

Public Document Pack

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2024

AT 4.30 P.M.

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

MEMBERS: Councillor K. Taylor, Bromsgrove District Council
Councillor H. J. Jones, Bromsgrove District Council- Chairman
Councillor D. Harrison, Malvern Hills District Council
Councillor C. Palmer, Malvern Hills District Council
Councillor M. Stringfellow, Redditch Borough Council
Councillor M. Dormer, Redditch Borough Council
Councillor K. Holmes, Worcester City Council
Councillor A. Scott, Worcester City Council
Councillor R. Deller, Wychavon District Council
Councillor M. Goodge, Wychavon District Council
Councillor T. Onslow, Wyre Forest District Council - Vice-Chairman
Councillor I. Hardiman, Wyre Forest District Council

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 26th September 2024 (Pages 5 - 16)
4. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April - Sept 2024 (Pages 17 - 24)

5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgets 2025/26 - 2027/28 (Pages 25 - 40)
6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services - Activity and Performance Data - Quarter 2 2024/2025 (Pages 41 - 78)
7. Progress Report on the Automation Project (Pages 79 - 82)
8. Air Quality Behaviour Change Project (Pages 83 - 108)
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.

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

13th November 2024

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

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

Notes:

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

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2024, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. J. Jones (Chairman), K. Taylor, D. Harrison, C. Palmer, M. Stringfellow, K. Holmes, J. Desayrah (substituting for Councillor A. Scott), R. Deller, M. Goodge and T. Onslow

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. M. Cox, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. D. Mellors, Mrs. M. Patel and Mrs. P. Ross

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

12/24 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

It was noted that due to a change in the Board's membership for Wyre Forest District Council, with Councillor I. Hardiman, replacing Councillor C. Rogers, Vice-Chairman of the Board; nominations were therefore required for a new Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED that Councillor T. Onslow, Wyre Forest District Council be elected Vice-Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

13/24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I. Hardiman, Wyre Forest District Council and Councillor A. Scott, Worcester City Council; with Councillor J. Desayrah in attendance as the substitute Member for Councillor A. Scott.

14/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

15/24 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 27th June 2024, were submitted.

Councillor J. Desayrah speaking on behalf of Councillor A. Scott, who was in attendance at the meeting, had asked for the following

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

amendment, to the last paragraph of Minute No. 9/24, to be considered by Members, as follows: -

“The Principal Environmental Health Officer, WRS was asked about the impacts of wood burning stoves and said that early research into wood burning stoves and fine particulate matter was not yet conclusive about the impacts, however, the World Health Organisation (WHO) did not recognise a safe level of fine particulate matter. Whilst traffic sources of particular matter (tyre and brake wear) were difficult to tackle, given wood burning stoves were perhaps, often but not always, more of an aesthetic addition to most homes rather than a primary source of heating, they were one of the sources of pollutants that people could do something about for themselves. The Principal Environmental Health Officer, WRS finished by saying that officers were in discussion with academic colleagues, about working with them to look at the impact of wood burners on air quality which would also need input from other professionals in due course, and that this may include work on the impacts on air quality inside the home”.

Councillor A. Scott would also like it noted that he had on-going concerns about the impact of wood burning on health and the quality of the environment for the wider society.

Following a brief discussion whereby Councillor K. Taylor, Bromsgrove District Council, questioned the amendment which stated, “more of an aesthetic addition to most homes rather than a primary source of heating.” Questioned was this not in the officers ‘opinion;’ as occasionally some houses / boats relied on wood burners as a primary source of heating, rather than it being an ‘aesthetic addition.’

With this in mind, Members agreed with the following amendment: -

“The Principal Environmental Health Officer, WRS was asked about the impacts of wood burning stoves and said that early research into wood burning stoves and fine particulate matter was not yet conclusive about the impacts, however, the World Health Organisation (WHO) did not recognise a safe level of fine particulate matter. Whilst traffic sources of particular matter (tyre and brake wear) were difficult to tackle, given wood burning stoves were perhaps, often but not always, in the officer’s opinion, more of an aesthetic addition to most homes rather than a primary source of heating, they were one of the sources of pollutants that people could do something about for themselves. The Principal Environmental Health Officer, WRS finished by saying that officers were in discussion with academic colleagues, about working with them to look at the impact of wood burners on air quality which would also need input from other professionals in due course, and that this may include work on the impacts on air quality inside the home”.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 27th June 2024, be amended as detailed in the preamble above, and approved as a correct record.

16/24

WRS REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - JUNE 2024

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources Finance, 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 pages 21 and 22 of the main agenda pack. The report covered the period April to June 2024.

Members were informed that the detailed revenue monitoring report, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report; showed a projected outturn 2024/25 of £6k surplus; and was based on the following assumptions: -

- A 3% pay award had been added to the projected outturn figures, as per the original budget, this equated to 82% of the total expenditure. Officers were still awaiting a final agreement for the 2024-25 pay award. Should there be a pay award of 5% this would create extra expenditure.
- If April to June 24 spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of year, there would be no overspend to be charged to partners on this service. WRS officers would continue to monitor and analyse this spend and advise of any changes in the projected outturn figure at Quarter 2.
- The following were the actual bereavements costs April – June 24 to be funded by partners. These costs were charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge, it was not possible to project a final outturn figure:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Bromsgrove District Council | £1k |
| Redditch Borough Council | £5k |

Other items for Members to note were: -

- £48k variance as detailed on Appendix 1.
- £282k of additional income as detailed on Appendix 2, which would fall to £249k at the year end.

RESOLVED that the Board

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – June 2024
- 1.2 That partner councils be informed of their liabilities for Apr – June 24 in relation to Bereavements

| | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------|
| Council | Apr–June Actual Bereavements £000 | 24 for |
|----------------|--|-------------------|

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 1 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 5 |
| Total | 6 |

- 1.3 That partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2024-25 in relation to three additional Technical Officers

| Council | Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000 | Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Gull Control £000 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Redditch Borough Council | 2 | |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 7 | |
| Worcester City Council | 3 | 16 |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 9 | |
| Wychavon District Council | 15 | |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 9 | |
| Total | 45 | 16 |

17/24

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTER 1 2024/25

The Technical Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Activity and Performance Data for Quarter 1 2024/25. The detail of the report focused on the first quarter of 2024/25, but the actual data allowed comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

The following key points were highlighted: -

Activity Data

The overall number of food related cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th June 2024 was 20% lower than the same period in 2022/23 but 14% higher than 2023/24. Of the 112 complaints handled

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

during the year to date, 70% were related to issues with food products (such as poor-quality food or food containing a foreign object).

Of the 366 programmed interventions undertaken during the year to date, only 2% had resulted in a business being rated as "non-compliant".

The overall number of Health and Safety cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th June 2024 was 15% lower than the same period in 2022/23 but 19% higher than in 2023/24. Just over 40% of cases had been reports of accidents (slips, trips and falls) in workplaces.

The overall number of dog-related cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th June 2024 saw a reduction of 2% compared to 2022/23 but a reduction of 22% compared to 2023/24.

In Licensing, the overall number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th June 2024 was close to the level in 2022/23, but 11% higher than 2023/24.

Pollution cases followed their usual trend with increasing numbers as we moved from Spring into Summer. However, in terms of numbers, cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th June 2024 were 29% lower than the same period in 2022/23 and 23% lower than in 2023/24. This was almost certainly down to the poor weather during the Spring and early part of the summer this year.

Just under 90% of cases were allegations of potential statutory nuisances, with most relating to noise from domestic properties (such as noise from barking dogs or noise from loud music).

Performance

As always, reporting against the suite of indicators was more limited for the first quarter.

The non-business customer measure at 60% was lower compared with 69.3% at the same time last year and around the same as the 60.4% at year-end for 2023/24.

Satisfaction for business customers remained good at 98.3%, above this figure at the same point last year and above the outrun at the end of quarter 4. Compliments outnumber complaints significantly, with the figure currently 15 to 5. There was a lot of ongoing work by officers in keeping customers informed of any outcomes.

Staff sickness was at 1.13 days per FTE, slightly above the previous 3-year's figures for this period (0.76, 0.9, 0.87 respectively) and above the 0.85 days per FTE from the same period in 2019, pre-pandemic.

In response to Councillor D. Harrison, Malvern Hills District Council, the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager explained that with regards to food complaints; food containing a foreign object could be,

insects, poor food hygiene, metallic objects or chemical contamination. The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager agreed to provide further detailed information to Councillor D. Harrison.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarter 1 2024/25, be noted and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

18/24

OPERATION LISBON 2 : DOG BREEDING

The Director, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced an information report on Operation Lisbon 2: Dog Breeding.

Members were informed that the report helped demonstrate how the service's small Intelligence Unit supported the broader delivery of the service.

During November 2020, WRS initiated an intelligence gathering operation code-named "Lisbon" (Lisbon 1). The primary purpose of the operation was to assess the people, businesses, and locations associated with unlicensed dog breeding and put in place strategies and/or interventions to reduce the level of offending. Whilst the operation had positive outcomes, several factors limited its effectiveness.

Firstly, as the operation was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it could not be stated with certainty whether the information collected during the initial stages of the operation was indicative of the "normal" trading environment. It was likely, for example, that information had been captured about certain nominals who had chosen to breed dogs whilst furloughed but did not continue this activity (at a licensable level) once restrictions were lifted. Secondly, the prominence of general selling platforms as opposed to those dedicated to dogs or pets was underestimated or had significantly changed by the time the operation had concluded. These platforms were not included in the scope of the operation, so it was also likely that several nominals operating illegally were undetected.

After Operation Lisbon had concluded, the service continued to receive complaints from members of the public about unlicensed dog breeders. As a result of those complaints, Operation Lisbon 2 was launched during November 2023 with a view to assessing the scale of offending in a post pandemic environment.

Fortunately, WRS and Shropshire Council both had an interest in this area and opted to share intelligence resources and to work together, allowing the scope of the operation to broaden covering both counties and encompassing additional sales platforms, including some generalist ones.

Key Legislation and Considerations

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activity Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 was the primary legislation covering the breeding of dogs. It placed a requirement on individuals or businesses to obtain a licence if they were “breeding three or more litters of puppies in any twelve-month period” and/or are “breeding dogs and advertising a business of selling dogs.” The failure to obtain a licence was a criminal offence under Section 13 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

When acquiring information from online platforms, care had to be taken to only request information that could be obtained under the Data Protection Act 2018. A policy change by the Home Office in 2023 meant that certain personal information (mandatory registration data) linked to online accounts must be treated as communications data and could only be obtained as regulated by the provisions of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. Despite this, several platforms did disclose such data which, whilst useable for intelligence purposes, became subject to permission from the local authority’s Senior Responsible Officer before it could form part of the investigative process.

Whilst proactive monitoring data was assessed prior to account information being requested, the limitations of certain platforms meant it could not always be established whether certain accounts were operating at a level where a licence was likely to be required. As a result, information pertaining to these accounts was not requested and their account information was not available for analysis during the latter stages of the operation.

The requirement for someone to be “in the business of selling animals,” did mean that the local authority must be able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that this was a business-related activity. There was no specific case law relating to this under the 2018 Act, however, the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 similarly required proof of trade or business so this case law has a role in informing thinking. Even under this legislation, the possibility existed for a person to have a “lucrative hobby,” so the business test may not necessarily be as black and white as it first appeared.

Results

Some 1,069 unique adverts were identified across Worcestershire over the five-month period of the operation. A significant proportion of those adverts were posted legally by licensed breeders (approximately 10%) or by private sellers who did not meet the threshold for a licence.

When adverts were reviewed, only 17% related to dogs categorised by the Kennel Club and others as being large breeds, demonstrating as officers expected, that they only make up a modest proportion of the market.

The most common breeds advertised across the two counties were Cockapoos, Cocker Spaniels, Labrador Retrievers, and Dachshunds. The total value of the adverts listed was more than £7 million (£4.2

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

million for Worcestershire and £2.8 million for Shropshire). Although there was likely to be some double counting of adverts as a few sellers would advertise on more than one platform. This figure was still much higher than officers involved in the project would have suggested before undertaking the operation. It showed that, although dog prices had fallen since the pandemic, there were still large numbers of animals being supplied commercially or otherwise.

The most prominent locations mentioned in adverts were Worcester and larger towns such as Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn, and Evesham. Whilst an advert might state the location as "Worcester," however, enquiries established that this designation also included sellers residing outside of the City Council boundary in the nearby villages under Wychavon's or Malvern Hills' jurisdiction.

Some 37 accounts were identified that were likely to have been trading without a licence. Further enquires led to some of these being linked to single individuals or, in some cases, small groups of people. Therefore, relationship charts were created to show the connections between different entities (people, online accounts, telephone numbers, email addresses) and a package of information was shared with senior officers in the Licensing team with recommendations for action.

The team had written warning letters and had offered guidance to 10 sellers identified during Operation Lisbon 2. Whilst 6 accounts were still being developed further by the Intelligence Unit as the operators were sharing contact details and advert locations. A total of 5 sellers, 2 of whom had previously been identified as part of Operation Lisbon 1, were now under formal investigation with a view to submitting reports to the various partner's legal departments.

Conclusions

The two Lisbon operations had revealed that a significant market in the selling of dogs across Worcestershire existed and, whilst a proportion of this was not commercial or done under license, a proportion of this activity was unlicensed and illegal. It also showed that detecting illegal activity was not completely straight-forward and required resource to be dedicated to the activity. By utilising our Intelligence Unit to do much of the initial case building, Licensing Officers were freed from the burden of logging and recording in these initial stages and received a completed package which had much of the evidence they would need to go forward with obtaining statements and interviewing potential defendants under PACE.

It was clear that these operations were best done at scale. Focus on a single district would likely be impossible due to the nature of descriptions in adverts. Working with Shropshire colleagues was positive, as one of the groups identified was engaging in cross border activity. Officers would look to promote the Operation Lisbon model to other licensing colleagues and the use of the Intelligence Operating Model as a tool for enforcement.

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

Officers were looking to commence Operation Lisbon 3 within 12/18 months and would look to work with Shropshire Council should they wish to do so.

In response to questions from Members, the Director, WRS, explained that introducing a requirement for dog owners to have a licence would be expensive and could be seen as discriminatory due to the potential cost.

Operation Lisbon 2 had highlighted that intelligence officers could pick the right people up by using / accessing various sites whereby people were advertising more than one dog for sale, officers would use monitoring of such sites, the marketing of dogs, and the relationship charts created instead of the requirement for a dog licence. This could also create further legislation that people would not always adhere to.

Sites were predominantly advertising popular breeds of pet dogs, not racing dogs such as lurchers or greyhounds.

With regard to the total value of the adverts listed £7 million, as detailed on page 67 of the main agenda pack, the Director, WRS was unsure of the profit return on that figure.

The onus was on dog owners to microchip their dogs and to ensure that they kept the required information up to date. Any loose / unsupervised dogs in the park could have their microchips checked by the Police, WRS dog wardens and veterinarians. WRS had recently secured funding from the two Community Safety Partnerships to roll out a project as part of its priority work on dog control to raise awareness on various dog-related matters including microchipping, to support tackling stray dogs and, if necessary, increase enforcement.

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, responded to further questions from Members in respect of animal welfare and the licence conditions; and in doing so briefly explained the following.

A licence was required if the selling of dogs, as pets, was being carried out as a commercial business, to make a profit. All businesses issued with such a licence would receive an initial visit from a WRS Officer with responsibility for animal welfare. Businesses were expected to maintain minimum standards with a licence being issued initially in most for one year; following which they would also be visited on each renewal application. Businesses meeting the higher standards (4 or 5 star rating) would be issued with a two or three year licence. However, intelligence-led spot checks at all such businesses would also be carried out by a WRS officer with responsibility for animal welfare.

The Director, WRS concluded that part of Operation Lisbon 2 was to look at the number of individuals who were working collaboratively. As highlighted in the report, it was the local authorities and their legal

departments to prove beyond a 'reasonable doubt' that they were operating such a business-related activity and to build a picture as to how they were linked working together. The legislation was changed in 2018, and to date WRS had not prosecuted anyone.

WRS used the same process and model for creating Intelligence logs as other agencies such as the Police and HM Revenue & Customs, therefore, it was straight-forward for WRS to disseminate intelligence / information to these other agencies as it was in a format they knew and understood. This was one of the benefits of adopting an intelligence operating model for the business.

RESOLVED that the information report Operation Lisbon 2: Dog Breeding, be noted.

19/24

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE AUTOMATION PROJECT

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) provided Members with an update on the Automation Project; and in doing so commented that it was nice to be able to bring positive news to the Board.

Progress on Forms

With an immense collaborative effort from all of the teams involved in this project, the Temporary Events Notice (TENs) application form went live this month and there were extra checks carried out in order to ensure that the workflow from the point of the application being submitted to the payment being taken and information landing into the IDOX back-office system correctly were processed appropriately each step of the way. This initially commenced with three partners, with the final three partner authorities going live either today (26th September 2024) or tomorrow (27th September 2024). With regards to payments received, Uniform references could now be allocated to payments when received.

The launch of the second form, the Premises Licensing Applications forms would commence shortly. As detailed on page 74 of the main agenda pack, work continued on the next set of forms and their launch, which would take place over the next few months or sooner where possible:-

1. Taxi Applications
2. Animal Licensing Applications
3. Pavement Licensing

Progress continued with the work of the 'task and finish group' set up by the Technical Services Manager, WRS.

Comms and Website Development

Officers continued to liaise with the communications leads with regards to partners websites being easy to navigate alongside the 'help'

Agenda Item 3

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
26th September 2024

guidance and FAQ's. After testing with external stakeholders and potential applicants, some tweaks were made where necessary.

In response to questions from Members, the Licensing and Support Services Manager explained that the Internal Audit team had been involved in setting up checking the progress of the Automation project and had agreed that the new system was 'fit for purpose'. Sign off for stages was in-hand.

In response to further questions from Members with regards to the forms being accessible for customers with disabilities and if the forms could be read by a screen reader or other assistive technology; the Licensing and Support Services Manager explained that lots of testing had taken place to ensure that all forms were accessible. Training would take place for officers at Worcester City, Redditch Borough, and Bromsgrove District Councils. However, with regards to the forms being read via a screen reader or other assistive technology; this was something they would have to look into and report back to Board Members.

RESOLVED that the Progress Report on the Automation Project be noted.

20/24

URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 5.26 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Board
21st November 2024

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING April – Sept 2024

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – Sept 2024
- 1.2 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for Apr – Sept 24 in relation to Bereavements

| Council | Apr–Sept 24 Actual for Bereavements £000 |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 3 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 4 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 6 |
| Worcester City Council | 1 |
| Total | 14 |



Agenda Item 4

1.3 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2024-25 in relation to additional Technical Officers

| Council | Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Envirocrime & Planning Enforcement £000 | Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000 | Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Gull Control £000 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 304 | 9 | |
| Malvern Hills District Council | | 7 | |
| Redditch Borough Council | 171 | 2 | |
| Worcester City Council | | 3 | 35 |
| Wychavon District Council | | 15 | |
| Wyre Forest District Council | | 9 | |
| Total | 475 | 45 | 35 |

1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2024/25 in relation to the additional increase in pay award and recommend the increase to individual partner councils:-

| Council | £000 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 3 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 3 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 4 |
| Worcester City Council | 3 |
| Wychavon District Council | 5 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 3 |
| Total | 21 |



Contribution to Priorities

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

Introduction/Summary

This report presents the financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services for the period April – Sept 2024.

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 24 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown - April – Sept 24 – Appendix 2

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. This shows a projected outturn 2024/25 of £5k surplus. It is appreciated this is an estimation to the year-end based on following assumptions:

- A 3% pay award has been added to the projected outturn figures, as per the original budget. We have received a final agreement for the 24-25 pay award of £1,290 per annum on all pay points below spinal points 43. The agreement was received after the completion of quarter 2 revenue monitoring, therefore the impact will reflect in quarter 3 revenue monitoring.
- If April to Sept 24 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be a overspend on this service of £13k. WRS officers will continue to monitor and analyse this spend and advise of any changes in the projected outturn figure at quarter 3. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners is:-

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Redditch Borough Council | £7k |
| Wychavon District Council | £6k |

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – Sept 24 to be funded by partners. These costs are charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge it is not possible to project a final outturn figure:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Bromsgrove District Council | £3k |
| Malvern Hills District Council | £4k |
| Redditch Borough Council | £6k |
| Worcester City Council | £1k |



Agenda Item 4

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – Sept 24
- Any grant funded expenditure is shown separate to the core service costs as this is not funded by the participating Councils.
- WRS budgeted for a 3% pay award in 2024-25. The current pay award of £1,290 per annum on all pay points (pro rata for part time work) as now been accepted by employers and unions, the additional pressure on WRS salaries will be £21,405. WRS are unable to cover this increase, therefore an increase to partner funding will be required of:-

| Council | 2024/25 |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| | £'000 |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 3 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 3 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 4 |
| Worcester City Council | 3 |
| Wychavon District Council | 5 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 3 |
| Total | 21 |

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this report

Contact Points

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

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case



WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2024/25

Total WRS Sept 24 / Period 6 - 24/25

| | Revised Full Year Budget 24-25 | Revised Budget - Committed Apr - Sept 24 | Expenditure Apr - Sept 24 | Variance | Qtr 2 Projected outturn | Qtr 2 Projected Outturn Variance | Comments |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | |
| Direct Expenditure | | | | | | | |
| Employees | | | | | | | |
| Salary | 4,158 | 2,079 | 1,740 | -339 | 3,829 | -328 | Includes Ukrainian employees, offsett in income £122k |
| Agency Staff | 0 | 0 | 287 | 287 | 498 | 498 | Covered by salary savings & income generation work, including work for other local authorities |
| Employee Insurance | 21 | 10 | 9 | -1 | 21 | 0 | |
| Sub-Total - Employees | 4,178 | 2,089 | 2,036 | -53 | 4,348 | 170 | |
| Premises | | | | | | | |
| Rent / Hire of Premise | 79 | 39 | 38 | -1 | 78 | -0 | |
| Cleaning | 1 | 0 | 0 | -0 | 1 | -0 | |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Sub-Total - Premises | 80 | 40 | 39 | -1 | 79 | -1 | |
| Transport | | | | | | | |
| Vehicle Hire | 13 | 6 | 1 | -5 | 5 | -8 | |
| Vehicle Fuel | 8 | 4 | 2 | -2 | 7 | -1 | |
| Road Fund Tax | 1 | 0 | 0 | -0 | 1 | 0 | |
| Vehicle Insurance | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | |
| Vehicle Maintenance | 3 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 3 | -1 | |
| Car Allowances | 62 | 31 | 20 | -11 | 44 | -19 | |
| Sub-Total - Transport | 92 | 46 | 27 | -19 | 63 | -28 | |
| Supplies and Services | | | | | | | |
| Furniture & Equipment | 44 | 22 | 16 | -6 | 45 | 1 | |
| Clothes, uniforms and laundry | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | |
| Printing & Photocopying | 17 | 9 | 8 | -1 | 16 | -1 | |
| Postage | 11 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 11 | 0 | |
| ICT | 79 | 39 | 68 | 29 | 92 | 14 | Includes £7k for special equipment 50% funded by DWP, £3.5k included in income. £4k increase in Microsoft licences & £2k increase in Idox managed service |
| Telephones | 40 | 20 | 13 | -7 | 29 | -11 | |
| Training & Seminars | 34 | 17 | 3 | -14 | 34 | 0 | |
| Insurance | 16 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 16 | 0 | |
| Third Party Payments | 203 | 102 | 101 | -0 | 203 | -0 | |
| Sub-Total - Supplies & Service | 445 | 223 | 228 | 5 | 450 | 5 | |
| Contractors | | | | | | | |
| Dog Warden | 121 | 61 | 156 | 95 | 288 | 166 | Additional contractors due to new contracts, recovered in income |
| Pest Control | 73 | 36 | 49 | 13 | 84 | 11 | This is overspend within pest control, funded by Redditch & Wychavon and shown in income |
| Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing | 72 | 36 | 19 | -17 | 44 | -28 | |
| Other contractors/consultants | 3 | 1 | 15 | 13 | 17 | 14 | £13k Appeal charges - recharged to Redditch, offsett in income |
| Water Safety | 5 | 3 | 2 | -0 | 5 | -1 | |
| Food Safety | 1 | 0 | 0 | -0 | 1 | 0 | |
| Environmental Protection | 12 | 6 | 17 | 12 | 26 | 14 | Bereavements recovered in income |
| Grants / Subscriptions | 13 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 15 | 2 | |
| Advertising, Publicity and Promotion | 6 | 3 | 1 | -2 | 4 | -1 | |
| Sub-Total | 304 | 152 | 266 | 114 | 483 | 178 | |
| Income | | | | | | | |
| Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc | -1,001 | -501 | -650 | -150 | -1,331 | -329 | See append 2 |
| Sub-Total | -1,001 | -501 | -650 | -150 | -1,331 | -329 | |
| Overall Total | 4,098 | 2,049 | 1,946 | -103 | 4,092 | -5 | |

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Income 2024/25

| Income from Partners | April to Sept 24 |
|--|-------------------|
| | £ |
| Budget | 2,048,813 |
| Pension Backfunding | 18,550 |
| Bereavement / Public Burials | 14,187 |
| Pest Control - Wychavon & Redditch | 6,456 |
| Employee for Animal Activity | 22,291 |
| Employee for Additional Gull Work - Worcs City | 26,000 |
| Tameside - Subs to Anti Fraud Network - Worcs City | 2,000 |
| Technical Pollution Work - Worcs City | 15,000 |
| Contaminated Land Work - Worcs City | 6,500 |
| HSE Report - Redditch | 12,930 |
| Planning Enforcement - Bromsgrove & Redditch | 211,276 |
| Ukrainian Support Work - Bromsgrove & Redditch | 56,204 |
| | 2,440,207 |
| | 2,440,207 |
| | |
| Grant Income | |
| Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting | 4,986 |
| | 4,986 |
| | 4,986 |
| | |
| Other Income | |
| Stray Dog Income | 130,620 |
| Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal, Admin & Uniform Support | 35,412 |
| County - Safety at Sport Grounds | 11,000 |
| Planning Support Work | 21,982 |
| Contaminated Land Work | 24,258 |
| PPC Work | 5,535 |
| Primary Authority work | 8,000 |
| Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc | 3,811 |
| Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered | 8,465 |
| Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening | 4,920 |
| | 254,003 |
| | 254,003 |
| | |
| Total Income Apr - Sept 24 | 2,699,196 |
| | 2,699,196 |
| | |
| 2024/25 Base Budget from Partners | -2,048,813 |
| | |
| Total Income Excluding Budget | 650,383 |

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WRS Board 21st November 2024

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICE BUDGETS 2025/26 – 2027/28

Recommendation

It is recommended that the WRS Board:

- 1.1 Approve the 2025/26 gross expenditure budget of £5,356k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Approve the 2025/26 income budget of £1,258k as shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Approve the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 25/26 onwards:

| Council | £'000 | Revised % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592 | 14.45 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538 | 13.13 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 725 | 17.68 |
| Worcester City Council | 658 | 16.07 |
| Wychavon District | 960 | 23.43 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 625 | 15.24 |
| Total | 4,098 | |

Agenda Item 5

1.4 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2025/26 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure.

| Council | 2024/25 £'000 | 2025/26 £'000 Excluding NI increases | 2025/26 £'000 NI increases |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 3 | 14 | 10 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 3 | 12 | 9 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 4 | 17 | 13 |
| Worcester City Council | 3 | 15 | 11 |
| Wychavon District Council | 5 | 22 | 17 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 3 | 14 | 11 |
| Total | 21 | 94 | 71 |

1.5 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2025/26 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 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| Worcester City Council | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Wychavon District Council | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.9 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Total | 2.7 | 2.6 | 3.9 |

Agenda Item 5

1.6 Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2025/26 in relation to additional Technical Officers, including the increase in NI pressure.

| Council | Planning Enforcement / Envirocrime £000 | Animal Activity Technical Officer £000 | Gull Control £000 |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 313 | 10 | |
| Malvern Hills District Council | | 8 | |
| Redditch Borough Council | 169 | 2 | |
| Worcester City Council | | 3 | 40 |
| Wychavon District Council | | 15 | |
| Wyre Forest District Council | | 9 | |
| Total | 482 | 47 | 40 |

Introduction/Summary Report

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

This report presents the revenue budget for 2025/26 – 2027/28 in relation to Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

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

- WRS Financial Plan 2025/26 – 2027/28 – Appendix 1
- WRS Partner Contributions Breakdown 2025/26 – 2027/28 – Appendix 2
- WRS Income Budget Breakdown 2025/26 – Appendix 3

WRS Budgets 2025/26

Appendix 1 shows the 2025-26 – 2027/28 budget breakdown for the district councils’ partnership.

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

- The enhanced pay award for 2024/25 as now been accepted by employers and unions, the additional pressure on WRS salaries will be £21k. WRS are not able to fund this increase, therefore an increase in partner funding will be required.

Agenda Item 5

- 3% pay award across all staff for 2025/26, 2% for 2026/27 & 2027/28. 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 £2.6k in 2025/26, a further 3% in 2026/2027 and 2027/2028
- Increase in ICT Hosting of £2.6k, a further 3% in 2026/27 and 2027/28
- Increase in Support Hosting of £3.8k in 2025-26, a further 3% in 2026/27 and 2027-28
- Total partner contribution as included in Appendix 2
- Income projections as included at Appendix 3.
- No inflationary increases in supplies and services or transport.
- Pension back-funding to be paid by all partners.

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

| Council | 24/25 £000 | 25/26 £000 Excl NI increase | 25/26 £000 NI increase | 26/27 £000 | 27/28 £000 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 3 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 13 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 3 | 12 | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 4 | 17 | 13 | 16 | 16 |
| Worcester City Council | 3 | 15 | 11 | 15 | 14 |
| Wychavon District Council | 5 | 22 | 17 | 22 | 21 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 3 | 14 | 11 | 14 | 13 |
| Total | 21 | 94 | 71 | 92 | 89 |

Following the autumn budget, NI costs increased from 13.8% to 15%, also the per-employee threshold at which employers become liable to pay NI reduced to £5k. This has created a pressure of £71k on the salary budget. It is understood that this increase in cost pressures will be covered for local authorities by way of additional new burdens funding, however, in the absence of clarity about how this will be delivered, officers would ask members to approve the budget at this stage and will commit to bringing a further paper bank to the February Board meeting when hopefully

Agenda Item 5

we will have clarity on Government's intentions. This will allow the Board to meet its obligations under the legal agreement to set a budget for the service by 1st December, whilst allowing officers time to bring a revised paper in to meet budget setting ahead of 2025/26.

The contract for Rent and ICT support with Wyre Forest states that the increase will be in-line with the RPI for the current year, therefore the actual increase may change in April 25. For 2026/27 and 2027/28 a further 3% has been added to rent, ICT support & hosting support.

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

| Council | 2025/26 Increase in Rent | 2025/26 Increase in ICT Hosting | 2025/26 Increase in Support Hosting |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| Worcester City Council | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Wychavon District Council | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.9 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Total | 2.7 | 2.6 | 3.9 |

Agenda Item 5

In addition to the base budget there are additional technical officers, working on animal activity, gull control & planning enforcement / envirocrime. We are unable to include these officers into the base budget as they are recharged on a different percentage basis to the agreed partner recharge allocations. The figures below include the additional NI pressure of planning & envirocrime £10k, animal activity £1k & gull control £0.4k.

| Council | Planning Enforcement / Envirocrime £000 | Animal Activity Technical Officer £000 | Gull Control £000 |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 313 | 10 | |
| Malvern Hills District Council | | 8 | |
| Redditch Borough Council | 169 | 2 | |
| Worcester City Council | | 3 | 40 |
| Wychavon District Council | | 15 | |
| Wyre Forest District Council | | 9 | |
| Total | 482 | 47 | 40 |

Agenda Item 5

- Below are the Pension back-funding figures to be paid by partners for 2025/26, the next actuary valuation by Worcestershire County Council will be 2026/27.

| Council | Pension Back Funding 2025-26 £000 |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 6 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 5 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 7 |
| Worcester City Council | 7 |
| Wychavon District Council | 9 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 6 |
| Total | 40 |

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this paper

Contact point

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

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

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| Account description | Approved Budget | Budget | Budget | Budget | Comments |
|---|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| | 2024 / 2025 | 2025 / 2026 | 2026 / 2027 | 2027 / 2028 | |
| | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's | |
| Employees | | | | | |
| Monthly salaries | 4,116 | 4,395 | 4,501 | 4,606 | Pay award applied 3% 25/26, 2% 26/27 & 27/28 |
| Training for professional qualifications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Medical fees (employees') | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Employers' liability insurance | 21 | 21 | 21 | 21 | |
| Employees' professional subscriptions | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | |
| Sub-Total - Employees | 4,141 | 4,421 | 4,527 | 4,633 | |
| Premises | | | | | |
| Rents | 77 | 80 | 82 | 84 | Increase of 3.5% applied 25/26 & 3% 26/27 & 27/28 |
| Room hire | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Trade Waste | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Sub-Total - Premises | 80 | 82 | 85 | 87 | |
| Transport | | | | | |
| Vehicle repairs/maint'ce | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | Underspent in 24-25, due to not being full establishment |
| 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 | 58 | 58 | 58 | 58 | |
| Sub-Total - Transport | 92 | 92 | 92 | 92 | |
| Supplies & Service | | | | | |
| Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental | 34 | 36 | 36 | 36 | Increase of 3% applied 25/26 & 3% 26/27 & 27/28 Increase of 3.5% applied 25/26 & 3% 26/27 & 27/28 |
| Materials | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | |
| Clothing, uniforms & laundry | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Travel fees | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | |
| General insurances | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | |
| Printing and stationery | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | |
| Books and publications | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Postage/packaging | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | |
| ICT | 79 | 70 | 70 | 70 | |
| Telephones | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | |
| Taxi Tests | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | |
| CRB Checks (taxi) | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 | |
| Support service recharges | 129 | 132 | 136 | 140 | |
| Support service recharges - ICT | 74 | 77 | 79 | 82 | |
| Sub-Total - Supplies & Service | 485 | 486 | 492 | 498 | |

| | Budget 2024 / 2025 £000's | Budget 2025 / 2026 £000's | Budget 2026 / 2027 £000's | Budget 2027 / 2028 £000's |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Contractors | | | | |
| Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's | 246 | 257 | 247 | 247 |
| Advertising (general) | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Grants and subscriptions | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Sub-Total - Contractors | 264 | 275 | 265 | 265 |
| Total Expenditure Budget | 5,062 | 5,356 | 5,461 | 5,575 |
| Income | | | | |
| Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc | -407 | -463 | -463 | -463 |
| Funding from Bromsgrove & Redditch for Enforcement Work | -448 | -482 | -497 | -512 |
| Sub-Total - Income | -855 | -945 | -960 | -975 |
| Income | | | | |
| Funding from partners for Technical Officers | -79 | -88 | -78 | -79 |
| Funding from partners for Increase in Rent | | -3 | -5 | -8 |
| Funding from partners for Increase in ICT | | -3 | -5 | -7 |
| Funding from partners for Increase in Hosting Charges | | -4 | -8 | -12 |
| Funding from partners due to unavoidable salary pressures 24-25 | | -21 | -21 | -21 |
| Funding from partners due to unavoidable salary pressures Excluding NI Increases 25-26 | | -94 | -94 | -94 |
| Funding from partners due to unavoidable salary pressures NI Increases 25-26 | | -71 | -71 | -71 |
| Funding from partners due to unavoidable salary pressures 26-27 | | | -92 | -92 |
| Funding from partners due to unavoidable salary pressures 27-28 | | | | -89 |
| Sub-Total - Income | -79 | -283 | -374 | -473 |
| Additional Income | | | | |
| Agreed reduced charge to Worcester City Council | -30 | -30 | -30 | -30 |
| Sub-Total - Income | -30 | -30 | -30 | -30 |
| Total Income Budget | -964 | -1,258 | -1,364 | -1,477 |
| DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET | 4,098 | 4,098 | 4,097 | 4,098 |
| 25-26 Partner Percentages | %'s | | | |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 14.45% | | | |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 13.13% | | | |
| Redditch Borough Council | 17.68% | | | |
| Worcester City Council | 16.07% | | | |
| Wychevon District Council | 23.43% | | | |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 15.24% | | | |
| Total | 100.00% | | | |

Reduction in 26-27 is due to gull control

See Appendix 3

| | Budget | Contribution Technical Officers - Including NI Increase | Contribution Increase in Rent, ICT & Hosting Charges | Unavoidable Salary Pressures | Total Partner Contribution |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 2024 / 2025 | 2025 / 2026 | 2025 / 2026 | 24-25 & 25-26 | 2025 / 2026 |
| | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's |
| Budget 2025 / 26 | | | | | |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592 | 324 | 1 | 27 | 944 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538 | 8 | 1 | 24 | 571 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 724 | 171 | 2 | 33 | 930 |
| Worcester City Council | 658 | 44 | 1 | 30 | 733 |
| Wychavon District Council | 960 | 15 | 2 | 44 | 1,021 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 625 | 9 | 1 | 28 | 663 |
| Total | 4,098 | 569 | 9 | 186 | 4,862 |

| | Budget | Contribution Technical Officers - Including NI Increase | Contribution Increase in Rent, ICT & Hosting Charges | Unavoidable Salary Pressures | Total Partner Contribution |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 2024 / 2025 | 2026 / 2027 | 25-26 & 26-27 | 24-25, 25-26 & 26-27 | Total Partner Contribution |
| | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's |
| Budget 2026 / 27 | | | | | |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592 | 334 | 3 | 40 | 969 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538 | 8 | 2 | 37 | 585 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 724 | 176 | 3 | 49 | 953 |
| Worcester City Council | 658 | 33 | 3 | 45 | 739 |
| Wychavon District Council | 960 | 15 | 4 | 65 | 1,045 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 625 | 9 | 3 | 42 | 678 |
| Total | 4,098 | 575 | 18 | 278 | 4,968 |

| | Budget | Contribution Technical Officers | Contribution Increase in Rent, ICT & Hosting Charges | Unavoidable Salary Pressures | Total Partner Contribution |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 2024 / 2025 | 2027 / 2028 | 25-26, 26-27 & 27-28 | 24-25, 25-26, 26-27 & 27-28 | Total Partner Contribution |
| | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's |
| Budget 2027 / 28 | | | | | |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592 | 344 | 4 | 53 | 993 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538 | 8 | 4 | 48 | 598 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 724 | 181 | 5 | 65 | 975 |
| Worcester City Council | 658 | 33 | 4 | 59 | 755 |
| Wychavon District Council | 960 | 16 | 6 | 86 | 1,068 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 625 | 9 | 4 | 56 | 693 |
| Total | 4,098 | 591 | 27 | 367 | 5,082 |

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| Council | WRS Approved Budget 24-25 | Tech Officer Animal Activity | Tech Officer Gull Control | Enforcement Officers | Envirocrime | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - Technical Officers NI Increases | Increase in Rent | Increase in ICT Support | Increase in Hosting Charges | 24-25 Unavoidable Salary Pressures | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - Excluding NI Increases | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - NI Increases | Total Partner Contribution 25-26 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592,164 | 10,268 | | 254,348 | 52,448 | 6,627 | 387 | 374 | 557 | 3,093 | 13,550 | 10,268 | 944,084 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538,195 | 7,488 | | | | 151 | 351 | 340 | 507 | 2,811 | 12,316 | 9,333 | 571,492 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 724,496 | 2,139 | | 112,694 | 52,448 | 3,499 | 473 | 458 | 682 | 3,785 | 16,579 | 12,563 | 929,816 |
| Worcester City Council | 658,051 | 3,209 | 40,070 | | | 495 | 430 | 416 | 619 | 3,438 | 15,058 | 11,411 | 733,197 |
| Wychavon District Council | 960,198 | 14,762 | | | | 297 | 627 | 607 | 904 | 5,016 | 21,972 | 16,650 | 1,021,032 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 624,521 | 8,344 | | | | 168 | 408 | 395 | 588 | 3,262 | 14,291 | 10,830 | 662,807 |
| Total | 4,097,625 | 46,210 | 40,070 | 367,042 | 104,896 | 11,236 | 2,676 | 2,589 | 3,857 | 21,405 | 93,766 | 71,055 | 4,862,427 |

| Council | WRS Approved Budget 24-25 | Tech Officer Animal Activity | Tech Officer Gull Control | Enforcement Officers | Envirocrime | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - Technical Officers NI Increases | Increase in Rent | Increase in ICT Support | Increase in Hosting Charges | 24-25 Unavoidable Salary Pressures | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - Excluding NI Increases | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - NI Increases | 26-27 Unavoidable Salary Pressures | Total Partner Contribution 26-27 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592,164 | 10,482 | | 262,363 | 54,101 | 6,627 | 730 | 706 | 1,132 | 3,093 | 13,550 | 10,268 | 13,287 | 968,502 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538,195 | 7,643 | | | | 151 | 663 | 642 | 1,028 | 2,811 | 12,316 | 9,333 | 12,076 | 584,858 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 724,496 | 2,184 | | 116,246 | 54,101 | 3,499 | 893 | 864 | 1,384 | 3,785 | 16,579 | 12,563 | 16,257 | 952,851 |
| Worcester City Council | 658,051 | 3,276 | 29,570 | | | 495 | 811 | 785 | 1,257 | 3,438 | 15,058 | 11,411 | 14,766 | 738,918 |
| Wychavon District Council | 960,198 | 15,068 | | | | 297 | 1,183 | 1,145 | 1,835 | 5,016 | 21,972 | 16,650 | 21,545 | 1,044,909 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 624,521 | 8,516 | | | | 168 | 770 | 745 | 1,193 | 3,262 | 14,291 | 10,830 | 14,013 | 678,309 |
| Total | 4,097,625 | 47,169 | 29,570 | 378,609 | 108,202 | 11,236 | 5,049 | 4,886 | 7,830 | 21,405 | 93,766 | 71,055 | 91,944 | 4,968,346 |

| Council | WRS Approved Budget 24-25 | Tech Officer Animal Activity | Tech Officer Gull Control | Enforcement Officers | Envirocrime | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - Technical Officers NI Increases | Increase in Rent | Increase in ICT Support | Increase in Hosting Charges | 24-25 Unavoidable Salary Pressures | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - Excluding NI Increases | 25-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures - NI Increases | 26-27 Unavoidable Salary Pressures | 27-28 Unavoidable Salary Pressures | Total Partner Contribution 27-28 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Bromsgrove District Council | 592,164 | 10,699 | | 270,596 | 55,799 | 6,627 | 1,083 | 1,048 | 1,723 | 3,093 | 13,550 | 10,268 | 13,287 | 12,795 | 992,731 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 538,195 | 7,801 | | | | 151 | 984 | 952 | 1,566 | 2,811 | 12,316 | 9,333 | 12,076 | 11,629 | 597,814 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 724,496 | 2,229 | | 119,893 | 55,799 | 3,499 | 1,325 | 1,282 | 2,108 | 3,785 | 16,579 | 12,563 | 16,257 | 15,654 | 975,469 |
| Worcester City Council | 658,051 | 3,343 | 29,570 | | | 495 | 1,204 | 1,165 | 1,915 | 3,438 | 15,058 | 11,411 | 14,766 | 14,218 | 754,632 |
| Wychavon District Council | 960,198 | 15,380 | | | | 297 | 1,756 | 1,699 | 2,794 | 5,016 | 21,972 | 16,650 | 21,545 | 20,747 | 1,068,064 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 624,521 | 8,693 | | | | 168 | 1,142 | 1,105 | 1,817 | 3,262 | 14,291 | 10,830 | 14,013 | 13,494 | 693,337 |
| Total | 4,097,625 | 48,145 | 29,570 | 390,489 | 111,598 | 11,236 | 7,494 | 7,252 | 11,922 | 21,405 | 93,766 | 71,055 | 91,944 | 88,537 | 5,082,038 |

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgeted Income 2025/26

Appendix 3

Grant Income

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

Partner Funded Income

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Employee - Animal Activity | 46,211 |
| Employee - Animal Activity - NI Increase | 930 |
| Additional Gull Work - Worcs City | 40,070 |
| Additional Gull Work - Worcs City - NI Increase | 430 |
| Envirocrime & Planning Enforcement - Bromsgrove | 306,796 |
| Envirocrime & Planning Enforcement - Bromsgrove - NI Increase | 6,420 |
| Envirocrime & Planning Enforcement - Redditch | 165,142 |
| Envirocrime & Planning Enforcement - Redditch - NI Increase | 3,456 |
| Increase in Rent | 2,676 |
| Increase in ICT Hosting | 2,589 |
| Increase in Support Hosting | 3,857 |
| Unavoidable Salary Pressures 24-25 | 21,405 |
| Unavoidable Salary Pressures Excluding NI Increases 25-26 | 93,766 |
| Unavoidable Salary Pressures NI Increases 25-26 | 71,066 |
| Agreed reduced charge to Worcester City Council | 30,000 |
| Total Partner Funded income | <u>794,814</u> |

Other Income

| | |
|--|---------|
| Stray Dog Income | 123,507 |
| County - Mgmt / Admin / Legal / Database etc | 67,687 |
| County - Petroleum Work / Safety at Sports Grounds / Uniform Support | 48,269 |
| Contaminated Land Work / Planning Support work | 100,000 |
| Primary Authority work | 40,054 |
| Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered | 30,000 |
| Animal Inspections | 3,000 |
| Private Water Supplies | 6,000 |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Health Certificates / Food Hygiene Re-Rating | 23,362 |
| Licensing - Pre-App Advice | 6,000 |
| Business - Pre-Opening Advice | 1,000 |
| Total Other income | 448,879 |

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Total Income | 1,257,693 |
|---------------------|------------------|

Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Board

Date: 21st November 2024

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2 2024/25

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 2024/5, 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 2024/5 was yet another damp affair, with many people querying whether we actually had a summer. This has impacted on at least one or two of our measures. Worcestershire has continued to be a draw for outdoor activities with a range of events and festivals continuing to feature and now we are beyond the pandemic, the crowds appear to be returning, but it is clear that this is not to everyone's liking.

Food: The slight downward trend in the number of food related cases continued with the period between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 showing a reduction of 15% compared to the same period in 2022/23 and 3% compared to 2023/24. Most food-related service request tend to be enquiries, including requests for business advice, rather than actual food complaints. Of the 220 actual food complaints received during the year to date, 68% have related to issues with food products (such as poor-quality food or food containing a foreign object) and 32% have related to poor hygiene standards or practices at food businesses. Some 891 proactive



Agenda Item 6

interventions at food businesses have undertaken during the year to date, with only 3% resulting in a business being rated as "non-compliant" (i.e., being issued a rating of 0, 1, or 2). A higher proportion of non-compliant ratings continue to be issued to the takeaway sector and small retailers.

The overall number of health and safety cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 shows a reduction of 12% compared to 2022/23 but an increase of 4% compared to 2023/24. Having said this, whilst complaint and enquiries increased slightly during the period, the number of reported accidents in the quarter was the lowest in some time. Approximately 40% of cases have been reports of accidents in workplaces with most cases relating to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days, or injuries to members of the public. The most common cause of accidents continues to be slips, trips and falls (whether on the same level or from height). Sadly, the service has investigated a fatality during the second quarter after a contractor working at a retail outlet was crushed by a piece of mechanical equipment.

The overall number of Licensing cases recorded between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 represents an increase of 5% compared to 2022/23 and an increase of 6% compared to 2023/24. Applications fell slightly following the Q1 peak, probably reflecting that most businesses try to get their Temporary Event notices served well ahead of time. Complaints and enquiries however went up but only back towards the steady trend line, indicating we still have a good understanding of the relative levels of demand hitting this service area. Approximately two thirds of cases have been applications and registrations, with 30% relating to private hire or hackney carriage vehicles and 28% relating to temporary events.

The number of Licensing enquiries, such as queries about regulations, by-laws, and licence conditions, invariably exceeds the number of actual Licensing complaints. Of the actual complaints received during the year to date, approximately 43% have related to taxi licensing, such as reports of poor driver behaviour, unauthorised parking, or poor driving standards, and 21% have related to alcohol licensing, usually indications that a business may be breaching the licensing objectives. A further 14% of complaints have related to animal licensing with most cases relating to the unlicensed breeding and/or sale of dogs. Work remained on-going during the period in relation to the investigations relating to Operation Lisbon 2.

Planning enquiries continued to show an increasing number of cases, with volumes between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 representing an increase of 26% compared to 2022/23 and 16% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 90% of enquiries have been consultations for air quality, contaminated land, and nuisance; with around 20% of enquiries continuing



Agenda Item 6

to be processed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.

Although, the number of information requests is often linked to the planning system, numbers fell during quarter 2, whilst the number of planning requests increased.

The total number of dog-related cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is comparable to 2022/23 but a reduction of 10% compared to 2023/24. Overall, the trend on dog related complaints and enquiries remains slightly upwards, whilst although we saw a significant increase in strays compared to Q1, the trend remains level or slightly downward. Most of the cases have been reports of lost or stray dogs with most categorised as "contained strays," meaning dogs were found and held by members of the public. There has, however, been a notable increase in the number of dogs picked up with welfare concerns and subsequently requiring veterinary treatment or examination. Around 55% of dogs have been successfully reunited with their owners, although this figure is known to vary between district authorities. Numbers of dog control complaints remain low, with 42 complaints received during the year to date, 19 of which related to dogs which are persistently straying from residential properties and 12 have related to dog fouling.

Whilst there is always an increase in pollution related work during the summer, this year's figures again show how poor the weather was. The overall number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 represents a reduction of 31% compared to 2022/23 when we have that very hot period, and a reduction of 19% compared to 2023/24 suggesting that this summer was even worse than last year. Over 90% of cases have been allegations of potential statutory nuisances, with most cases relating to noise from domestic properties (most often from barking dogs or from music). Other prominent potential nuisances commonly reported include noise from hospitality businesses, smoke from the burning of waste, including garden waste, and dust from construction sites.

Public Health complaints, usually relating to accumulations of rubbish or pest issues were slightly up on the last quarter, albeit more or less on trend. The overall number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 represents a reduction of 3% compared to the same period in 2022/23 and a reduction of 6% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 60% of cases have related to pest control such as enquiries about domestic treatments, enquiries about sewer baiting, or complaints about pest activity caused by the actions of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 26% of cases have related to accumulations at residential properties which can create pest control issues if vermin species are attracted to the location.



Of the 414 domestic treatments undertaken by contractors via the framework operated for people on certain benefits during the year to date, 48% were due to issues with rats whilst overall 35% of interventions have taken place at properties in the Redditch district.

Performance

The non-business customer measure has fallen to 58.5% from 60% last quarter. Number of people are happy with the speed of initial response dropped slightly to just below 70%, and just under 60% remain happy with the time it takes to reach a conclusion. The biggest issue still appears to be our inability to deliver the outcome people would like to see, which is most often down to public expectations not being met by what the law on nuisance allows for. This is probably also why the numbers reporting feeling better equipped to address issues for themselves in the future remains low, although it has increased slightly this quarter from 50% to 51.9%. Numbers of responses to our questionnaires, whether by paper or electronic, also remain low with less than 60 returned so far this year.

Business satisfaction has fallen very slightly this quarter, from 98.3% to 97.7% but remains within the usual range for the measure, and above last year's low 94.5% figure which officers felt was merely a blip.

Compliments continue to significantly outnumber complaints.

Performance on processing complete driver license renewals was at 97.6% for all authorities, which is higher than the same period last year (93.9) but similar to the figure in previous years.

The data on defective vehicles relates to situations where the vehicle is recorded as having been suspended either by the district garage on inspection or by an officer. This may follow a reported accident taking the vehicle outside the acceptable standards, or even when the vehicle is submitted for its routine 6-monthly check. In recent reporting periods we have seen an increase in the number of defective vehicles reported under this indicator, driven mainly by higher numbers in one of the six fleets. Between April and the end of September this year, 26 vehicles had been suspended in the period, with the majority belong to our one of our larger fleet areas. This is lower than at the same point in the previous two years (34 and 37 vehicles respectively,) and represents only 1.54% of the fleet county-wide that were recorded as potentially problematic. More details appear in the table in appendix B at the end of the report. We will continue to re-enforce the need to ensure vehicles are always fit for use on the road with drivers and operators, and that the regular tests are not to be used to assess what maintenance may be required.



Agenda Item 6

Staff sickness has increased from 1.13 days per FTE to 1.55 days per FTE cumulative for the year. Current sickness levels are similar to the same period in the last 3 years (1.42, 1.79, 1.55,) but above the first year of the pandemic period (0.95.) Sickness remains significantly lower than the figures for 2019/20 (2.91,) and 2018/19 (2.77) at the same point in the year.

The overall rate of noise complaints against population is 0.67, lower than the figure at this point last year (0.79,) and well below the figures at Q2 in the most recent years (0.9, 1.08, 0.94 and 0.85, respectively.) This is again a good reflection of the poor weather over the Spring and Summer. Members will be aware that this measure has been significantly higher at this point in previous years, as high as 2.1 in 2017/18.

The rate of hospitality businesses allegedly not upholding the 4 licensing objectives is 4%, slightly lower than the same period last year (5%,) and roughly in line with most of the previously recorded figures at this point in the year (6.7%, 4.3%, 4.9%.) This is looking like the norm for this measure again, suggesting that the 2.7% from 2022/3 and 2.8% seen in 2018/19 were unusually low. We know that, on occasion, one or other district can hit above 8%, but figures so far this year look like they are around the average and hopefully will continue in a similar vein.

Income brought in during the first half of 2024/25 is £258,989, which is slightly higher than the previous two years (£204,718 and £232,520 respectively,) and significantly up on the 2-years before this. Using the historic budget figure for 2016/17 (£3,017,000) to maintain the comparison with previous years, this comes out at 8.6% of that budget. Looking back at this point over recent years for comparison, the figures were 6.8%, 7.7%, 5.42%, 4.37%, 5.3% and 4.7% going back to 2018/19. The figure is roughly 5.7% of current revenue budget, so still healthy.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

Appendix A: Activity Report (separate document),
Appendix B below



Appendix B: Performance indicator table 2024/5

| Indicator | Reporting period | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4/ Outrun |
|---|------------------------------------|------|---|----|--|
| 1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 60 | 58.5 | | |
| 2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 98.3 | 97.7 | | |
| 3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection | Annually | 98.7 | Bromsgrove 99.5 Malvern Hills 97.7 Redditch 98.0 Worcester City 99.3 Wychavon 98.1 Wyre Forest 97.4 Worcestershire 98.4 | | Bromsgrove Malvern Hills Redditch Worcester City Wychavon Wyre Forest Worcestershire |
| 4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year | Annually | 1.3 | Bromsgrove 0.5 Malvern Hills 2.3 Redditch 2.0 Worcester City 0.7 Wychavon 1.9 Wyre Forest 2.1 Worcestershire 1.6 | | Bromsgrove Malvern Hills Redditch Worcester City Wychavon Wyre Forest Worcestershire |
| 5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application | 6-monthly | NA | 97.6% | NA | |
| 6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this represents of the fleet county-wide | 6-monthly | NA | 26= 1.54% of 1684 vehicles on the road county-wide BDC 1 MHDC 2 RBC 18 WC 6 WDC 1 WFDC 0 | NA | |



Agenda Item 6

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|----|--|
| 7 | % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 50 | 51.9 | | |
| 8 | Review of register of complaints/compliments | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 5/11 | 12/26 | | |
| 9 | Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better | Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative | 1.13 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 4.2 Malvern Hills 3.5 Redditch 3.0 Worcester City 5.5 Wychavon 2.2 Wyre Forest 5.9 Worcestershire 4.0 | NA | Bromsgrove Malvern Hills Redditch Worcester City Wychavon Wyre Forest Worcestershire |
| 12 | Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population | 6-monthly | NA | Bromsgrove 0.55 Malvern Hills 0.68 Redditch 0.69 Worcester City 0.74 Wychavon 0.60 Wyre Forest 0.79 Worcestershire 0.67 | NA | Bromsgrove Malvern Hills Redditch Worcester City Wychavon Wyre Forest Worcestershire |
| 13 | Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17) | 6-monthly | NA | £258,989 which is 8.6% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue budget figure (£3,017,000) | NA | |



Agenda Item 6

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|----|----|--|
| 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 | 2024-25



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Malvern
Hills
District
Council
www.malvernhills.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

Written by Simon Wilkes (Director of Regulatory Services)

Welcome to the second Activity Report of 2024/5. We retain the usual format that members will have seen for some years. The most obvious addition, which will include more detail as we go forward relates to the page on planning and enviro-crime enforcement, which Bromsgrove and Redditch formally added to their partnership requirements in June.

So far in 2024/5 planning support continues to show increases in demand. Food safety and health and safety at work activities are both on-trend. Numbers of food businesses being found with significant non-compliances remains relatively low. Stray dog complaints are up on Q4 the previous two quarters' figures, but overall close to trend.

Information requests fell in Q2, going against the increases in planning support related activity, which we have often suggested as a driver of these.

In Licensing, the level of applications fell last quarter after the peak in Q1. we suggested that last quarter's peak was possibly a reflection of the competition for custom in the sector, with businesses trying to get their summer event offers out earlier than previous years and into customers' diaries. Complaints and enquiries for licensing increased following a drop in Q1.

For pollution and nuisance related work, the year continued slowly with moderate levels of complaint, most likely because of the poor spring and summer weather. Whilst numbers did show a peak over the summer, numbers were curtailed compared to the same period in previous years. This clearly demonstrates the seasonality and impacts of weather on nuisance work. Warm weather leads to open windows so that noise can penetrate houses that would otherwise be stopped by the modern double and triple glazing deployed in most properties. Public Health related complaint work, linked to nuisance, like accumulations was roughly on trend for the period.

We hope you find the content information and, as ever please contact myself or the three Team Managers if you have any other queries.

Many Thanks



Simon

Community Environmental Health

Written by David Mellors (Environmental Health And Trading Standards Manager)

Quarter One

The routine food hygiene intervention programme continued with support from our contractors. The recruitment process for the 5 new food safety officers agreed by the Board commenced to support this work. This is a key priority as we not only have our 2024-2025 businesses to inspect but also some 600 existing and new premises outstanding from 2023-2024. The latter have been risk assessed to ensure that we focus resources on the highest risk businesses.

Compliance continues to be very high with over 90% of premises achieving Food Hygiene Rating System (FHRS) scores for of Level 4-5. Level 3 is considered to demonstrate that premises are broadly compliant with the law, so these premises exceed the statutory requirements.

As always officers continue to find poor premises where more formal action is required. One persistently non-compliant premises (a bakery in Malvern) where the food business operator has shown reluctance over an extended period to make the serious improvements needed is currently going through the formal legal process. Officers also investigated chocolate Easter eggs at a major retailer that were found to have been nibbled by mice. Work is ongoing to bring these premises into compliance.

The aggregators (Just Eat, Deliveroo etc) now remove businesses with very poor scores from their platforms. Consequently, those poor performers wishing to partner with them tend to improve quickly and often pay for a re-rating. Getting a good FHRS score is a key driver to compliance. There are also early signs that numbers of new premises may be on an upward trend with more mobile and home-based traders registering with us. Indeed, the seemingly never-ending coffee shop openings continue, although we may now be at saturation point as several have also closed. The business closures reported appear to be mostly down to increased costs of staff, food, and energy.

We were also involved in two national initiatives in Quarter one.

- The Food Standards Agency's continuing national E Coli investigation. Worcestershire has several growers who supply the major sandwich producers and have been identified as the possible source. All the Worcestershire businesses involved have co-operated fully in providing the information requested.
- A traceability exercise on imported meat products led by the National Food Crime Unit. We worked closely with Trading Standards colleagues at the County Council on the latter as it often involved poor labelling. It is a legal requirement that food is labelled in English. In one case officers had to use an interpreter as none of the items found could be identified. The operation led to food being removed from the market.

A considerable amount of officer time was spent working with UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency) in an investigation into a Cryptosporidium outbreak at a farm in Worcestershire which received extensive media coverage. The number of reported cases ran into the hundreds and is said to be the largest known outbreak of its type. As this is also a working farm your officers had to work closely with the Health & Safety Executive on enforcement issues.

Officers also dealt with over 200 food complaints and enquiries about food premises and issued 23 Export Certificates.

In statutory nuisance work, an Abatement Notice was served on a public house in May under the Environmental Protection Act for noise from outdoor music events, and a noisy cockerel was put before the courts! Preliminary meetings were held for events including summer music festivals, and officers worked with event organisers for a previously controversial bank holiday event as well as preparation for the Christmas light switch on in Worcester.

Complex health and safety investigations continued, with your Officers attending the inquest into the death of a participant in a charity boxing event, and a dog sledging accident investigation was concluded.

Quarter Two

Interviews for the recruitment of five new officers into the Community Environmental Health Team as agreed by the Board to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency food safety recovery programme were concluded in Q2. The outcome was successful in that three additional Regulatory Support Officers (RSO) joined us in September. They come from diverse backgrounds, namely travel, retail and teaching. One is also a fluent Chinese speaker. As WRS continue to lead the way in developing the RSO role our Principal Officer (Food) has developed a specific training programme to ensure they are 'competent' to deal with low-risk premises as required by the Food Law Code of Practice. Job offers were also made for two Technical Officer posts in food safety, and another to fill the vacancy in noise/pollution work. They will commence employment next quarter.

Major investigations in Q2 included noise from the refurbishment of a Sainsburys supermarket in Worcester with numerous complaints of night time disturbance whilst floors were being dug up. Site meetings were held with the local Councillor and members of Sainsburys senior management and compromise reached on permissible activities at specific hours. We also received an appeal in respect of a Noise Abatement Notice served on a public house in Droitwich for excessively loud music impacting on an elderly neighbour. We await a court date.

A prosecution file for a local bakery which is consistently non-compliant was submitted to Malvern Hills District Council. We continued as ever to undertake routine inspections completing 450 high risk visits during the quarter. Most premises continue with good levels of compliance although there does appear to be an upwards trend in premises dropping in their FHRS rating. Failure to have a documented system, poor cleaning, lack of training and inadequate pest control were the main reasons.

A farm in Bromsgrove was one of several venues which held music events under temporary event notices which were monitored over the summer using both noise monitoring equipment and personal visits by members of the team.

Evidence of breaches of a noise abatement notice was established during an ongoing investigation into loud music from a residential address in Worcester. A prosecution file has subsequently been prepared ready for submission to the legal team.

Quotations have been obtained for a major works in default project to replace a failed sewage treatment system in Barnt Green, Bromsgrove.

A licence review has been instigated in relation to a public house in Worcester following ongoing noise complaints concerning loud music and late-night noise from customers on the premises.

In addition, your officers provided evidence at a Licence application hearing, having made representations concerning premises in Wyre Forest which included proposals for outdoor music events until 0100 hours. As a result, the applicant amended their application for outdoor music to end by 2200 hours and agreed to a number of additional noise control conditions.

Licensing

Written by Kiran Lahel (Licensing And Support Services Manager)

Quarter One

On the whole there was a slight downward trajectory in licensing enquiries at the start of the quarter which is not dissimilar to other years at Q1 where this tends to be the calmer period between Christmas and summer queries. The team however have continued to remain busy due to other priorities which have namely taken the shape of policy matters that have required significant input from the teams.

At the beginning of April, it was announced that the Pavement Licencing Scheme that was originally introduced during the covid pandemic under the Business and Planning Act 2020 were to be made permanent as of the 31st March 2024 by provisions made in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. This has therefore involved the team putting together a new pavement licensing policy based on the new legislation for each district council and presenting the new policy to all licensing committees or similar with a recommendation to consult on each policy for implementation. In the meantime the team are continuing with the temporary scheme until such decisions are made.

A review of the Taxi Standards that were implemented by all district councils in 2022 highlighted the need to make safeguarding training for all taxi drivers mandatory. As part of the initial changes a mandatory requirement for all NEW drivers to undertake the competency certificate was introduced. This is a thorough training session looking at all aspects that are required for a taxi driver to do their role including equalities, safeguarding, communication, driver conduct and responsibilities. The feedback from drivers has remained positive and valuable but showed a uneven playing field with half of drivers now trained and others not. As a result, officers have presented reports to all district councils recommending that all drivers undertake safeguarding training and undertake refresher training every three years.

Members Training commenced across all districts in June with officers providing training to new and established members of the committee. A new interactive format has been welcomed by members and has allowed different scenarios to be played out through role play and videos which has allowed a multitude of different questions asked by councillors to get themselves ready for the role.

During the pandemic, an operation commenced to look at illegal dog breeding across Worcestershire and the results clearly brought to light the amount of people that were unlicensed and illegally selling dogs across the County. As a result, various teams across WRS including Licensing, the intelligence unit and the Dog Warden service have worked together to educate, communicate and monitor complaints in order to reduce this number in the long term. Earlier this year a second operation commenced through the intelligence team and again they identified there still to be a large number of potential illegal dog breeding cases across the County. Although it had reduced since the first operation the numbers still signified a problem and as a result licensing officers are now investigating a number of cases that will either result in licence applications being submitted, warning letters distributed, or enforcement action being taken.

Finally, the team have been working with Technical Services and the Intelligence team on introducing a new triage process for calls and queries. Licensing remains the service with the highest volume of call and queries to the duty desk. As a result, some of these queries are referred to a licensing technical officer but could be answered by the duty officer team. Both teams have been working together to establish a set of processes that the duty officers can use to enable them to efficiently navigate through the questions/queries they receive daily. The intelligence team have highlighted from information and data collected which areas of licensing form the largest numbers of queries in order to aid prioritisation.

Quarter Two

The summer spike tends to show impact in this quarter with evidence of applications and queries higher than the last quarter. Most of these relate to both Taxi Licensing and the Licensing Act and due to summer leave in the team this can be a challenging quarter for officers with fewer staff members in over the summer period.

Offices have been busy working on a number of policies for consultation this quarter ranging from new policies including the 'Pavement licensing policy' that has started to make its way back from consultation in some districts and the 'Mandatory Safeguarding for Taxi Drivers' that has also started to make its way back from consultation in some districts. But also, policies that require review based on statutory requirements such as the Gambling Policy. All consultations are posted on each individual district website to reply to and hard copies can be collected from the districts if required.

The number of new Animal licensing inspections have been slowly increasing and there has been a programme of interim inspections scheduled which has required more officers to get involved than usual. The team have also been working on Operation Lisbon where investigations remain ongoing.

Enforcement work continues across the team including evening work on taxi ranks, officers investigating suspended premises licences and interim animal inspections scheduled whereby there has been intelligence received regarding a licensed or unlicensed premises.

Alongside operational and day to day work the team continues to strive for efficiencies and have been continuing their work on implementing Victoria forms for the automation of licensing forms and a number of procurement projects including making the DBS process for taxi drivers more efficient and last but not least the procurement of veterinary services for animal licensing inspections.

Technical Services

Written by Mark Cox (Technical Services Manager)

Quarter One

Our Air Quality work continued to work at pace. As well as drafting and submission of 6 Annual Status Reports by the team for all 6 Districts, a draft Air Quality Action Plan for Worcester City successfully navigated through Worcester City Council Committees. A behaviour change survey, jointly developed with Public Health also closed and the results stated to be analysed. Initial steering group meetings with key stakeholders were held for Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest District Council's in order to produce a draft Air Quality Action Plan for both by November 2024. Our AQ Behaviour Change work also has begun to pick up pace starting with lots of contact with schools some of which have led to visits.

During this period the draft Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy for Redditch Borough Council was finalised. This updated strategy reviews and replaces the 2001 document taking account of changes in the Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance 2012, national policy, council policy, and sets out the Council's strategic approach to review and assessment of contaminated land. The document is due to go to RBC committee in October 2024. The strategies for the other districts will follow on the back of this draft.

Although contract work for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) came to an end during April 2024 we continued to offer contracted support to Gloucester City Council (GCC), East Staffordshire (ESBC) and North Warwickshire Borough Council's (NWBC) as well as the six Worcestershire districts. This often involves reviewing complex reports provided in support of planning applications and discharge of planning condition requests. We are asked to comment on the whole range of planning applications, large and small, including residential developments, commercial, infrastructure projects, solar farms, industrial processes, extensions, change of use, conversion of buildings and any other development where contamination may be a relevant consideration.

Interesting cases to note include the demolition and redevelopment of Bromsgrove Fire Station, a fuel depot in Gloucester City and an old farm near Pinvin all for various uses including residential development.

Routine Industrial Permitting work including inspection of large industrial processes, foundries and casting through to cement processing and petrol stations all continued. No significant issues arisen apart from continuing complaints against a large manufacturing facility in the Gloucester area.

As of April 2024, the current 2 remaining COVID Advisors are continuing to assist with the Homes for Ukraine scheme along with a principal officer managing the scheme in Bromsgrove and Redditch. Throughout Q1 significant effort have been dedicated to school and college registrations, the support workers have been working with education officers and Ukrainian guest with the registration process, applications, references and have accompanied several students to college open evenings; also supported parent with worries about school documentation, attended school meeting and helped rectify any issues that arose.

In April the Homes for Ukraine team had a meeting with an external Mental Health team to discuss some complex issues and best ways to deal with them, and in May we with met with the wider Redditch Council Housing Team to build a relationship and discuss the best approach on how we can work together to support our guests on the scheme. As usual team have continued to support guests move from their hosts to independent living in either Social Housing or Private Rented Accommodation, this consists of financial advice, help setting up utilities, sourcing furniture and household goods and help getting children into schools / colleges. There were 2 new arrivals in Bromsgrove and 10 new arrivals in Redditch.

This first quarter of the new financial year is always busy from an IT development perspective as we prepare and submit most of our government returns. Over the quarter we have also taken part in various cyber security awareness activities designed to increase the security and resilience of the computer system we use. We have also worked to enhance service delivery, with these activities including regular updates and patches to our main back office system, record retention and deletions. We also offered PAT testing for all electrical equipment located in our offices and for remote working equipment. We are obliged to complete this every 2 years. Work on Service-wide projects has also continued including the Automation Project and introduction of Taxi digital Identity records. We have continued income generation work with Bromsgrove and Redditch Planning, Worcestershire Trading Standards, and Tewkesbury Borough Council's Environmental Health and Licensing.

Quarter Two

For the Technical Pollution team, work on the 2 new draft Air Quality Action Plans commenced at pace for both Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest District Councils. This work involved continuation of the steering group meetings following from Q1 and into Q2 followed by detailed source apportionment, modelling, quantification and feasibility study assessment of the measures together with report writing. Additionally, our behaviour change work began to accelerate with contact with 49 schools to introduce our AQ work and Real Time Air Quality Portal.

A new draft Contaminated Land Strategy for Redditch Council was produced and submitted to the portfolio holder for consideration prior to Committee stages leading to sign off by Full Council later in 2024. Redditch's Strategy is the first in a refresh programme for all of the District Council's strategies, with the one for Malvern Hills proposed to follow in early 2025. We continue our contract work for North Warwickshire, Gloucester City and East Staffordshire District - including sites within Uttoxeter and Burton-on-Trent. The team have dealt with a couple of interesting cases in Gloucester requesting sign off of technical conditions, a standout being large new housing development at Hill Farm, Hempsted Lane, Gloucester. At Bakers Quay, Gloucester we also dealt with some sign off validation for areas of the site where planning consent was granted back in 2014 when the site was still being investigated/assessed and a remedial strategy agreed. We also provided support to our planning officers on a complex planning application at the Roxel Group site, near Stourport as well as several solar farms and battery storage facilities with scoping consultations and/or Environmental Information Requests across the Districts.

In terms of Environmental Permitting, a significant amount of time has been spent dealing with Modern Packaging in Pershore to upgrade their existing abatement technology as well as dealing with Roger Dyson (Foundry) in Droitwich Spa to improve their solvent management plan. As part of our contract work, minor issues involving Permal in Gloucester are ongoing and we are in liaison with Gloucester City representatives.

For our Database administration and information technology support team, over this second quarter we took part in various cyber security awareness activities designed to increase the security and resilience of the computer system we use. This quarter we facilitated the introduction of the new Mimecast e-mail security system. At the beginning of the quarter the 2 remaining COVID Advisor continued to assist with the Homes for Ukraine scheme along with a principal officer managing the scheme in Bromsgrove and Redditch. Also, in July we successfully recruited another part time Homes for Ukraine support worker into the team.

As well as the usual routine support given to existing guests, hosts, and new arrivals, significant time and effort was dedicated to school and college registrations. Specifically on-going support was provided to three Students trying to get into college and university, with liaison between them and the education authorities. Other support is provided such as that provided to support Ukrainian guests who wanted to improve their job prospects, liaising with the job centre to access available free courses. Offering Employment advice to two young Male guests and helping with CVs. There have been 2 new young mothers in recent months, who have received help and advice from the support workers such as childcare, medical support, healthy starts scheme, visas and passports. Between the team there has been attendance at Bromsgrove and Redditch welcome refugees support groups and the Ukrainian Pop-up café hosted in the Bromsgrove Methodist church.

During September we saw an increase in demand for more hosts with three new arrivals in Redditch, due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and with the colder months approaching and the continuation of blackouts. We are continuing to explore different ways to try and attract new hosts to the scheme. Again, during September following the loss of one Dog Warden and with the commencement of new contracts with Birmingham, Solihull and North Somerset, we increased the number of dog wardens from two full time to now having three full time and a part-time warden.

Unfortunately, due to the new contracts we have had to put to sleep increasing numbers of stray dogs because of aggression primarily, but also because we have received higher numbers of pitbulls and XL Bully dogs (both banned breeds). The heightened levels of aggression in some of the stray dogs has caused a significant percentage which are not rehomeable to be put to sleep using a dart gun at the kennels, minimising risk to wardens, the public and the vet by not having to move the dog unnecessarily. As well as the larger bull breeds, we have also seen an increase in the number of puppies and dogs with significant welfare support needs. We attempt to meet the identified best method of caring for each dog which may mean alternative forms of boarding outside of our contracted kennels, such as fostering.

Dog Control

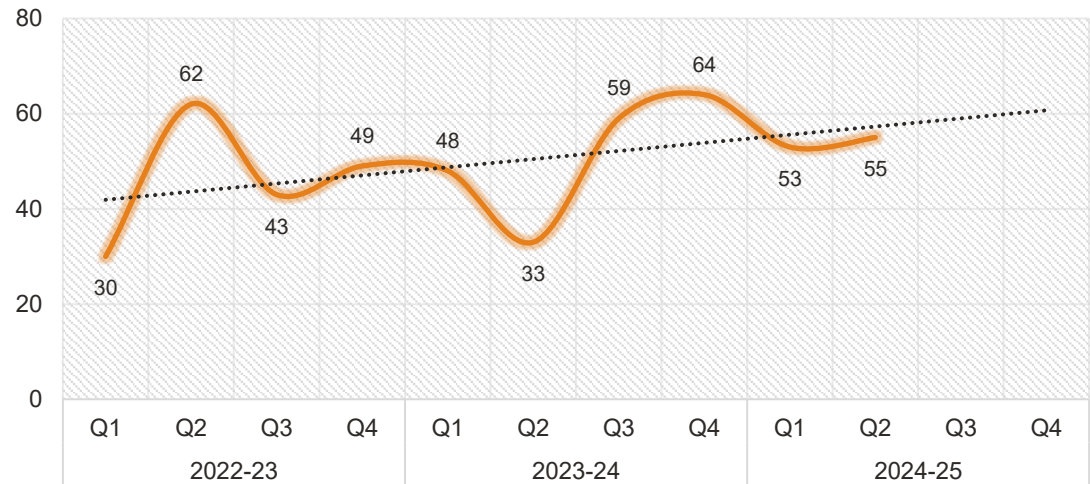
The data on this page outlines the number of dog control cases (complaints, enquiries, and reports of lost or stray dogs) handled by the service. Complaints received by WRS include reports of dangerous dogs, reports of dog fouling, and reports of dogs persistently straying. Complaints relating to the welfare of dogs, however, are investigated by the RSPCA and West Mercia Police unless the dog is found to be straying.

Comments

The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is comparable to 2022/23 but a reduction of 10% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 86% of cases have been reports of lost or stray dogs with most cases categorised as "contained strays" (meaning dogs were found and held by members of the public). There has, however, been a notable increase in the number of dogs picked up with welfare concerns and subsequently requiring veterinary treatment or examination. Approximately 55% of dogs have been successfully reunited with their owners although this figure is known to vary between local authorities.

In general terms, the service receives a low number of dog control complaints and enquiries each quarter. Based on the 42 complaints received during the year to date, 19 have related to dogs which are persistently straying from residential properties whilst 12 have related to dog fouling.

Complaints and Enquiries



Reports of Lost or Stray Dogs



Food Safety

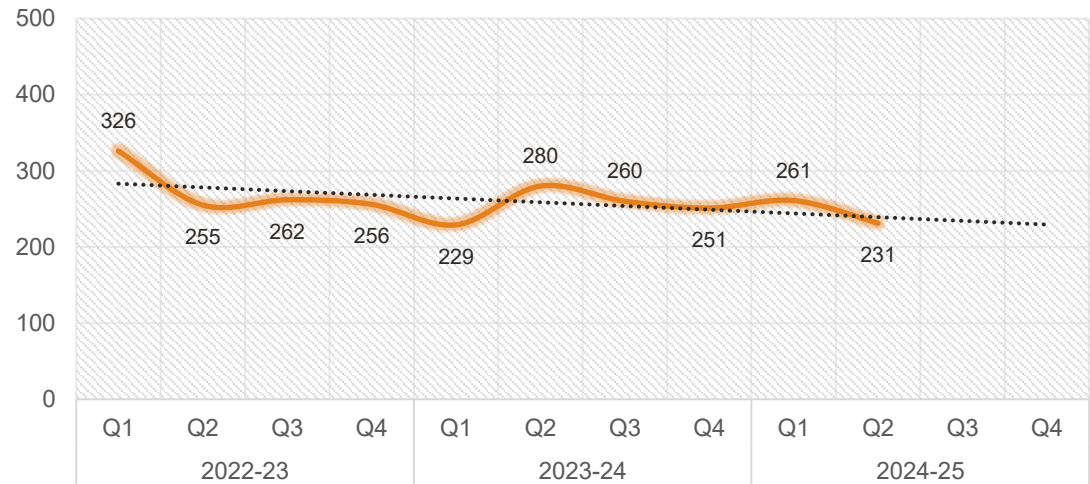
The data on this page outlines the number of food safety cases (complaints, enquiries, and notifications) received by the service and the number of food safety interventions undertaken at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Complaints handled by WRS relate to food products and premises, however, complaints regarding the composition and labelling of food (including allergen labelling) are primarily investigated by Trading Standards. Enquiries handled by the WRS include requests for business advice, requests for hygiene ratings, and requests for export health certificates which are required by businesses seeking to export food to Northern Ireland, the European Union, and non-EU countries.

Comments

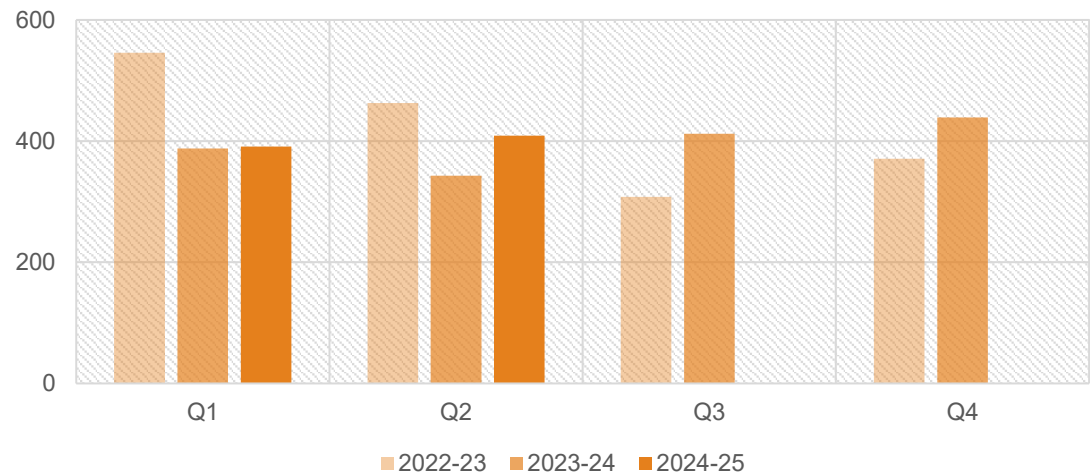
The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is a reduction of 15% compared to 2022/23 and a reduction of 3% compared to 2023/24. The service tends to receive a greater number of enquiries (including requests for business advice) than complaints. Based on the 220 complaints received during the year to date, 68% have related to issues with food products (such as poor quality food or food containing a foreign object) and 32% have related to poor hygiene standards or practices at food businesses.

Based on the 891 interventions undertaken during the year to date, 3% have resulted in a business being rated as "non-compliant" (issued a rating of 0, 1, or 2). A higher proportion of non-compliant ratings continue to be issued to the takeaway sector and small retailers. To find out more about food hygiene ratings, please visit <https://ratings.food.gov.uk>.

Complaints and Enquiries



FHRS Interventions



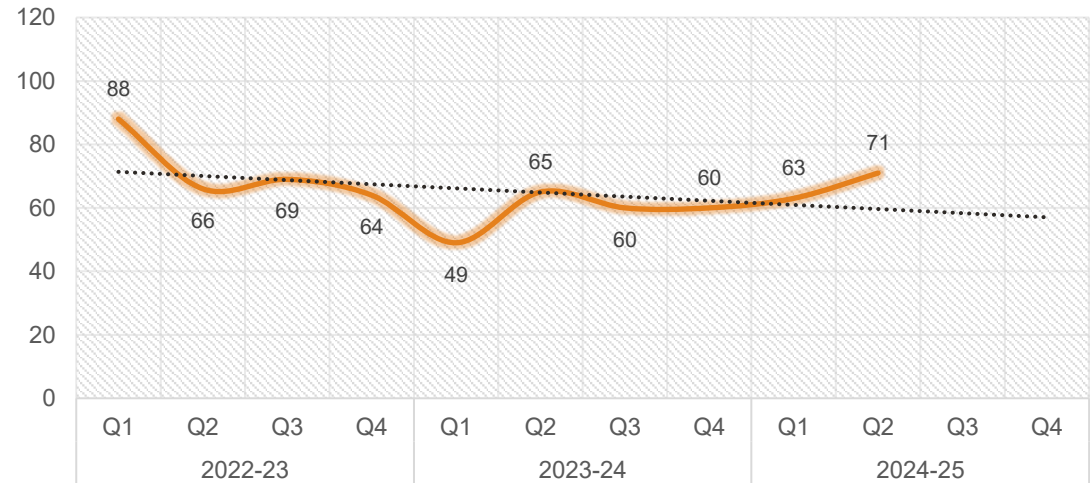
Health & Safety

The data on this page outlines the number of health and safety cases (complaints, enquiries, and reports of accidents in the workplace) received by the service. Investigations are only undertaken by WRS where they relate to premises such as retail outlets, offices, leisure services, hospitality premises, and cosmetology premises. Other premises, such as factories and medical premises, fall with the remit of the Health and Safety Executive.

Comments

The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is a reduction of 12% compared to 2022/23 but an increase of 4% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 40% of cases have been reports of accidents in workplaces with most cases relating to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days or injuries to members of the public. The most common cause of accidents continues to be slips, trips and falls (whether on the same level or from height). Sadly, the service has investigated a fatality during the second quarter after a contractor working at a retail outlet was crushed by a piece of mechanical equipment.

Complaints and Enquiries

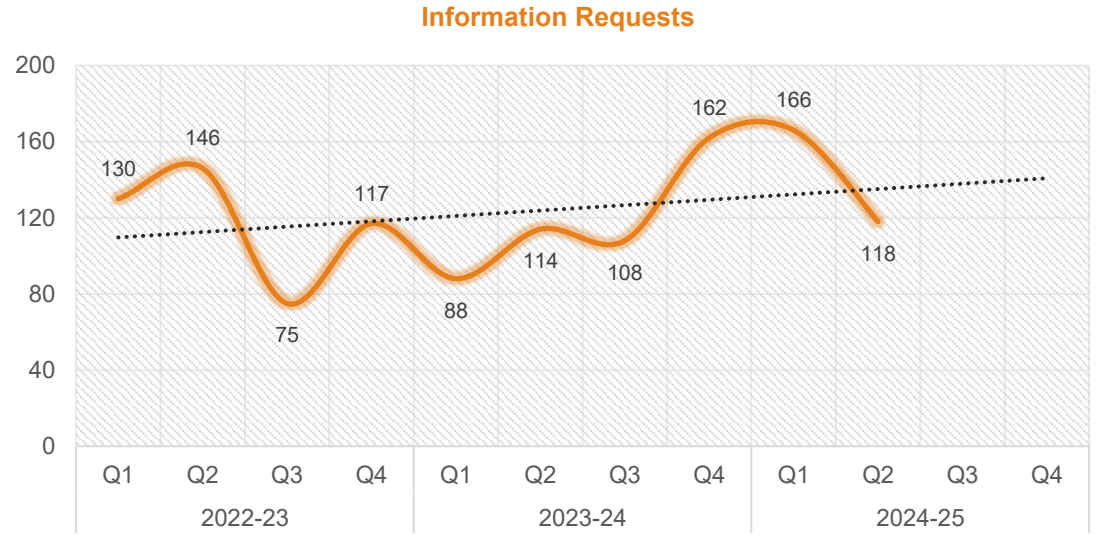


Accident Reports



Information Requests

The data on this page outlines the number of information requests received by the service. Requests for information are generally received from the public, or private sector companies, and are made under the Environmental Information Regulations, Freedom of Information Act, or General Data Protection Regulations (commonly known as Subject Access Requests). Requests for information are also received from other local authorities or law enforcement agencies and are made under the Data Protection Act (for the prevention and detection of crime or in connection with legal proceedings).



Licensing

The data on this page outlines the number of licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and registrations) received by the service. Complaints handled by WRS can relate to licenced and unlicensed activitiy, however, cases generally relate to the following areas:

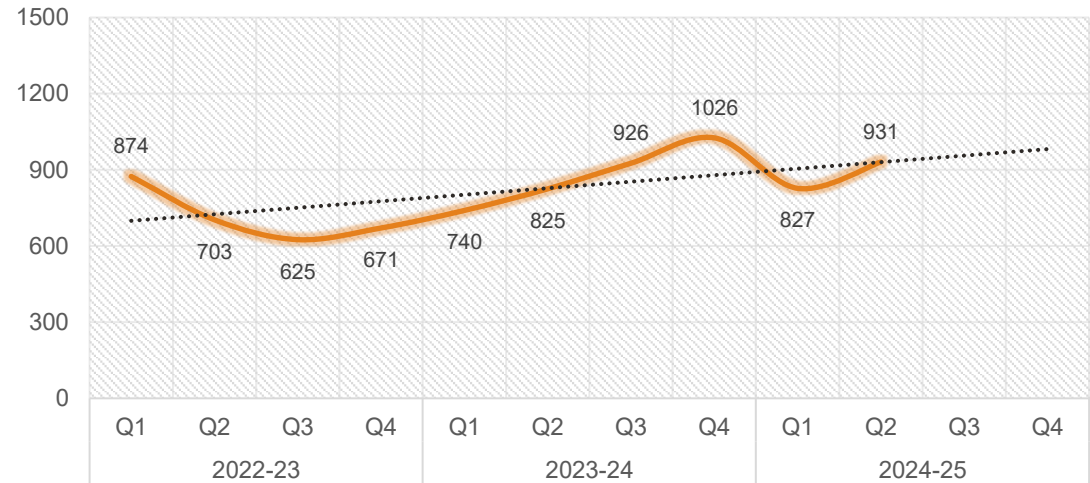
- Alcohol and Entertainment
- Animals
- Caravans
- Gambling
- Scrap Metal
- Sex Establishments
- Skin Piercing
- Street Trading, Amenities, and Collections
- Taxis

Comments

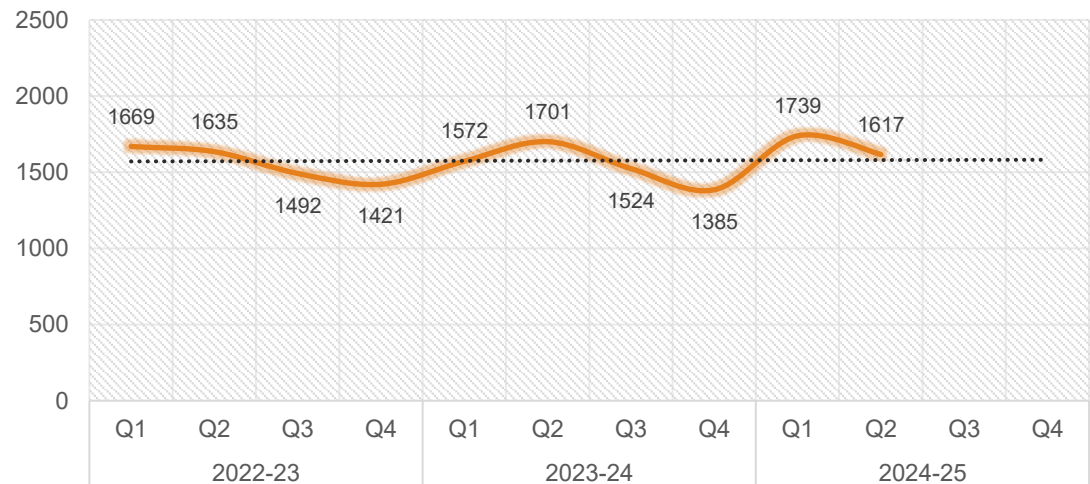
The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is an increase of 5% compared to 2022/23 and an increase of 6% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 66% of cases have been applications and registrations with 30% relating to private hire or hackney carriage vehicles and 28% relating to temporary events.

In general terms, the service receives a higher number of enquiries (such as queries about regulations, by-laws, and licence conditions) compared to complaints. Based on the complaints received during the year to date, approximately 43% have related to taxi licensing (such as reports of poor driver behaviour, unauthorised parking, or poor driving standards) and 21% have related to alcohol licensing (businesss breaching the lciensing objectives). A further 14% of complaints have related to animal licensing with most cases relating to the unlicensed breeding and/or sale of dogs.

Complaints and Enquiries



Applications and Registrations



Planning

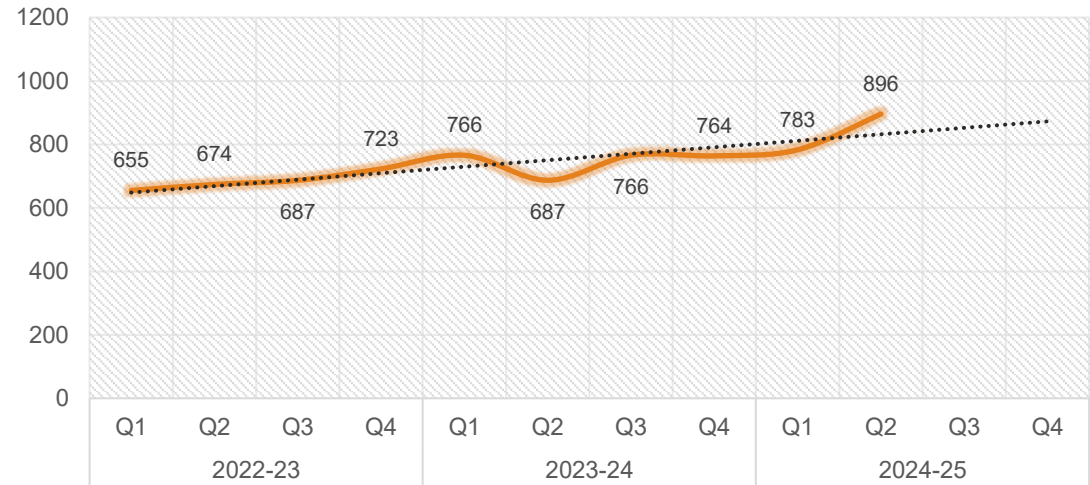
The data on this page outlines the number of planning enquiries received by the service. Planning enquiries processed by WRS are either consultations or requests to discharge planning conditions, however, enquiries only relate to the following areas:

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

Comments

The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is an increase of 26% compared to 2022/23 and an increase of 16% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 90% of enquiries have been consultations for air quality, contaminated land, and nuisance; whilst 1 in 5 enquiries continue to be processed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.

Planning Enquiries



Planning Enforcement & Enviro-Crime

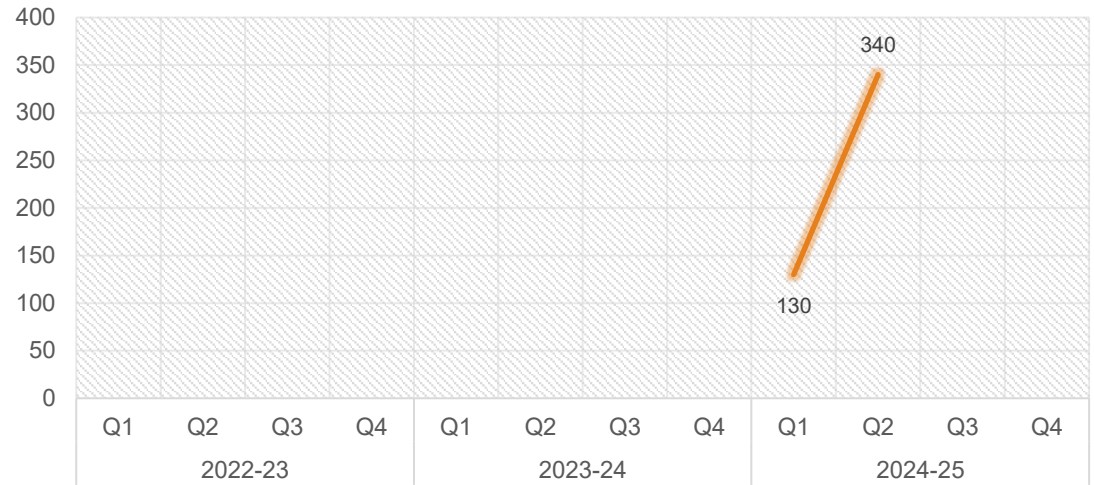
The data on this page shows the number of planning enforcement and environmental crime cases (complaints and enquiries) received by the service. Complaints handled by WRS include reports of fly-tipping, littering, and planning breaches at residential or commercial premises. The planning enforcement and environmental crime functions are only delivered on behalf of Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils and have only been within the remit of the service since June 2024.

Comments

There is currently no comparable temporal data available for the planning enforcement and enviro-crime functions. Based on the 470 cases investigated during the year to date, 69% have related to fly-tipping whilst 19% have related to suspected planning breaches at residential properties.

As this is a new service area for WRS, processes and priorities continue to be adapted however there are a number of priority work areas which include: enforcement of fly-tipping hotspots, clearing a backlog of legacy planning enforcement cases, and streamlining and standardising the approach to tackling untidy land cases.

Complaints and Enquiries



Pollution

The data on this page outlines the number of pollution cases (complaints and enquiries) received by the service. Complaints handled by WRS include reports of nuisances (noise, light, odour, smoke) originating from domestic, commercial, or agricultural activity and notifications of contamination incidents.

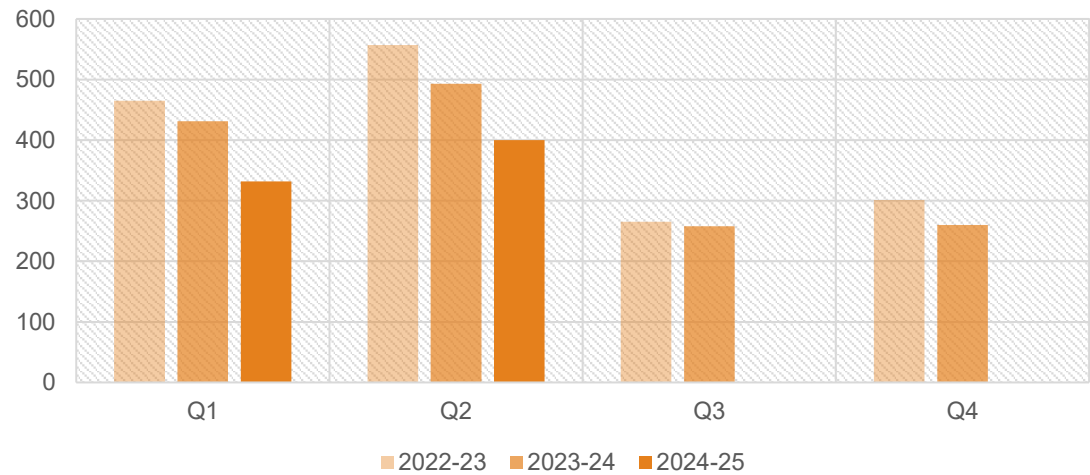
Comments

The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is a reduction of 31% compared to 2022/23 and a reduction of 19% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 91% of cases have been reports of nuisances with most cases relating to noise from domestic properties (such as noise from barking dogs or noise from loud music). Other prominent nuisances commonly include noise from hospitality businesses, smoke from the burning of domestic or commercial waste, and dust from construction sites.

Complaints and Enquiries



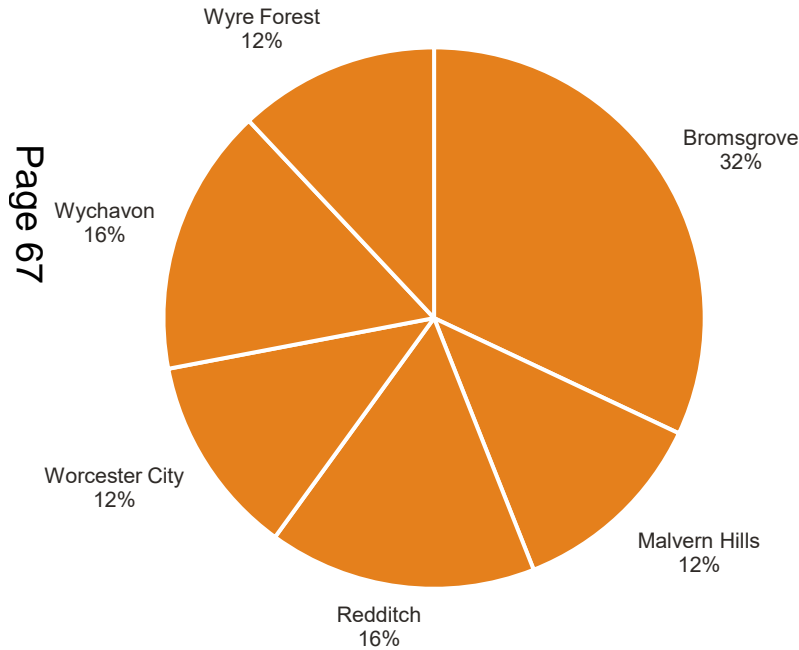
Complaints and Enquiries (Noise Only)



Noise

The data on this page outlines the wards in Worcestershire which have the highest case rate in terms of noise pollution. It also shows the districts in which these wards are located.

Note: The figures in the table are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. Where a ward is highlighted, it was also one of the top 10 wards featured in the 2023/24 Activity Report.



| Ward | Total | Population | Rate |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------|------|
| Barnt Green And Hopwood | 11 | 2,951 | 3.73 |
| Cathedral | 35 | 11,760 | 2.98 |
| Avoncroft | 10 | 3,451 | 2.90 |
| Perryfields | 4 | 1,557 | 2.57 |
| Honeybourne And Pebworth | 7 | 2,844 | 2.46 |
| Warndon | 12 | 5,661 | 2.12 |
| Droitwich Central | 5 | 2,621 | 1.91 |
| Dodderhill | 5 | 2,809 | 1.78 |
| Winyates | 14 | 8,139 | 1.72 |
| Rock Hill | 5 | 2,970 | 1.68 |
| Wribbenhall And Arley | 9 | 5,381 | 1.67 |
| Bewdley And Rock | 14 | 8,457 | 1.66 |
| Alvechurch South | 5 | 3,105 | 1.61 |
| Lodge Park | 9 | 5,619 | 1.60 |
| Batchley And Brockhill | 14 | 8,930 | 1.57 |
| Link | 10 | 6,455 | 1.55 |
| Hallow | 3 | 1,941 | 1.55 |
| Blakebrook And Habberley South | 14 | 9,350 | 1.50 |
| Belbroughton And Romsley | 10 | 6,771 | 1.48 |
| Arboretum | 9 | 6,130 | 1.47 |
| Harvington And Norton | 4 | 2,788 | 1.43 |
| Lowes Hill | 4 | 2,854 | 1.40 |
| Church Hill | 11 | 7,991 | 1.38 |
| Catshill North | 4 | 2,912 | 1.37 |
| Priory | 6 | 4,384 | 1.37 |

Public Health

The data on this page outlines the number of public health cases (complaints and enquiries) received by the service and the number of subsidised treatments carried out by contractors. Complaints handled by WRS include reports of accumulations and reports of pest due to the activities of local residents or businesses. Pest control treatments are only offered by four districts (Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, and Wychavon) as Worcester City Council and Wyre Forest District Council do not offer a subsidised pest control service.

Comments

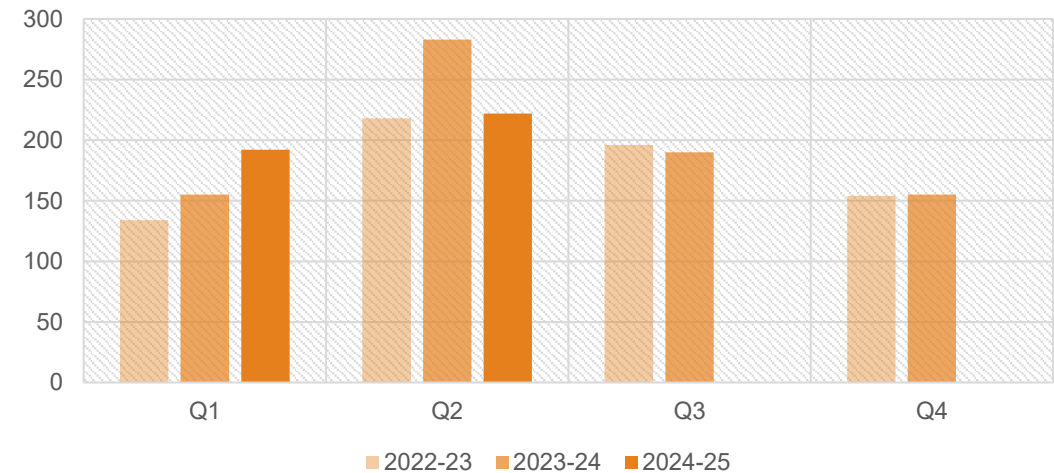
The number of cases received between 1st April 2024 and 30th September 2024 is a reduction of 3% compared to 2022/23 and a reduction of 6% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 60% of cases have related to pest control such as enquiries about domestic treatments, enquiries about sewer baiting, or complaints about pest activity caused by the actions of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 26% of cases have related to accumulations at residential properties which can also include pest control issues.

Based on the 414 domestic treatments undertaken by contractors during the year to date, 48% were due to issues with rats whilst 35% have taken place at properties in the Redditch district.

Complaints and Enquiries



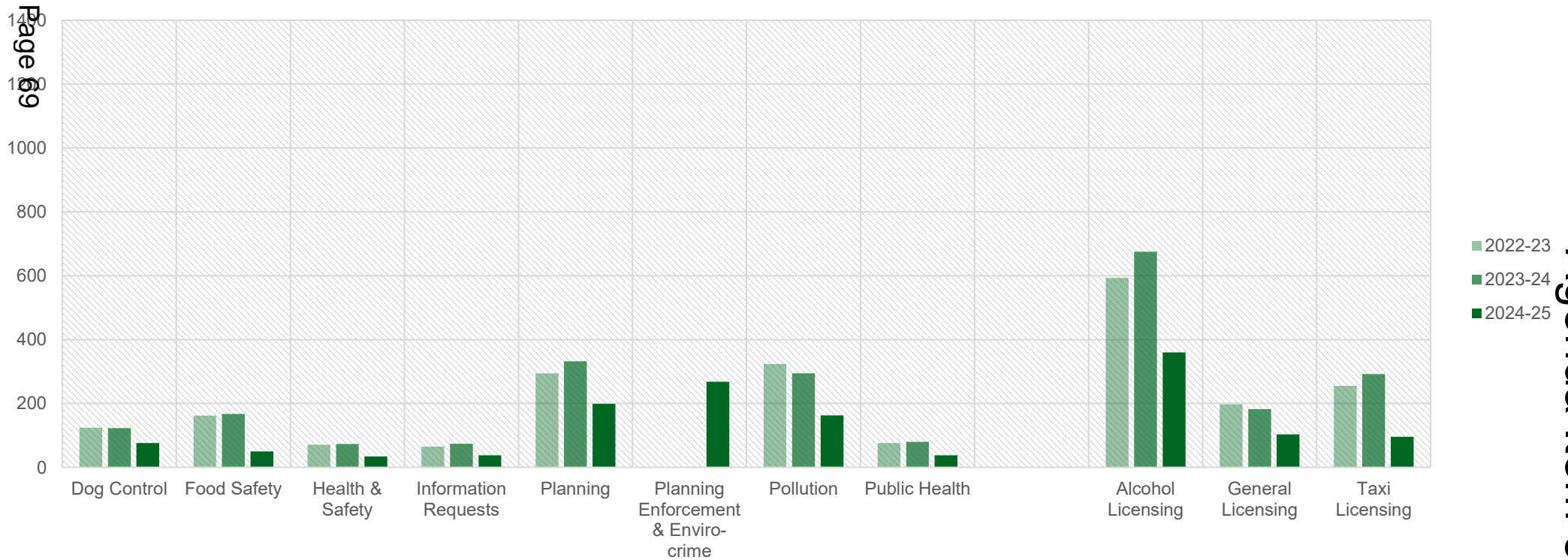
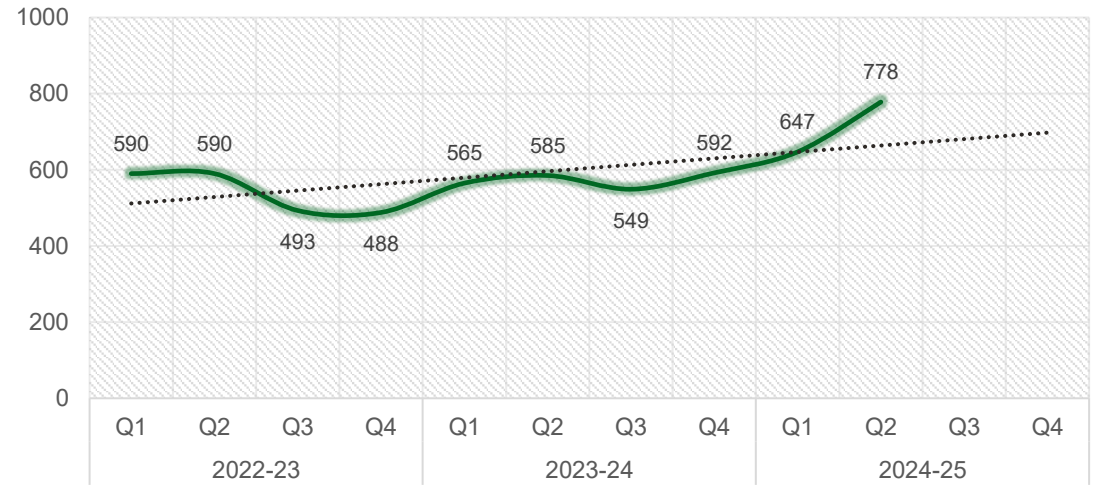
Domestic Subsidised Treatments



The data on this page outlines the number of Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and notificatons) received by WRS where the subject or enquirer were located in the Bromsgrove district.

Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service. The recent increase in cases can be attributed to the additional funcitons (enviro-crime and planning enforcement) now being delivered by the service. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. The Y axis on this chart has also been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Bromsgrove District Council

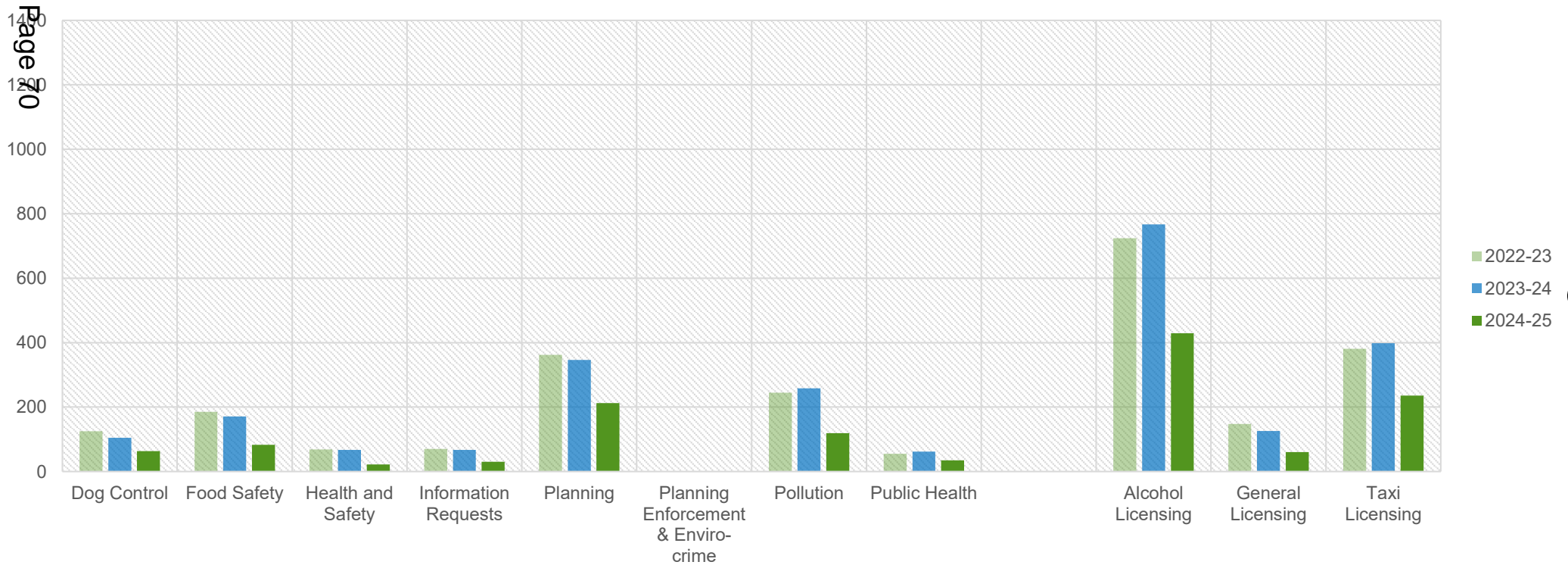
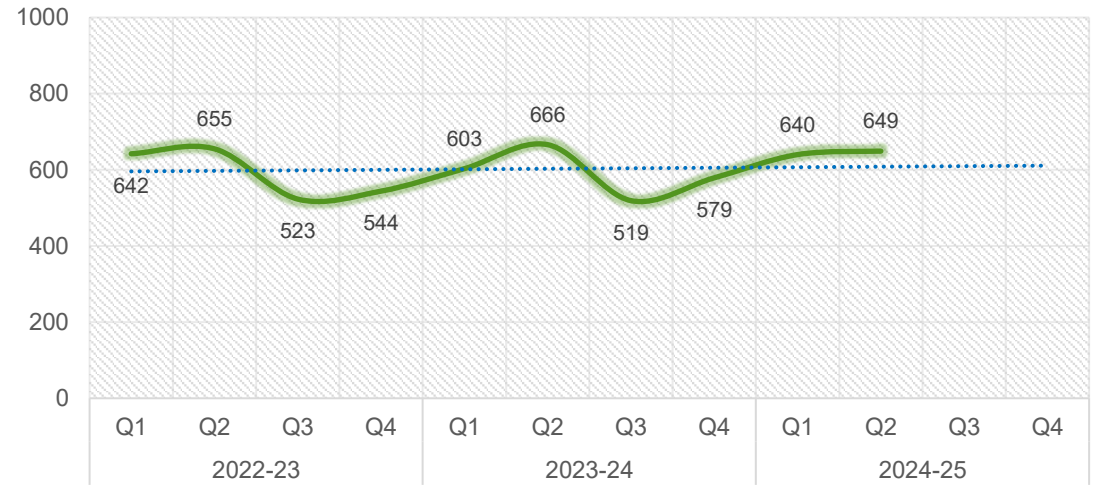


Malvern Hills

The data on this page outlines the number of Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications) received by WRS where the subject or enquirer were located in the Malvern Hills district.

Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. The Y axis on this chart has also been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Malvern Hills District Council

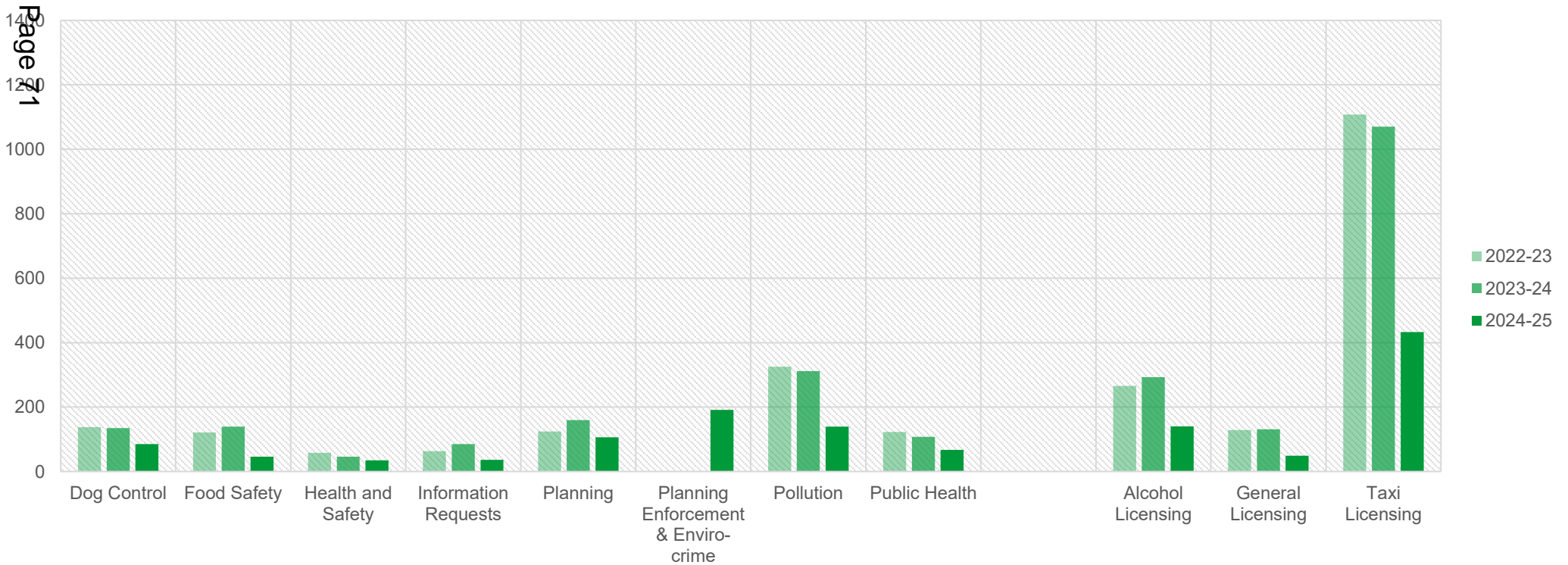
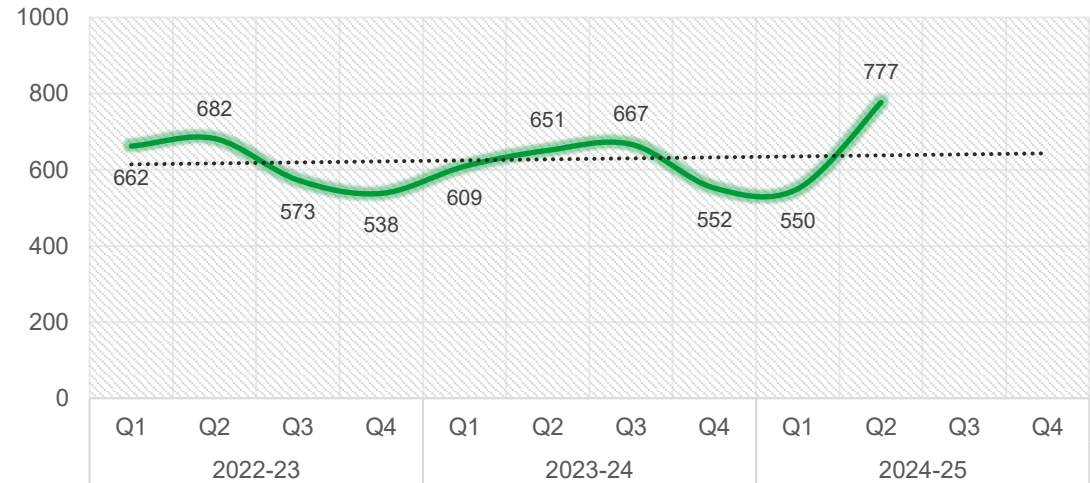


Redditch

The data on this page outlines the number of Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications) received by WRS where the subject or enquirer were located in the Redditch district.

Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service. The recent increase in cases can be attributed to the additional functions (enviro-crime and planning enforcement) now being delivered by the service. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. The Y axis on this chart has also been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Redditch Borough Council

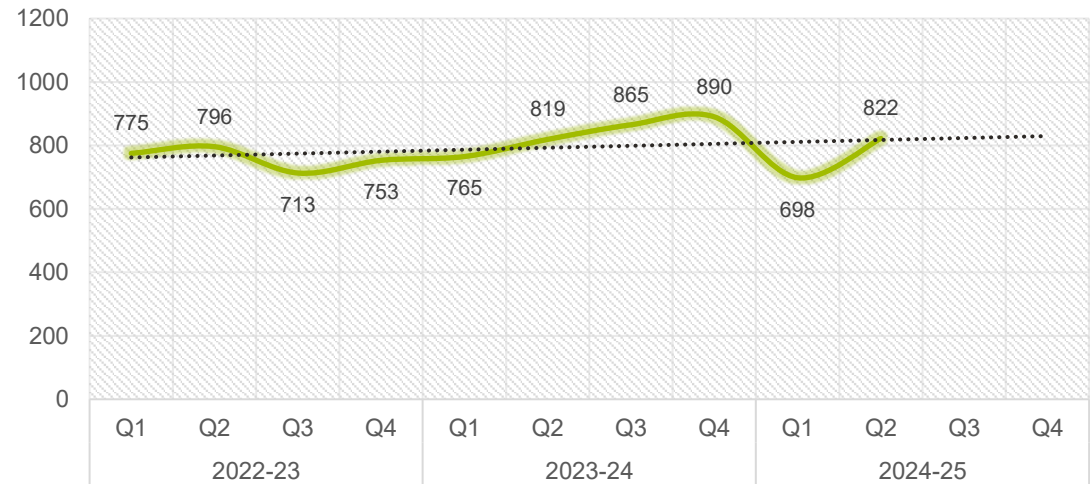


Worcester City

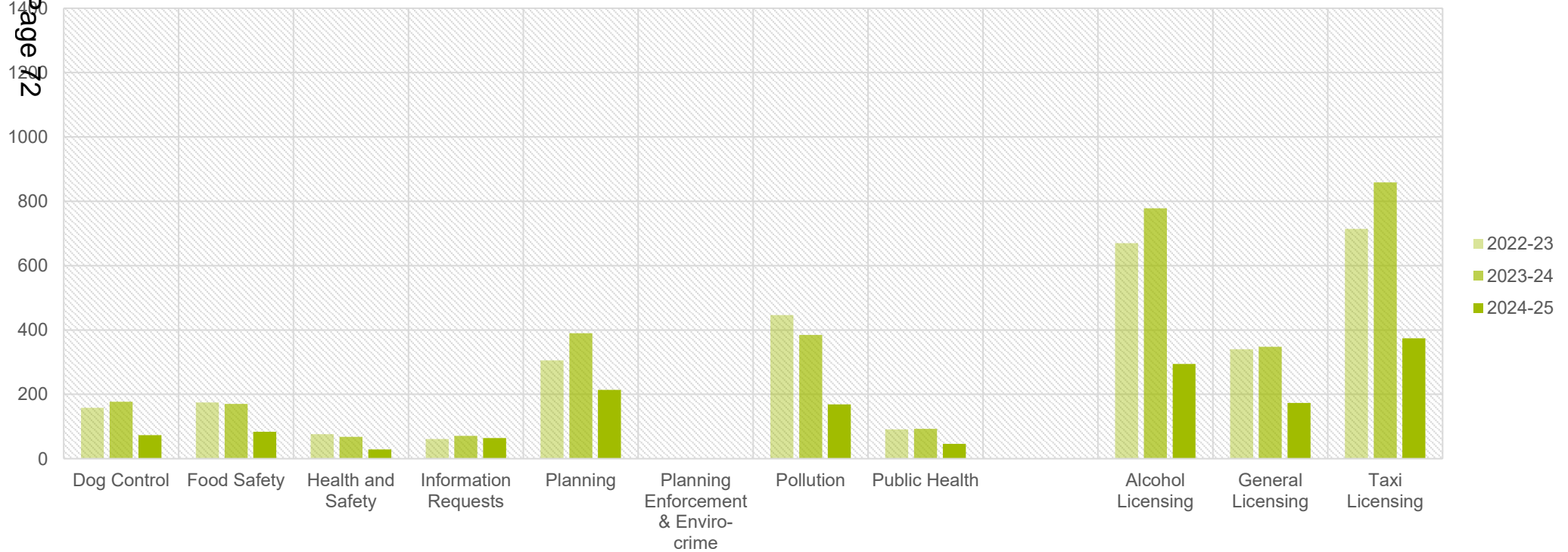
The data on this page outlines the number of Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications) received by WRS where the subject or enquirer were located in the Worcester City district.

Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. The Y axis on this chart has also been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Worcester City Council



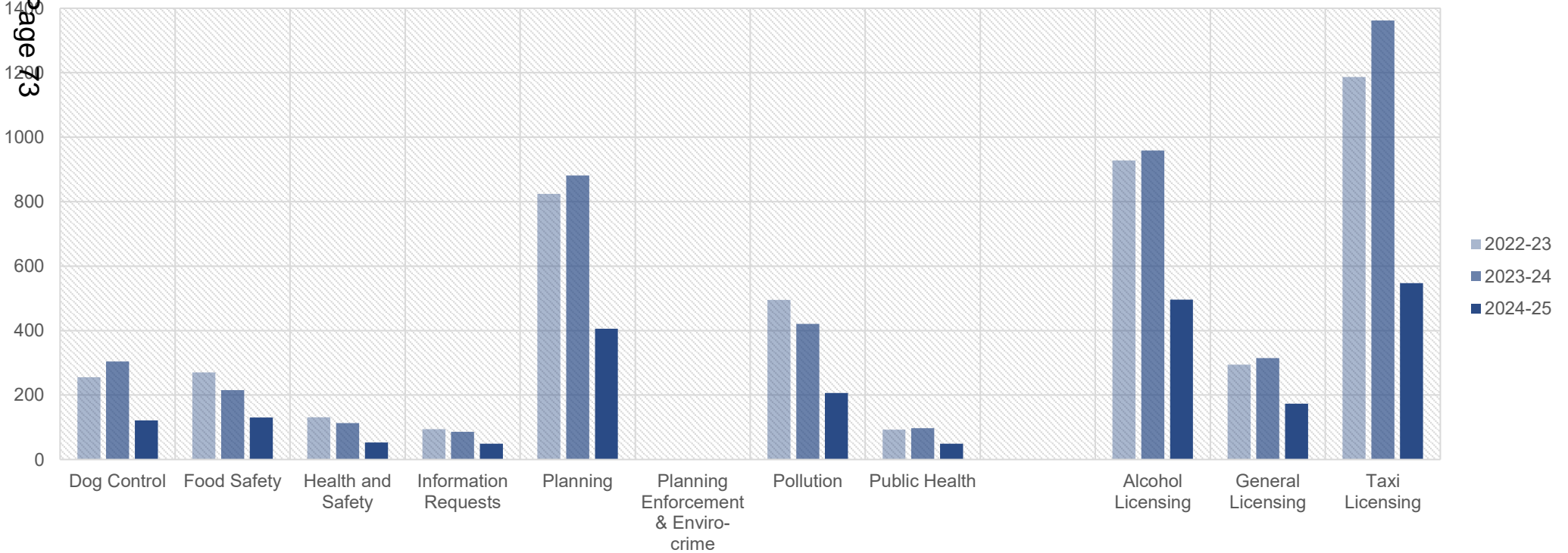
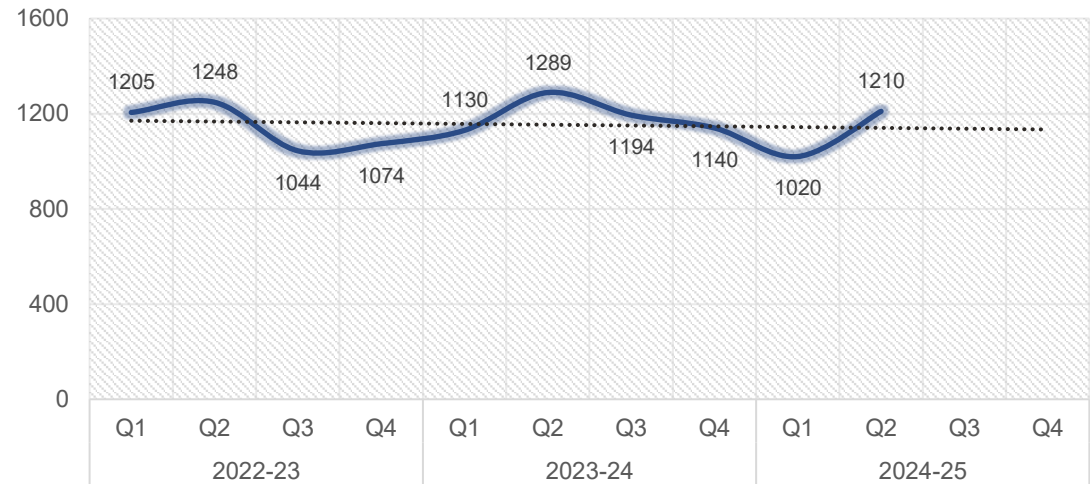
Page 22



The data on this page outlines the number of Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications) received by WRS where the subject or enquirer were located in the Wychavon district.

Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. The Y axis on this chart has also been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Wychavon District Council



Wyre Forest

The data on this page outlines the number of Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications) received by WRS where the subject or enquirer were located in the Wyre Forest district.

Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2025. The Y axis on this chart has also been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Wyre Forest District Council



Page 24

24

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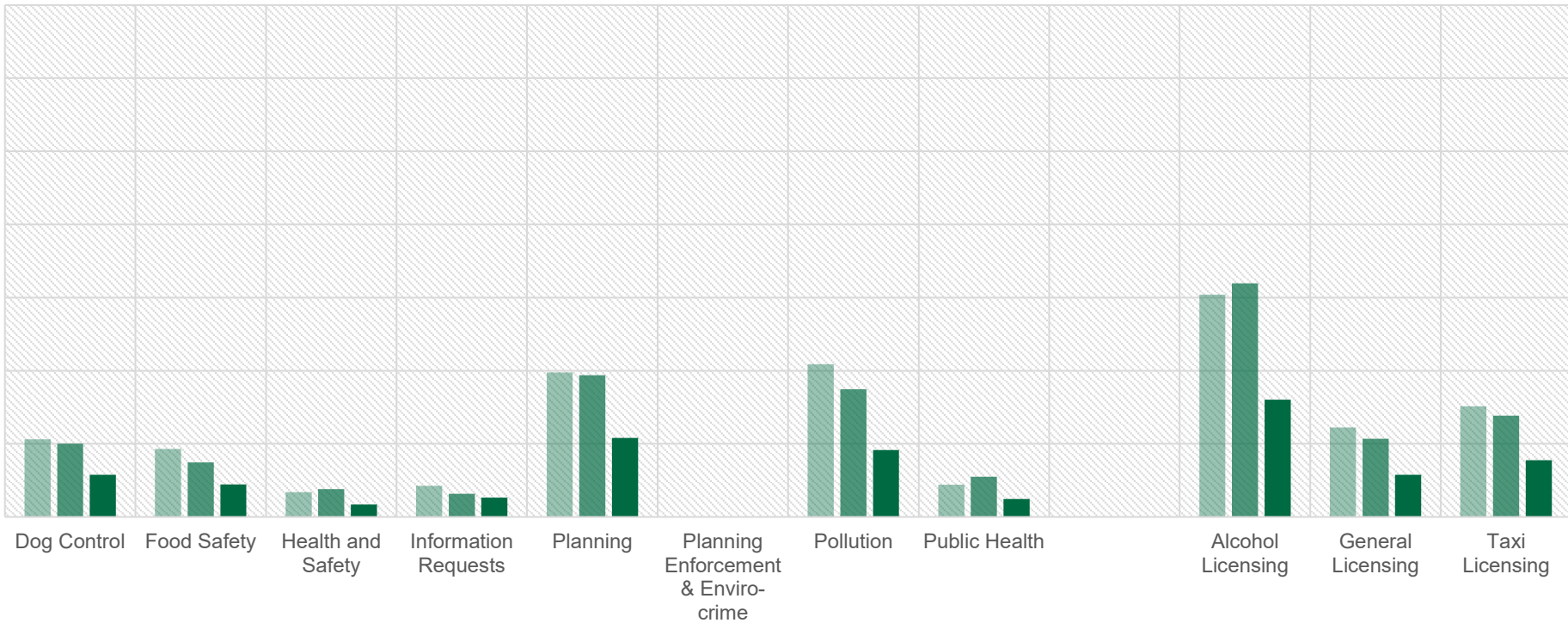
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2022-23
2023-24
2024-25

Agenda Item 6

Birmingham City

The data on this page outlines the number of planning enquiries processed by the service on behalf of Birmingham City Council.

We currently, and historically, have only ever provided services in relation to dog control. We commenced provision of an out of hours stray dog kennelling, reuniting with owners and rehoming of unwanted stray dog service which continued until Q1 2022-23 with finders dropping off dogs out of hours which they had found. Unfortunately we lost the use of the kennels we were primarily using to service this contract and, as a result, changed the contract delivery to include collection of stray dogs. This increased the number of dogs received, kennelled and rehomed, reducing the number of dogs Birmingham City might see as strays in the future. In Q4 2023-24, the out of hours contract arrangements with Birmingham ceased with assistance being provided on an ad hoc basis only until a new contract for kennelling of all Birmingham stray dogs commenced.

The new contract arrangement which started on 1st September this year includes the receipt of stray dogs (deposited by Birmingham City Dog Wardens) to our kennelling facilities, where we facilitate reunification, rehoming or where a banned or dangerous dog, arrange euthanasia. We envisage there to be in excess of 1200 stray dogs a year received through this contract.

Birmingham City Council



Cheltenham

The data on this page outlines the number of dog control cases (reports of lost or stray dogs) handled by the service on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council.

The dog control work undertaken for the authority 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. Having said that, post-pandemic stray dog numbers have been increasing year on year following the issues widely reported about dog socialisation and anxiety since as well as the current cost of living crisis.

Cheltenham Borough Council



Gloucester City

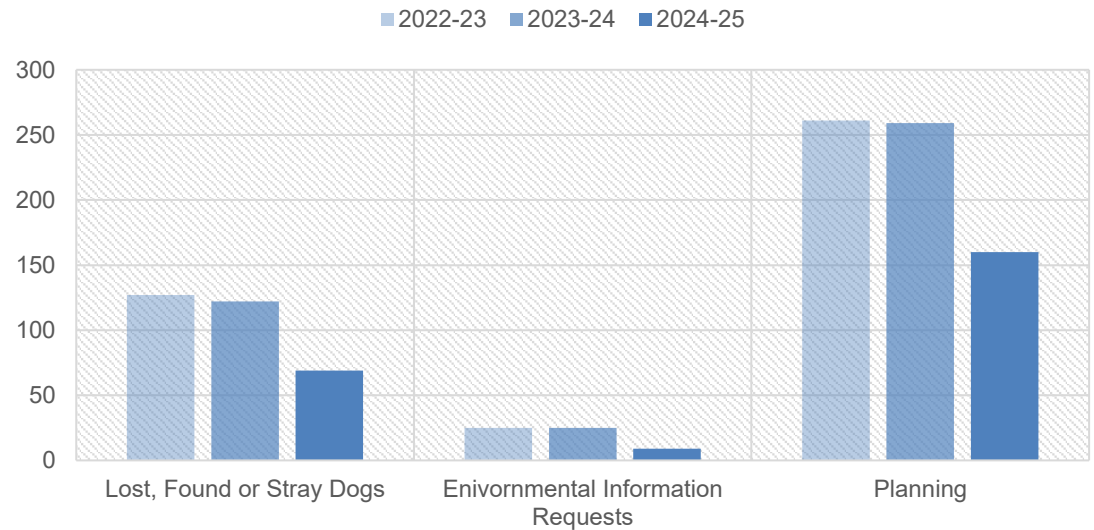
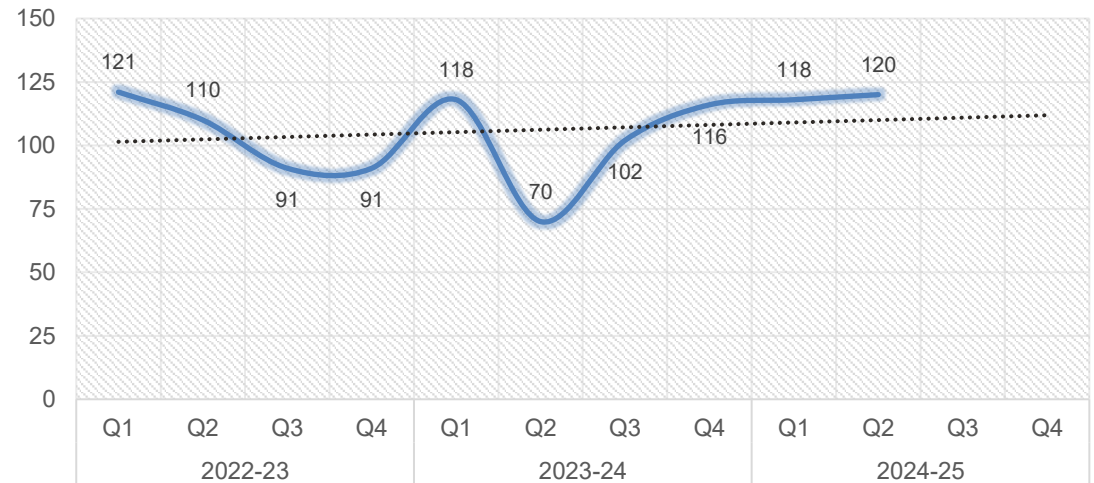
The data on this page outlines the number of dog control cases (reports of lost or stray dogs), environmental information requests, and planning enquiries handled by the service on behalf of Gloucester City Council.

The dog control work undertaken for the authority 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. The numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually, however, this is being closely monitored as the numbers are plateauing and there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays in other areas due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

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

Page 7

Gloucester City Council



Agenda Item 6

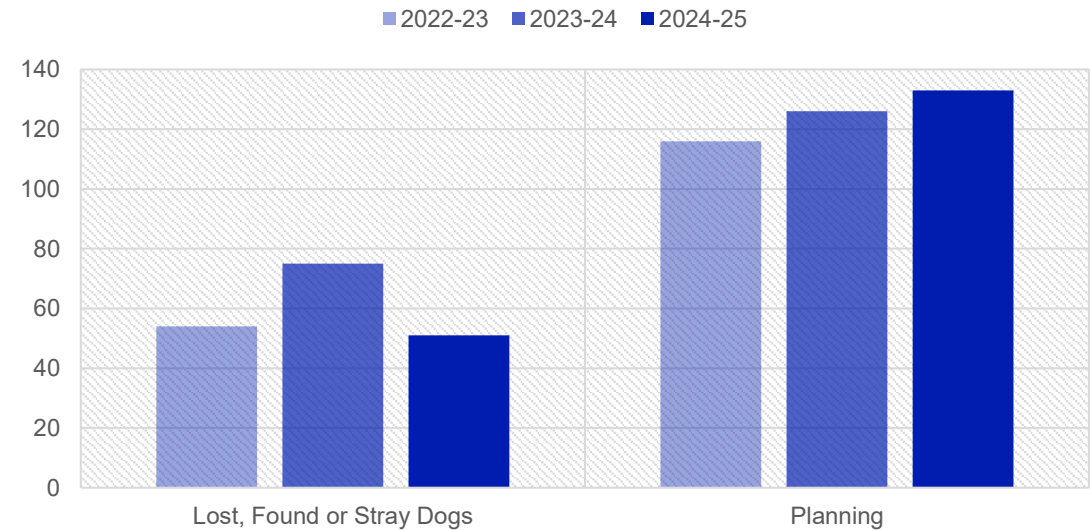
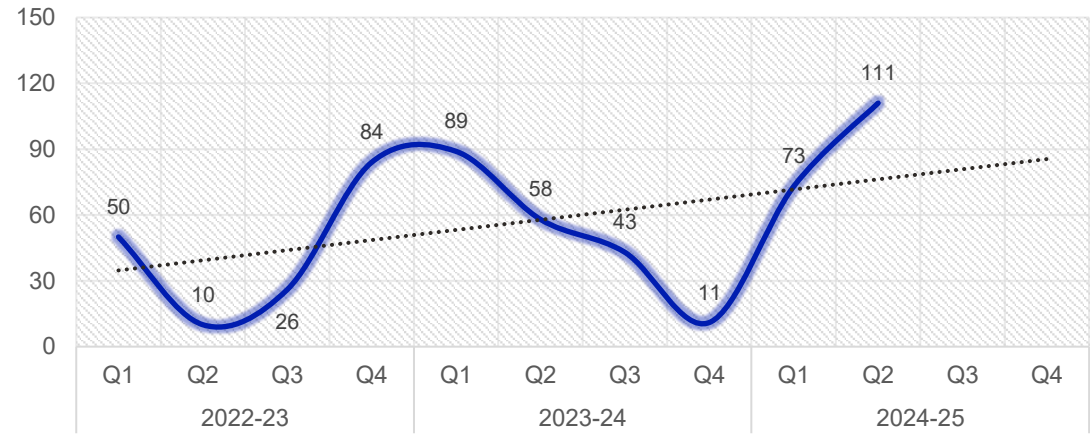
Tewkesbury

The data on this page outlines the number of dog control cases (reports of lost or stray dogs), and planning enquiries handled by the service on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

The dog control work undertaken for the authority is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners, and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays in other areas due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In addition to dog control activity, the service has recommenced the provision of advice to Planning Officers on nuisance and air quality matters, following cessation of the service in Q4 2023-24 following a successful recruitment campaign.

Tewkesbury Borough Council





WRS Board

Date: 21st November 2024

Progress Report on the Automation Project

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

Background | In 2023 at a previous Joint Board meeting members agreed to create a reserve of £150,000 from the previous year's underspend to fund the implementation of automation of data entry for customers. This would enable a range of services across WRS to be addressed by the customer entering data onto forms on the WRS website, which would then upload directly into our IDOX Uniform back-office system. Subsequently this will also include the automation of payments for Licensing, so our host authority Bromsgrove District Council will collect fees for the 6 partners and pass money back to the other 5. Officers agreed to provide a short progress report at each Board meeting between then and the actual implementation of the project.

Report | **Temporary Events Notice (TEN)**

The Temporary Events Notice form went live for 5 of the 6 districts in Worcestershire by close of play on Friday 27th September. Due to a planned internet update Worcester City requested to wait until a week later to launch the form on their website.

Overall, the shift to moving online has been a huge success with very few complicated challenges and as of writing this report we have 82% of forms now coming through this route.

The figures in Table 1 and Table 2 show the number of TENs received as of the 6th November 2024. There have been 249 TENs submitted to WRS in total. 155 were submitted via Victoria Forms (62%). Although there is still limited data based on the number of days the form has been live to see a real trend, the non-Victoria Forms TENs channel of submission seems to have successfully dropped off since the middle of October with a general upturn in Victoria Forms submissions as most now come via that route:

Total numbers by month

| Month | VF Form | Non-VF | Total | Percent VF |
|----------------|---------|--------|-------|------------|
| September 2024 | 18 | 28 | 46 | 39% |
| October 2024 | 93 | 63 | 156 | 60% |



Agenda Item 7

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|---|----|-----|
| November 2024 | 44 | 3 | 47 | 94% |
|---------------|----|---|----|-----|

(NB: September and November have about the same number of days 'live' with VF and almost the same number of TENs submitted. The difference is in how they have been submitted)

Percentage of TENs submitted by VF by month to date, by district

| District | 2024 09 | 2024 10 | 2024 11 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| BDC | 11% | 44% | 60% |
| MHDC | | 68% | 100% |
| RBC | 100% | 71% | 100% |
| WCC | | 48% | 100% |
| WDC | 25% | 69% | 100% |
| WFDC | 100% | 53% | 80% |

The maximum number of Victoria Forms TENs received on any one day is 13, which has now occurred twice. This number was matched only once by non-Victoria Forms routes, that being only three days after launching Victoria Forms. There have been no days with double figures worth of non-Victoria Forms submissions since September.

The team are continuing to monitor the submissions to ensure it is all working correctly but this will slowly be reduced once the second form goes live.

Next Steps

The decision has been taken to launch the personal licence application form next which is slightly different to the original list presented in September at the last meeting so the order of forms launching are now below:

1. Personal Licence Applications
2. Premises Licence Applications
 - Application to vary a premises license
 - Application to vary a DPS
 - Application form to transfer a premises licence
3. Taxi Applications
4. Animal Licensing Applications
5. Pavement Licensing

Progress continues on the 'service request' form where the task and finish group have now developed a series of questions for different scenarios received by all the teams across WRS. It is has been a challenge to scope out by the teams involved as it has required the need to address a very wide range of potential requests relating to the work of all three WRS service areas. It has also required members across WRS teams to get together at various points of the scoping exercise.

Comms and Website Development



Officers continue liaising with the communications leads to ensure district websites are easy to navigate alongside the 'help' guidance and FAQ's. These have been tested with external stakeholders and potential applicants and tweaks have been made where deemed necessary. The team have also been in touch with Victoria Forms regarding accessibility and they have confirmed that Victoria Forms meet the WCAG 2.2 AA standards.

Taxi ID Cards

Alongside the wider automation project, officers have been working with MyTAG to implement the roll out of electronic ID Cards for the taxi trade for both safeguarding and night time enforcement measures. IT colleagues at Wyre Forest have progressed with work on the dashboard and SANDBOX requirement and are now working with SmartTag to enable remote access to the IDOX database. This will allow testing to commence and templates of the Taxi ID cards to be created. As stated at the last meeting the Victoria forms project has taken precedent so work had stalled slightly but officers are now working on what is required to ensure this element of the project can be delivered with in scope and to the required objectives.

Contact Point

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WRS BOARD

Air Quality Behaviour Change Project

Recommendation

That members note the report and actions taken by WRS Staff and assist in enabling positive discussions to improve air quality in Worcestershire

Contribution to Priorities Recommendations

Health and Wellbeing
Environmental Protection

Report

Background

Air pollution has a significant effect on public health, and experts suggest that poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. In 2010, the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee considered that the cost of health impacts of air pollution was likely to exceed estimates of £8 to 20 billion¹. More recently, the West Midlands Combined Authority published its Air Quality Framework Document which states that poor air quality in the WMCA area, contributes to 2900 early deaths and if air pollution was reduced to the WHO Air Quality Guidelines 2021, it would generate economic savings (primarily to the NHS) exceeding £3.2 Billion²

In this context, between 2018 and 2022, staff from Worcestershire Regulatory Services engaged with Public Health at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to mirror work done by other Local Authorities to fund and engage

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution>

² Page 47, <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/ruchg02c/wmca-air-quality-framework-reference-document-awaiting-approval-from-wmca-board.pdf>

behaviour change work. WRS utilised external funding to develop a behaviour change project including funding officer capacity. Worcestershire County Council's Public Health team provided help to establish the baseline of knowledge and appetite for behaviour change in the county, which was used to guide the early development of the project. A behaviour change officer (BCO) was recruited in late February 2024 on a fixed term contract for 2.5 years. The aim of the project was to improve air quality through encouraging sustainable travel initiatives, particularly within schools and local businesses in specific locations. Key aims include reducing short car journeys by encouraging walking and cycling, raising awareness of air quality impacts, and encouraging community partnerships.

The specific target areas for the project include London Road, Worcester and the Lickey End M42 Junction, Bromsgrove. This report sets out the work of the BCO to date and future work plans.

Key Activities and Achievements:

The BCO's work can be classed into 4 workstreams:

1. *Survey Insights*: Collected data through a county wide survey and further follow up surveys, revealing high car usage for short trips and gaps in air quality awareness, guiding future behaviour change efforts.
2. *School Engagement*: Conducted 59 schools visits and work meetings, securing 6 schools committed to air quality projects with activities like workshops and assemblies.
3. *Community Outreach*: Engaged the Breathe Easy Group and care homes, identifying the need for improved air quality awareness and monitoring knowledge.
4. *Promotional Materials*: Developed infographics, surveys, and materials to promote AQ awareness in schools.

More detail on each is provided below.

1. Survey Insights:

Significant data collection has been achieved to gain an understanding of air quality perceptions in Worcestershire using 2 surveys:

WRS Air Quality Behaviour Change Survey (Public Health and WRS Collaboration)

The first was a joint public health and WRS air quality behavioural change survey, carried out to gain baseline data for the project. The survey was conducted over 3-months, between February and May 2024. The survey was promoted online via district council websites and social media along with some paper copies available in community locations. The survey received 1,326 responses, primarily from adults aged 31-60+. The survey gathered insights on awareness of air quality health impacts, sources of pollution, travel habits, and suggested improvements. Key findings include moderate awareness of health impacts, strong concerns over road traffic as a pollution source, but a dominant preference for cars in travel, even on short trips. A summary of this is attached at Appendix 1.

HoW College – WRS AQ Survey

As the main baseline survey failed to gather sufficient from the younger end of the population, those aged between 16 and 30 years old; a new survey was conducted in September and October 2024 with the participation of the HoW College group involving all campuses, in Worcester, Malvern, Bromsgrove and Redditch. This survey was developed in-house and the online survey reached 741 college students and staff, to assess transportation habits, awareness of air quality and barriers to sustainable commuting.

Respondents were mainly aged 16-30, with many living more than four miles from the relevant campus. Findings show a reliance on cars, gaps in understanding of pollution sources, and identified personal and infrastructure barriers to low-emission travel options like walking or cycling. Further details of the results appear in Appendix 2.

Key Information derived from the Surveys:

Several issues and barriers were identified:

- *Awareness Gaps:* Significant gaps remain in public understanding of air quality's health impacts and pollution sources, especially among younger populations (HoW College survey).
- *Primary Pollution Sources:* Both surveys highlight vehicle emissions as a primary source of concern around pollution, with road traffic recognised by 88% in the general survey and 42.7% at HoW College.
- *Reliance on Cars:* A high percentage of participants prefer cars even for short journeys due to convenience, lack of alternatives, or travel distance, with 58% in the general survey and 34% at HoW College.

- *Sustainable Transport*: Key barriers include time constraints, distance to travel, weather, and the need to carry items. Infrastructure concerns, such as limited access to safe cycling or pedestrian routes, further discourage sustainable commuting.

These helped to identify several opportunities for initiatives:

- *Awareness Campaigns*: Using educational materials and social media to target awareness efforts on health impacts and pollution sources, with a focus on younger groups and areas with lower awareness,
- *Promoting Sustainable Transportation*: Encourage walking, cycling, and public transport through programs addressing the identified barriers (e.g., bike-friendly routes, encourage car sharing or bus use,).
- *Community Engagement*: Use data insights to foster partnerships with schools and community groups, emphasising air quality's relevance to health and the environment.
- *Localised Interventions*: Focus on areas with high car usage and help to develop school-based travel plans that aim to reduce reliance on vehicles.

2. School Engagement:

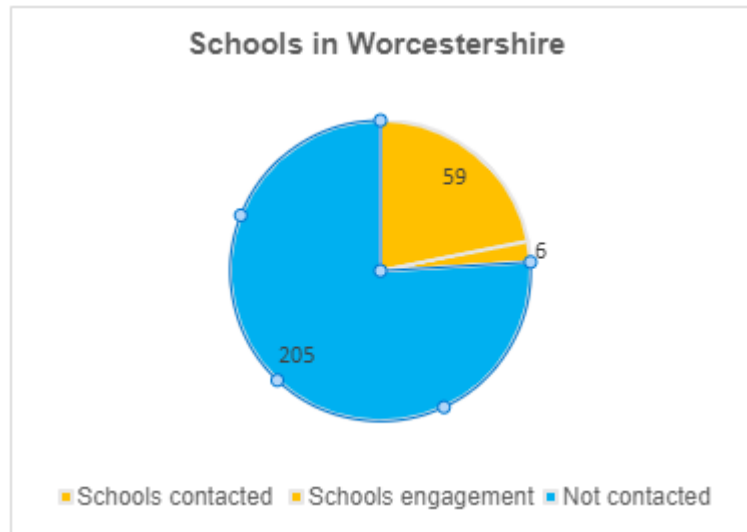
Survey data indicated that some focus was necessary on young people, with schools and colleges as potential venues for promoting air quality awareness. Hence, the BCO prioritised outreach to schools to foster engagement and identify participation opportunities.

A database was created with 264 schools as potential contact points across the County (242 state schools and 22 independent schools.) Between March and June 2024, 49 school visits were conducted, introducing the BCO role and promoting the AQ Worcestershire 2024 initiative.

From July to October 2024, emails were sent to schools to arrange meetings and explore potential air quality projects, resulting in 10 responses and collaborative meetings with schools in Worcester, Bromsgrove, Pershore, and Kidderminster, including the University of Worcester.

Following these efforts, 59 schools were contacted, achieving a significant milestone with six schools - including five schools and Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW)—committing to ongoing behaviour change projects and activities such as workshops and assemblies. Details of these appear in table to Appendix 3 – Table 3, and in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1. School Engagement 2024



While there has been successful participation from some schools, many have noted limited capacity to engage due to competing educational and financial priorities. This limitation has restricted the visibility and reach of our activities, especially in schools that have yet to participate.

To help address this, three targeted surveys are planned to reach parents, staff, and primary school children to further engage and encourage school involvement using the following strategies:

- (i) *Targeted Support for Schools Near Air Quality Monitors:* Given the BCO's focus on critical road and street areas in Worcester and Bromsgrove, providing additional resources and attention to schools close to air quality monitors in each of the six districts would make behaviour change impacts more tangible. Schools could use localised data to show students and staff how travel habits directly affect air quality, with real-time data sessions enhancing awareness and engagement.
- (ii) *Flexible, Tiered Participation Programs:* Offering flexible engagement levels (low, medium, high) allows schools with limited resources or time to participate in basic sustainable transportation activities. Observations from school visits suggest that most schools have bike parking, student commuting data, and access to some transportation options. Leadership and staff are also generally open to sharing air quality information with

parents, though few schools have a School Travel Plan (STP) in place. A tiered offering allows schools to select a participation level that fits their capacity and gradually increase their involvement should they be able and want to.

(iii) *Incentives for Participation:* Schools could be encouraged to join cost-free behaviour change initiatives through incentives like eco-certificates, and awards such as “Air Quality Ambassador” or “Air Quality Champion” for those making measurable progress. Supporting recognition for schools could improve their local media profile and help demonstrate their value to the community they serve. Whilst some of this may be done within current resource, building this into a larger scale initiative would require more and sustainable funding, which the service does not have at this stage.

To achieve these goals, successful partnerships will be essential including with Public Health, County Highways and Transport colleagues from the County Council, as well as colleagues in the District Councils. Community stakeholders, including members and potentially businesses too will also be important. Together, these efforts aim to boost participation and elevate air quality as a priority within the educational community.

3. Community Engagement

The BCO also established key partnerships with community groups, including Breathe Easy in Redditch and local care homes along London Road in Worcester. This has helped reveal gaps in community awareness regarding air quality issues and emphasised the need for targeted monitoring and education.

The BCO also participated in five high-profile events including SustFest, Clean Air Day, and Freshers Fayres, providing direct engagement with hundreds of residents. These events offered valuable opportunities to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change, which highlighted opportunities to enhance the reach of our initiatives, significantly increasing the potential for public engagement and impact e.g., expanding our digital presence through a more robust website or interactive portal, linked to EarthSense, would enable real-time access to air quality data for community groups and schools. For further details see tables 4 and 5 in appendix 3.

4 Promotional Materials

The BCO has or is developing infographics, surveys, and materials to promote AQ awareness in schools. Examples of this appear at appendix 4:

“Air Quality in Worcestershire”: Infographic providing an overview of the public health situation and its relationship to Air Quality

HoW College – WRS AQ Survey: Leaflet designed to collect information from staff and students' at HoW

5 Future Work

With funding until approximately September 2026, the BCO's work programme is expected to continue, broadly along the following lines:

- 0-6 Months: Building awareness of air quality issues, especially through expanded partnerships, school engagement and other small events. Completion of a communication plan with Communication Officers in the Districts and beyond will aid messaging and promotion.
- 6-12 Months: Once 12 months of real time monitoring data becomes available, the BCO, linked to both developmental project work with the Technical Pollution Team will look to incentivise participation of the real-time AQ data (EarthSense), broaden community involvement and understanding.
- 12+ Months: Expand partnerships, seek infrastructure improvements, conduct annual impact reviews.

Further details appear in the Action Plan at Appendix 5.

No future funding options for continuing this work have been identified currently, with the removal of DEFRA's Local Authority Air Quality Grant programme taking away the most obvious access point to resources.

Contact Points

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Heydi Horton, Air Quality Behaviour Change Technical Officer, Heydi.Horton@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

Appendix 1 -Summary Report – Public Health – WRS AQ Survey (Feb-May 2024)

Appendix 2 - Summary Report – HoW College – WRS AQ Survey (Sept-Oct 2024)

Appendix 3 -Summary of visits/contacts with schools / community groups

- Table 1 – Visits were made to school's March to June 2024
- Table 2 – List of school's respondents July to October 2024
- Table 3 – List of schools identified for behaviour change activities.
- Table 4 – Visits to Community and Care Sector Organisations
- Table 5 – Participation in events

Appendix 4 - Material to promote information and collect data for behaviour change work

Appendix 5 - Action Plan

Appendix 1 - Summary Report – WRS/ Public Health – Baseline Survey (Feb-May 2024)

Air Quality Survey Data Report

June 2024

Introduction

Air quality has improved in England over recent decades. However, it continues to be the biggest environmental risk to public health.

Children, the elderly and those with pre-existing heart and lung health conditions, being most affected.

It shortens lives and contributes to chronic illness. Health can be affected both by short-term, high-pollution episodes and by long-term exposure to lower levels of pollution.

Survey Aims

We wanted to better understand the views and experiences relating to air quality for the people who live and work in Worcestershire.

We asked people to complete a questionnaire to share their perceptions, behaviours, concerns and suggestions for improving air quality.

The survey was launched on the 09.02.24 and was closed on 17.04.24. Overall, there were 1326 respondents.

Survey Respondents:

Demographics

50% respondents identified as female, 46% male.

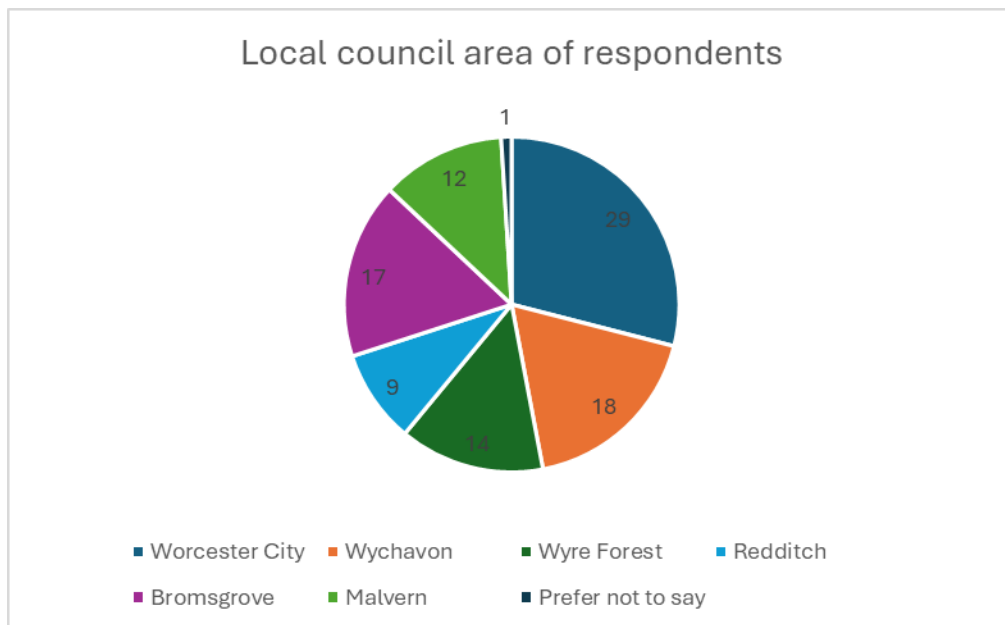
50% respondents were 31-60 years.

46% respondents were 61+ years.

36% respondents were not currently, or no longer working.

91% respondents were of White/ British/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Irish origin.

Area of residency



Health

75% of respondents told us they **do not** have a health condition that may be affected by poor air quality.

83% of respondents said they don't have any physical restrictions that prevent or make walking difficult.

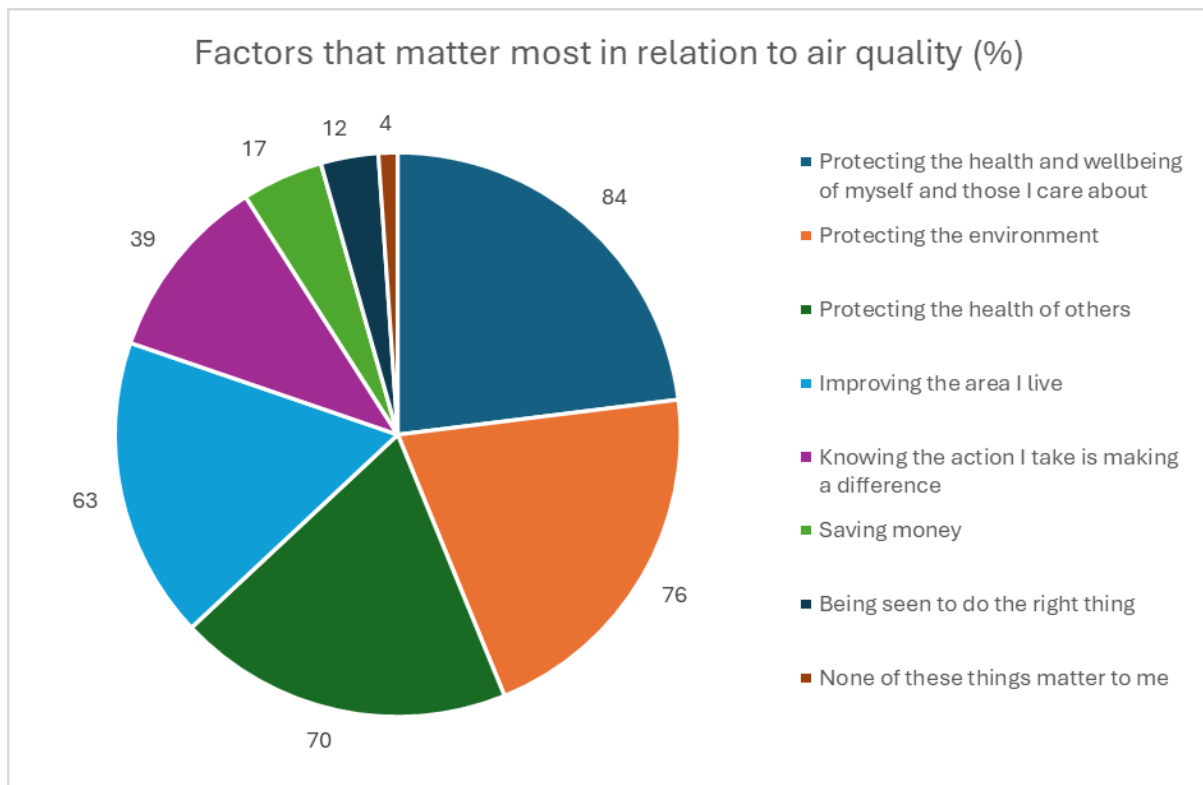
78% said they don't have any physical restrictions that prevent or make it difficult to cycle.

90% said they don't have any physical restrictions that prevent or make it difficult to use public transport.

94% said they don't have any physical restrictions that prevent or make it difficult to drive.

What's important to you

Protecting the health of themselves and others, protecting the environment and improving the area in which respondents live mattered most to people in relation to air quality.



Air Quality Awareness

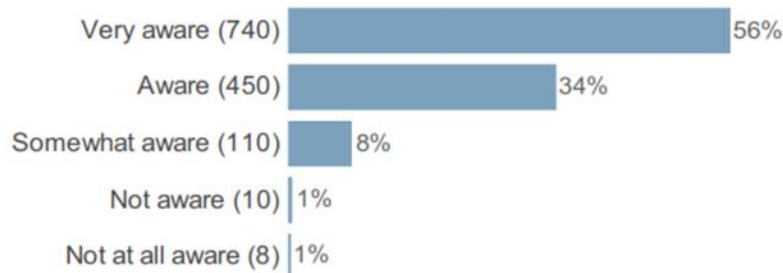
43% of respondents told us they were only slightly or moderately aware of the impact of air quality on their health or the health of others.

41% of respondents told us they were either extremely concerned or very concerned about the air quality where they live.

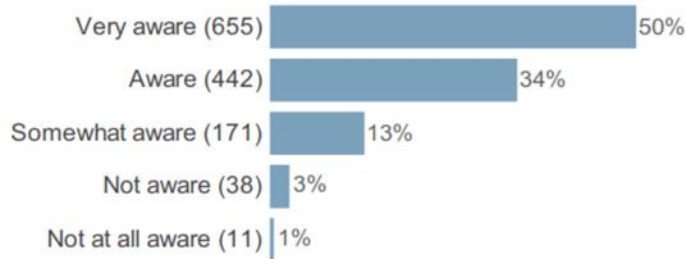
Over a third (34%) of respondents told us they were either extremely concerned or very concerned about the air quality where they work.

We asked about air quality awareness and health on the following statements. You answered;

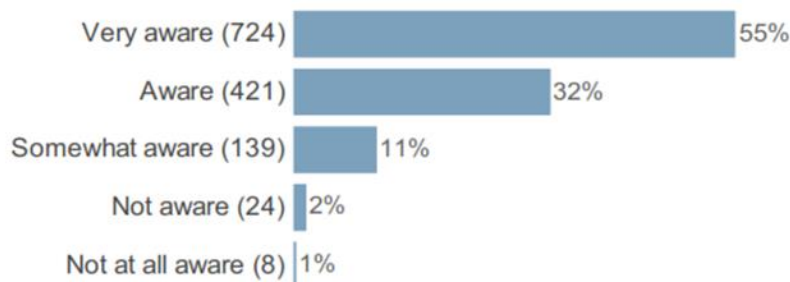
Air pollution affects everyone of all ages but the most vulnerable in the community including children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with heart and lung problems are most at risk.



When we breathe polluted air, small pollution particles can enter through our lungs into the blood stream and can reach the brain and other organs.

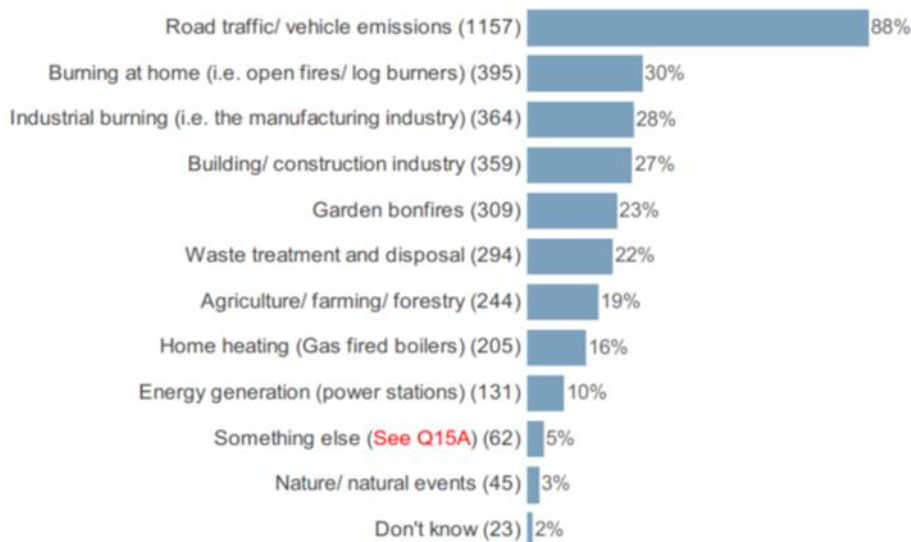


Serious health problems such as asthma, stroke, heart disease, dementia and lung cancer can be linked to the exposure to air pollution.



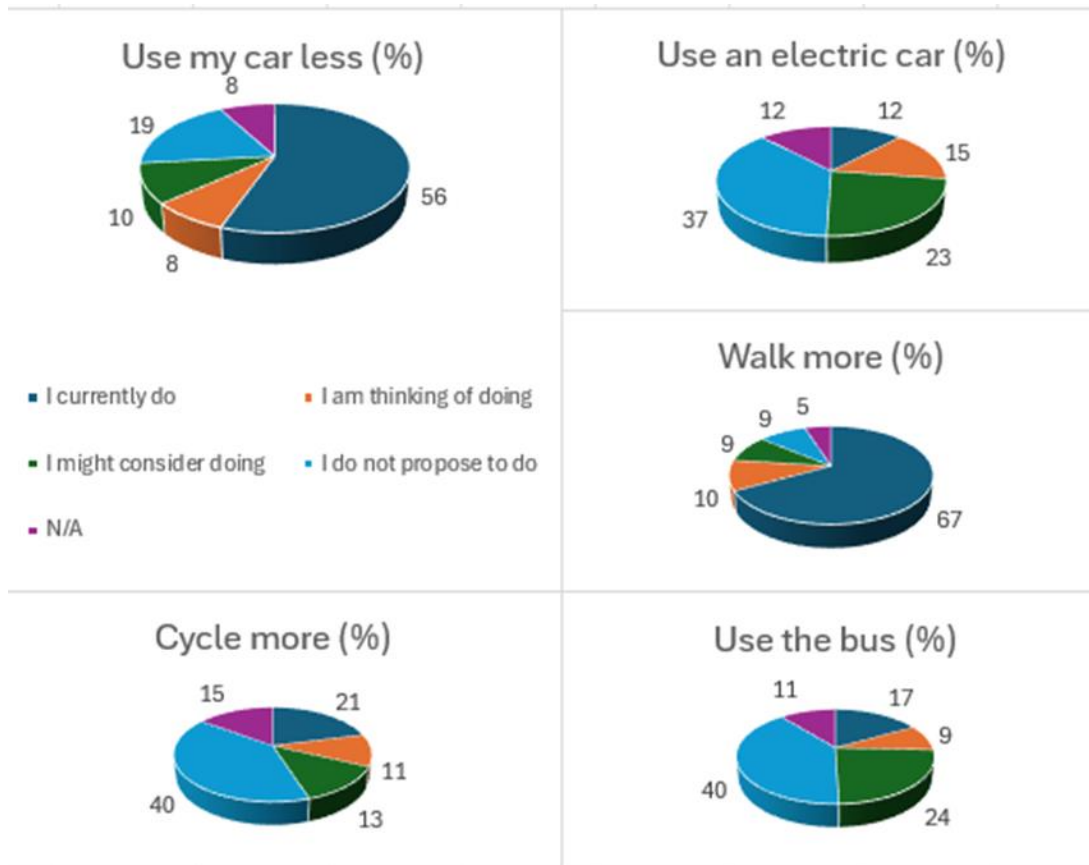
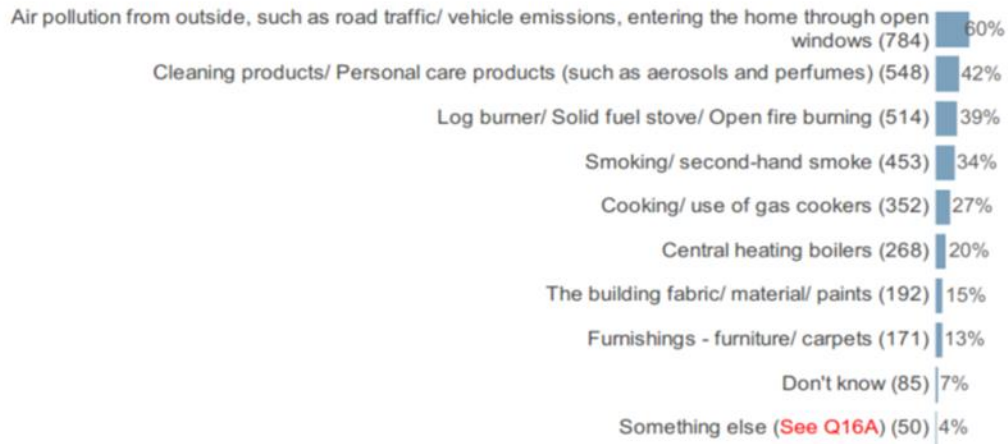
Knowledge regarding air quality

88% of respondents told us they considered **road traffic/ vehicle emissions** to be the main source of outdoor air pollution and **almost 1/3 (30%)** of people told us it was **burning at home** (open fires/ log burners). This was followed by industrial burning (28%), building/ construction industry (27%), garden bonfires (23%), and waste treatment and disposal (22%). See below.



60% of participants told us the main source of indoor air pollution was from outside, such as road traffic/ vehicle emissions, entering the home, this was followed by cleaning products (42%) and log/solid fuel burning (39%).

Agenda Item 8

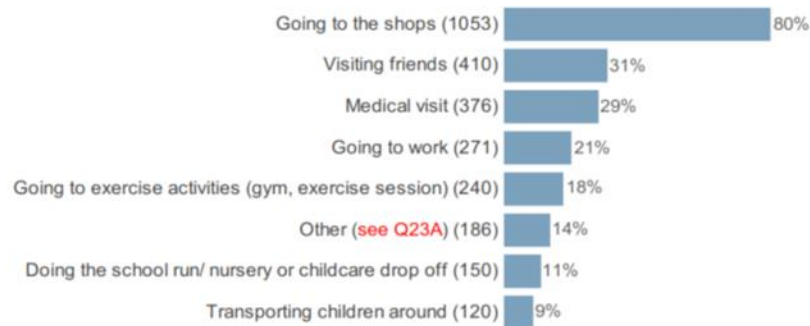
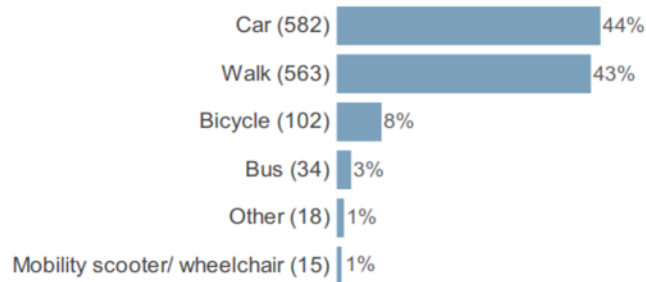


Travel Habits

Over half of all respondents (54%) travelled 4 miles or less to their usual place of work.

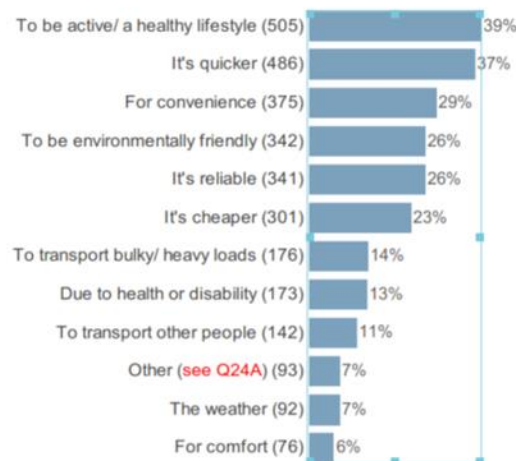
58% of people usually use the car to get to work.

Agenda Item 8



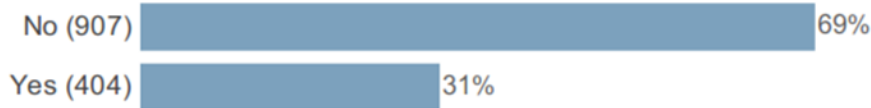
Some participants selected 'other' for Q23 when there were existing options available, so therefore should be included in the statistics above

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Going to the shops – 4 | 4. Going to work – 1 |
| 2. Visiting friends – 5 | 5. Going to exercise activities (gym, exercise session) – 1 |
| 3. Medical visits – 3 | 6. School run - 3 |



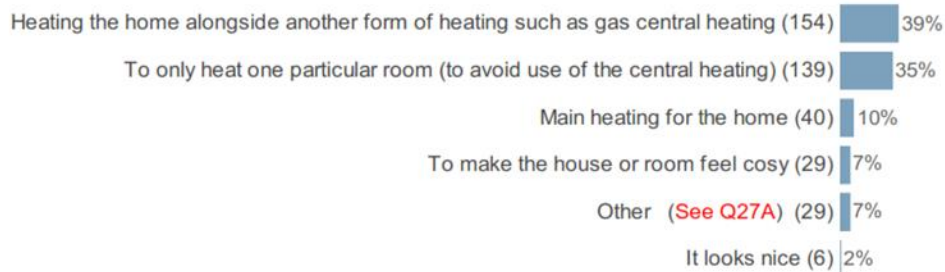
Some participants selected 'other' for Q24 when there were existing options available, so therefore should be included in the statistics above

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. It's quicker – 3 | 6. To transport bulky/heavy loads – 3 |
| 2. For convenience – 4 | 7. Due to health or disability – 5 |
| 3. To be environmentally friendly – 2 | 8. To transport other people – 3 |
| 4. It's reliable – 1 | 9. The weather - 2 |
| 5. It's cheaper - 4 | |



What do you mainly use this for (Q27)?

39% of people used their log burner/ open fire alongside another form of heating, 35% used it to heat one particular room in the home.



Some participants selected 'other' for Q27 when there were existing options available, so therefore should be included in the statistics above

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Heating the home with another heating system – 19 | 4. To make house/room cosy – 1 |
| 2. To heat one particular room – 2 | 5. It looks nice - 3 |
| 3. Main heating for the home – 2 | |

Themes that were identified from this question from a public health and behaviour change perspective were:

1. Participants spoke about idling particular around school pick-ups and delivery drivers/taxis.

“Air pollution is not really a problem here however near school people wait for children with their engines running, perhaps some signs to help educate people about the impact on neighbourhoods”

“There needs to be more effort to stop the very many delivery drivers idling their engines whilst delivering goods from Amazon (must be thousands per week) and other delivery companies”

“Education and stop drivers from running their engines, as they don't seem to understand that it's not only affecting the environment but also them sitting in their cars. Once you can stop this then you are on your way to better air”

2. Improve opportunities and encourage active travel across Worcestershire

“Look at encouraging more ppl to use public transport or walk and not use their cars. There is a real culture in Worcester of people using their cars for everything even very short journeys”

“Encouraging active travel (walking and cycling) would reduce air pollution dramatically”

“Only active travel can work; it reduces cars AND makes car journeys quicker AND improves the health and wellbeing of those who are able to do it. Consider long term side benefits for health and social care budgets. Active travel is sociable. Car travel is isolating”

3. Participants spoke about how they worry about air quality.

“I have lived in this area for over 40 years and have seen the gradual deterioration of the quality of life here vastly change to the level it is now through the car fumes and congestion because of the build-up of traffic”

through the town and also the introduction of building work being carried on this area adding to the unacceptable level of pollution that we now have to endure”

“I have had a baby recently and the midwife did a breath test on me. It came back with high carbon monoxide levels which worried me. I went and purchased a carbon monoxide monitor for the home in case an appliance was leaking but it’s never picked anything up. The midwife said it could be due to poor air quality in the area where I live”

“My main concern is the quality of the air that I am exposed to on my walk”

4. Campaign information about air quality and support available

- Educate via campaigns about the dangers to health from idling.

“Education and stop drivers from running their engines, as they don’t seem to understand that it’s not only affecting the environment but also them sitting in their cars. Once you can stop this then you are on your way to better air”

“Campaigns to make drivers aware about pollution and fumes from sitting with engines running. We live near a school and parents and taxis sit along our road with engines on. Their children will be breathing in all those fumes”

“Could there be a campaign to stop people leaving cars running whilst waiting for kids to come out of school or more walking buses”

- Raise awareness of how air quality can affect your health.

“Poor air quality is one of the 12 risk factors for developing dementia. If more people were aware of this, they may take the problem more seriously”

“Get Parish, District and County Councils and schools involved in campaigns to raise awareness and improve air quality. Just like the biodiversity policy that all councils have had to include in their policies, have a clean air policy”

- “Educational awareness around the use of indoor air pollutants needs to be share”

- Participants want to know where they can go to find out more information about air quality.

“I don’t have any information on what air quality should be to avoid illness etc and have no idea what the air quality is in Harvington. Where can I find out?”

“I think log burners have become very trendy and people don’t know that they are a health risk, there isn’t enough information out there about this and it’s hard to convince people it is dangerous. I don’t think people understand what they are breathing in and how dangerous it is”

“I live close to M5 motorway and would like to know pollution levels in my garden”

- Support and grants for residents to insulate home and change heating

“Grants need to be made available to help those residents who cannot afford to insulate their homes to do so. If all residents had better insulated homes the impact would be considerable”

“Better information on home insulation and grants. Education”

“Subsidise low emission heating systems. Subsidise solar for homes. Offer free advice and guidance on reducing pollution in and around your home and to businesses”

Summary Points


- Protecting the health of themselves, the health of others, the local environment and improving the local area mattered most to people regarding air quality
- 88% of respondents told us they considered road traffic/ vehicle emissions to be the main source of outdoor air pollution and 60% gave the same reason for indoor air pollution.

- Over half of all respondents (54%) travelled 4 miles or less to their usual place of work.
- 58% of people usually use the car to get to work
- 80% of people said their short journeys were to go to the shops
- 43% of people are slightly aware/ moderately aware of the impact of air quality
- 31% of respondents had a log burner. 39% of people used their log burner/ open fire alongside another form of heating, 35% used it to heat one particular room in the home.

Opportunities

- Raise awareness of air quality and the impact it has on the health of individuals and the environment
- Promote active travel modes of transport to improve air quality alongside the health benefits, especially for short journeys
- Raise awareness of the impact of idling vehicles
- Raise awareness of sources of air quality information and the action individuals can take to help improve it
- Raise awareness and promote the support available for home improvement and sustainability measures

Appendix 2 - Summary Report – HoW College – WRS AQ Survey (Sept-Oct 2024)



Air Quality Survey

HoW College

Collect information on students' and all staff Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW) transportation habits on their way to college and how these habits relate to Air Quality. The survey was conducted between September 17th and October 20th, 2024

Key Findings Summary

1 Demographics
741 responses.

49.7% (368) were male, 48% (356) were female, and 2,3% (17) preferred not to disclose their gender.

Over 80% of the respondents were between 16-30 years old (607), followed by 31-45 years (61), and 46-60 years (49).

2 Travel Habits

A significant portion of respondents (50.8%) live more than 4 miles from the college, and the main transport Methods:

Car: 252 respondents use cars as their primary mode of transport, which makes it the most common form of transport and bus: 201 respondents.

Only 17% (130) walk, while only 2.6% (20) use bicycles and 99 use trains. Just 17.6% (131) respondents used travel.

3 Perception of Air Pollution

The main source of air pollution identified by 42.7 % (317) respondents was vehicle emissions, followed by 36% (267) industrial burning and burning at home and garden fires were less significant. However, 13% indicated that they did not know the main sources of air pollution.

34% of the respondents expressed concern for the health and wellbeing of their family and 32% of them for the environment. A small group (8%) stated that none of these air quality issues mattered to them.

741 responses (almost similar % male and female)

50.8 % live more than 4 miles from the college


252 respondents travel by car

17% Walk

2.6% cycle

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Key Findings Summary

4 Health Concern

Protecting family health (34.9%) and the environment (32.2%) were the top motivations for respondents concerned about air quality, reflecting a sense of social responsibility among the participants. A small group (8.5%) stated that none of these air quality issues mattered to them.



34.9% responded that they are concerned about family health



32.2 % concerned for the environment.



8.5% none of these air quality issues mattered to them

5 Willingness to Change

While many already walk for short journeys (64.3%) with 8.2% considering doing so in the future. Only 14.3% currently cycle for short journeys, with over a third (34.3%) stating they do not intend to.

40.5% of respondents currently use the bus, and 33.9% use trains. However, a significant percentage do not propose switching to public transport in the future (around 24-25%).



64.3% consider walking



14.3% want to go by bike



40.5% use the bus, and 33.9% use trains (but over 20% do not propose use to public transport in the future)



70% lack of time



64% long distance to College



58% weather condition



37.7% carry things

6 Barriers to Walking

The main reasons for not walking more include lack of time (70%), weather conditions (58%), distance to college (64%) and 37.7% carry things which makes walking less feasible. Only 14% of respondents reported having physical restrictions.

These barriers suggest that structural issues, like transportation infrastructure and climate, significantly impact behaviour .



Appendix 3 - Table 1 – Visits were made to schools in Worcestershire March to June 2024

| N. | School Name/Town | Visit Date mm/dd/aa | N. | School Name/Town | Visit Date mm/dd/aa |
|----|--|------------------------|----|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College/ Worcester | 3/22/24 | 26 | Perryfields Primary Pupil Referral Unit/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 2 | Abbeywood First School/ Redditch | 4/18/24 | 27 | Pitmaston Primary School/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 3 | Aston Fields Middle School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 | 28 | Red Hill CE Primary School/ Worcester | 3/22/24 |
| 4 | Battenhall Nursery/ Worcester | 4/24/24 | 29 | Regency High School/ Worcester | 5/2/24 |
| 5 | Bishop Perowne CofE College/ Worcester | 4/24/24 | 30 | Rigby Hall Day Special School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 |
| 6 | Bromsgrove School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 | 31 | Riversides School/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 7 | Busy Bees in Worcester/ Worcester | 5/2/24 | 32 | Royal Grammar School Worcester/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 8 | Christopher Whitehead Language College and Sixth Form/ Worcester | 4/24/24 | 33 | Shooting Stars nursery's/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 9 | Christopher Whitehead Language College/ Worcester | 4/24/24 | 34 | South Bromsgrove High/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 |
| 10 | Church Hill Middle School/ Redditch/ Redditch | 4/18/24 | 35 | Springfield RGS/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 11 | Finstall First School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 | 36 | St Barnabas C Of E Primary School/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 12 | Fort Royal Community Primary School / Worcester | 3/22/24 | 37 | St George's C of E Primary School/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 13 | Heart of Worcestershire College/ Redditch | 4/18/24 | 38 | St George's Catholic Primary School/ Worcester | 4/24/24 |
| 14 | Holly Trees Children's Centre/ Redditch | 4/18/24 | 39 | St John's Church of England Middle School Academy/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 |
| 15 | Hollymount School/ Worcester | 5/5/24 | 40 | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School/ Worcester | 5/2/24 |
| 16 | Millfields First School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 | 41 | St Peter's Catholic First School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 |
| 17 | Moon's Moat First School & Nursery/ Redditch | 4/18/24 | 42 | St Stephen's CE First School/ Redditch/ Redditch | 4/18/24 |
| 18 | Newbridge School/ Worcester | 3/22/24 | 43 | Stanley Road Primary School/ Worcester | 3/22/24 |
| 19 | North Bromsgrove High School/ Bromsgrove | 5/1/24 | 44 | The Forge Secondary Short Stay School/ Redditch | 4/18/24 |
| 20 | Northwick Manor Primary School/ Worcester | 5/7/24 | 45 | The King's School/ Worcester | 5/7/24 |
| 21 | Nunnery Wood High School/ Worcester | 3/22/24 6/12/24 | 46 | The River School/ Worcester | 5/7/24 |
| 22 | Nunnery Wood Primary School/ Worcester | 5/7/24 6/12/24 | 47 | Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre/ Redditch | 4/18/24 |
| 23 | Oasis Academy Warndon/ Worcester/ Worcester | 5/2/24 | 48 | Tudor Grange Academy Worcester/ Worcester | 5/7/24 |
| 24 | Oldbury Park Primary School/ Worcester | 5/7/24 | 49 | Tudor Grange Primary Academy Worcester/ Worcester | 5/7/24 |
| 25 | Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic/ Worcester | 4/24/24 | | | |

Appendix 3 - Table 2 – List of schools contacted July to October 2024

| N0. | School/Town | Meeting Date mm/dd/aa |
|------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Blessed Edward Oldcome Catholic College (Worcester) | 9/11/24 |
| 2 | Hanley Castle High School (Worcester) | 10/14/24 |
| 3 | Heart of Worcestershire College | 7/18/24 8/7/24 |
| 4 | Holy Redeemer Catholic Primary School (Pershore) | 9/26/24 |
| 5 | Meadow First Primary School (Bromsgrove) | 7/22/24 10/3/24 |
| 6 | South Bromsgrove High School (Bromsgrove) | 9/30/24 |
| 7 | St Oswald's C of E Primary School (Kidderminster) | 9/25/24 |
| 8 | St. George C of E Primary School (Worcester) | 10/9/24 |
| 9 | St. George Catholic Primary School (Kidderminster) | 10/18/24 |
| 10 | Worcester University | 7/31/24 |

Appendix 3 - Table 3 – List of schools identified for behaviour change activities

| N. | School/Town | Focus of Engagement | Next activities... |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| 1 | St. George C of E Primary School (Worcester) | They have a School Travel Plans (STP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Next few months 2024: Conduct a survey to gather feedback from parents and staff on their perceptions of air quality around the school (2) January 2025: Promote the “Clean Air Night campaign” |
| 2 | Holy Redeemer Catholic Primary School (Persore) | Educating younger students on air pollution and its health impacts. This school does not have information about travel plans to schools. It is interested in working on air quality issues because it has a very narrow access road, and its hours of greatest vehicle traffic are in the morning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 19th November 2024: Assist in the delivery of the school assembly (2) Next few months 2024: Conduct a survey to gather feedback from parents and staff on their perceptions of air quality around the school (3) January 2025: Promote the “Clean Air Night campaign” |
| 3 | Meadow First Primary School (Bromsgrove) | The school has an environmental project within the framework of UNICEF’s support for children’s human rights, in which they carry out activities to promote air quality. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Next few months 2024: Conduct a survey to gather feedback from parents and staff on their perceptions of air quality around the school (2) January: Promote the “Clean Air Night campaign” |
| 4 | St. George Catholic Primary School (Kidderminster) | The primary school has 214 students and provides financial assistance for van transportation for 22 children. 10 children between 7 and 11 years old belong to an environmental group (eco group) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 28th November 2024: Meeting to present the survey proposal and the clean air night activity, (2) Next few months 2024: Conduct a survey to gather feedback from parents and staff on their perceptions of air quality around the school (3) January 2025: Promote the “Clean Air Night campaign” |
| 5 | Hanley Castle High School (Worcester) | High School engagement on monitoring local air quality student projects. They have a founding project 'Engineering Solutions: Air Pollution' which has been produced by the James Dyson Foundation (16 air quality monitors) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Next few months 2024: Help to design and assist in the delivery of the school assembly in the next few months to introduce the topic to more students. (2) January 2025: Promote the “Clean Air Night campaign” |
| 6 | Heart of Worcestershire College | Targeting college students to promote environmentally friendly habits. We are taking part in the student welcome festivals held at the Redditch, Bromsgrove, and Worcester campuses in September 2024. We are also conducting an air quality opinion survey among students and college staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Late November 2024: Present the results of the survey conducted among students and staff of the college on the perception of air quality, conducted between September 19 and October 20, 2024. (2) January 2025: Promote the “Clean Air Night campaign” |

Appendix 3 - Table 4 – Visits were made to Community and Care Sector Organisations

| N. | Group Name/ Town | Activity | Visit Date mm/dd/aa |
|-----------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Breathe Easy Group/ Redditch | Meeting – Assembly – promote AQ Survey | 4/18/24 |
| 2 | Prospect Place Care Home/ Worcester | Visit to promote information | 6/12/24 |
| 3 | South Hayes Care Home / Worcester | Visit to promote information | 6/12/24 |
| 4 | Stuar House Shaw Healthcare / Worcester | Visit to promote information | 6/12/24 |
| 5 | Worcester Intermedia Care Home / Worcester | Visit to promote information | 6/12/24 |
| 6 | Red Hill Care Centre / Worcester | Visit to promote information | 6/12/24 |
| 7 | West Midlands Ambulance Service | Visit to promote information | 6/12/24 |

Appendix 3 - Table 5 – Participation in events

| N. | Event Name | Description | Visit Date mm/dd/aa |
|-----------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | SustFest- Wyre Forest – Riverside Park Stourport-on-Severn | | 4/27/24 |
| 2 | Promote the Clean Air Day campaign in schools | | 6/20/24 |
| 3 | Running Out of Time – Worcester | | 6/24/24 |
| 4 | Worcester Welcome – Worcester University | | 9/14/24 |
| 5 | Freshers Fayres – Heart of Worcestershire College | | 9/18/24 9/19/24 9/20/24 |

Appendix 4 - Poster- Air Quality Portal – Earthsense

Air Quality
In Worcestershire


Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health and is estimated to kill over **40,000** people a year in the UK. In Worcestershire, it is mainly caused by small particles and gases in the air, which can't see and that can cause harm if you breathe them in.

Sources of Air Pollution

- Vehicle Emissions (truck icon)
- Indoor Burning (fireplace icon)
- Outdoor Burning (campfire icon)
- Industry (factory icon)
- Short Journeys (less than 2 miles) (car icon)

The diagram shows a winding road with a car emitting smoke. Dotted arrows point from the road to icons representing a school, a city building, a shopping cart, and a church, indicating that pollution affects these locations.

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 **Worcestershire Air**

www.worcsregservices.gov.uk

How can you help?

Cycle, Walk or use Public Transport

Where you can, leave your car at home and walk, cycle or take public transport instead.



Switch to an Electric Car

Electric cars have no emissions when driving.



Don't Idle

When stopped or in traffic, turn off your engine to reduce emissions. Idle cars can produce more air pollution than moving ones!



Visit Our Air Quality Portal



- 1 Visual air quality data of 27 sites across Worcestershire.
- 2 Find out what the local air quality is like near you
- 3 See the different pollutants and colour coding on the map
- 4 Information can be downloaded

portal.earthsense.co.uk/WorcestershirePublic

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) is a shared service formed from the Environmental Health and Licensing departments of the six Worcestershire District Councils.

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Appendix 5 - Action Plan

| Short-Term (0-6 Months) | Medium-Term (6-12 months) | Long-Term (12+ Months) |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1. Raise Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaigns in Schools and Colleges: Conduct workshops, assemblies, and create posters targeting air quality awareness, specifically focusing on health impacts and sources of pollution. Social media and Online Engagement: Leverage digital platforms to share educational content about air pollution's effects and encourage sustainable habits. | <p>1. Targeted Support for Schools Near AQ Monitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Data Usage: Provide schools with real-time AQ data and integrate these insights into classroom discussions to make the impact of behaviour changes more tangible. Educational Materials Development: Create toolkits for teachers and staff at high-impact schools, focusing on actionable steps for improving air quality. | <p>1. Sustain and Scale Successful Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition Programs: Establish annual recognition programs for schools and community groups that achieve significant air quality improvements. Expand School Partnerships: Continue to engage additional schools each year, using testimonials and case studies from previously engaged schools to encourage new participation. |
| <p>2. Data Collection and Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey Rollouts for Parents and Students: Implement surveys for students, staff, and parents in additional schools to gather more specific insights on travel habits and perceptions. Baseline Data Collection: Collect baseline data from schools near air quality monitoring stations to track changes over time. | <p>2. Expand Participation and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Incentives for Schools: Offer mini-grants or eco-certificates to schools that make measurable progress, recognise them as "Air Quality Ambassadors" in local media. School Travel Plan Initiatives: Work with schools to develop or strengthen School Travel Plans, which can address barriers to walking, cycling, and carpooling. | <p>2. Enhanced Infrastructure and Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for Sustainable Infrastructure: Advocate for bike-friendly routes, safe pedestrian areas, and other infrastructure improvements to facilitate low-emission commuting. Seek Additional Funding: Work with stakeholders to secure funding for long-term projects, like installing air quality monitors at key locations and sustaining behaviour change initiatives. |
| <p>3. Encourage Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiered Participation Levels: Allow schools with limited resources to engage through simple activities, like promoting clean travel in newsletters and sharing AQ information with parents. Small Group Events: Organise small events (e.g., mini workshops or Q&A sessions) at schools, targeting initial levels of engagement with minimal resources required. | <p>3. Broaden Community Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Events: Engage with groups like the Breathe Easy Group, and participate in community events (e.g., Clean Air Day) to increase public awareness. Collaborate with Local Organisations: Strengthen ties with local government agencies, health departments, and community organisations to expand support and visibility. | <p>3. Review and Adaptation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact Assessment and Adjustments: Conduct annual reviews of behaviour change activities to evaluate the effectiveness, adjusting approaches based on survey data and feedback. Long-Term Community Engagement Platform: Real time visualisations from local monitoring for classroom discussions, develop interactive modules tailored to different age groups, etc. |

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