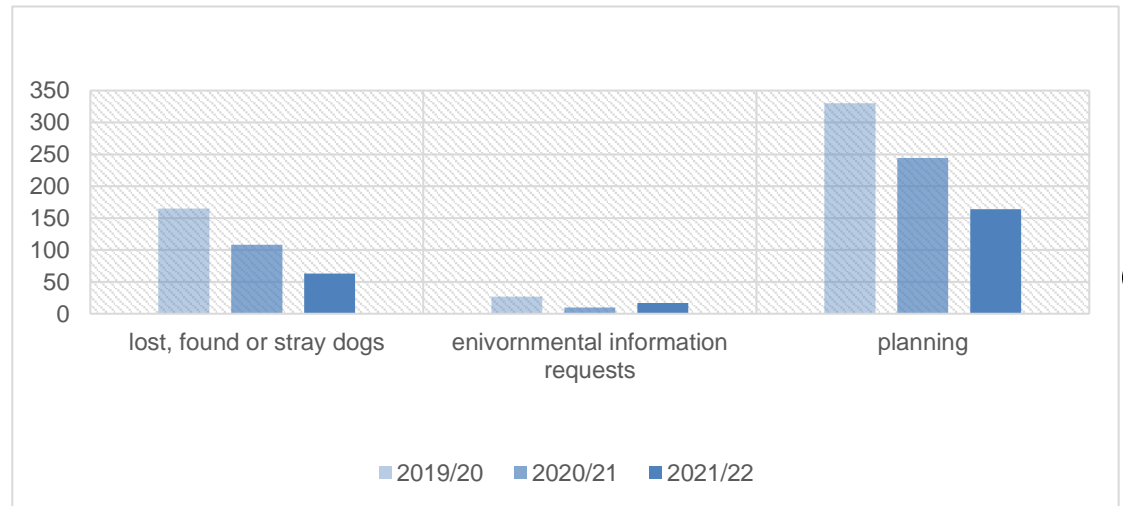
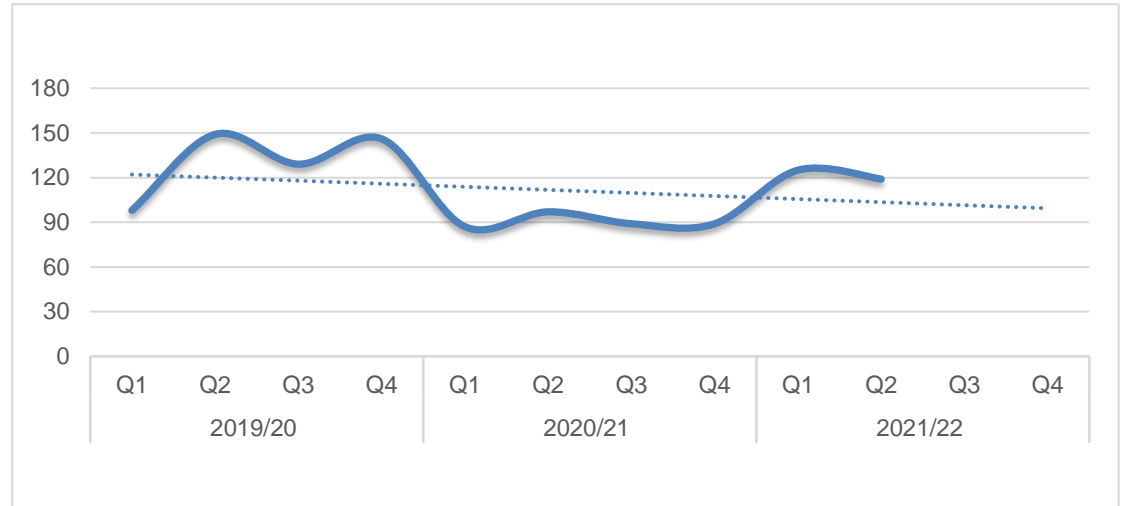


The dog control work undertaken for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Cheltenham Borough Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. There is concern however that, post lockdown, there will be an increase in the number of abandoned stray dogs as people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues. This is coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

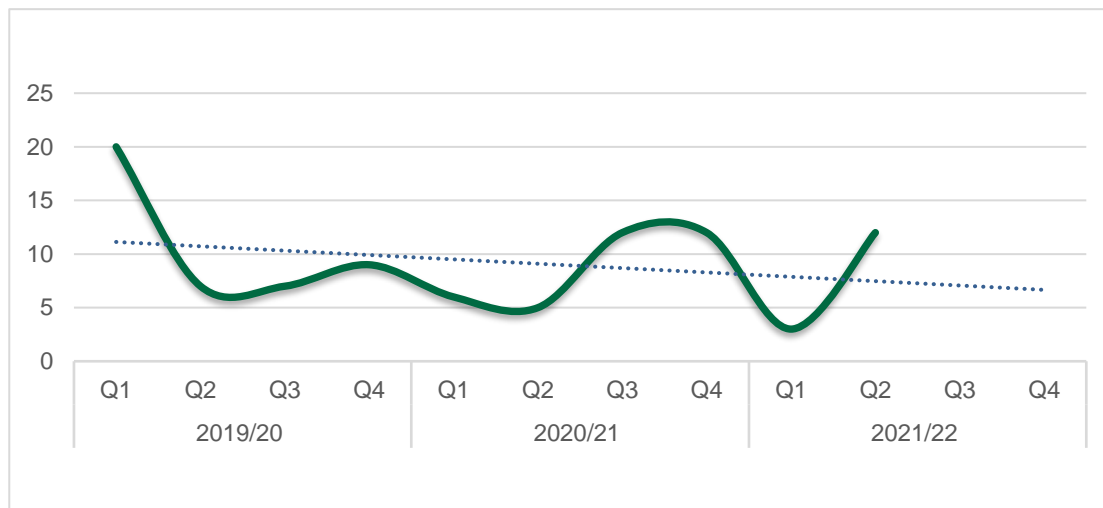


The dog control work undertaken for Gloucester City Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Gloucester City Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. There is concern however that, post lockdown, there will be an increase in the number of abandoned stray dogs as people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues. This is coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

Planning work undertaken on behalf of Gloucester City Council was notably higher during quarter one; with the number of consultations completed an increase of 54% compared to 2019/20 and 2020/21.



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.



The dog control work undertaken for Tewkesbury Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. There is concern however that, post lockdown, there will be an increase in the number of abandoned stray dogs as people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues. This is coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

Planning work undertaken on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council was notably higher during quarter one; with the number of consultations completed an increase of 38% and 60% compared to 2019/20 and 2020/21 respectively.

