

Public Document Pack

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 25TH JUNE 2026

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
Councillor J. Owenson, Malvern Hills District Council
Councillor C. Palmer, Malvern Hills District Council
Councillor M. Dormer, Redditch Borough Council
Councillor N. Pioli, Redditch Borough Council
Councillor R. Uddal, Worcester City Council
Councillor K. Holmes, Worcester City Council
Councillor R. Deller, Wychavon District Council
Councillor M. Godge, Wychavon District Council
Councillor T. Onslow, Wyre Forest District Council
Councillor I. Hardiman, Wyre Forest District Council

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of Vice-Chairman
3. Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
4. 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.

5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 19th February 2026 (Pages 5 - 20)

6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April- March 2026 and Annual Return (Pages 21 - 34)
7. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2025/26 (Pages 35 - 76)
8. Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 3 and 4 2025/26 (Pages 77 - 126)
9. Compliments, Complaints and Comments Process (Pages 127 - 132)
10. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

17th June 2026

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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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 Council
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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2026, AT 4.33 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors I. Hardiman (Chairman), J. Spilsbury (Vice-Chairman), K. Taylor, C. Palmer, M. Dormer, K. Holmes, A. Scott, R. Deller and M. Goodge

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

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

31/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. J. Jones, (Bromsgrove District Council), J. Owenson (Malvern Hills District Council), and K. Henderson (Wyre Forest District Council).

32/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

33/25 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 20th November 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 20th November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

34/25 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL TO DECEMBER 2025**

The Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 (s151) officer took the opportunity to briefly introduce herself in her new role and in attending her first meeting of the Board.

The Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 officer commented that she was aware that Members of the Board were kept well informed of

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) budgets by their own authorities s151 senior officers.

The WRS detailed revenue monitoring quarter 3 report provided Members with the projected outturn 2025/2026 of £8k surplus. Which was an estimation to the year-end based on the assumptions as detailed on page 21 of the main agenda pack.

The Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 officer stated that the revenue monitoring was looking good and that she had been pleasantly surprised by the income generated by WRS. The income generation team should be pleased. It was noted that any additional costs had been offset by additional income.

The question of the service being seen as 'Value for Money' was raised by Councillor K. Taylor, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC).

In responding the Director, WRS acknowledged that such questions had only arisen since WRS had taken over Planning Enforcement for BDC and that this had led to questions regarding the wider value for money of the shared service. Members were reassured that the Director, WRS reviewed expenditure for the six Districts in comparison with each Council's nearest Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) nearest neighbour group. These were Councils which CIPFA felt were similar, not necessarily geographically close together. The Director, WRS further stated that he was willing to share this information after the meeting with Board Members should they so wish.

Councillor M. Dormer, Redditch Borough Council (RBC) commented that it was very early days and there was very little activity prior to the take-over for WRS to make a comparison. Councillor M. Dormer stated that he was very happy with Planning Enforcement being taken on by WRS and that he had every confidence.

The Director, WRS further added that the Technical Services Manager's team worked very closely with the relevant planning officers for both BDC / RBC and had had to pick up some very long outstanding cases.

Some Members commented that this may be a perception, and that the information as detailed in the Activity and Performance Data, Quarter 3, 2025/2026, as shown on page 110 of the main agenda pack, showed that BDC was making the very most of WRS for Planning Enforcement and Environmental Crime.

RESOLVED that the Board

1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – December 2025

1.2 That partner Councils be informed of their liabilities for April – December 2025 in relation to Bereavements, as follows

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

Council	Apr–Dec 25 Actual for Bereavements £000
Bromsgrove District Council	9
Malvern Hills District Council	7
Redditch Borough Council	6
Worcester City Council	14
Wychavon District Council	4
Total	40

1.3 That partner Councils be informed of their liabilities for 2025-26 in relation to Pest control, as follows

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2025/25 Pest Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	4
Wychavon District Council	23
Total	27

1.4 That partner Councils be informed of their liabilities for 2025-26 in relation to additional Technical Officers, as follows

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2025/26 Planning Enforcement / Envirocrime £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2025/26 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2025/26 Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	346	9	
Malvern Hills District Council		7	
Redditch Borough Council	178	2	
Worcester City Council		3	41
Wychavon District Council		16	
Wyre Forest District Council		10	
Total	524	47	41

With the agreement of the Chairman, Councillor M. Goode, Wychavon District Council took the opportunity to express his sincere thanks to WRS officers for the way in which they had handled one of the public burials involving someone he had known. Councillor M. Goode stated that it was carried out extremely well and was very professionally managed, and that it showed how good the service was at ensuring someone was there to give the deceased a dignified send-off.

35/25

FOOD SERVICE AND FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

The Director Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Food Service and Food Standards Agency (FSA) engagement report, for Members consideration.

As detailed in the report, the Agency was the main competent authority for food controls in England. The Agency had been pushing local authorities in recent years to increase their commitments to food law enforcement and to align activities more closely with the letter of the Food Law Code of Practice issued under section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990.

This initially led to an increase in WRS establishment from 1st April 2024 of 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) on food work. The Agency continued to monitor the levels of performance and continued to raise concerns in the autumn, with threats to escalate their engagement process. Members were alerted of this at the November Board meeting where the budget was agreed with a caveat that officers may need to look at a further uplift in capacity. After engagement with senior officers and lead Members, WRS partners agreed to a further uplift in the WRS budget specifically for Food Safety Act enforcement.

This report explained the detail of this and how the additional expenditure would be deployed.

Members were made aware of the on-going engagement with the FSA during the November Board meeting. At that time, officers explained that in their most recent engagement with the Agency, it had become very clear that anything less than wholesale compliance or evidence of attempts to operate to full compliance with the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice would not be welcomed and challenge would continue.

Also at the November Board meeting, officers explained that they would be creating a revised action plan for the Agency which would hopefully address their concerns but as part of this they would also be looking at a time and motion document created by the Agency to get a clearer understanding of what resourcing might be required. Officers also agreed to look at staffing in our neighbouring county areas with those districts, to see if WRS were on a par with them.

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

As detailed on page 28 of the main agenda pack, the time and motion document had indicated that there was still a shortfall in necessary resourcing to deliver fully on the Code of Practice. It also appeared that the service had fewer officers than the collective Environmental Health services in either Warwickshire or Gloucestershire for delivering these activities

As previously explained to Members, the Agency's view was that authorities with:

- 250 food premises per dedicated FTE were well resourced and likely to achieve Code requirements.
- 350 food premises per dedicated FTE would be stretched in achieving Code requirements.
- 450 premises or more per dedicated FTE would flounder and not achieve Code requirements.

Members were further informed that the current allocation in WRS with the additional posts put the service at around 420 premises per FTE (around 13FTE being available for food hygiene work.) At the November Board meeting, the Director, WRS had provided Members with an example of the approximate costs of adding 3FTE Technical Officers to the establishment for food hygiene work. Adding this to the establishment would reduce the number of premises per FTE to just below the 350 premises figure and bring the service more in line with the collective provision in our two county neighbours.

On that basis, discussions had taken with the senior Partner Officers of the Board and given the relatively modest uplifts entailed, it was agreed that this could be built into the medium-term financial plans for the six partner authorities.

Senior Members were made aware and agreed to this course of action. This now left the need for Board Members to formally agree to the increase in establishment, which would then allow the Community Environmental Health (CEH) Manager to begin the process of recruitment to the newly created vacancies.

These new posts would be integrated into the two geographically arranged CEH Commercial units covering the east and west halves of the county, with their work areas divided along district lines (Malvern Hills, Worcester City, Wyre Forest, and Redditch. Bromsgrove, Wychavon.)

In their latest response to the submission of the revised action plan, The FSA Officer who had been liaising with WRS officers, had said,

“Thank you for your email and for the additional information provided which gives clear milestones in relation to clearing your backlog of interventions alongside those that become due in the programme for 25/26 and appears to be a realistic and achievable plan with the staff

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

you will have in place. We will monitor your progress against the milestones using the data provided in the 6 monthly enforcement returns; I may also contact you between returns for an update. I would be grateful if you anticipate a deviation from the plan if you could let us know.”

Since the Agency appeared to now believe that WRS had a realistic and achievable plan with the additional resources we would have in place, then they would mainly rely on the 6-monthly reporting that all local authorities were required to provide to assess our performance, it was hoped that WRS would be allowed to proceed with the work.

Board Members would no doubt want to be kept abreast of developments, so managers would look to further enhance the information provided as part of the quarterly reporting to the Board to ensure that Members could be confident of the progress against the plan and that the additional resources were working as was anticipated. As Members would no doubt recall from last time, bringing new staff into these roles was not straight-forward, so there may be a lag in getting permanent people into roles, but the service would be able to retain the services of competent Agency staff to help fill the gap for this period.

Members were therefore being asked to endorse the increase in establishment as outlined in the report. The details of the increase in budget was outlined below.

Appendix: Cost and impact on Partner Contributions

Council	2026-27 agreed %’s	Total Partner Contribution 26-27 including Technical Officers	- Budget for Additional Food Employees	Total Partner Budget 2026-27
	%	£	£	£
Bromsgrove District Council	14.35%	962,522	24,602	987,124
Malvern Hills District Council	13.04%	575,692	22,360	598,052
Redditch Borough Council	17.56%	912,114	30,100	942,214
Worcester City Council	16.64%	758,018	28,529	786,547
Wychavon District Council	23.27%	1,026,659	39,893	1,066,552
Wyre Forest District Council	15.14%	668,476	25,946	694,422
Total	100.00%	4,903,481	171,430	5,074,911

Officers felt that this would be sufficient, given that Members had received and approved a full budget paper at the November Board meeting, and that the overall value involved was modest compared to the full budget.

The following sums, as detailed above, would be added to the base budget to cover the cost of the additional 3 posts. The total included an allowance for car allowance, IT equipment and training requirements to maintain competence.

Members referred to the November Board meeting minutes which referred to trainees or modern apprenticeships being taken on.

In response the Director, WRS explained that officers had wanted to recruit experienced officers, however, this was not achievable, officers would look at modern apprenticeships or potential graduates. The Director, WRS explained that a number of the universities offering Environmental Health degrees had modified their courses to act as apprenticeships to allow training to be covered by Apprentice Levy funding. The University of Wolverhampton was identified as the nearest offering this approach and could be considered if necessary.

In response to questions from Members about agency staff being utilised should it take time to recruit into the roles; the Director, WRS, explained that agency staffing costs would be roughly double the cost of an officer directly employed, therefore officers would only ideally use agency staff for a period of 6 months, and no longer. It was highlighted that, as with previous agency staff, officers would look to recruit agency staff who were interested in the role and had the ability and skillset to take on a permanent role.

RESOLVED that

- 1.1 the report be noted, and
- 1.2 Members agree the consequent increase in establishment that flows from the funding uplift as agreed by the partners.

36/25

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2026/2027

The Director, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the WRS Service Plan 2026/2027.

As detailed in the report, the Board signed off the WRS Service Plan each year. This process helped to make Members aware of what the service was proposing for the relevant financial year and provided a sign off that some central government bodies liked to see in relation to service delivery plans e.g., the Food Standards Agency.

The plan followed the pattern of previous years and had an Executive Summary to pick up on the main points. This year's plan continued to consider the long-standing strategic priorities for local authority regulatory services provided by the Department for Business and Trade (DBaT), as these provided a framework that allowed WRS to have a golden thread back to the priorities of the six partners and to link to the

requirements of the various national bodies that oversaw the work of WRS.

Whilst WRS had retained these for this purpose, the focus of this year's plan remained on the tactical priorities identified in the service's Strategic Assessment that had been refreshed for the coming 3-years. This piece of work reviewed the full data and intelligence picture and looked at emerging threats. The assessment recommended retaining our cross-cutting priorities but rolling more work into the following:-

- Supporting a safe and vibrant night-time economy
- Promoting the responsible sale, breeding, and ownership of dogs
- Promoting safe, clean, and healthy communities

As highlighted in the report, most aspects of business-as-usual fitted into these priorities, particularly the last where things like environmental permitting and food hygiene related to businesses outside of the night-time economy.

Again, a range of high-level activities against the 3 tactical priorities were identified within the plan so that Members were aware of the general focus of the workload. Below this would sit several plans, either team based or cross cutting that would be used to drive the actual business activities.

The plan had been devised in the face of on-going financial uncertainty with money being tight across the public sector. Both businesses and households continued to feel the pinch, and this had led in the past to increases in work for regulatory services as businesses might take more risks to survive and households sought to reduce expenditure on what might be essential products.

Although WRS did not yet have clarity on what form of unitary local government would replace the two tier arrangements in Worcestershire, the bids put forward by the partners gave a route for either the continuance of WRS as a shared service alongside Public Health if the decision was a north: south split, or to plug into a unitary county model at a suitable level in the event of that option being the Government's choice. This should give staff the confidence to focus on what needed to be done in the intervening period.

Working with businesses and other partners would remain essential in the coming year or two to generate income and mitigate financial risk but also to ensure that outcomes were delivered that matched the priorities of partners and stakeholders. Delivery for other local authorities also remained a key income generation strategy, supported by limited work for the private sector and any specific grant monies that WRS felt were worthwhile pursuing. WRS had built on our client-base post pandemic with new clients for dog-related support, and officers hoped that they would be able to identify new ones, although over time this would get harder especially as the unitary decisions became public and other

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

districts supported by WRS began to look closer to home at future solutions. Officers did however remain hopeful that this strategy would remain fruitful in the immediate future and even post-vesting day, some of the newly formed authorities may see the sense in continuing to buy support for certain functions from established expert teams.

Officers would continue to use intelligence where they could, to drive the business forward and the embedding of this approach and its associated processes would continue.

As with previous years, Members were being asked to pay particular attention to the provisions for food hygiene delivery in the coming year. This was in order to meet one of the recommendations of the 2017 audit by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) who were keen that Members had a better understanding of the demand in this service area when they authorised the plan going forward. This year, details of the improvement plan sent to the FSA just after Christmas to help demonstrate the partners' commitment to attempting to meet the provisions of the Agency's statutory Code of Practice had been included.

The Risk Register had been updated to reflect the current position in areas like IT provision and development, staffing levels, and our reliance on contractual relationships for income. The threat from cyber-attack had become more real in recent years as the devastating consequences had been felt by colleagues in other local authorities elsewhere in the country. Officers continued to work closely with the WRS ICT host, Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC), in order to limit the risk of this and WRS officers received regular training and reminders of the threats faced. Our teams had for many years been using mobile and flexible work patterns which had yielded efficiencies but our reliance on ICT provision to deliver this did increase our vulnerability to disruption.

Members raised a number of questions with regard to mitigating cyber security, what specifically were WRS doing?

In response the Director, WRS, reassured Members that the Technical Services Manager, WRS liaised regulatory with their ICT host authority, at WFDC; as WRS slotted into their wider cyber security plan. The Technical Services Manager, WRS also liaised regularly with Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils ICT teams for which WRS relied on for some services, WRS were also included in their Business Continuity Plan.

Councillor A. Scott, Worcester City Council, thank the Director, WRS for a very useful plan. He also referred to one of the three priorities, namely
–

'Supporting a safe and vibrant night-time economy'

Councillor A. Scott informed officers that he was aware of enforcement issues raised by businesses and residents, specifically with pavement

licenses and furniture being left outside of premises, making it hard to access and clean areas. Could enforcement be included in the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)?

In response the Director, WRS, informed Members that such enforcement was included in the relevant teams 'Team Plan.' Officers were aware of the issues raised by Councillor A. Scott. The WRS twelve KPI's had been agreed by the Board, however, officers could include relevant enforcement information in the quarterly Activity and Performance Data, should Board Members so wish.

Councillor A. Scott expressed his thanks and agreed that it would be useful to have information for Members to consider as to how enforcement was being managed and monitored.

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, further responded and in doing so drew Members' attention to page 94 of the main agenda pack, which detailed information on Pavement Licensing. The team had looked at areas of compliance and non-compliance, as this had been included in the Licensing teams, Team Plan.

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, also responded to a question on the new primate licensing and in doing so informed Members that only one person had come forward for a primate licence. The WRS Communications Officer had engaged with vets and had produced a lot of communications on primate licensing, whereby officers had taken a couple of enquires following on from the communication releases.

RESOLVED that

- 1.1 the Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Service Plan 2026/2027 be approved, and
- 1.2 Members specifically note the level of work to be undertaken by the service this year in relation to the partners' roles as local food authorities.

37/25

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA QUARTER 3 2025-2026

The Community Environmental Manager, WRS present the Activity and Performance Report, Quarter 3, 2025/2026.

The detail of the report focused on the third quarter of 2025/2026, but the actual data allowed comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

As detailed in the report, although the number of food complaints and enquiries had fallen during quarter 3, the overall number of food safety cases received during the year to date was 14% up compared to last year and 11% above the figure in 2023/24.

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

Of the 1,149 interventions undertaken during the year to date, only 4% had resulted in businesses being rated as "non-compliant" (i.e., were issued a rating of 0, 1, or 2). A higher proportion of non-compliant ratings continued to be issued to the hospitality sector (such as takeaways and restaurants) or small retailers.

Health and safety complaints and enquiries remained on trend in quarter 3 but reported accidents fell, meaning the overall number of such cases received during the year to date was 4% lower than last year but was broadly comparable with 2024/25. Almost half of cases had 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. Sadly, the service had had to investigate three fatalities this year, the most recent one being an incident where a member of the public had drowned in a privately run swimming pool.

There had been an on-going Community Environmental Health (CEH) involvement following the discovery of a rodent infestation and food product recall in respect of a retail warehouse in Kidderminster. Following the voluntary closure of the premises, legal proceedings were instigated for food hygiene offences. The company entered a guilty plea and were sentenced in December 2025. The Chief Executive of the FSA had expressed their thanks to the WRS team for the way in which this had been successfully dealt with.

As detailed in the report, the fall in nuisance complaints through quarter 3 mirrored previous seasonal patterns, usually reflecting the shift to autumnal weather. As further highlighted, the vast majority of cases were reports of alleged statutory nuisances, with 42% relating to noise from residential properties (such as noise from barking dogs or audio-visual equipment). Other prominent alleged nuisances included noise from night-time economy businesses, noise from other hospitality businesses, smoke from the burning of domestic or commercial waste, and with the dryness of last summer, noise or dust from construction sites.

Business customer satisfaction was marginally above the last quarter at 95.2%, slightly below the figure this time last year (96.8%) but was still well above previous year's 92% at the same point in the year. So far, 131 responses had been received. One question had fewer responses than the others, making one or two negatives more impactful. Beyond this, speed of response and not giving the response that gave people the outcome that they had hoped for seemed to be the main issue.

Overall numbers of compliant and non-compliant food businesses were at 98.5% and 1.5% respectively. This remained good and on a par with previous years.

The ratio of compliments to complaints remained good at 45 to 10.

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

Staff sickness had increased from 3.04 days per FTE to 4.56 days per FTE cumulative for the year. This was the highest that sickness had been for some time and above the figures for the same period in the previous 3 years (2.94, 2.44, 2.94). Whilst cold and flu viruses had been worse this year compared to last year, over 77% of sick days recorded fell into the long-term category (i.e., members of staff being off for 28 days plus.) Members had previously been made aware that one or two WRS officers were yet to recover from serious illness and remained absent.

Members raised a number of questions, as follows:-

- Stray dogs with canine parvovirus – who bears the vet costs?
- XL Bully ban – were we seeing an end to XL bullies?
- Microchipping – information on dogs reunited with their owners, dogs not chipped or information on their microchip not being kept up to date and action taken.
- Homes for Ukraine – Members expressed their thanks to the officers commitment and the level of support received. Was this level of support extended to all refugees?
- Infection control – mosquitos.
- Enforcement Information.

In response officers explained that it was not always known if a stray dog had canine parvovirus. The charity that rehomed stray dogs that were not reunited with their owners, covered any necessary vet bills prior to rehoming. The kennels used by WRS for stray dogs had a very strict cleansing routine, as did the dog wardens for the vans they used.

With regard to XL bullies, there were still areas with a high rate of XL bullies with the dog wardens taking at least one a month.

The funding secured for the Home for Ukraine scheme had been extended to 2026/2027. The funding was for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils only and for refugees from the Ukraine only. The Technical Services Manager, WRS informed Members that more hosts were needed for this scheme.

The Director, WRS, stated that there was a broad range of enforcement undertaken by WRS and collating and providing information on all aspects of enforcement would be very time consuming for officers. Therefore, he would appreciate Members contacting him to request any specific information they required with regards to enforcement matters.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS further added that planning enforcement information had been presented to both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils and that a further enforcement activity report would be presented to both Councils.

The Technical Services Officer, WRS also explained that microchipping was a priority in the WRS Service Plan 2026/2027. 30% of dogs were

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

found to be unchipped, with a significant proportion of unchipped dogs being found in worryingly poor health conditions. The numbers varied between Districts. On average about 50% of dogs were reunited with their owners, again this varied across the Districts. When owners came forward for their dogs, they had to complete a certain number of checks before being reunited with their dogs. Members were made aware that in the UK it was a legal requirement under the 'Control of Dogs Order' for dogs to wear a collar with an ID tag showing the owner's name and address. The WRS Communications Officer also liaised with vets and signage was placed in veterinary practices reminding dogs owners to microchip their dogs and to ensure that their information on the microchips was kept up to date.

WRS had held a number of microchipping events in South Worcestershire, with funding secured through the Community Safety Partnership. Sadly, these events were poorly attended. Members were however reassured that as from 1st April 2026 officers would be picking up on microchipping and dog tag enforcement; with officers pursuing and prosecuting where evidence was available and the public interest test was met.

In response to a question with regard to the Neighbourhood and Tenancy Team at Redditch Borough Council and microchipping, the Technical Services Manager, WRS commented that he would consider as to how WRS could engage with the Tenancy Officers about any concerns they had in respect of dogs in premises that they visited.

The Director, WRS explained that there was currently no requirement for local authorities to control invasive mosquitos. However, as detailed on page 92 of the main agenda pack, WRS Community Environmental Health, with its infection control role had volunteered to support the invasive mosquito surveillance efforts being coordinated by the Medical Entomology and Zoonoses Ecology Team (MEZE) at UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

Members thanked officers for their detailed responses to the questions and concerns raised.

Members also briefly referred to the 'Agent of Change Principle' in the newly revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Director, WRS acknowledged that this was of paramount importance and a very important principle for officers and Members involved in the planning process.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarter 3, 2025/26 be noted and that Members used the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

38/25

REVISION OF POLICY FOR RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REQUESTS (FOR INFORMATION HELD BY WRS)

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

The Technical Services Manager, WRS presented the Revision of Policy for responding to Environmental Information requests (for information held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)) for Members' consideration.

Members were informed that the policy presented was a revision of the EIR policy already in existence, but the revised policy provided greater clarity on how requests could be made and how they would be processed. The policy was in line with the Environmental Information Requests (EIR) and Information Commissioner's Office Guidance.

Processing included establishing whether a charge was required to be paid prior to the release of the information requested. Any charge would be calculated based on an hourly rate set by each Partner Council and the estimated time required to collate and format the information requested.

Standard administrative processes could not be charged for and any request that was simple to respond to and information could be collated and formatted in less than 30 minutes would be provided free of charge.

Other exemptions to charges applied where the information was held on a public register, where it was examined at WRS offices, where it could be signposted to as it was publicly available or published elsewhere.

Similarly no charge would be made for requests made by students in the course of their academic studies; or journalists in the course of journalism for a news organisation where that information was easily extracted; or made by a professional body of which WRS was a direct or indirect member or where release of the data requested would be for the greater good and was easily extracted.

In response to questions from Members, the Technical Services Manager, WRS explained that with regards to possible frivolous and vexatious requests, that Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were very different to Environmental Information Requests (EIR). Officers would triage any EIR enquires received, and where relevant the information would be free of charge or a charge added. Anyone requesting an EIR would be informed if a charge were to be put in place due to the potential hours taken (this would be a flat charge as per the policy guidance). Should the information requested be extracted and collated in a shorter period of time than originally anticipated, then the charges would be reimbursed.

RESOLVED that the revised Environmental Information Requests (EIR) policy, as detailed on pages 127 to 131 of the main agenda pack, be agreed and adopted as from 1st April 2026.

39/25

TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES PRIOR TO THE

Agenda Item 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
19th February 2026

COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

There was no urgent business to be considered.

The meeting closed at 5.43 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Joint Board 26th June 2026

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL – MARCH 2026 & ANNUAL RETURN

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Joint Board:

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – March 2026
- 1.2 Approve that the 2025/6 surplus of £67,487 be added to the WRS reserve, to assist with addressing any upcoming cost pressures. If not approved the surplus balance will be refunded to partners in the usual proportions.

Contribution to Priorities

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

Introduction/Summary

This report presents the final financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services for the period April – March 2026. In addition, a number of financial statements are appended to this report.

Background

During the financial year, quarterly financial reports are presented for consideration by the Partners and the Joint Board.

Report

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

- Revenue Monitoring Statement 2025/26 - Appendix 1
- Annual Statement 2025/26 - Appendix 2
- Annual Statement Analysis 2025/26 – Appendix 3
- WRS Income Analysis 2025/26 – Appendix 4
- Reserve Statement – Appendix 5

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. This shows a final outturn surplus of £67k, this represents 1.6% of the actual budget and is due to:-

- due to lower salary costs than originally budgeted, reflecting vacancies and delays in recruitment during the year. These savings have been partly offset by additional agency staff incurred due to backfilling of staff working on other contractual work e.g., food recovery programme, contaminated land & and work for other local authorities.
- WRS had another successful year and has over achieved the budgeted income by £517k, a breakdown of all income is shown in Appendix 4
- As requested by the Board Appendix 1 details explanations relating to any significant variances.
- The pest control 2025/26 outturn figure to be funded by partners is £26,997, as per below:

Redditch Borough Council	£4,155
Bromsgrove District Council	£1,720
Wychavon District Council	£21,122

This income is included in the income outturn figure.

- The bereavements 2025/26 outturn figure to be funded by partners is £61,930 as per below:

Bromsgrove District Council	£16,154
Malvern Hills District Council	£8,562
Redditch Borough Council	£5,917
Worcester City Council	£20,432
Wychavon District Council	£10,865

This income is included in the income outturn figure.



Agenda Item 6

- The Technical Officers to be funded by partners for 2025/26 is shown below:-

Technical Officer for Animal Activity

Bromsgrove District Council	£9,910
Malvern Hills District Council	£7,972
Redditch Borough Council	£2,585
Worcester City Council	£3,663
Wychavon District Council	£13,789
Wyre Forest District Council	£9,695

Technical Officer for Gull Control

Worcester City Council	£40,483
------------------------	---------

This income is included in the income outturn figure.

Members are asked to approve that the final outturn surplus amount of £67,487 be added to the WRS General Reserve, to assist with any upcoming cost pressures. If this request is rejected the surplus will be refunded to partners in the usual proportions.

Some of the pressures that may arise in the coming year are outlined below.

- The salary increase is going to exceed the budgeted 3% as an offer beyond this has already been rejected by the unions.
- There is likely to be a need to invest in training to develop food officers to meet the statutory training requirements in the Code of Practice and begin building tomorrow's new Environmental Health Officers.
- There may be further pressure on Licensing depending on what further national taxi standards government brings forward using provisions in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, which may necessitate temporary capacity to support implementation.
- The Gambling profile may need to be revised with the introduction of the option for a Gambling Assessment to be produced that looks at harms. Colleagues in Public Health have already asked the team to be involved in a piece of funded work looking at this.
- The Department for Transport is currently considering the responses to their consultation on the future of taxi licensing, to which we responded. The King's speech mentioned legislation to bring in changes to

Agenda Item 6

the Hackney and Private Fire controls, but it is unclear what this will constitute.

- The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 is likely to begin the process for a licensing regime for the supply of tobacco, vapes and related products. Whilst there is much talk of Trading Standards enforcement, it seems likely that the licensing process will sit with district councils, so again preparations will need to begin for this once the proposals come forward.
- We are still waiting for Government to finalise its proposals for increased controls around cosmetic procedures. As with tobacco licensing, although Trading Standards already deals with underage supply of botox and fillers, it seems likely that any licensing regime for practitioners and businesses will be shared between the local authority and potentially CQC, depending on the nature of the treatment.

Hence, there are likely to be a range of factors that may increase time pressure on teams and require the recruitment of temporary staff to support business as usual activities so these developing agendas can be addressed. The team may also be more involved in the development of the unitary solution once a decision is received from MHCLG, so 2026/7 is shaping up to be a very busy year for shared service officers.

Any grant funded expenditure is shown separate to the core service costs as this is not funded by the participating Councils.

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

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this report

Contact Points

James Walton
Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough councils
James.Walton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1: WRS Out-run 2025/26
Appendix 2: WRS Annual Statement 2025/26
Appendix 3: WRS Annual Return 2025/26
Appendix 4: WRS Income 2025/26
Appendix 5: WRS Reserves statement 2025/26



WRS - Profit & Loss Report 2025/26
Total WRS Final Outturn 2025-26

Append 1

	Revised Full Year Budget 25-26	Committed Expenditure Apr - Mar 26	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	
Direct Expenditure				
Employees				
Salary	4,440	3,998	-441	Difficulties in recruiting to some roles. Includes Ukrainian support employees for BDC/RBC, costs for this covered in income.
Agency Staff	0	527	527	Use of agency to cover difficult to fill vacancies, 2 x long term sick and income generation work, including work for other local authorities
Employee Insurance	21	21	-0	
Sub-Total - Employees	4,461	4,547	86	
Premises				
Rent / Hire of Premise	82	77	-5	
Cleaning	1	0	-0	
Utilities	0	0	0	
Sub-Total - Premises	82	77	-5	
Transport				
Vehicle Hire	13	5	-8	
Vehicle Fuel	8	7	-1	
Road Fund Tax	1	0	-1	
Vehicle Insurance	5	5	0	
Vehicle Maintenance	3	4	1	
Car Allowances	53	41	-12	Changed work patterns in Community EH and better allocation of activities are helping to manage travel costs.
Sub-Total - Transport	83	63	-20	
Supplies and Services				
Furniture & Equipment	46	55	9	Replacement of a number of office chairs and equipment are included here.
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	3	1	
Printing & Photocopying	17	9	-8	
Postage	11	15	4	
ICT	99	133	34	Includes increase of £10K for revised cyber security measures from WFDC as ICT host
Telephones	40	17	-23	
Training & Seminars	33	20	-13	The service is large enough to bring in trainers to reduce the cost of maintaining competence. On-going training for the new staff may see spend next year increase.
Insurance	16	7	-9	
Third Party Payments	209	205	-5	
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	474	464	-10	
Contractors				
Dog Warden	121	421	300	Additional contractors due to new and varied contracts, recovered in income
Pest Control	78	83	5	
Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	52	40	-12	Less reliance on contracted capacity
Other contractors/consultants	3	22	20	This cost was recovered by BDC & shown in income
Water Safety	5	7	2	
Food Safety	0	-0	-0	
Environmental Protection	18	96	78	Bereavements recovered in income ; Works in Default - Hillrise, recovered in income from relevant partner
Grants / Subscriptions	13	17	5	
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	8	3	
Sub-Total	295	695	399	
Income				
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-1,101	-1,617	-517	See appendix 4
Sub-Total	-1,101	-1,617	-517	
Overall Total	4,294	4,228	-67	
	0	-0	-0	

Notes:-

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Annual Return For Year Ended 31st March 2026

Accounting Statement For Worcester Regulatory Services

	31st March 2025	31st March 2026
	£	£
1 Balances brought forward	344,707	343,414
2 (+) Income from local taxation and / or levy	0	0
3 (+) Total other receipts	5,577,781	5,844,016
4 (-) Staff costs	4,403,343	4,546,542
5 (-) Loan interest / capital repayments	0	0
6 (-) All other payments	1,175,731	1,298,069
7 Capital - Dog Vans	0	0
8 (=) Balances carried forward	343,414	342,820

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services - Annual Return

Regulatory Services Income received 25-26

Income from Partners	£
Budget	4,293,856
Transfer to Reserves / Refund of Savings	-67,082
Pension Backfunding	33,877
Bereavement / Public Burials	47,976
Cotswold Drainage Hillrise	27,480
Pest Control - Wychavon , Redditch & Bromsgrove	26,997
Employee for Animal Activity	47,614
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Worcs City	40,483
Technical Pollution Work - Worcs City	44,863
Contaminated Land Work - Worcs City	13,000
Brant Green Pedal	10,350
Idox support - Bromsgrove & Redditch	785
Planning Enforcement - Bromsgrove & Redditch	523,753
Ukrainian Support Work - Bromsgrove & Redditch	160,080
	<u><u>5,204,033</u></u>

Grant Income	£
New Burdens Grant and MHCLG Grant	9,415
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	6,824
	<u><u>16,239</u></u>

Other Income	£
Stray Dog Income	380,036
County - Mgmt / Admin / Legal etc	65,170
County - Safety at Sport Grounds	22,000
Planning Support Work	54,306
Contaminated Land Work	25,724
PPC Work	8,381
Primary Authority work	23,274
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	13,802
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	13,718
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating	16,634
Victorian Fayre	700
	<u><u>623,745</u></u>

Total Box 3 Accounting Statement	<u><u>5,844,016</u></u>
---	--------------------------------

Regulatory Services Employees 25-26

Box 4	£
Employees Related Costs	4,546,542
	<u><u>4,546,542</u></u>

Regulatory Services Other Costs 25-26

Box 6	£
Premise Related Cost	77,300
Transport Related Cost	62,657
Supplies & Service	1,158,111
	<u><u>1,298,069</u></u>

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Agenda Item 6

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Income Received 25-26

Income from Partners	£
Budget	4,293,856
Transfer to Reserves / Refund of Savings	-67,082
Pension Backfunding	33,877
Bereavement / Public Burials	47,976
Cotswold Drainage Hillrise	27,480
Pest Control - Wychavon , Redditch & Bromsgrove	26,997
Employee for Animal Activity	47,614
Employee for Additional Gull Work - Worcs City	40,483
Technical Pollution Work - Worcs City	30,000
Contaminated Land Work - Worcs City	13,000
Brant Green Pedal	10,350
Idox support - Bromsgrove & Redditch	785
Planning Enforcement - Bromsgrove & Redditch	523,753
Ukrainian Support Work - Bromsgrove & Redditch	160,080
	5,189,170
Grant Income	
New Burdens Grant and MHCLG Grant	9,415
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	6,824
	16,239
Other Income	
Stray Dog Income	380,036
Worcester County - Mgmt, Legal, Admin & Uniform Support	80,033
County - Safety at Sport Grounds	22,000
Planning Support Work	54,306
Contaminated Land Work	25,724
PPC Work	8,381
Primary Authority work	23,274
Training / Idox Support / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	13,802
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	13,718
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating / Pre-Opening / Victorian Fayre	17,334
	638,608
Total Income Apr - Mar 26	5,844,016
2025/26 Base Budget from Partners	-4,226,774
Total Income Excluding Budget	1,617,242

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**Worcestershire Regulatory Services Reserve Statement -
2025-26**

Append 5

Worcestershire Regulatory Services 25-26

Earmarked Reserve	Balance 1st April 2025	Transfers Out 2025/26	Transfers In 2025/26	Balance 31st March 2026	
	£	£	£	£	
Health & Well being related / Worcs Works Well	59,068			59,068	Supporting Air Quality Behavioural Change Project
LEP	9,297			9,297	Held for Worcestershire Food & Drink
WRS General Reserve	126,124		46,392	172,516	
Better Business For All	2,859			2,859	Held for Region
Brexit	40,000			40,000	
Licensing	15,000			15,000	Digital ID Card Project; KL to push with WFICT team
Make it Worcestershire	1,808			1,808	OPSS funded project
IT Enhancement Project	89,259			89,259	Victoria Forms Project
Total Earmark Reserve	343,415	0	46,392	389,806	

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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Joint Board

Date: 25th June 2026

Title: Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2025/26

Recommendation

That the Joint Committee note the Annual Report for 2025/6 and agree that a copy be forwarded to each Chief Executive of the 6 partner authorities and to the wider elected member base in their areas.

Contribution to Priorities

Not applicable

Summary

Under the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Service Level Agreement, the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and the Lead Finance Officer for the host authority, Bromsgrove District Council, are required to submit to the Joint Board an annual report that covers the performance of the shared service and provides a summary of the finances. This report covers the period from 1st April 2025 to 31 March 2026. If endorsed by the Joint Board, a copy will be forwarded to each Chief Executive of each member authority, and the authors would request that members use their usual channels within their authorities to distribute the report to the wider elected member cohort.

Report

Under Clause 11 of Part 1 of the Shared Services Partnership Agreement, the Joint Board is required to receive a report at its annual meeting which will be held no later than 30 June each year. The report covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The annual report is co-signed by the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and the Lead Financial Officer for the Host Authority as required by the legal agreement.

The report covers the performance of the service for that period, both in terms of KPIs and highlights of activity, a short summary activity report appearing at Appendix 5, which we limit due to the detail that Board members will see in the Activity Data Report. Some detail of the performance indicators has also been covered by the Activity data.

It is far enough away from the pandemic now that we are probably safe to say that the demands hitting the service are what we should

now expect as the norm. The service was part of the core response to the pandemic and it provided us with some very flexible staff, a number of whom have formed the teams delivering the Homes 4 Ukraine support for Redditch and Bromsgrove, with support from experienced WRS managers, while several other former covid staff also feature in the planning enforcement and enviro-crime enforcement team.

Performance remained good in most areas last year. Food business compliance rates remain high. Taxi license renewals were slightly down on previous years, but still well above 90% in 5 working days. The taxi fleet appears to be generally in good order, and this year saw another fall in the number of vehicles failing whilst in service, most of which is detected when vehicles are submitted for a 6-monthly test.

As with previous years, complaints against the service are exceeded by compliments but the ratio is lower. Complaints arose across a range of service areas this year. The main issues for complainants related to:

- Not being allowed to be involved in re-homing of a dog
- Dissatisfaction with investigations on planning related matters,
- Concerns regarding the tone of a standard letter used in nuisance cases
- Response to a nuisance issues, despite having noise equipment deployed in their property.

Non-business customer satisfaction was slightly up on last year at 57.1% compared recent figures of 56.7%, 59.2% and 60.4% respectively. Further detail on this is provided in both the Annual Report itself and Activity Report. The range of areas for complaint was quite broad this year, with no pattern within the service..

Managers will continue to work to address this performance measure. The nature of the service is such that we will never be able to make everyone happy because a significant proportion of nuisance complaints will not amount to a statutory nuisance, but we know that we can improve our performance in this area.

Business satisfaction fell to 92.3% for no obvious reason, similar to the way it did two years ago when 94.6% was recorded. We hope to see it return to levels beyond 95% in 2026/7.

The indicators for licensed premises and noise complaints have been in place long enough now for us to establish good baselines. This year almost all figures are at average or below. The rate of noise complaint against population for all districts this year showed a modest increase on the previous year but again remains good despite last summer's record-breaking temperatures. which undoubtedly contributed to this. Overall, it still suggests that the environment for Worcestershire residents is

good.

The Annual Report also gives a summary of the financial position, the key achievements and covers issues relating to human resources. There are also sections on risk management and equalities. The Report will be published on the WRS website and will be shared with other partners. Putting the report into the public domain meets the requirement in the Regulators Code, made under the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, which requires local authorities to publish summary information about their regulatory activities each year.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are contained within the Annual Report.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

WRS Annual Report 2024/5

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ANNUAL REPORT

2025/26

Making Worcestershire a healthy, safe and a fair place to live where legitimate businesses can thrive

Introduction 3

- 1. Performance, Performance-Management & Audit 4
- 2. Service Delivery Highlights 10
- 3. Financial Management 17
- 4. Workforce Planning and Human Resources Management 18
- 5. Accommodation 19
- 6. Business Transformation 19
- 7. Risk Management 20
- 8. Equality and Diversity 21
- 9. Next Steps 21

Appendix 1: Structure (1st April 2024) 23

Appendix 2: Risk Log 24

Appendix 3: Revenue Out-turn 2024/25 30

Appendix 4: Activity summary by individual partners 33

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report has been produced for the Joint Board in accordance with clause 11.1 of Part 1 of the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement. The report covers the progress and performance of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for the period 1st of April 2025 up to the 31st of March 2026 and reports operational activity by the relevant service elements for the financial year. The report summarises key performance data for WRS and provides a summary of the financial position. The report also meets the requirement of the Regulators Code, which requires local authorities to publish a summary of their regulatory activities on an annual basis.

During the year 2025/6, we saw the driest and one of the hottest Summers on record, but although nuisance demand was high, it did not go beyond the levels in 2023/4, which was a moderate year weatherwise. This may suggest a ceiling on levels of nuisance complaint, however, public expectation around how local authority activity could influence the local environment remains high and often exceeds what the law can deliver. Work continued with the development of work to support air quality action plans which progress through relevant member forums at the partners. From these, officer moved onto Contaminated Land strategies, which are now all in place too. The Food Standards Agency continued to take a strong interest in the service and progress on increasing the volume of food visits being undertaken to our lower risk business cohort. This led to further challenge and the partners investing in an additional 3FTE food staff for 2026/7.

Our key strategic priorities, which had been in place for 2-years shaped our tactical approach to the key cross cutting issues identified in the strategic assessment, which were:

- Supporting a safe and vibrant night-time economy
- Promoting the responsible sale, breeding, and ownership of dogs
- Promoting safe and clean communities

The team continued to support legitimate businesses and residents, particularly the vulnerable, where we were able and at the same time, we tackled those who broke the law, ignored best practice, or adversely impact the local environment and the ability of others to enjoy it. Central to this approach remained the availability of accurate data and intelligence sharing. Our intelligence and performance unit coordinated and analysed intelligence obtained by WRS officers and external agencies, helping managers to target WRS resources more effectively and to forge links with other enforcement agencies and partners to share intelligence and target enforcement action. This is becoming more and more embedded at the heart of what we do.

Simon Wilkes
Director of Regulatory Services

James Walton
S151 Officer Bromsgrove DC/ Redditch BC

1. PERFORMANCE, PERFORMANCE-MANAGEMENT & AUDIT

Performance reporting remains underpinned by the IDOX UNiform management information system, providing Joint Board members with a clear picture of the work being undertaken by WRS. Our key performance measures previously agreed with the Board, continue to focus on a range of outputs and outcomes that should give confidence in the service. Previous year’s results appear in brackets in the relevant box, with most recent previous year first, providing a comparative view of performance over time. Members are reminded that the recent past is coloured by the pandemic so figures from 2020/21 to at least 2022/3 are likely to be difficult to compare with earlier years.

	Measure	Figure	Commentary
1	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to non-business customers satisfaction	57.1% (56.7, 60.4, 59.2, 61.6, 74, 69.5, 63.0. 75.4, 78.9, 78.2, 77.4)	Similar to last year and based on an average score for 6 questions relating to the interaction of the service with non-business customers. 67.7% found their contact with WRS helpful, up from the previous few years at 60.9%, 65.8% and 63.5% respectively. 68.8% found the information and advice provided easy to use, below previous few years figures of 75.6%, 71.7% and / 72% respectively. Some 53.8% felt that the length of time to address their problem was satisfactory, which is lower than the last 3-years 56.3% 57.7% and 54.5%. At 61.2%, those happy with the time for a first response was up on last year’s 56.3% but it remained below the 66.9% and 65.1% of the previous 2-years respectively. Finally, some 44% of matters were fully resolved to the satisfaction of the responder, which is up on last year’s 38.7% but still leads to a lower overall reported figure. Managers will continue to look at how to improve performance in a number of these areas but the main thing will be trying to manage public expectations around what is achievable with nuisance issues as many of these will never be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. Response rates remain poor with 109 this year compared to 104 last year and 161 and 138 in the previous 2-years. Literally hundreds of requests for responses (over 780,) a mix of digital and paper

			questionnaires were sent out, but it is very difficult to get replies.
2	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to business customers satisfaction	93.2% , (97.1, 94.6, 98.1, 98.2, 98.4, 97.4, 97.2, 97.7, 97.1, 97.9, 97)	Based on an average score for 9 questions relating to the interaction of the service with business customers. This year saw fewer numbers of returns than previous years, (170 compared to 246, 271 and 352 the previous three years). This is out of 2846 who were asked for a response. Of those who responded, 92% (96.6%, 95% 98.3% for the last 3-years,) felt that their business had been treated fairly and 95.1% (97.5%, 96%, 98.6% for the last 3-years,) of customers felt staff were polite in their dealings with them and informative. Some 98.5% (98.5%, 94.1%, 98.3, 98.7% last 3-years,) of customers found the information and advice we provided easy to understand and 93.8% (97.7%, 93.8%, 97.9% for the last 3-years,) found their interaction with us helpful. 91.1% (94.9%, 91.2%, 96% for the last 3-years,) were happy with the speed of our responses and, of those who made enquiries rather than being visited, 90.4% (96.5%, 92.5%, 96.3% for the last 3-years,) were satisfied with the response. Two years ago, we said we were puzzled by the results, all of which were slightly lower than in previous years but with no obvious reason behind that such as a change to management practice and approach, or the information provided. Last year, figures seemed to return to normality, so we assumed that slightly poorer year was a blip. This suggests this may not be the case, although small returns always risk giving a distorted picture, but managers will look at some of our business interactions to see if things have changed.
3	% Food businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Bromsgrove 98.6% (99.2, 99.4, 99.3, 99.3, 98.4, 97.1.) Malvern Hills 98.3% (98, 98.2, 97.8, 98.4, 98.6, 98.1.) Redditch 97.3% (97.7, 98.2, 97.1, 97.5, 97.6, 95.6.) Worcester City 99.1%	The figures demonstrate the high levels of compliance generally of our food businesses. They are mainly well-run and responsive to any issues in relation to hygiene and protecting the health of customers. The wider interaction with lower risk businesses allowed for by the additional resource allocated by the partners

		(99.2, 99.2, 99.0, 98.4, 98.4, 97.5,) Wychavon 98.3% (98.3, 98.2, 97.6, 98.2, 99.2, 98.0,) Wyre Forest 98.3% (97.6, 97.8, 98.5, 98.6, 98.2, 98.1,) Worcestershire 98.4% (98.4, 98.5, 98.3, 98.5, 98.5, 97.5,)	has again had no appreciable impact on the figures, suggesting that these premises too show good compliance levels.
4	% of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Bromsgrove 1.4% (0.8, 0.6, 0.7, 0.7, 1.4, 2.9, 3.6,) Malvern Hills 1.7% (2.0, 1.8, 2.2, 1.6, 1.6, 1.9, 2.8,) Redditch 2.7% (2.3, 1.8, 2.9, 2.5, 2.4, 4.4, 5.1,) Worcester City 0.9% (0.8, 0.8, 1.0, 1.6, 1.6, 2.5, 2.2,) Wychavon 1.7% (1.7, 1.2, 2.4, 1.8, 0.8, 2.0, 3.0,) Wyre Forest 1.7% (2.4, 2.2, 1.5, 1.4, 1.8, 1.9, 2.4,) Worcestershire 1.6% (1.6, 1.5, 1.7, 1.5, 1.5, 2.7, 2.7,)	Food premises scoring 2 or below on the Food Hygiene Rating System are deemed to be at risk of not producing safe food and are subject to further intervention until such time as they meet requirements or face formal action. There are only small numbers of these in each district.
5	% of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	92.8% (97.5, 96.8, 97.5, 97.6, 96.9, 75.2,)	This measure was introduced in 2017/18 and looks at how quickly driver licenses are renewed. This is one of the licensing processes where generally no additional paperwork is required before someone is re-licensed so generally this is one where the WRS team is in most control over timescales. Looking back, a slightly below par first half of the year in terms of performance, has led to a slightly lower end of year figure, mainly caused by staffing pressures.
6	% of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service	45 vehicles, 3.1% Of 1467 vehicles on the road county-wide	This number failing is lowest in 5 years (54, 70, 84 and 59 respectively,) so a continuing improvement. Focusing on the percentage is probably better as total number of vehicles can vary slightly year to year. This year's rate is around average looking back and ignoring the Covid-

		(3.3%, 4.2%, 5.4, 4%, 0.39% , 3.6%, 2.8%, 2.2%, 2.4%) NB: Figure in bold is from 2020/21 when council garages and others used for testing vehicles were closed for much of the year and no proactive enforcement monitoring took place.	affected year. Members should remember that taxi vehicles travel a great deal further each year than domestic vehicles and therefore require significantly more upkeep to keep them in a good and safe condition. This will create financial pressures within the trade, but the safety of the travelling public must remain paramount for the local licensing authority. Given the current financial difficulties for many, this result should probably be seen in a positive light.
7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	47.1% (53.4, 56.6, 57.0, 58.5, 58.8, 68.2, 58.1, 59, 72.5, 73.8, 76.8, 74.2)	This focuses on non-business customers. It is a specific question asked to members of the public in the questionnaire to test if the information and support provided to them by WRS is likely to help them deal with their own problems in the future. The measure has been lowered for a number of years, reflecting the lower performance overall on non-business customer satisfaction, and reduced return rates.
8	Review of register of complaints and compliments	14 complaints (22, 26, 28, 25, 42, 44, 27, 25, 31, 17, 24, 47,) 33 compliments (69, 121, 116, 134, 161, 163, 128, 138, 103, 51, 57, 36,)	This is our longest running performance indicator in this format, hence the long list of previous year's figures. The large drop in compliments appears directly related to the lack of overall feedback across both types of customers. Many positives were seen if feedback forms that are simply no-longer returned. Complaints arose from a number of areas this year including work on planning and enviro-crime for Redditch and Bromsgrove.
9	Staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	6.05 days per FTE (4.31, 3.07, 2.93, 5.2, 1.9, 4.4, 4.12, 12.45, 5.95, 2.3, 3.9, 7.7, 9.5)	Sickness in the team was higher than its been since before the pandemic. 69.5% of this year's sickness was classed as long-term (absence for a period exceeding 28 days,) and driven by a small number of people dealing with serious health conditions. Short term sickness accounts for under 2-days per FTE.
10	% of staff who are satisfied with working for WRS	96.5% 90.5, 94, 92, 97.5%, 93.5%, 98%, 88%, (NB: Annual figures for 2017/18 and before, 80%, 85%, 77%, 82%)	57 responses were received from the staff cohort, slightly down on last year, but still reasonably good for a team of around 85. As ever, some did not respond to all the questions. This score for this measure is based on those who scored 5/10 or better for the question in the staff survey which asked, are you satisfied with working with

			WRS (score is from 0 to 10.) Some 73.7% (42/57,) scored this question at 8/10 or higher. Only two of the respondents scored less than 5, both indicating 4/10. Due to current time constraints, we have yet to do more detailed analysis of broader staff comments, but it is good to know that many are happy working for the service.
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	<p>Bromsgrove 8.2% (6.8, 9.9, 7.2, 5.9, 5.4, 6.8, 8.7,)</p> <p>Malvern Hills 4.5% (5.1, 5.8, 4.1, 5.1, 3.5, 5.7, 4.8,)</p> <p>Redditch 5.2% (5.2, 8.7 8.1, 9.5, 8.3, 8.5, 7.1)</p> <p>Worcester City 8.3% (6.7, 13.8, 8.5, 10.0, 5.7, 8.8, 8.1,)</p> <p>Wychavon 4.8% (4.3, 6.2, 8.2, 6.3, 3.7, 4.2, 4.0,)</p> <p>Wyre Forest 7.6% (8.3, 9.1, 9.4, 9.1, 5.1, 8.5, 7.0,)</p> <p>Worcestershire 6.4% (6.0, 8.8, 7.6, 7.5, 5.0, 6.8, 6.4,)</p>	<p>Linked to the Crime & Disorder agenda and introduced following discussions with elected members, this measure has been in place over 10 years now, although only eight years results appear in the table. There are some changes for each district, but the overall average for the County is similar to previous years. Only Bromsgrove's figure is above the average compared to its previous figures, so, despite the record-breaking summer heat, where people were having their windows open for longer, perhaps they were less worried by noise from licensed premises. Members are reminded that this measure only records the level of accusations of breaches, and we can confirm that there has not been an increase any kind of formal action. It still shows that 90% plus of premises across the County are well run and controlled by their operators, and we know from interactions with Police and Trading Standards colleagues that concerns tend to be limited to smaller numbers of premises.</p>
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	<p>Bromsgrove 1.98 (1.93, 2.19, 2.26, 2.25, 2.56, 1.96, 2.7, 2.82, 3.0, 2.7, 3.1)</p> <p>Malvern Hills 1.91 (1.62, 1.91, 1.93, 2.29, 2.45, 2.07, 2.2, 2.39, 3.0, 2.3, 3.9)</p> <p>Redditch 1.94 (1.89, 2.45, 3.09, 3.61, 3.67, 2.97, 3.2, 3.61, 4.1, 3.7, 3.5)</p> <p>Worcester City 2.45 (2.03, 2.86, 3.40, 3.47, 3.1, 2.78, 3.2, 3.13, 4.2, 4.0, 2.9)</p> <p>Wychavon 2.13</p>	<p>Given the rates for all districts last year were reporting their lowest figures since the indicator was introduced, unsurprisingly it is slightly increased this year. However, all reported figures are modest compared to previous years and even Worcester at the highest reported this year is below the average for that district. With record-breaking temperatures, we might have expected a steeper rise, but perhaps people were less concerned than we might have anticipated.</p> <p>Domestic noise represents more than half of the nuisance complaints and, as we have illuded to in Activity Data Reports, noise from dogs and from audio devices remain</p>

		(1.75, 2.04, 2.07, 2.45, 2.08, 2.01, 2.1, 2.46, 2.7, 2.6, 2.5) Wyre Forest 2.44 (2.04, 2.29, 2.75, 2.65, 2.71, 2.37, 2.6, 3.23, 3.4, 3.0, 3.0) Worcestershire 2.17 (1.89, 2.33, 2.57, 2.9, 2.74, 2.35, 2.7, 2.93, 3.4, 3.1, 3.8)	key drivers of this. With commercial premises it tends to be a small number of these that certain residents have concerns about, and things like a change of DPS in a pub and the business looking at more diverse ways of bringing in revenue can lead to friction with the local community. 1,299 noise cases were received during 2025/2016 (171 more than the previous year), with 795 cases (61%) relating to noise from domestic properties.
13	Total Income	£654,847 which is 21.7% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue budget figure (£3,017,000) and 15.4% of current revenue budget (£4,294,000)	This figure does not include the income for work derived from partners like the Homes 4 Ukraine work or other work for the six partners. This is purely money raised from outside of the partnership.
14	Cost of regulatory services per head of population.	Based on outrun cost of £4,227,369 against the County's most recent population estimate of 613680 in 2023, the service cost is: £6.89 per head	This is the amount spent by the partners following the off-setting of cost with income, then divided by the most recent mid-year estimate the County Council provides on the population estimates pages of its website. It is difficult to benchmark this figure with other authorities as WRS functions are not all of those reported in the relevant part of the RO return to DLUHC.

The WRS management team is committed to a high standard of service delivery with the resource available to it. As has often been said, this is sometimes difficult within the legal framework that the service must work in, and sometimes persuasion is the only tool available to officers to achieve a balance between one need and another. Whilst business satisfaction has dipped a little this year, for no obvious reason again, the larger continuing challenge for the service is to improve the perception of non-business customers have of our performance. With so few responses and knowing that those who are dissatisfied will be significantly more likely to reply than those happy with the service, especially as we are all inundated we people asking us to rate their performance, this may be easier said than done. Given how few responses the service received, the team will need to look at alternative means of getting feedback.

Management team meetings are used to review performance against the service plan and to highlight any issues of concern. Principal Officers (first line managers) attend these wider management meetings to ensure a two-way flow of information between management and staff. Separately, the Head of Service and Team Managers meet weekly to ensure everything is kept under review. Teams have their own detailed plans that sit below the service plan signed off by Joint Board. Progress against this is monitored by Team Managers and Principal Officers. The Management team also looks to the strategic direction of the service and ensures that the operational and financial resources available to partners are used in the most efficient manner to achieve both their individual strategic aims together with WRS priorities.

Whilst our Uniform IT platform is a little old and clunky, still housed locally not in the cloud, it operates reasonably well across functions and continued refinement ensures our ability to report to Joint Board on our performance measures in an accurate way. Consideration was given to replacement of the system some time ago but, in the current financial climate, this is cost-prohibitive when we have a system in place that does the job, albeit has its limitations. The process of Local Government Reorganisation probably reinforces this decision and, once we have a decision and know how the world will look for the service post-April 2028, it may be worth opening a dialogue with colleagues in the partner authorities. Systems is one of the elements of the Services workstream currently established and looking at LGR so this may lead to those conversations.

The service also subscribes to the national IDB intelligence database, enabling it to share intelligence with other local authorities in the region and nationally so that common issues and individual entities active across local authority borders can be identified and work to deal with them co-ordinated. MHCLG has been looking to encourage the broader use of the system, especially at district council level, and has been funding access for district council Housing Standards teams to help them better engage with colleagues in Trading Standards services where enforcement responsibility for estate agency, tenant fees and energy efficiency of buildings sits.

There are a wide range of bodies to which the service must report data (e.g., Food Standards Agency, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Health and Safety Executive, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Gambling Commission etc.). All statutory reports are submitted to ensure that WRS continues to meet its partner's statutory obligations. It was hoped that the central bodies would accept a single data return for all partners, but it now appears that all Departments except for the Health and Safety Executive continue to require individual returns for each partner. WRS provides these as necessary.

A short summary of activity data is included at Appendix 4 to avoid duplication with the wider and more detailed set of activity data that is provided in the final Activity Data Report for 2025/26, which members will receive at the same meeting where this Annual Report is presented.

There was no engagement with the shared Internal Audit team this year beyond support for the implementation of the automation project that utilises the Victoria Forms product to allow the submission of on-line service requests and license applications that are automatically put into the back-office Uniform database to reduce inputting. We did, however, receive an audit of Licensing by the internal audit team acting on behalf of Wyre Forest DC, who are not part of the shared service. Generally, the results were positive with only 3 minor issues to address, which were picked up by the team.

2.0 SERVICE DELIVERY HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food Safety:

Routine food safety interventions continued as norm during the year, our five new staff from the previous year having undergone competency training and able to carry out food work in premises suitable to their role. We reduced our contractor support to one full time individual. A new EHO joined the team in January

One of the newly created roles was Regulatory Support Officers whose work was focussed on the lower risk end of food registrations where there is a very high turnover of businesses with ongoing data cleansing required.

The Food Standards Agency continued to take an interest in local authority food safety performance not just at WRS, but countrywide. During 25-26 they required us to produce an updated Food Safety Action Plan to reduce outstanding visits by March 2028. They also required us to improve compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice to ensure interventions are carried out within 28 days of due inspection date. This led the service to create two Business Compliance Teams (East working in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wychavon Districts and West working in Malvern Hills, Worcester and Wyre Forest).

We completed 3542 interventions during the year, of which 2158 were inspections and 1384 information and intelligence gathering activities. 870 new business registrations and 490 food related complaints were received, and 116 health certificates were issued. The inspection programme resulted in only 13 appeals against the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score given by officers and 83 premises requested a paid-for re-rating visit once any remedial work had been done., an increase of 25% on the previous year. Compliance continued 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 continued to find poor premises where more formal action is required. Whilst numbers have remained small (66 L0-L2 on FHRS), there continues to be a small upwards trend in premises dropping in their FHRS. Failure to have a documented system, poor cleaning, lack of hot water, lack of training and inadequate pest control were the main reasons where conditions were sufficiently poor to give a low rating.

We continued to work closely with Trading Standards colleagues including on allergen management where compliance continues to be an issue, especially in smaller businesses in the ethnic sectors.

The year also saw the trial take place of The Range in Kidderminster who were fined £300,000 for an infestation of mice. Officers also dealt with an increase in illegally imported or contaminated foods including a large consignment of raw frozen octopus and a range of banned African imports. Worcestershire is also home to the largest UK importer of chicken and chicken products leading to a number of recalls and investigations into food production chains involving multiple countries and local authorities.

Work is ongoing with a high security prison in the Wychavon DC area to secure access for monitoring food safety improvements.

Three salmonella incidents with raw chicken and processed chicken products for Aldi imported from Poland by Westbridge Foods were addressed, requiring liaison with the FSA Incidents Team and several local authorities where affected products were being stored (Malvern Hill DC). The quarter also saw three voluntary closures of food businesses due to poor food hygiene standards.

Your officers provided support to Goodmans Geese (Malvern Hills DC) with an APHA investigation when bird flu restrictions hit, with the associated threat to their essential Christmas trade, worked with an international business in Bromsgrove DC to ensure the integrity of their distressed load process after some consignment issues and supported another local company in exporting new products to Turkey.

The service supported the Victoria Fayre Safety Advisory Group and event in Worcester, with officers monitoring the food stalls.

We have noted an increase in the number of general enquiries about opening new food businesses, and new registrations continue at some 60 per month adding to the team's workload.

CEH: Nuisance and pollution:

This year was a challenging time for your Community Environmental Health Team, with some very complex and difficult cases coinciding with the retirement of one of the Principal Officers who led on noise and pollution issues and some officers requiring extended and unforeseen periods of leave. Recruitment has proven to be very difficult due to the nationally recognised shortage of qualified environmental health officers but remains ongoing. The vacant position of Principal Officer is currently being covered using agency staff.

The team investigated 2,194 service requests in respect of nuisance work, 829 of which related to noise from domestic premises. 26 Abatement Notices were served.

Major works in default were undertaken to resolve a long-standing drainage issue in Barnt Green. An old septic tank system and soakaway at a residential property had failed, giving rise to discharges of sewage across the property and into the road. The remedial works included the installation of a modern packaged sewage treatment plant with consented discharge into the highway drainage system, avoiding the need for a new soakaway which would have been costly and disruptive and prone to future failure.

The summer months saw the Team involved in some very interesting and unusual nuisance investigations. In addition to the usual barking dog complaints which included the submission of an enforcement file for breach of an abatement notice in Worcester, Officers investigated nuisance arising from extensive development works in Bromsgrove, noise nuisance from a car wash in Redditch which has subsequently closed following our involvement, and noise in Bromsgrove in respect of the fast-growing sport of Padel, the sound of which unfortunately is somewhat akin in nature to that of a shooting range. We also received a query in respect of paramotor aviators in Malvern Hills. Not a problem for which we have powers, but we were able to signpost to the appropriate regulatory body

Infection control investigations were undertaken into cases of norovirus and cryptosporidium across the district, and an Officer was deployed to oversee an exhumation. In our infection control role, we are also supporting the invasive mosquito surveillance efforts coordinated by the Medical Entomology and Zoonoses Ecology Team (MEZE) at UKHSA. This project has been crucial in detecting invasive mosquitoes (*Aedes albopictus*/tiger mosquito and *Aedes aegypti*) on seven occasions since 2016. This surveillance is significant given the rising number of Dengue virus cases in Europe, exemplified by the detection of three locally acquired cases in Paris last year, necessitating invasive mosquito control measures. Our role is in running and submitting mosquito traps as part of the surveillance effort. With rising temperatures, we anticipate detections to become more frequent. Early detection and control of these mosquitoes will be increasingly crucial across England to mitigate public health risks associated with mosquito-borne diseases.

CEH: Health and Safety:

Following receipt of a Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 notification, an accident investigation was carried out into a Jewson DIY outlet in Redditch. A Forklift truck had reversed into and run over the right foot of a window fitter from a local company, who was collecting building materials from the branch. He was attended by a paramedic and taken directly to hospital with multiple foot fractures and dislocated toes.

The Parent Company was subsequently successfully prosecuted in Q1, found guilty of offences under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and on appeal against sentence fined £300,000 with costs to the sum of £11,029.

Sadly, investigations continued into several fatalities notified to the team, with regular liaison and updates being made to the Coroner's Office. Your officers supported the Coroner following an investigation into a fatality at Aldi which involved a scissor lift and undertook a project through tasking whereby swimming pool operators were contacted and provided with advice following a swimming pool fatality earlier in the year.

Safety Advisory Group working continued, including Safety at Sportsgrounds work for Worcestershire County Council, with ongoing engagement with Bromsgrove Sporting, Sixways stadium and Kidderminster Harriers Football club. Worcester Racecourse also has a regulated stand, and the end of season Safety Group meeting was chaired by WRS Lead Officer. As we moved towards the Spring, preparations began for the festival season that generally kicks off the first Bank Holiday weekend in May.

We were also able to provide safety advice in respect of the re-enactment battles of Evesham and Worcester, which sounds somewhat ironic, and in respect of an algal bloom which made an appearance in a Redditch park, presenting a safety hazard. We also assisted the new owners in their preparations for welcoming Rugby back to Sixways and carried out checks at the Sunshine Music Festival.

LICENSING

Licensing General:

The number of queries and applications have remained consistent and followed the usual established pattern, but the implementation of Victoria forms has certainly changed and reduced the number of queries the team receive in respect of Temporary Event notices and Personal Licences. This in turn has allowed the team to focus on streamlining processes in other aspects of licensing mainly taxis to ensure applications are received in full meeting all the requirements of each district policy.

With one member of the team being off long-term sick, others working on Victoria Forms and vacancies the usual pre-summer and pre-winter spike in work driven by applications and queries relating to both Taxi Licensing and the Licensing Act meant the team were stretched making it a challenging year for officers.

The team have worked with all finance teams across the districts to ensure Victoria Forms finances are being redistributed to the districts prior to the roll out of the Taxi forms which will inevitably bring new challenges in the short term but a more efficient and customer friendly journey going forward. In talking to the Taxi trade across all districts this is a much-welcomed introduction which will allow all applicants to fill out their licensing applications and attach all documents needed in one submission rather than send in separate documents and emails.

Licensing officers and colleagues in the community environmental health team have worked together to look at enforcement and compliance in both the NTE (Nighttime economy) and across the extensive programme of events and festivals that take place in the County. By working together and with partners including the police, the BID and district council officers the teams are engaging with event organisers early to ensure they have the correct permissions in place including an up-to-date events management plan if needed. Compliance checks are then carried out to businesses to ensure they are upholding their licensing objectives and/or operating their events safely.

The introduction of the permanent pavement licensing regime last year allowed for more flexible dining experiences for customers and allowed businesses to use their outdoor spaces safely. In light of this a review was undertaken of all current street trading policies across the districts and it was agreed that there needed to be more flexibility for businesses to trade and meet changing consumer habits and demands. These will be rolled out across all the districts in 2026/2027.

A number of new licensing regimes have been highlighted by Central Government but one that came to fruition was the implementation of the new Primate licensing regulations. Each new Policy was reviewed by each licensing committee and implemented ahead of the required implementation in April 2026.

Member Training is always a big feature for officers in early June, and this took place across all districts, with officers providing training to new and established members of the six Licensing committees. A new interactive format was welcomed by members, and this allowed different scenarios to be played out through role play and videos, which allowed a multitude of different questions to be raised by councillors, to get themselves ready for the role at hearings.

Alongside operational and day to day work the team continued to strive for efficiencies, with work continuing to implement new processes to streamline taxi applications with several procurement projects commenced including making the DBS process for taxi drivers and the printing and posting of taxi plates.

Taxis:

A review of CCTV in taxis was discussed at Licensing committees as part of the follow up review to the 2022 Taxi Standards and a consultation by the Department for transport was recently run to make Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) responsible for all taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing. This consultation was following a white paper proposal to improve passenger safety, increase enforcement efficiency, and establish national minimum standards. A response was submitted on behalf of all district councils by officers after engaging with the Chairs of Licensing for all district councils.

Enforcement work continued across the team including evening work on taxi ranks. The team are now working with other Councils to look at taxi matters in several districts, particularly issues with ranks, over ranking and looking at the increase of area vehicles have given rise to concerns.

Alcohol/ Entertainment and Gambling:

Enforcement work continued across the team including officers investigating suspended premises licences. Intelligence suggests that premises that have not paid their annual fee may also be liable to be non-compliance in other areas of regulatory control, so they are generally worthy of an intervention. And a sharp reminder that unlicensed activity is a crime can result in prompt payment!

Work across teams on preliminary meetings were held for events including summer music festivals, and officers worked with event organisers for a previously controversial bank holiday event in Wychavon. A farm in Bromsgrove was one of several venues which held music events under temporary event notices which were monitored over the spring using both noise monitoring equipment and personal visits by members of the CEH and Licensing teams.

As they do every year, several of the WRS teams supported the City Council with colleagues from across the city with the annual Victorian Christmas Fayre. This is an event that several of the teams get involved in and enjoy working with partners to ensure the event goes off safely for all concerned.

Gambling inspections took place across the districts with no major issues reported. There were good signs of compliance and understanding by all premises. The annual visits have improved standards and knowledge of both the licensing team and the businesses across the County.

Animal-related Activity: The number of Animal licensing inspections have increased over the last two years as officers have ensured interim inspections are being undertaken and several welfare issues have been raised as a result of this proactive approach. There were a number of improvement notices and suspensions served on businesses that did in fact make the necessary improvements to have these lifted and return to having a licence albeit a change to their previous star rating.

The team have noticed a slight decrease in compliance but are working with the communications officer to send out information so that licence holders are aware of the statutory guidelines and requirements for each star rating.

Finally, the West Midlands Safari Park had their licensing visit for its Zoo license where no concerns were raised by the team or the vet present for the visit. The Zoo was pleased with the outcome, and they continue to follow and adhere to policies and guidance as required.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

General Air Quality Work: This continued with officers submitting the 6 Annual Status Reports for all Districts required by the Ministry. Various forms of engagement took place with member forums in a number of the partner councils.

Steering group meetings with key stakeholders were held through the year for Bromsgrove District Council, Worcester City Council and Wyre Forest District Council to progress their Air Quality Action Plans.

The Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy for Worcester City Council was finalised this year. This updated strategy both reviewed and replaced the document from 2001, taking account of changes in the Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance, national policy, council policy, and set out the Council's strategic approach to review and assessment of contaminated land. It was approved in February 2026. This Strategy was the last in a refresh programme for all the District Council's strategies. Work has now commenced on the reprioritisation of sites with the potential for contamination to be present such that any assessment of harm can be taken.

Through the year Officers were often 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. These work areas often involve officers reviewing complex reports provided in support of planning applications and the discharge of planning condition requests.

Routine Industrial Permitting work including inspection of large industrial processes, foundries and casting through to cement processing and petrol stations continued through the year. The focus of this regime is on activities which, by their very nature are likely to cause pollution unless they are controlled and monitored correctly. Generally, there is good compliance in these areas, but the service has in recent years taken several cases to court following pollution incidents or near misses. Annual returns on processes permitted, risk and activity undertaken were provided to Defra.

Behaviour Change Project: Continuing to build on the findings of the behaviour change survey jointly developed with Worcestershire CC Public Health that was undertaken last year, we have continued to roll out an engagement campaign with local schools, colleagues, community groups and during community events and activities.

Dog related work: It has been a very busy year for this area of the service. We have continued to deliver dog warden, kennelling and rehoming contracts for Birmingham City, Cheltenham Borough, Gloucester City, North Somerset, Tewkesbury Borough and two Welsh authorities, and to support this work officers went out to recruitment to bring in capacity to support the wider work.

Unfortunately, the new contracts brought a significant number of dogs where euthanasia was the only option as the number of dogs exhibiting aggressive behaviour went up dramatically. This was partly due to higher numbers of Pitbull and XL Bully type dogs, both banned breeds, coming into our care. The heightened levels of aggression in some of the stray dogs led to an increased number being euthanised using a dart gun to minimise the risk to wardens, staff at kennels, the vets and the public. Procurement of a specialised vet able to perform such tasks has assisted with service delivery.

As well as the larger bull breeds, we also saw an increase in the number of puppies and dogs with significant welfare support needs. This included dogs that are underweight, and those that suffer with sores, injuries and fur loss. Officers attempted to meet the identified best method of caring for each dog, which sometimes meant looking to alternative forms of boarding outside of our contracted kennels, such as fostering. We have also run a number of publicity campaigns aimed at education and support as well as specific ones aimed at identifying perpetrators.

Overall, stray numbers were at the highest for some years, mainly driven by the new contracts. Whilst we recognise the requirement to euthanise banned breed dogs if unclaimed or not covered by relevant exemption certificates, it is distressing for both the wardens and the staff at our kennelling partners.

ICT team: The team continue to ensure we are engaged with various cyber security awareness activities designed to increase the security and resilience of the computer system we use.

They also worked to enhance service delivery, with these activities including regular updates and patches to our main back-office system, record retention and deletions. The team also contributed to service-wide projects including the Automation Project and introduction of Taxi digital Identity records.

At the beginning of the financial year the team was pivotal in delivering the statutory returns required for the six partners in several areas including the food law returns for the Food Standards Agency.

Later in the year, the team continued its work with the Host's IT service and back-office support company to completely refresh our Database address gazetteer to include regular updates going forward and increased the time our back-office database system is available.

The team have continued to contribute to the service budget with income generation activity in supporting the County Council's Trading Standards team; Bromsgrove and Redditch Planning team; and Tewkesbury Borough Council's Environmental Health and Licensing teams with their respective databases and associated digital documents.

BDC/ RBC SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Enviro-crime/ Planning enforcement: We continue to develop the intelligence led approach across these functions, using it to drive the roll out of Overt cameras with associated signage specifically targeting hotspot areas and have been successful in capturing offenders. Some incidents remain under investigation with others leading to fixed penalty notices. The continued focus on these specific areas using our intelligence-led approach is being reviewed every month to ensure continued best use of resources to try and slow down the prolific tipping in these areas. A total of 89 Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been served across the two districts during the year with almost all being paid. This included the use of the newly set FPN for breach of a Community Protection Notice (CPN). Where FPNs have not been paid or are not appropriate, prosecution files are being prepared. With the natural lag of time from commencement of investigation to service of FPNs, CPNs or prosecutions, we are anticipating a continued level of enforcement activity in 2026/27. During the year updates on enforcement activity, introduction of the FPN for Breach of a CPN, introduction of a Parking Contravention Notice (Civil) for littering and revision to the environmental enforcement policy have been delivered through the Committee processes.

OUT OF AREA WORK AND INCOME GENERATION

Although contract work on contaminated land for East Staffordshire District Council came to an end during 2025, we continued to offer contracted support to Gloucester City Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council, as well as the six Worcestershire districts.

We have continued income generation work with Bromsgrove and Redditch Planning, supporting Worcestershire CC Trading Standards, and Tewkesbury Borough Council's Environmental Health and Licensing.

3.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Quarterly financial monitoring reports are provided to managers and finances are regularly considered by officers from the partners ahead of each Joint Board meeting. Bromsgrove DC operates a robust ordering and authorisation process to ensure the transparency and accuracy of costing. This year saw an underspend at year end of around £67,000. This was down to excellent work on income generation across the service but particularly in the Technical Services division and with dog related activity where our expertise is recognised in the region but also reflects some of the difficulties with recruiting into parts of the service, especially Community Environmental Health. The draft overrun budget for 2024/5 is included as Appendix 3. The overrun position is subject to final audit, although the budget is at a level that does not require a specific audit of the WRS accounts. Hence, this will be done as part of the overall audit of Bromsgrove District Council's accounts.

From 2016/17 until 2020/21, the main financial operating assumption was a cash standstill budget, with increasing income targets set to balance the budget each year. The pandemic period saw WRS reshape itself and take on further work funded by partners or by the County Council. Post-pandemic, partners have recognised that the service's ability to increase income is more limited and have agreed to fund the recent pay increases and necessary uplifts in pension and national insurance contributions. Members recognised that the income generation progress could not deliver the level of increases expected, especially in the current climate. This situation is unlikely to change in the immediate future with pay increases likely to be at similar levels to recent year's level and prices continuing to increase. The uncertainty created by Local Government Re-organisation may lead to an unwillingness from new potential clients to buy service from us, or it may cause existing customers to look closer to home for solutions as part of the re-organisation process. Should it be necessary, the service's reserve may help partners to buffer some

financial impacts were the financial model for the service to become difficult to maintain, allowing partners time to determine the way forward for the delivery of these functions. 2023/4 was the first and only year during WRS's 16-year existence that officers have had to ask members to exercise this ability to draw down from reserves to balance an overspend, and this was only £8,000.

4.0 WORKFORCE PLANNING AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

4.1 Structures, Turnover and Training

The WRS structure has now been in place since October 2015 with Simon Wilkes as the Head of Service with a team of four Manager posts looking after different areas of the service. David Mellors as Community Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager covering all the responsibilities of his Community Environmental Health team, (Food Safety, Health and Safety and Statutory Nuisance, with some other minor areas,) and the Trading Standards remit (Weights and Measures, Food and Agricultural Standards, Product Safety, Fair Trading, Animal Health) on a contractual basis since the County's departure from the partnership in 2016. Mark Cox continues to head up the Technical Services Team covering Technical Pollution (managing Planning, IPPC, Contaminated Land, Air Quality), Dog Wardens, Pest Control, Information Management & Database administration and more recently the first contact team of Duty Officers. Technical Services also includes the new Planning enforcement and Enviro-crime enforcement added by Bromsgrove and Redditch. Kiran Lahel heads up the Licensing and Support Services Team, with the Licensing team servicing all six district council Licensing committees as those decisions around policy remain with to the six partners, either for practical reasons or because the law (Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005,) requires it.

Staff turnover remains relatively low, although we are starting to see older members of staff taking flexible retirement and several reducing their hours to allow them to commit to other activities away from the workplace. Where people have to commute, one or two have looked at jobs nearer to home to reduce this pressure, which is relatively low due to our flexible working policy. We have not seen any further losses to better paid roles with national public bodies, but as we have said in previous years, the fact is that WRS continues to provide a solid platform for professional development shows that we retain our reputation for excellence. Previous new recruits have settled in, and their diverse backgrounds have brought a new dynamic, whilst the new cohort of food officers recruited last year are now making a meaningful contribution to the work programme. The further expansion of food capacity within Community Environmental Health has meant re-arranging the teams into two commercial units and one on Nuisances and other Environmental matters, to ensure the correct level of support and to hopefully demonstrate continued improvements in food performance.

We do need to recognise the risks that our aging workforce presents and to start to look at how we bring new blood into the service. The absence of apprentice type training routes has hampered this for Environmental Health, but we are now seeing the development of such courses which would allow the service to access levy funding for the training if we can establish dedicated training posts on the establishment. This is something we need to actively address in the coming years, particularly if we can utilise learning establishments in the wider area.

Maintaining competence remains central to our ability to deliver income and, helpfully more training is now being delivered in bite-sized chunks via Teams, making it easier and cheaper to hold onto relevance competencies. However, there will always be a need to undertake some face-to-face training, particularly where a course has to run over an extended period to embed new knowledge within the officer's understanding. As ever, we will look to use our usual PDR approach this year with a main one and a 6-month review to help identify what individuals need.

4.2 Staff Sickness

During 2024/5 staff sickness reached 6.05 days per FTE, the highest it has been since before the pandemic. Almost 70% of this year's sick days were classed as long term (absence for a period exceeding 28 days,) and are down to a small number of staff members with serious health conditions. One of those officers has now left the organisation and another will be returning to work shortly on phased return following a battle with leukaemia. We hope to see a significant improvement next year, and it should be noted that short term sickness accounts for less than 2-days per FTE, which may be regarded as good for an aging workforce likely to be susceptible to a range of health conditions seen in older adults.

5.0 ACCOMMODATION

WRS remains located at Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, with flexible and mobile working generally the norm, and staff frequently using home as their start and finish point for work in the field. Office based activity will remain important for team performance, identity, and morale so officers will continue to operate to a flexible pattern that facilitates this and provides face to face liaison with managers and colleagues or for meetings. The touch down points retained in each of the councils have provided an excellent venue for licensing appointments and these continue to be maintained on an appointment only basis, providing a useful balance between availability for the trade and efficiency of service delivery. Taxi drivers/ operators can be told what they will need over the telephone, ensuring that officer face-to-face time can be used more effectively to ensure complete applications are made and that paperwork has been completed correctly.

These work patterns enable staff to strike a better work/life balance which is essential for good morale, whilst maintaining the team ethos, having an organisation with which the staff identify and belong to, and giving the opportunity to share ideas and issues with other team members. Despite what those who evangelise about the benefits of virtual contact say, it does not build the kinds of trusting, working relationships necessary for the work that we do, so whilst we will be making more use of systems like Teams, it will not wholly replace face to face interaction between staff members.

6.0 BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION (SERVICE DELIVERY OPERATING MODEL)

The Intelligence Operating Model is now the way we deliver most of our activities. The pressures of the Food Standards Agency mean we will be more limited in how we apply this to this function, but it will still have a part to play, and intelligence practices will still be important in identifying the detail behind the ownership of some of our more opaque outlets. The model of a Strategic Assessment for longer term priorities and Tactical Assessments for adjusting resource allocation to address emergent threats has long been the operating model in core policing and other law enforcement organisations, not only nationally but internationally too. WRS continues to lead in the wider regulatory environment, using what we learnt with our Trading Standards colleagues on how this model can support our activities.

The revised Strategic Assessment that will help inform delivery until 2028 now, recommended that the focus of activity should be around the following tactical priorities:

- Supporting a safe and vibrant night-time economy
- Promoting the responsible breeding, sale and ownership of dogs.
- Supporting safe, clean and healthy communities

A Team Manager will take responsibility for each one, ensuring that work is done across the three teams that can contribute to related outcomes. These three are sufficient to capture project and business as usual activities including environmental permitting, air quality, contaminated land, food law enforcement away from the NTE, and others.

Other intelligence products review our data and intelligence to support Team Managers and Principal Officers in determining activities to respond to the intelligence picture current at that time. Subject and problem profiles will provide a more in-depth look at issues or the entities creating them to support managers in their decision making.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

WRS continues to manage its approach to risk and business continuity. The development of policy, delivery of service priorities and the management of its services for six partners attract risk. In reviewing its service risks and the effects of management strategies and policies WRS seeks to:

- Identify, assess, and manage risk,
- Safeguard the services assets and equipment,

Risk Management becomes must be considered as part of our management process so that, where appropriate; risks are avoided, reduced, transferred, or retained and managed. The WRS risk register was developed so it could be integrated with the partners' individual risk registers. It is maintained and reviewed periodically, with the current version attached at Appendix 2. This was reviewed ahead of the creation of the 2026/7 service plan. Many of the generic risks and mitigation served us well during the pandemic and remain relevant. Flexible work patterns can create their own risks around feelings of isolation, lack of team identity and loss of belonging to the organisation and basic things like risk of muscular-skeletal injury because people spend long hours working at desks that are not ideal. So, whilst the service will continue to make more use of virtual meetings, they will never fully replace face to face interaction, nor will they lead to the abandonment of a physical location for the service.

Cyber-attack is seen as the most prevalent risk currently and the service continues to work with our ICT host, Wyre Forest DC and Bromsgrove DC to limit this and help to ensure we have good business continuity measures in place. Team Managers continue to work on tailoring business continuity plans to meet the needs of their diverse service areas. Understanding what functions or activities need to be restored quickly is key to this, followed by exercising plans to ensure everyone understands what needs to be done and where to find what is necessary to continue with activity.

The return to a more traditional approach to food law enforcement and the inspection at low-risk premises currently favoured by the Food Standards Agency has led to the service including a specific line in the register to highlight the Agency's demand for "to the letter" compliance with the Local Authority Code of Practice on Food Law Enforcement. Whilst we will continue to shape what we do with intelligence, options around food to vary activity are somewhat more limited. The introduction of the revised version of the Local Authority Code occurred ahead of schedule in October last year, and it is clear from correspondence with Chief Executives that the expectations around compliance with statutory Code will continue, extending next year to include the food standards work undertaken by the County Council's Trading Standards team. It should be noted that there has always been a line in the register relating to the behaviour of government departments and arms-length bodies and policy change but give the Agency's approach, they now merit separate mention.

Concerns remain around public expectation of what is deliverable in law, particularly in relation to nuisance issues. The law is old and effectively what is a statutory nuisance is a matter of opinion rather than being based on any specific statutory levels of, for example noise. This is difficult for members of the public to accept but the service will look to improve its performance in the eyes of our non-business customers.

Finally, a line was added last year relating to local government re-organisation. Whilst this is not relevant looking backwards, it is to the services and the partner's future. With the bids having been submitted and knowing that the future is likely to be either slotting into a unitary county arrangement or remaining a shared service alongside Public Health in a 2-council shared service gives some certainty. We await the Ministerial decision due during the Summer.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

WRS operates in line with the host Authority's adopted Equality Standard for Local Government as a framework to help embed equality and diversity into everyday aspects of its work. The professional bodies for regulators like the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers are trying support the leaders of our regulatory services to encourage diversity. This is something that we will take on board at WRS and do our best to move forward in an inclusive way.

9.0 THE NEXT STEPS

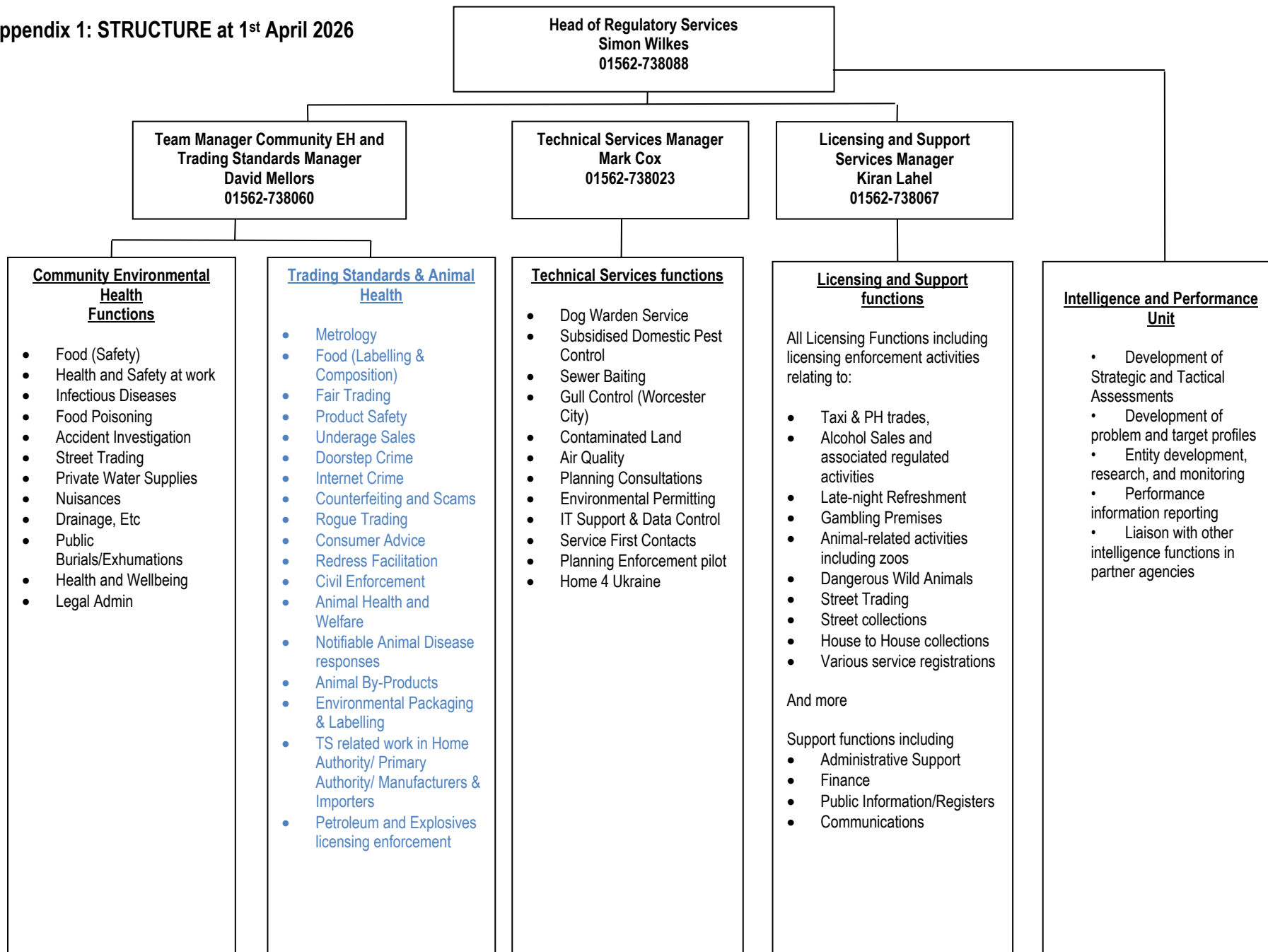
The pandemic is behind us, and we are now back onto a business-as-usual footing. Local government re-organisation creates a question mark for the service and its staff, but the bid documents give two clear options which possibly may have a more limited impact on WRS staff compared with their other district colleagues. There is a risk that the changes will create threats to our income generation activities if new authorities create economies of scale like our own, but these are unlikely to emerge before the process of re-organisation is completed in 2028. In the meantime, our work needs to continue so we will:

- Continue to deliver the WRS Business Plan and our annual operational service plans,
- Maintain existing income streams,
- Following our philosophy of continuous improvement, continue to review operations to improve marginal efficiencies,
- Continue the process of channel shift by increasing the customer's ability to use self-help, do transactions on-line and monitor progress of work.

- Continue to work closely with County Council Trading Standards colleagues and other partner agencies by maintaining links that support both WRS and other services to the benefit of local people.
- Continue to engage with partners to see if any other services could sit well on the WRS platform.
- Support partners with the preparation of business cases for LGR.

There are likely to be further proposed changes to the legislative framework in the coming year as Government continues to modernise some aspects of regulation. We will respond to consultations on behalf of the partners in relation to any proposed changes and, where we can, work with other colleagues in the region to help amplify the thinking of local authority officers across our area.

Appendix 1: STRUCTURE at 1st April 2026



Appendix 2 – WRS Risk Register 2026/7

Risk Description	Consequences	When is this likely to happen	Current Position			Control measures
			Likelihood	Impact	Matrix RAG Status	
Loss of Data through IT failures or Cyber Incident	Disruption to Service Provision. Inability to produce records and data.	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Cyber-attacks are a growing threat for all public bodies. Wyre Forest ICT has effective processes and business continuity plans in place. WFDC has upgraded relevant systems including Windows and Office 365, and is looking to increase security with further additions, which the service will pay for. Cyber security training is delivered regularly and risks identified are tackled.
Issues with the WRS database system	Impact on work planning. Self-help may not enable savings required	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Idox Uniform is an old system but, it provides the necessary functionality and has been capable of integrating with Victoria Forms to provide a sound on-line payment platform that updates the back-office without additional inputting. Bromsgrove & Redditch's additional functions have been integrated into the system so, it does have some flexibility for deployment directly to new enforcement functions. Complexities might arise with potential new service areas not currently catered for within the database, where existing partner databases may need to be maintained in addition.
Effective and efficient Business Continuity arrangements in place	Disruption to service if e.g., Major Power failures or other reasons that access to Wyre Forest House is not possible.	On-going	Very Low	Medium	Amber/Red	Whilst the pandemic showed that we were well prepared for the need to maximise working from home and touchdown stations remain available in partner council locations, WRS Managers continue to build their contingency plans in the event of a prolonged IT failure or cyber-attack that will allow services to be maintained. This is the greatest risk facing local authorities currently and is one we all continue to move forward with.

Maintain our capacity to achieve service delivery	Disruption to service e.g., Major staff sickness (e.g., flu pandemic) or Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified staff.	On-going	Low	Medium	Amber	<p>Whilst the service was able to broaden its activities during the pandemic, engaging people with no formal background to cover roles, it also helped us to better understand the limited availability of competent and qualified officer capacity. This has been re-enforced by recent difficulties in recruiting, particularly into traditional Environmental Health roles. These pressures will only be resolved in the longer term by local and central government investing in additional capacity and additional training to bring more people into the regulatory professions.</p> <p>Demand has increased over the years as we have taken on contracts, effectively operating as a centre of excellence for certain activities. This does however mean that, whilst we have good resource of our own, in event of an issue, there are limited places where we could ask for help. Our service is better resourced and qualified than would be possible if we didn't provide such services for income. Which balances this. Regional and sub-regional groups are in place so can provide shared resources for local authorities if required.</p> <p>Effective training and development processes are in place to ensure recruitment and retention of staff. Maintenance of training budgets has been essential in holding onto our competitive edge for income generation.</p> <p>Regular inventory and maintenance of equipment is undertaken. In the future, budget for replacement kit may be an issue but would be a relatively small amount for partners to share. For example, we know our provider of noise monitoring equipment from Germany no longer makes the equipment we use and, while we can get it repaired by a UK-provider, longer term new forms of kit will need to be assessed to replace the traditional "Matrons."</p>
Pest contractors cease operations.	Disruption to service. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Green	The Pest control framework contract has multiple pest control suppliers so the loss of one allows work to be moved to the others. This should limit or eliminate

						risk, although the unlikely loss of multiple companies might create capacity issues.
Effective and efficient contract arrangement for dog control	Disruption to service if no kennels available. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Amber	There have been significant increases in numbers of stray dogs, dog disease, breed and behavioural complexities and supplier contracts are restricted by distance. Retendering for conventional contracts in kennelling and support services remains difficult and consideration may be given to creating our own kennel capacity. Contractual obligations provide additional pressure. The current kennelling contracts are to be extended until 2028.
Hosting support does not deliver necessary financial and HR support to ensure efficient management	Efficiency of management reduced; staffing issues remain unaddressed, and performance suffers	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Issues with the new BDC finance system have mainly been resolved, however some workarounds remain in place due to some unforeseen issues. Roll out of reporting by managers has yet to be finalised and training provided. HR capacity remains pressured and there are some frustrations around expectations that are being addressed. We need to improve communication with our hosts to ensure the needs of the shared service do not get missed during any significant changes to systems or processes. This has been flagged to the new CEO.
One or more partners continue to be under great financial pressure and may consider alternatives to the partnership to deliver their service	Creates reputational issues for remaining partners and increases the need to manage overheads. Difficulties in delivering highly varied levels of service	On-going	Medium	High	Amber	The 2016 legal agreement limits variations in contribution before partners must move to contractual relationship, but this is quite high before it kicks in (20%.) Leanness of our organisation minimises overheads and focuses resource at the front line. The growth strategy has generated income to support partners, but there are limits to this without additional capacity being added to the system. Historically, invest to save capacity has paid for itself within a relatively short period of time. The impending re-organisation may see significant changes to the way in which external partners require our services, which needs to be considered one we know the decision on structures from 2028 onwards.

Robust arrangements in place in relation to obtaining legal advice and monitoring legislative changes.	Loss of cases is costly and damages reputation.	On-going	Low	Medium	Green	Continued close working with BDC legal team and other partners who don't use BDC for advocacy. Technical and legal training days for staff. Difficulty in keeping informed of Case Law developments for Environmental Health in particular, and new emergent issues can leave the law at a disadvantage or not being addressed without the significant cost of establishing case law. Membership of, and attendance of Officer Technical Groups outside the County does assist with communication of emergent issues, solutions and case results.
Service provision complies with Government requirements, New performance regimes are introduced that the service is not staffed to address	Intervention by Government bodies Other national bodies seek to introduce similar frameworks to the FSA Code to get what they regard as suitable minimum levels of service. We understand that Government is asking its central competent bodies to ensure that regulatory regimes are fit for purpose and do not pose a risk to UK exports post BREXIT as the UK no longer has the cover of the EU taking on this role. This may make new codes or performance frameworks in areas outside of food law more likely. NB: Food Standards Agency is addressed below.	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Limited detail of what is required for statutory minima can make decision making difficult around what is required in law as a minimum. The LGA is clearly aware of impact of budget reductions on regulation and has made it clear Government cannot expect what it had previously. Fewer interventions/ audits by government. The Service's engagement with the Food Standards Agency in recent years has led to a significant increase in investment in relation to food law activity, to bring the service into line more with the Food Law Code of Practice. This has meant bringing back a more traditional approach to these activities rather than the innovative intelligence-led approach being previously used, which of itself did not appear to generate significant risk. Environmental reporting for Local Air Quality Management, Pollution Prevention and Control and Private Water Supply Inspection reports to Defra and DWI have received positive responses with no issues of concern raised by these bodies*.
Compliance with Food Code of Practice	Adverse comments following audits. FSA, can seek ministerial direction	On-going	High	High	Amber/ Red	This is a subset of the section above line as FSA is the only body currently with a statutory code that LAs must have significant regard to, plus it has the power

	to make LAs comply with its Code of Practice					<p>to apply for Ministerial Orders to force LAs to comply with the letter of the Code.</p> <p>Until recently the Agency appears to have been happy to allow LAs to experiment as long as they abide by the spirit of the code and resource the function at a reasonable level. It has now changed tack and is seeking to push local authorities to operate much more closely to the letter of the code in an effort to create additional resource. Papers have been submitted to the Board twice in recent years alerting members to the challenges faced to the innovative approach that the service has been taking.</p> <p>The partners made a significant investment in new resources to address many of the Agency's concerns at the end of 2023/4 and this has been fruitful in terms of improved performance, but the Agency is now insistent on full alignment with its Code, so further investment is planned. This has necessitated a re-design of operations within the Community Environmental Health division, with the creation of geographical teams for the delivery of food and other commercial functions, and a separate environmental enforcement team that will operate across the County.</p>
Failure to deliver external contract work at the level expected by the business or local authority with whom we have the contract	Damage to reputation, loss of future income streams, financial impact of paying damages	On-going	Low	High	Green	Ensure contract negotiations are clear on performance criteria and these are clearly recorded in the final documentation. Monthly reviews against performance criteria. Select staff to ensure competence of those undertaking work outside Worcestershire. Maintain strong links with the customer's monitoring staff. Intervene early with corrective action. Whilst this is not an issue currently, income may become harder to pick up as the re-organisation process gathers momentum.
Local government Re-organisation	Ensuring the statutory regulatory functions are accommodated in any new unitary arrangements to meet	On-going	High	Medium/Low	Green/Amber	There is little for officers to do before any decisions on final structures and timetable are made. The structuring of the shared service means that

	the requirements of the new structure					integration of these elements into one authority would be relatively straight-forward should the decision be to establish a unitary county model. The alternative two-unitary model clearly indicates a preference for the retention of the shared service alongside a shared County-wide Public Health service. Whilst there would need to be conversations on how governance for these shared services might sit and, for regulation, what functions would remain/ be added, there does appear to be some certainty for officers looking forward.
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Appendix 3: Detailed out-turn for Regulatory Services 2025/26

			Revised Full Year Budget 25-26	Committed Expenditure Apr - Mar 26	Variance
Direct Expenditure			£	£	£
Employees					
	Salary		4,440	3,998	-441
	Agency Staff		0	527	527
	Employee Insurance		21	21	0
	Sub-Total - Employees		4,461	4,547	86
Premises					
	Rent / Hire of Premise		82	77	-5
	Cleaning		1	0	0
	Utilities		0	0	0
	Sub-Total - Premises		82	77	-5
Transport					
	Vehicle Hire		13	5	-8
	Vehicle Fuel		8	7	-1
	Road Fund Tax		1	0	-1

	Vehicle Insurance	5	5	0
	Vehicle Maintenance	3	4	1
	Car Allowances	53	41	-12
	Sub-Total - Transport	83	63	-20
	Supplies and Services			
	Furniture & Equipment	46	55	9
	Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	3	1
	Printing & Photocopying	17	9	-8
	Postage	11	15	4
	ICT	99	133	34
	Telephones	40	17	-23
	Training & Seminars	33	20	-13
	Insurance	16	7	-9
	Third Party Payments	209	205	-5
	Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	474	464	-10
	Contractors			
	Dog Warden	121	421	300
	Pest Control	78	83	5

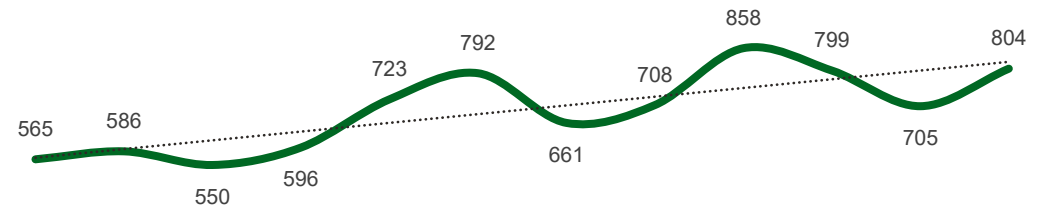
		Taxi / Alcohol / & Other Licensing	52	40	-12
		Other contractors/consultants	3	22	20
		Water Safety	5	7	2
		Food Safety	0	0	0
		Environmental Protection	18	96	78
		Grants / Subscriptions	13	17	5
		Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	8	3
		Sub-Total	295	695	399
		Income			
		Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-1,101	-1,617	-517
		Sub-Total	-1,101	-1,617	-517
		Overall Total	4,294	4,228	-67

Appendix 4: District Council Summaries

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 in the Bromsgrove district.

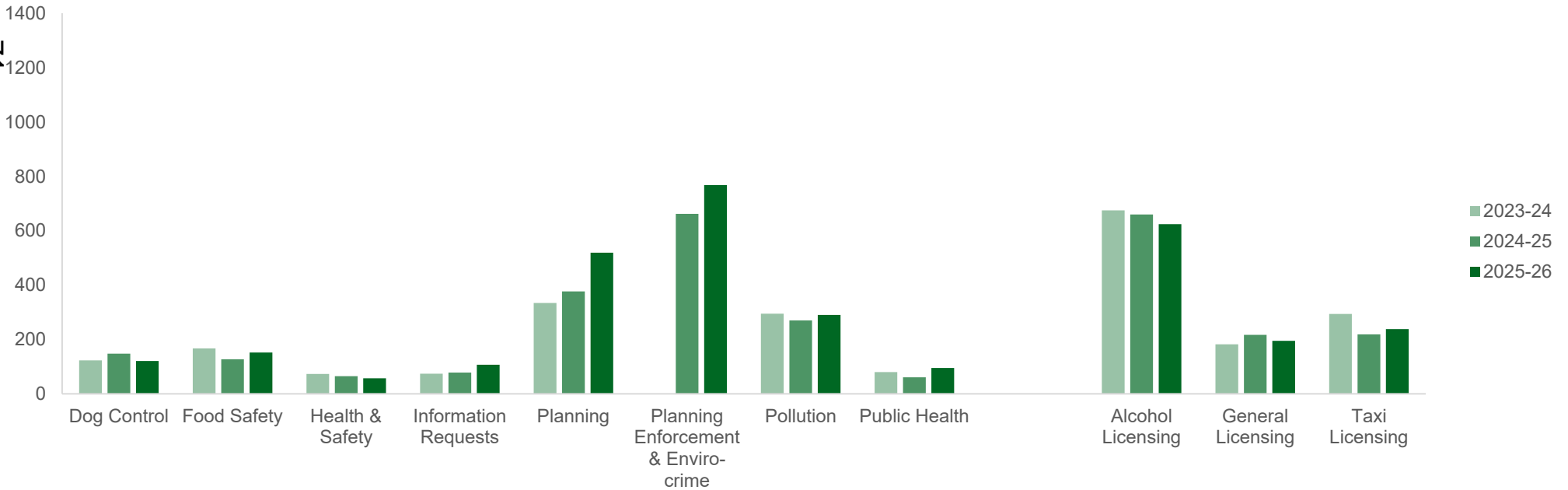
Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service and the Y axis has been standardised to enable comparisons with other districts. The recent increase in cases can be attributed to the additional functions (enviro-crime and planning enforcement) now being delivered by the service.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Page 71

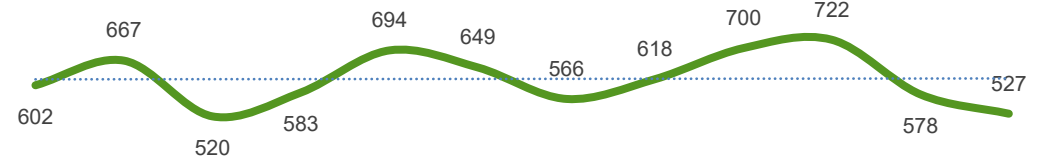


Appendix 5: District Council Summaries

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.

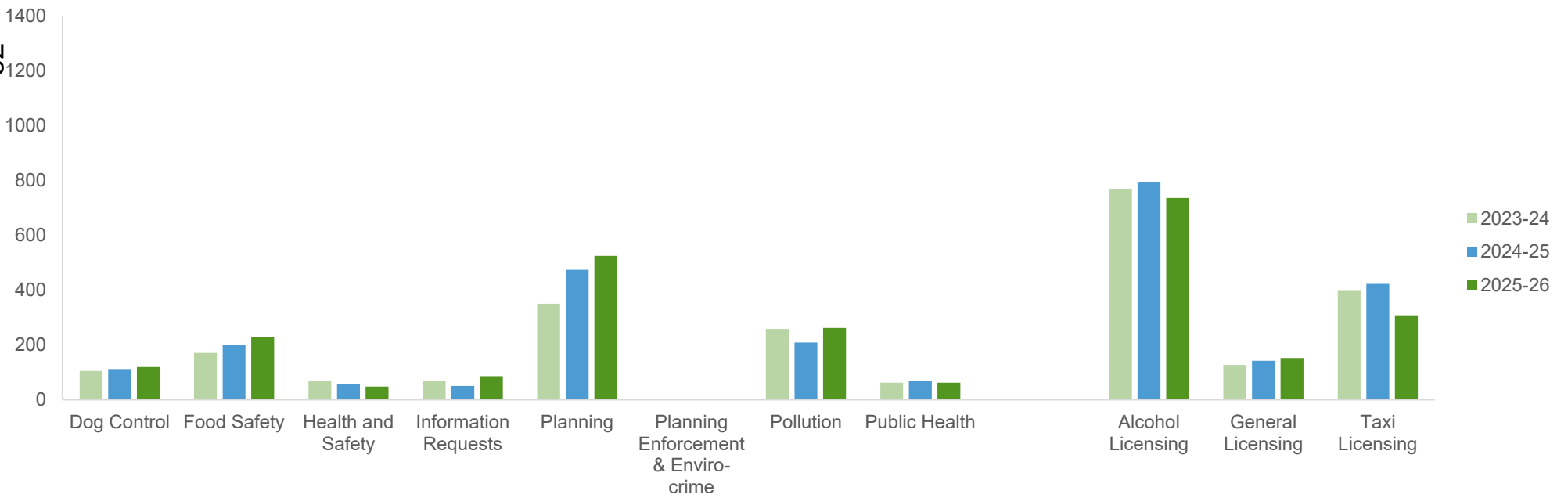
Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service and the Y axis has been standardised to enable comparisons with other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Page 72



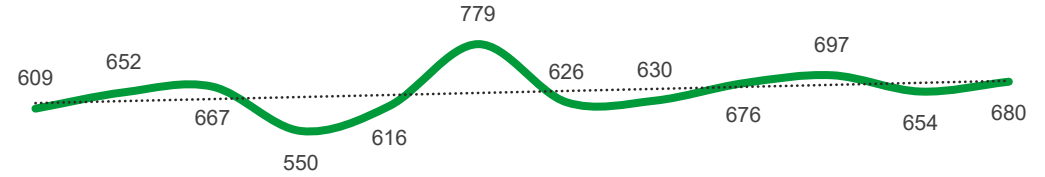
Agenda Item 7

Appendix 5: District Council Summaries

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.

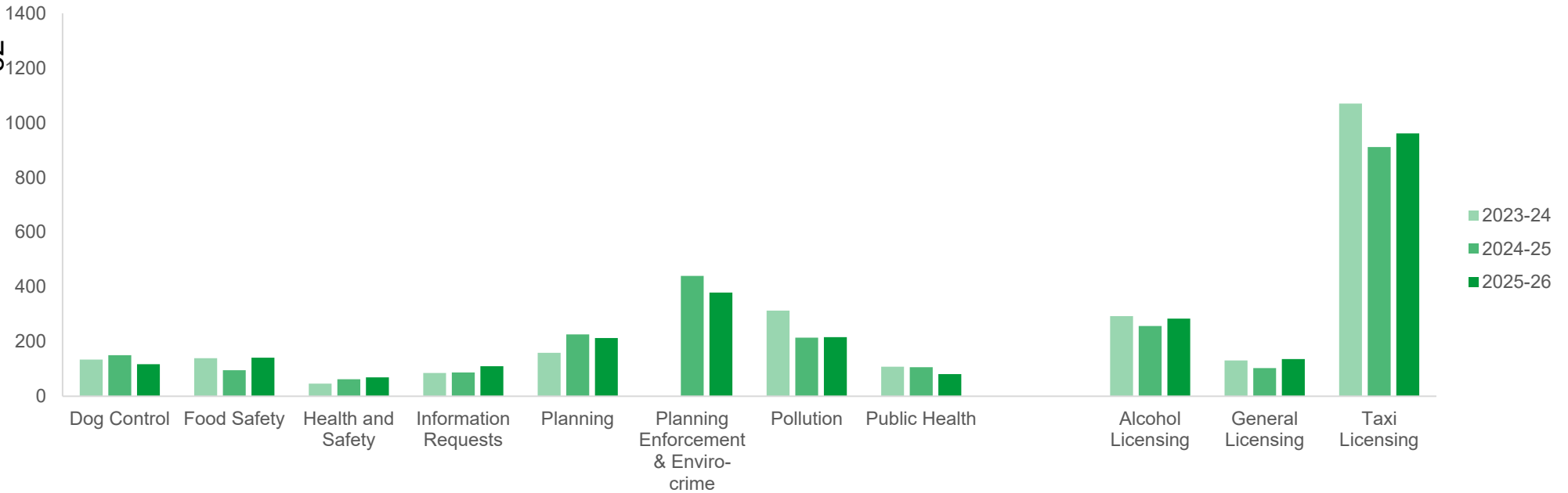
Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service and the Y axis has been standardised to enable comparisons with other districts. The recent increase in cases can be attributed to the additional functions (enviro-crime and planning enforcement) now being delivered by the service.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Page 73

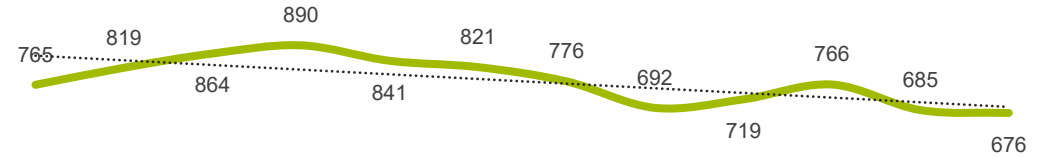


Appendix 5: District Council Summaries

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.

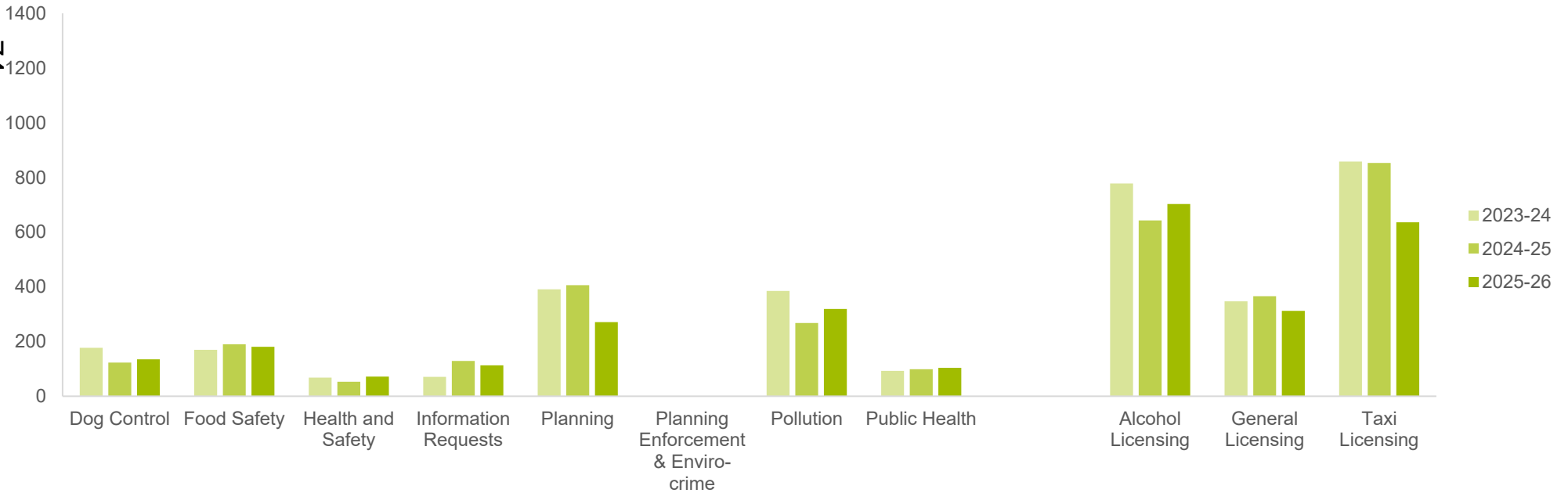
Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service and the Y axis has been standardised to enable comparisons with other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notificaitons



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Page 74

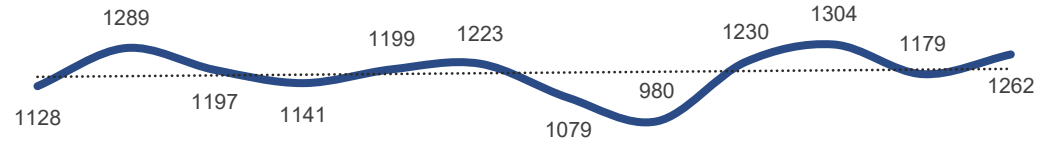


Appendix 5: District Council Summaries

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.

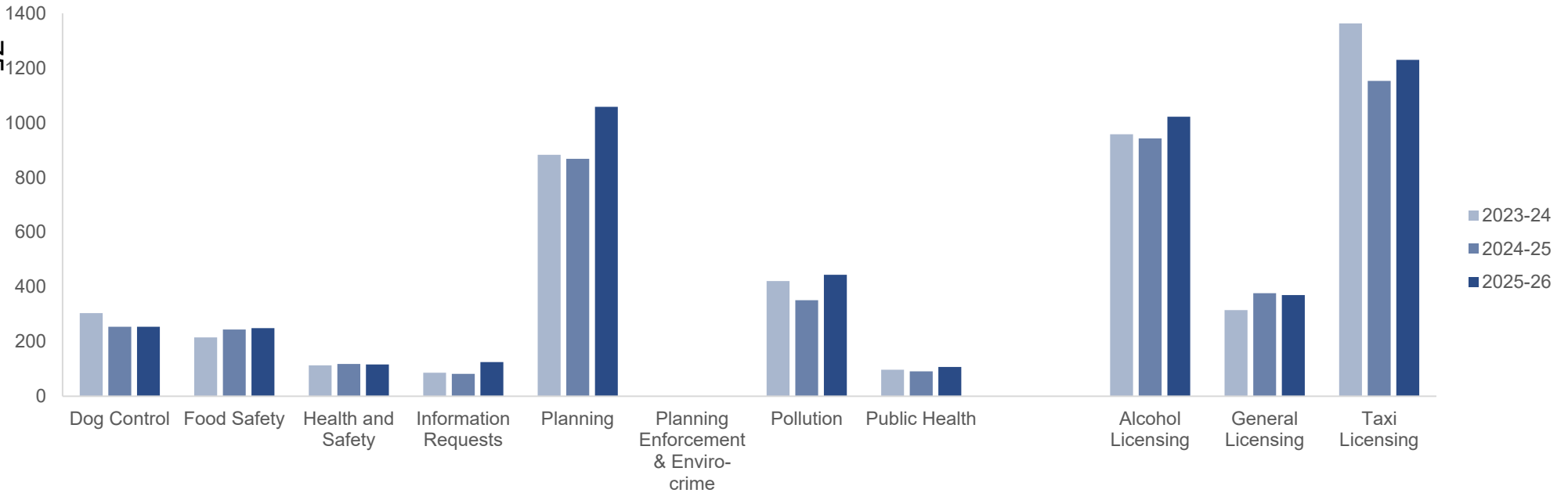
Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service and the Y axis has been standardised to enable comparisons with other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notificaitons



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Page 75

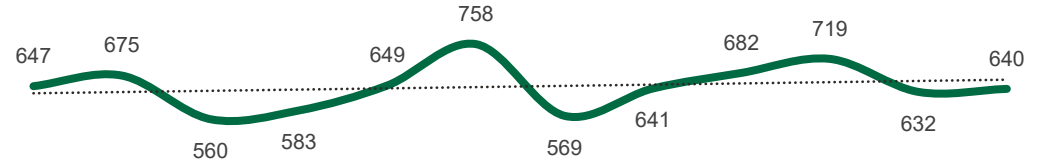


Appendix 5: District Council Summaries

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.

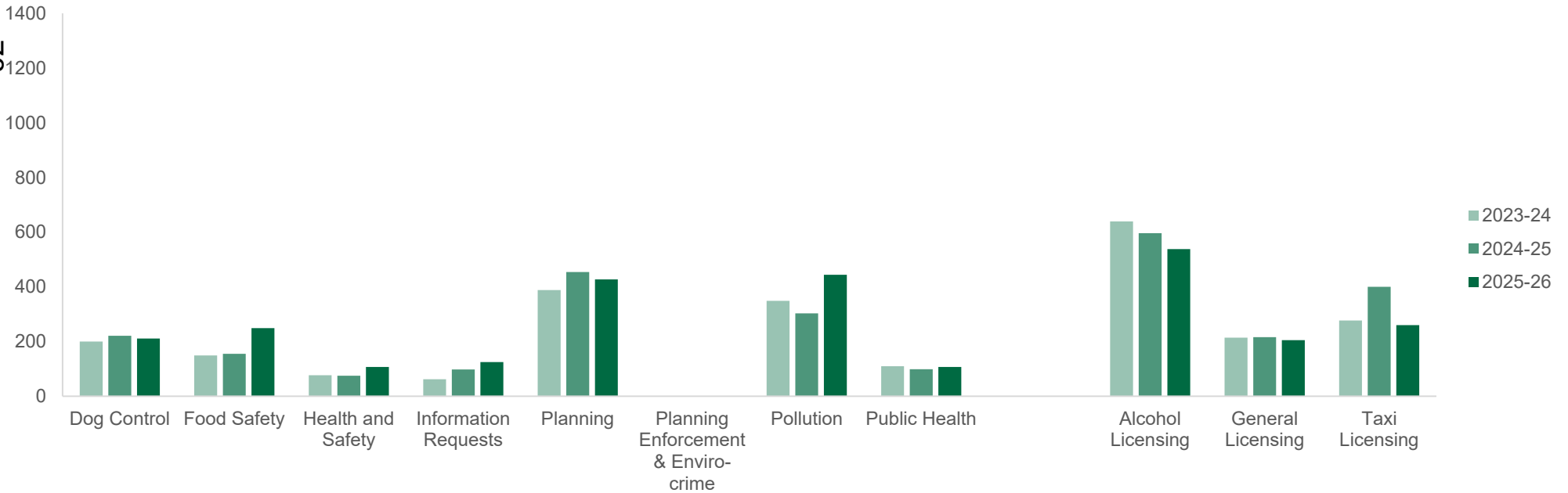
Note: The chart below provides a breakdown of cases by the primary functions undertaken by the service and the Y axis has been standardised to enable comparisons with other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notificaitons



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Page 76



Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Joint Board

Date: 25th June 2026

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 3 and 4 2025/26

Recommendation

That the Joint 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 final quarter of 2025/6, but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

Joint 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 number of dog control cases received during the year represented an increase of 5% compared to last year and an increase of 13% compared to 2023/24. It was the busiest year for the team of the last three.

Most cases were reports of lost or stray dogs with most being "contained strays," so the dog being found and held by a member of the public. Around 18% of dogs assessed had welfare concerns and as outlined in previous reports, there has been a concerning increase in these types of cases over the past few years. Approximately 42% of dogs were successfully reunited with their owners, across all the Councils we support with this work, however, this figure varies significantly between local authorities. The average across the Worcestershire authorities is approximately 50%.

The service receives a modest number of dog control complaints and enquiries each quarter. Of the 84 complaints received during the year, 67 related to dog fouling and/or dogs that were persistently straying from residential properties.

The overall number of food safety cases received during the year was an increase of 14% higher than each of the past 2-years. The majority of contacts for the service are enquiries, including requests for business

Agenda Item 8

advice. However, of the 522 actual complaints received during the year, 73% related to issues with food products such as poor-quality food or food containing a foreign object, whilst 27% related to poor hygiene standards or practices at food businesses.

Based on the 1,727 FHRs food hygiene interventions undertaken during the year, around 5% resulted in businesses being rated as "non-compliant" (issued a rating of 0, 1, or 2). Most low scores continue to occur in the hospitality sector (such as takeaways and restaurants) or small retailers. To find out more about food hygiene ratings, please visit <https://ratings.food.gov.uk>

The overall number of health and safety cases received during the year was slightly higher than the previous 2-years. Just under half of cases were 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. Slips, trips, and falls remain the greatest cause of workplace accidents. Sadly, the service has investigated three fatalities that were reported during the year.

The overall number of licensing cases fell last year by 4% compared to last year and 8% compared to 2023/24. Just over two-thirds of cases were applications or registrations and, as would be expected, the most common types submitted to the service relate to temporary events (23%), private hire vehicles (18%) and hackney carriage vehicles (11%).

Licensing continues to receive more enquiries such as queries about regulations, by-laws, and licence conditions etc, than complaints about license holders or licensed premises. Of the 1076 complaints received this year, approximately 43% related to taxi licensing (such as reports of poor driver behaviour, unauthorised parking, or poor driving standards,) and 28% related to alcohol licensing (reports of business failing to comply with the licensing objectives). A further 11% of complaints related to animal licensing with most cases relating to the unlicensed breeding and/or sale of dogs.

Planning enquires fell by 5% compared to last year but remained 18% above the number in 2023/24. Approximately 94% of enquiries were consultations for air quality, contaminated land, or nuisances; whilst approximately 1 in 5 enquiries were processed (on a contractual basis) on behalf of other local authorities

After peaking in Q3, at the highest in any one quarter for the past 3-years, the number of information requests (EIR/FOI) fell back slightly in Q4, but overall the number during the year was again significant. We often see these requests, EIRs in particular, linked to planning work, but this is not always the case.

There is currently no comparable temporal data available for the planning enforcement and enviro-crime functions as the service has only been delivering these functions since June 2024. Of the 1114 cases recorded during the year, around 69% related to fly-tipping incidents whilst 32% were complaints about suspected breaches of planning legislation at residential or commercial properties.

From an environmental crime perspective, it should be noted that the number of cases we mention here is the number picked up for investigation

by the service. During the year, approximately 2,225 fly-tipping incidents were reported to Bromsgrove District Council whilst 1,842 incidents were reported to Redditch Borough Council. Where an incident is not investigated, this is commonly because there is no possible means for the service to identify a suspect and/or because insufficient information was supplied via the reporting form.

The overall number of pollution cases received during the year was 16% up compared to last year but 7% lower than in 2023/24. One might have expected the incredibly hot summer to yield significantly larger number of nuisance cases as people have their windows open more, even at night, but this did not occur. Just over 90% of cases were allegations of potential statutory nuisances, with 42% of cases relating to noise from residential properties such as noise from barking dogs or audio-visual equipment. Other sources of potential nuisance came from the types of premises previously reported including hospitality.

The number of public health cases, which have a similar legislative basis as nuisance, received during the year was broadly comparable to last year but and slightly down on 2023/24. Around half of the cases received related to pest control and were enquiries about domestic treatments, sewer baiting, or complaints about pest activity caused by the actions of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 27% of cases were reports of accumulations at residential properties, however, such complaints often reference the presence of rodents or other pests.

Of the 515 domestic treatments undertaken by pest control contractors during the year, just over half were due to problems with rats, whilst a further 24% were due to issues with wasps or hornets. Around two thirds of treatments took place at properties in the Redditch or Wychavon districts.

Homes for Ukraine

Support has continued to be provided to Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils with the provision of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This has involved host and guest checks, support and guidance as well as facilitating appropriate payments. More details are provided in the Annual Report.

Performance

The year saw another unexpected drop in business satisfaction from above 95% to 93.2. The non-business customer measure closed at 57.1% compared to 56.7%, 60.4% and 59.2% respectively in the last 3 years.

More detail on these is contained in the Annual Report. With non-business customers, resources to address nuisance complaints continue to be stretched during the Summer. Managers will continue to look at how to improve performance in several areas and continue to try to manage public expectations around what is achievable with nuisance issues as many of these will never be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. Response rates were low again this year with only 109 responses, compared to 104, 161 and 138 in the previous 2 years, none of which are good. Literally hundreds of requests for responses (over 700 to non-business and several thousand to business,) using a mix of

Agenda Item 8

digital and paper questionnaires were sent out, but it is very difficult to get replies. For the business measure only 170 customers responded compared to over 200 last year. In better scoring years we would expect 200-250 responses from non-business customers and perhaps beyond 300 in a good year from businesses. Managers will now look at a completely different way to get feedback, but even then, with everyone feeling overloaded with requests from every supplier that we use and from every delivery firm that brings good to our doors, it may be harder to get back to statistically valid levels of return. Clearer communication and officers maintaining agreed contact intervals with complainants may help improve this situation and, while we will never achieve total satisfaction because of the nature of our work, we know we can do better than this.

People who felt better equipped to deal with issues ended the year at 42.9%, well below the figure in the recent past (53.4, 56.6%, 57%, and 58.5%,) but it should be noted that a low score here invariably accompanies a low overall satisfaction score.

The figures for licensing processing are slightly below last year's 97.5%, at 92.8% of taxi driver renewals completed within 5 working days of having a full application. A poor start to the year could not be made up for with improvements in the second half of the year. The number of vehicles suspended is lower than in the last 5 years at 45, compared to 54, 70, 84 and 59 respectively. As members will see from the details in the appendix, much of this is still driven by a single fleet. Members should also note that the testing regime does vary to some extent between partners. Failure rates may reflect the current economic climate, with cost-of-living pressures continuing to impact on members of the trade. However, members should remember that the safety of the travelling public is paramount in their role as the licensing authority.

Numbers of compliments are down on previous years, to the extent that the ratio to complaints is only just over 2:1 this year. Many compliments and thank you notes were captured from the returned questionnaires, so this is the reason why this has fallen.

Staff sickness is up again at 6.05 days per FTE, compared with 4.31, 3.07, and 2.93 days in the last 3 years. A significant proportion of this year's sickness is long-term (more than 28 days,) and relates to a very small number of officers who have had to deal with serious illness. They have now either left the organisation or are beginning phased return to work.

Staff satisfaction was 96.5%, higher than last year and a good result given the pressures. 57 of our staff responded, which was slightly down on last year, and over 73% of staff who responded scored the service as 8/10 or better to work for, which shows most staff do like working in the environment we provide. Further work will be done during the year to look at more detailed feedback for the staff.

The proportion of businesses licensed under the 2003 Act (alcohol and entertainment) being alleged to not uphold the 4 licensing objectives is

Agenda Item 8

about average in all districts bar one this year. Only Bromsgrove's figure is above the average compared to its previous figures, so, despite the record-breaking summer heat, where people were having their windows open for longer, perhaps they were less worried by noise from licensed premises. This measure looks at allegations regarding breaches of the objectives, so this is not a proportion undermining the objectives. Although residents may not like what a pub is doing, it is not always the case that their activities contravene what is required. We have previously explained to members that, after pandemic lockdowns where hospitality premises were closed for long periods, the general tolerance of noise and similar activities from this type of premise seemed to have reduced. Hence, as these businesses sought other activities and uses of their outside spaces to increase revenue, residents living in the vicinity became unhappy with the changes. The data still shows that most premises across the County are well controlled by their operators, with issues arising from a minority.

The figures for the rate of noise complaints per 1000 heads of the population is up on last year, but only by a modest amount and the figures were still below the average this year compared to previous years. This is a little surprising as the good weather generally leads to increased nuisance cases, but it is not particularly reflected here.

Overall income was excellent with income from non-partner sources at over £650,000, which represents 21.7% of the budget from 2016/17, which we have used for comparison over the years, and over 15% of current net revenue.

Various pressures from salaries and inflation have driven up costs in recent years including increased staff numbers. Therefore, the cost per head of population is up this year at £6.89 per head of population. As we have said previously, it is difficult to compare our costs with others because of the way the service is delivered, however we are sure spending is comparable or modest compared to similar local authorities that are discharging these functions.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

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

Agenda Item 8

Appendix B: Performance indicator table

Table of PIs 2025/6

Indicator	Report ing period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/ Outrun
1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	53.8	61.7	59.6	57.1
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	91.8	95.1	95.2	93.2
3. % businesses broadly compliant/ made compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3	Bromsgrove 98.3 Malvern Hills 98.1 Redditch 97.5 Worcester City 99.2 Wychavon 98.2 Wyre Forest 98.1 Worcestershire 98.3	98.5	Bromsgrove 98.6 Malvern Hills 98.3 Redditch 97.3 Worcester City 99.1 Wychavon 98.3 Wyre Forest 98.3 Worcestershire 98.4
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.7	Bromsgrove 1.7 Malvern Hills 1.9 Redditch 2.5 Worcester City 0.8 Wychavon 1.8 Wyre Forest 1.9 Worcestershire 1.7	1.5	Bromsgrove 1.4 Malvern Hills 1.7 Redditch 2.7 Worcester City 0.9 Wychavon 1.7 Wyre Forest 1.7 Worcestershire 1.6
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	88.4	NA	92.8
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this	6-monthly	NA	8/1551 or 0.5% of the fleet county-wide Vehicles found defective in service (suspended during the period) are: BDC 0 MHDC 0	1. NA	45/1551 or 2.9% of the fleet county-wide Vehicles found defective in service (suspended during the period) are: BDC 1

Agenda Item 8

represents of the fleet county-wide			RBC 5 WCC 1 WDC 1 WFDC 1		MHDC 0 RBC 22 WCC 13 WDC 7 WFDC 1
7 % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	42.9	57.8	51.3	47.1
8 Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	1/3	6/18	7/23	14/33
9 Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	2.17 days per FTE	3.04 days per FTE	4.56 days per FTE	6.05 days per FTE
10 % of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	96.5
11 % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 6.8 Malvern Hills 3.5 Redditch 3.9 Worcester City 5.5 Wychavon 3.5 Wyre Forest 7.6 Worcestershire 5.1	NA	Bromsgrove 8.2% Malvern Hills 4.5% Redditch 5.2% Worcester City 8.3% Wychavon 4.8% Wyre Forest 7.6% Worcestershire 6.4%
12 Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.74 Malvern Hills 0.86 Redditch 0.61 Worcester City 0.86 Wychavon 0.72 Wyre Forest 0.80 Worcestershire 0.77	NA	Bromsgrove 1.98 Malvern Hills 1.91 Redditch 1.94 Worcester City 2.45 Wychavon 2.13 Wyre Forest 2.44 Worcestershire 2.17
13 Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue	6-monthly	NA	£347,337 which is 8.6% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue budget figure (£3,017,000) and 8.09% of current revenue budget (£4,293,000)	NA	£654,847 which is 21.7% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue budget figure (£3,017,000) and 15.4% of current revenue budget (£4,294,000)

Agenda Item 8

budget (16/17)					
14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	Based on outrun cost of £4,227,369 against the County's most recent population estimate of 613680 in 2023, the service cost is: £6.89 per head

Worcestershire
Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2025-26

Published on 11th February 2026



Foreword

Written by **Simon Wilkes** (Director of Regulatory Services)

Welcome to the final activity report for 2025/26. As ever, it follows the familiar format that Board members will have seen many times and, whilst the detail covers the period 1st January to 31st March 2026, figures in the graphs and tables will allowing comparison with the data in previous periods.

Last year was the busiest in the last 3 for dog related matters despite numbers falling from Q3 into Q4. We hope to see a downward trend continuing into 2026/7.

The number of food hygiene interventions grew as we move through the year and our new staff built their confidence and competence, ending the year with over 1700 FHRS interventions. Health and Safety at Work complaints remained on trend but reported accidents were up slightly overall.

Information requests continued on their upward trend up on last quarter. Sometimes in can feel like a neverending stream of FOI and EIR contacts come through each day. Planning enquiries fell slightly over the year but rose at the end of the year in Q4.

In Licensing, applications and registrations was on-trend for the year. Complaints and enquiries to fell back during Q4, following the slight downward trend we have been seeing in this area.

Members will see that the pattern of nuisance complaints for the year, with summer peaks and falls mirrors previous seasonal patterns, usually reflecting the shift in weather. As we have said elsewhere, whilst last year's summer temperatures were record-breaking, the spike of nuisance complaints did not exceed the levels in the summer of 2023/24. Public Health related complaints (accumulations, vermin, public burials, etc,) often linked to nuisance with similar legislative controls were on par with previous years.

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

Many thanks,



Community Environmental Health

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

Quarter One

Quarter 1 was a challenging time for your Community Environmental Health Team, with some very complex and challenging cases coinciding with the retirement of one of the Principal Officers who led on noise and pollution issues and some officers requiring extended and unforeseen periods of leave. Recruitment has proven to be very difficult due to the nationally recognised shortage of qualified environmental health officers but remains ongoing.

Following receipt of a Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 notification, an accident investigation was carried out into a Jewson DIY outlet in Redditch. A Forklift truck had reversed into and run over the right foot of a window fitter from a local company, who was collecting building materials from the branch. He was attended by a paramedic and taken directly to hospital with multiple foot fractures and dislocated toes.

The Parent Company was subsequently successfully prosecuted in Q1, found guilty of offences under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and on appeal against sentence fined £300,000 with costs to the sum of £11,029.

Sadly, investigations continued into the several fatalities notified to the team and covered in previous reports, with regular liaison and updates being made to the Coroner's Office.

There was on-going CEH involvement following the discovery of a rodent infestation and food product recall in respect of a retail warehouse in Kidderminster. Following the voluntary closure of the premises, legal proceedings were instigated for food hygiene offences. The company has entered a guilty plea, and sentencing has been set for December.

The new programme of pro-active food safety interventions commenced, and your Officers continued to work with food giant Muller as part of the Primary Authority arrangement whereby WRS provide assured advice nationally.

The investigation into continuing food offences at a Bakery in Malvern Hills DC escalated with a prosecution pre-hearing scheduled for June.

The end of season reviews were completed on the designated sports grounds and stands on behalf of the County Council, which include Worcester Warriors rugby, Worcester City football, Bromsgrove Sporting, Kidderminster Harriers and Worcester Racecourse.

Infection control investigations were undertaken into cases of norovirus and cryptosporidium across the district, and an Officer was deployed to oversee an exhumation.

Major works in default were undertaken to resolve a long-standing drainage issue in Barnt Green. An old septic tank system and soakaway at a residential property had failed, giving rise to discharges of sewage across the property and into the road. The remedial works included the installation of a modern packaged sewage treatment plant with consented discharge into the highway drainage system, avoiding the need for a new soakaway which would have been costly and disruptive and prone to future failure.

In nuisance work, Officers are working with the respective partner legal teams following appeals against abatement notices served on Padel Courts in Bromsgrove District and a noisy water tank in a block of flats in Worcester City. Both unusual and novel issues.

Quarter Two

The summer months saw the Team involved in some very interesting and unusual nuisance investigations. In addition to the usual barking dog complaints which included the submission of an enforcement file for breach of an abatement notice in Worcester, Officers investigated nuisance arising from extensive development works in Bromsgrove, noise nuisance from a car wash in Redditch which has subsequently closed following our involvement, and noise in Bromsgrove in respect of the fast-growing sport of Padel, the sound of which unfortunately is somewhat akin in nature to that of a shooting range. We also received a query in respect of paramotor aviators in Malvern Hills. Not a problem for which we have powers, but we were able to signpost to the appropriate regulatory body.

In Food, allergens continue to provide a cause for concern and a restaurant in Worcester, operated by a large national chain, closed voluntarily whilst it carried out much-needed improvements in food safety.

In health and safety, we continue to liaise with the Coroner's Office in respect of the fatalities under investigation. We were also able to provide safety advice in respect of the re-enactment battles of Evesham and Worcester, which sounds somewhat ironic, and in respect of an algal bloom which made an appearance in a Redditch park, presenting a safety hazard. We also assisted the new owners in their preparations for welcoming Rugby back to Sixways and carried out checks at the Sunshine Music Festival.

In our infection control role, we are also supporting the invasive mosquito surveillance efforts coordinated by the Medical Entomology and Zoonoses Ecology Team (MEZE) at UKHSA. This project has been crucial in detecting invasive mosquitoes (*Aedes albopictus*/tiger mosquito and *Aedes aegypti*) on seven occasions since 2016. This surveillance is significant given the rising number of Dengue virus cases in Europe, exemplified by the detection of three locally acquired cases in Paris last year, necessitating invasive mosquito control measures. Our role is in running and submitting mosquito traps as part of the surveillance effort. With rising temperatures, we anticipate detections to become more frequent. Early detection and control of these mosquitoes will be increasingly crucial across England to mitigate public health risks associated with mosquito-borne diseases.

Quarter Three

Much of Q3 was spent working on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) time and motion study and preparing a report providing assurance as to how we plan to move to compliance with the revised Food Law Code of Practice (October 2025). As part of this the team completed work on, and went live with, the “Living List” making food inspection allocations more efficient. Work also commenced on the first trials of an “In-house” digital inspection programme being developed in co-ordination with Wyre Forest DC’s ICT Team to reduce the burden of administration on officers to free up operational time.

In food safety, CDS (Superstores International) Limited, trading as The Range, were sentenced at Kidderminster Magistrates Court on 11th December 2025 for food safety offences and ordered to pay £400,000 and costs. This was after live rodents and droppings were found in its store in Wyre Forest. Concerns were initially raised by the public after food for human consumption, including easter eggs, had been gnawed by mice. Following the findings, the Range worked cooperatively with WRS to recall the easter eggs and voluntarily closed off areas of the store where gnawed food was found. Additional pest control measures were also put in place. Whilst the vast majority of food businesses in Worcestershire are broadly compliant with hygiene requirements, this outcome serves as a reminder to all business owners of the consequences of failing to maintain pest control and food safety standards, and of the importance of protecting the community.

Work is ongoing with a high security prison in the Wychavon DC area to secure access for monitoring food safety improvements.

Three salmonella incidents with raw chicken and processed chicken products for Aldi imported from Poland by Westbridge Foods were addressed, requiring liaison with the FSA Incidents Team and several local authorities where affected products were being stored (Malvern Hill DC). The quarter also saw three voluntary closures of food businesses due to poor food hygiene standards.

Your officers provided support to Goodmans Geese (Malvern Hills DC) with an APHA investigation when bird flu restrictions hit, with the associated threat to their essential Christmas trade, worked with an international business in Bromsgrove DC to ensure the integrity of their distressed load process after some consignment issues and supported another local company in exporting new products to Turkey.

We have noted an increase in the number of general enquiries about opening new food businesses, and new registrations continue at some 60 per month adding to the team’s workload. At a time when there is a nationally recognised shortage of Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) which we ourselves have experienced during recent recruitment drives, we continue to support new entrants into the profession and during Q3 were able to provide work experience for a trainee military EHO.

In health and safety work, your officers supported the Coroner following an investigation into a fatality at Aldi which involved a scissor lift and also undertook a project through tasking whereby swimming pool operators were contacted and provided with advice following a swimming pool fatality earlier in the year.

The service supported the Victoria Fayre Safety Advisory Group and event in Worcester, with officers monitoring the food stalls.

In nuisance work, a longstanding issue with noise from a Redditch Car wash was successfully resolved and investigations continue in respect of noise nuisance from the fast-growing sport of Padel, the sound of which unfortunately is somewhat akin in nature to that of a shooting range.

Quarter Four

The final quarter of the year was mainly focussed on completing food inspections, where the level of compliance continued to be high. The service also worked up the food safety recovery plan to satisfy the Food Standards Agency that the resource issues identified by them through audit earlier in the year were being addressed.

An initial assessment of staffing requirements was undertaken using the time and motion tool created by the Food Standards Agency. At the same time discussions were taking place with the partners regarding the allocation of additional resource to this work, which led to agreement in principle for three additional full-time equivalent Technical Officers, whose competencies would allow them to inspect all premises. The Action Plan was accepted by the Agency, and the WRS Board approved the appointment of three additional Technical Officers (Food Safety) to the team at its meeting in February.

At its heart, the revised food plan operates through the recreation of two geographically focused Environmental Health Commercial teams within the Community Environmental Health division. Their focus will be food safety, but they will retain responsibility for the investigation of serious incidents under health and safety at work, infectious diseases which are mainly food related, Primary Authority engagement and agreements and management of the county safety advisory groups. This reorganisation was implemented in Q4, with a third Nuisance and Pollution team covering the county for those service demands.

In health and safety, officers continued to work with and provide reports for the coroner' s office in respect of the fatalities under investigation. WRS chaired the Bromsgrove Sporting mid-season Safety Advisory Group.

Nuisance work included supporting the investigation by the Environment Agency and other partners into an illegal waste site in Wychavon and ongoing investigations into noise and dust nuisance at a large housing development in Bromsgrove.

Licensing

Written by **Kiran Lahel** (Licensing And Support Services Manager)

Quarter One

It is apparent from the data presented that licensing applications have once again followed previous trends and numbers have again increased this quarter. Officers themselves have noted a larger increase, and this has largely been due to the number of early TEN's being submitted for events and a high number of three year licence renewals due in April this year for Wyre Forest. On a positive note, we can see that complaints and queries are reducing, and this is largely due to the triaging process and the steady introduction of Victoria Forms our online form submission process. The team have worked hard on creating detailed FAQ's and piloting the forms with key stakeholders prior to being rolled out.

A number of key areas have been noted to have increased officer input this quarter and have required either working with colleagues within the licensing team and Community Environmental Health, third parties or West Mercia Police.

Pavement Licensing

With all policies now introduced across the districts there has not only been an increase in application forms for this licence but also some non compliance visits required. Although work has commenced prior to summer there will be a requirement for another pavement licensing audit to take place prior to next spring and summer to ensure that everyone that requires a licence should have one in place. The introduction of the permanent scheme has allowed for a renewal licence which reduces the cost for businesses that already had a licence under the temporary regime.

Animal Licensing

Applications are again increasing in this area of work with more applications being received by the team for new licences. A project looking at 5* rated premises and undertaking interim visits by officers have unfortunately highlighted that not all businesses are keeping up standards and requirements as set out in the guidance long after an inspection has been carried out. As a result, a number of premises have had their licence suspended with officers providing advice and guidance to licence holders of the improvements required so that suspensions can be lifted. In this licencing regime if businesses have their star rating changed, or licence suspended or revoked they have a right of appeal to the first tier tribunal.

Taxis

Several districts have now been in touch through either Councillors, Licensing Chairs and operators or licence holders themselves to discuss the presence of 'Uber' in their areas and what can be done to prevent such a large presence. A report has been produced by the team and has started to be taken through the Licensing Committees in each district to explain the legislation and the limited amount of powers officers have. However, on a positive note the teams have also been engaging with colleagues at Wolverhampton City Council to arrange joint enforcement and compliance visits at night.

Joint Engagement

Officers have seen an increase in engagement activity on SAGs/Event Management Plans for large festivals jointly with community environmental health colleagues. There are several large recurring festivals over the summer periods where event holders are getting in touch early to ensure there are no problems however there have also been a few new festivals that are receiving increasing number of concerns due to the nature of them taking place near residential properties. If objections are received for these events not covered by a TEN then these would need to go to a licensing Sub Committee to be determined.

Quarter Two

Applications received by the team always tend to be higher in quarter 2 due to the number of Temporary Event Notices received by the team for summer events and festivals. This year has seen the first full summer using the victoria forms method for TENs and it has been not only positively received by the public but it has had a positive impact on the team from a processing perspective.

The high number of TENs received for festivals and events has come hand in hand with more out of hours compliance checks being conducted jointly with both West Mercia Police colleagues and Community Environmental Health colleagues. This year the team have seen a higher number of festivals that have caused concerns for nearby neighbours and therefore a joint up approach with colleagues has been essential and welcomed through investigations.

New Animal Licensing inspections continue to be submitted with a slight increase in applications since pre covid. This is an area of licensing that continues to pull on resources due to not only the length of time it takes officers to inspect premises but also due to the requirement to work with licence holders on their applications. The proactive work the team also continue to do has improved compliance across the County.

Compliance and multiagency work has continued throughout the summer with a number of visits taken place at caravan sites in Wychavon that have raised concerns in various partnership meetings and officers have continued to visit gambling premises across the County as part of the annual inspection programme.

On policy matters the team are working with each Licensing Committee on new Street Trading policies to incorporate changes in peoples buying habits and behaviours but also taking into consideration festivals, markets and events that sometimes require road closures. The Chairs of Licensing hope that it will bring a more flexible and up to date approach for both traders and the public.

Quarter Three

The number of licensing cases received during the quarter have been slightly down compared to the last quarter which is not dissimilar to the pattern seen in the previous two years. Approximately 68% of cases to date this year have been applications or registrations and, in parallel with previous reports, the most common types of applications submitted to the service relate to temporary events (25%), private hire vehicles (18%) and hackney carriage vehicles (10%).

The team continue to work on forms to be used online. The next set of forms to be rolled out for licensing will be pavement licensing and animal licensing forms with the next set in the process to be looked at by the team to be online taxi application. Alongside this, work continues across all teams in WRS to roll out the 'service request' form which will cover the most reported areas of the service to be submitted online.

The team welcomed an external licensing audit on behalf of Wyre Forest district council. The overall feedback was that the service has a Substantial design and effectiveness of controls for licensing. The team generally had a sound system of internal controls designed to achieve system objectives. The service have appropriate policies, procedures, legislation and guidance in place for Licensing which reflect current working practices. There were some minor recommendations that the team have been working on for Control Effectiveness.

There were Licensing Committees across all of the districts where some looked at fees and charges and others looked at street trading and the regulations surrounding the UBER taxi model were discussed. The team are working on new street trading policies for all districts and will be taking them to Licensing Committees in the next quarter for approval to go out to consultation.

The team continue inspections for new and renewal applications for animal licenses alongside carrying out the required interim inspections. This quarter the team have also carried out an interim zoo inspection at 'All things Wild' and started looking at the implementation of the new 'Primate Keeper' Licensing regime with a communication plan drawn up and liaison planned with vets across the County in readiness for its implementation in April 2026.

And finally, as always the team with colleagues across the service and Worcester City colleagues helped out at the Victorian Fayre with officers working during the day and evenings ensuring that all of those involved had the correct licenses in place to ensure it was an enjoyable event for all.

Page 93
Quarter Four

The Licensing team continue to work on making the licensing process for applications more streamlined for applicants with focus this quarter on the taxi applications. The implementation of the Temporary Events form and premises licence forms have evidently reduced the number of queries on these two application types. On par with previous years there is a drop in applications around this time of year. The team have been encouraging businesses to apply early for TENs where possible to ensure businesses have the correct permissions in place for outdoor events.

Interim animal licensing inspections highlight a need for these to continue as licence holders choose alternative ways to meet rising costs to ensure they meet the statutory guidelines. It is one area of licensing where an increase in resource has been allocated to deal with complaints and unlicensed breeders.

The West Midlands Safari Park inspection took place this quarter in collaboration with community environmental health colleagues as did the interim inspections at Little Owl Farm Park and All things Wild. All businesses engaged well with licensing officers and the appointed Vet to ensure they were all meeting the requirements set out in the legislation.

The implementation of a new primate licensing regime was also introduced across all districts with extensive comm's work executed in collaboration with all district comms teams to ensure the new piece of legislation was put on the radar of potential applicants and current primate keepers.

The team have been looking at different areas of enforcement and have been working with Wolverhampton city Council officers on taxi enforcement and partners across all districts to put in place a programme of enforcement to look at events set up for the World Cup and summer events. Officers will be out with partners across the districts to ensure businesses are complying with the law.

Finally, Street Trading Policies have been re-looked at across the County with these starting to make their way through the Licensing committees. The aim is to support businesses and meet the changes in consumer demand to allow for a more flexible and business friendly approach to street trading.

Technical Services

Written by **Mark Cox** (Technical Services Manager)

Quarter One

The team were focused on production of the **air quality** Annual Status Reports (ASRs) for the six Districts prior to the end of June deadline but also continued to work on the draft air quality strategy in the background. In addition, following the review of real time monitoring data with deployment of the Earthsense Zephyr monitors last year, a number have been relocated.

As well as reviewing a number of priority sites, work on **contaminated land** has largely focused on the continued digitisation of records to enhance the services ability to respond to Environmental Information Requests.

In relation to **Planning and Environmental Enforcement**, a total of 9 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for fly-tipping and littering, and four Community Protection Warnings which progressed to four Community Protection Notices have been issued. In general, most planning enforcement matters are resolved by informal means or regularisation (through granting of planning consent retrospectively).

The number of **dogs** being reported as strays remains high and for quarter one is over 100 more than last year. The poor condition that a significant proportion of the dogs are found in is a worrying trend, such as a French Bull dog with a large mammary tumour, and others with a variety of infections, mange and emaciated. We also had a number of very young puppies and very old dogs, at 17 and 18 years of age. Such cases are difficult to cater for in terms of welfare whilst looked after by the Council and often presents a difficult task in obtaining a rehoming placement when not claimed. Unfortunately we have had an outbreak of parvovirus which is a highly contagious disease for dogs.

Towards the end of 2024, the Home Office announced that current guests in the UK under the **Homes for Ukraine** (HfU) scheme are eligible to apply for the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme. As nearly half of the guests on the HfU scheme arrived between April and July 2022 in Bromsgrove and Redditch, the team experienced a particularly busy period the first quarter of this financial year, dedicating significant time to reminding guests to apply and assisting them throughout the application process.

Support was also provided in cases where application decisions were delayed beyond expected timeframes. Unfortunately, one notable case involves a guest who arrived as an unaccompanied minor and applied for her UPE in May 2025. As of the end of Q1, she has yet to receive a decision. This delay has caused considerable distress, as it prevented her from attending a planned university trip to the United States as well as a long-awaited home visit to Ukraine. Such cases are emotionally taxing for the guests and time-consuming for the support workers.

While the Homes for Ukraine scheme has generally received positive feedback, some challenges remain. In May, one host faced significant criticism from their family for their involvement in the scheme, ultimately leading to their withdrawal. As a result, the guest had to be relocated to temporary accommodation, a transition that was fully supported by the team.

During Q1 there were new arrivals across the 2 districts which WRS support with this work (4 adults and 4 children). There are currently 15 hosts in Bromsgrove (17 adults / 13 children) and 17 hosts in Redditch (20 adults / 9 children). Support Workers continue to provide assistance to all hosts and guests remaining on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as well as to those guests who have transitioned to independent accommodation.

Quarter Two

Following successful delivery of our **gull control** programme during the breeding season over the summer months, our Gull Control Officer has been preparing the Organisational Licence return for Natural England to demonstrate compliance with our licence as well as finishing off arrangements for the last of the proofing works for this year. We have continued to receive requests for help and have prepared a programme of control for 2026/27 to be presented at Committee next quarter including a summary of this year's activity.

During the summer the updated **Contaminated Land** Inspection Strategies for Bromsgrove and Wychavon continued to progress through the respective committee processes. In parallel, the prioritization and risk scoring of approximately 10,000 potentially contaminated sites across the area has been actively ongoing. This process is critical for determining the order of site investigations based on potential risks to human health and the environment.

The summer months also saw a high volume of Environmental Information Requests (EIRs) related to contaminated land, alongside routine **planning consultations** (which is where support is provided to planning officers on environmental health related elements of applications or requests to discharge conditions). The team also continued to support Gloucester City Council and North Warwickshire District Council and responded to ad hoc consultations from Bristol City Council.

In August and September, WRS was asked to provide a second opinion on a planning application involving a site where remediation of a public open space had not been implemented, in Bristol City Council area. The original developer had gone into administration, and WRS reviewed the submitted assessment report, offering professional recommendations to the Environmental Health Officer.

A different significant planning case in Gloucester City involved proposed development on part of a closed landfill site. The site presents risks from ground gases and residual contamination, compounded by its proximity to the River Severn, in-situ leachate systems, and protected water supply zones. The inclusion of privately owned residential properties adds complexity regarding long-term infrastructure management. WRS's Contaminated Land Team has been actively working with the Local Authority and stakeholders to ensure the site is safe and suitable for its intended sensitive use. Furthermore, support was provided in the development of the South Worcestershire Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for air quality. This work was led by the Senior Strategic Planning Officer at the County Council and culminated in the SPD being presented to committee in September, where it was formally approved by all three districts.

During this quarter, significant progress was made in **air quality** management across the region. The process of revoking several Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) was initiated, specifically those located in Bromsgrove (Lickey End and Redditch Road) and Wychbold in Wychavon. In addition, the relocation of ten low-cost air quality sensors was successfully completed. This forms part of the ongoing effort to improve spatial coverage and data quality for local air quality monitoring.

The Annual Status Reports for all Districts (ASR) were published in July and made available on the council's website, providing a comprehensive overview of air quality trends, monitoring data, and progress against local objectives.

Air Quality Behavioural Change work

The Behavioural Change Officer with support from colleagues undertook a series of community engagement activities aimed at raising awareness and promoting behavioural change around air quality issues across key locations in Worcestershire.

A number of school visits were conducted in Bromsgrove as part of the Community Awareness initiative. These sessions focused on educating pupils about the sources and impacts of air pollution, as well as practical steps individuals and families can take to reduce their exposure and contribution to poor air quality. The interactive nature of the sessions helped to foster a strong understanding of the topic among young people, encouraging them to become ambassadors for cleaner air within their schools and homes.

In September, the team participated in the 2025 Freshers' Fairs at both the Worcester and Redditch campuses of Heart of Worcestershire (HOW) College. These events provided an excellent platform to engage with new students, many of whom are new to the area and may be unaware of local air quality challenges. Through informative displays, interactive activities, and one-on-one conversations, students were introduced to the importance of sustainable travel choices, the health impacts of air pollution, and the role they can play in improving local air quality.

Further outreach was carried out through visits to community centres and businesses along Redditch Road and Lickey End Road in Bromsgrove. These visits aimed to engage residents and business owners in discussions about air quality, offering tailored advice on reducing emissions and exposure in both domestic and commercial settings. The team also gathered feedback on local concerns, which will help inform future interventions and policy development.

Additionally, a visit was made to St. Martin with St. Peter Church of England Church, where members of the congregation were engaged in a discussion about the links between environmental stewardship and air quality. This provided a valuable opportunity to connect with the community in a more reflective setting, reinforcing the shared responsibility for protecting the environment and promoting public health.

In relation to Planning and Environmental Enforcement, this quarter has seen an increase in the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for fly-tipping and littering related offences at 18 with 4 Community Protection Warnings also served. The team are continuing to investigate and bring to account those responsible for such crimes in Bromsgrove and Redditch Council areas.

Our **Homes for Ukraine** work has continued in Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council areas including the following two case studies:

One of our Ukrainian guests, 'Olga' (not her real name) a young student who arrived in the UK in April 2022, was recently refused admission to several local Sixth Forms. The reason cited was that her English Language GCSE result was not high enough at a Grade 3.

However, this decision did not reflect the full context of Olga's situation. As a newly arrived child from a war zone on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, Olga had no prior knowledge of English when she arrived in the UK. Despite this, she became fluent in the language within just three years, while also performing strongly in her other GCSE subjects. In addition, she is multilingual and has demonstrated exceptional resilience and academic potential.

With her mother's consent, our Homes for Ukraine Support Workers intervened by liaising with the admissions teams directly. They assisted in setting out Olga's unique background and achievements whilst showcasing her achievements, despite the significant pressure she endured whilst taking her GCSEs, while her father was serving on the frontlines in Ukraine providing medical aid, and her mother was undergoing treatment here in the UK for a life-threatening illness.

Shortly after our intervention, Olga's mother updated the team to confirm Olga went for an interview at a sixth form that had been contacted by the team and was successful in gaining a place. She went on to say 'I will remember your help for the rest of my life. Thank you again for everything!'

In our other case study, back in August 2022, a young guest and her mother arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Like many others adjusting to a new country, both mother and daughter faced significant challenges in settling into life in the UK. They struggled not only with the language barrier but also with mental health concerns, particularly for the young woman.

Recognising their need for additional support, one of our Ukrainian speaking support workers dedicated time to working closely with the family over the past three years. Her consistent involvement has been vital in helping them navigate both daily life and complex systems such as healthcare and education. We recently received the following message from a teacher highlighting the invaluable contribution of the support provided in our community:

'I just wanted to pass on my gratitude for allowing us access the support worker who interprets at our 6 weekly education progress meetings which are held between us, our pupil KP, the parent and school. These meetings are so important to ensure that school and parents are kept up to date with the pupil's progress and also of any concerns. These meetings would not be as effective without the support worker's input, not solely due to her interpreting so masterfully educational terms and pupil's mental health agencies such as CAMHS, but also helping us to understand the cultural differences. The family have started to make a positive step towards becoming more settled at home and at school and this is very much thanks to them. I think that the Homes for Ukraine scheme is fantastic and I do hope that you and your team appreciate how much you are supporting these families in so many ways.'

Air Quality

During this last quarter, we have developed a few projects with the University of Birmingham, WM Net Zero programme. This includes a source apportionment study of PM2.5 utilising the University's mobile supersite. The second project involves analysis of low cost sensor (Zephyr) particulate matter data to determine a local baseline, and correlate observed regional peaks with known national and international episodes and sources, and potentially local hospital admissions data.

The team were asked by Bromsgrove District Council to prepare an options paper for additional Particulate Matter Monitoring within their area. A draft report was presented to Cabinet Working Group in December presenting a number of options including extending the life of existing sensors for a further period beyond current contract and undertaking a source apportionment study of PM2.5 within the Bromsgrove area. The report was received favourably and will be presented to cabinet and overview and scrutiny within the next quarter.

In November we facilitated Air Quality Action Plan steering group progress meetings for Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest.

WRS have joined a newly formed customer council working with Earthsense, our air quality sensor providers, to develop enhancements to the MyAir software which is behind the public facing portal of our air quality monitoring and live data feed.

Behavioural Change Air Quality

During this quarter, extensive engagement activities were delivered across Worcestershire, including multiple school assemblies in Worcester and Bromsgrove aimed at raising awareness of local air pollution and seasonal issues such as Bonfire Night. Schools engaged included Red Hill Primary School and St George's Primary School in Worcester, as well as The Orchard School, Aston Fields Middle School, and Lickey End First School in Bromsgrove. In December, five assemblies were also delivered at Nunnery Wood High School, reaching over 1,000 students and increasing understanding of air quality, health impacts, and individual behaviour change.

In addition, the Clean Air Youth Lab project was successfully delivered at Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW College, Worcester Campus) for SEN students. The programme ran over six sessions between October and December and achieved high levels of participation and engagement. Following this positive experience, the project will be replicated in February and March 2026 for SEN students in Redditch. Preparatory work is also underway for a new four-session project planned for January 2026, aimed at business students at the HoW College Worcester campus, which include activities to support the clean Air Night Campaign.

Contaminated Land

We received the State of Contaminated Land Survey from the Environment Agency in November 2025. This is a mandatory survey under Section 78U(2) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The survey comprised 33 compulsory questions and 22 voluntary ones, all regarding work undertaken in respect of contaminated land by the LA over the years in relation to declaration of sites, CL Strategy, inspection of sites, and other related information. We were required to provide a separate response for each district council in Worcestershire.

Contaminated Land

We were also requested to complete the response on behalf of Gloucester City Council as we undertake CL contract work on their behalf. We completed the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy for Wyre Forest District Council in this period. The strategy was agreed and has been uploaded to the WRS website alongside the completed ones for Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, and Wychavon. Work then started on drafting the final outstanding strategy for Worcester City Council.

Dog Control

We have received several dogs as strays with poor skin conditions, with a number needing emergency vet treatment. One lurcher had a narcotic open wound, another had a gaping open wound the size of a melon from its stomach down its leg. This latter dog required an emergency operation. One terrier was covered in mammary tumours, a cruel case of neglect. The higher than usual number of lurchers found as strays is possibly linked to recent police activity to disrupt hare coursing crimes.

We held a successful dog microchipping event on 26th November at Worcester Country Park with plans for another in the new year. The aim of these events and previous ones is to enable reunification of dogs to owners with minimal costs being incurred by the Council by reducing the number of dogs in the community without owner's details and promotion of responsible dog ownership.

Permitting

As part of the regime requirements, WRS submitted the UK BAT evidence collection forms for two brick manufacturing sites. This work helps to support the wider permit regime development and keeps it aligned to real world conditions and technology applications.

Homes for Ukraine

Work has continued to support individuals and families under the Homes for Ukraine scheme across the Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council areas. During October and November, several complex and time-intensive cases required significant input from our support workers. These included supporting a family experiencing a difficult housing situation; assisting a gentleman who became the victim of an employment scam, which resulted in fraud being recorded against him and his bank accounts being frozen; and helping a family who encountered challenges applying for UPE visas for their two young children due to the absence of passports. This latter case involved extensive liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to secure passport appointments.

In 2025, one of the WRS Homes for Ukraine Support Workers, who herself arrived in the UK under the scheme in 2022, achieved an ESOL qualification to teach English. Through her work, she identified a gap in provision for elderly Ukrainian guests who may struggle to travel to college-based ESOL courses or lack the confidence to attend them, despite having limited English language skills. In response, she organised her first English class for elderly learners in December. The sessions have been well attended and have received very positive feedback from participants.

One attendee commented:

“You have explained everything so clearly! you have made it so easy for us to understand. If everyone explained things the way you do, we would be speaking the language within six months.”

On 13th December, the team organised a “Breakfast with Santa” event for Ukrainian toddlers and young children. Sixteen children attended alongside their parents. These events are consistently well received and play an important role in bringing the Ukrainian community together, offering families a supportive and welcoming environment as they adjust to life in a new country after fleeing war.

Feedback from parents included:

“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to come together and for creating such a wonderful atmosphere for the children. Happy holidays.”

Quarter Four

During the final quarter of 2025/2026, the Dog Warden Service experienced a significant increase in cases involving dogs with severe welfare concerns. The complexity and seriousness of these cases placed considerable financial and operational pressure on both the service and our supporting charity and rescue partners, due to the extensive veterinary treatment, rehabilitation, and foster care required. These cases highlight the continuing need for strong partnership working between local authorities, veterinary professionals, charity/rescue organisations, and foster carers to safeguard these dogs.

There are a few notable cases managed during this period. In January, a Chihuahua was seized in Wychavon following a road traffic collision involving a vehicle driven by an underage driver. The dog sustained serious injuries as a result of the incident and required extensive veterinary treatment and ongoing medical care. In February a Lurcher was seized in Worcester, significantly underweight and in considerable pain. The dog had a large swollen wound to its leg which required urgent veterinary attention, including surgical stitching and further treatment. Also, Officers seized a Cocker Spaniel (for a client authority) that was found in an extremely neglected condition. The dog was severely matted, representing one of the worst grooming-related welfare cases encountered by Dog Wardens during the year. Immediate veterinary and grooming intervention was required to alleviate suffering. Then in March, we had three dogs of note. Officers seized a Chihuahua in Redditch, in a severely compromised condition. The dog was extremely underweight, with nails curled into the paw pads, poor dental health requiring extractions, and multiple lumps and growths which were later diagnosed as cancerous. Due to the dog's condition and prognosis, a specialist foster placement was arranged to provide palliative care. In Wychavon, a Dachshund was seized with evidence of historic leg fractures that had been left untreated. Veterinary assessment confirmed long-term suffering and neglect associated with the untreated injuries. Finally in Malvern Hills District a Lurcher was seized in an emaciated state, with a body condition score of 0 meaning it was lucky to be alive. The dog was unable to stand properly and was described as being “skin and bones.” Due to the severity of its condition, the dog was placed into foster care where it required intensive, round-the-clock nursing and rehabilitation support.

Air Quality

Following a request by Bromsgrove District Council, an options paper for additional Particulate Matter Monitoring within the BDC area was presented and approved by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny in January 2026 and Full Council in February. The recommended option includes extending the life of existing sensors for a further period beyond current contract and undertaking a source apportionment study of PM2.5 within the Bromsgrove area. The study will provide a characterisation of the sources of PM utilising the specialist monitoring equipment (the UK's only mobile supersite) at a fixed location for one month in summer and one in winter. Data analysis and written report will be provided by an experienced academic researcher. The recommended option is being part funded by the Director of Public Health, WCC. Particulate Matter (PM) is considered to be the most important air pollutant in terms of health impacts. Long-term exposure to PM increases mortality and morbidity from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and can cause cancer. Effects are amplified in vulnerable groups including young children, the elderly, and those suffering from breathing problems like asthma. It is also causally linked to dementia and decline in cognitive function. There is growing evidence for associations with adverse birth outcomes and diabetes. In March, we facilitated AQAP steering group progress meetings for Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest. The team also began preparations for Annual Status Reporting for production in the next quarter. Additionally, we have been preparing a response to complete Defra's Wood Burning Stove survey.

Behavioural Change Air Quality

As part of Worcestershire Regulatory Services' behaviour change programme, the Air Quality team delivered a short educational project with Level 2 Business students at Heart of Worcestershire College, Worcester campus. The sessions introduced students to the links between air quality, business activity and urban environments, helping them understand why air pollution is increasingly relevant for businesses and local economies. Over four sessions, students examined how air pollution can affect productivity, consumer behaviour and city attractiveness. Real examples of air quality regulation in the UK were discussed, including the Birmingham Clean Air Zone and London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), helping students understand how environmental policies influence business decisions.

The collaboration also led to wider engagement within the college community. Business students carried out research and presented proposals on improving air quality, while the college promoted the Clean Air Night campaign and encouraged more sustainable travel options, such as the use of Beryl bikes. Between February and March, we delivered a five-session SEN-focused programme in Heart of Worcestershire College in Redditch. The programme introduced students to air quality in a simple and accessible way, using a mix of short explanations and interactive, visual activities. Across the sessions, students explored key topics including what air pollution is, its main sources (particularly traffic), and health impacts, alongside practical activities such as observing the college environment and developing their own clean air messages and posters. Feedback from the teacher was positive, highlighting good student engagement and that the sessions worked well within the SEN setting. Overall, the programme successfully supported awareness, participation and student confidence in communicating clean air messages.

At the end of March, we attended an Earth Day event at The Hive, organised by the University of Worcester. It was a positive day, with lots of families and children attending. We had the opportunity to speak with them about air quality in a simple and approachable way and share parts of our toolkit — especially the colouring sheets, which were very popular with the younger audience.

Contaminated land

In this quarter we completed the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy for Worcester City Council. The strategy was presented at the corporate agenda planning meeting on 24th February and then approved by the Environment Committee on the 10th March 2026. This is the sixth and final strategy to be completed for all the district partners and concludes around 18 months to 2 years working on this project. The documents have all been approved by the relevant partner council's and are accessible on the WRS website. Work will continue with completing the risk scoring and prioritisation process for the sites of potential contaminated land concern as set out within the strategy.

Some examples of planning work in this quarter include continuing to help Bromsgrove Planning colleagues with a complex case concerning a reserved matters application for a residential development on a former landfill site for which outstanding issues remained in relation to risks from ground gas. We dealt with a consultation at Belbroughton for conversion and extension of a garage to residential use where it was alleged asbestos may have been present on site following demolition of an earlier outbuilding. This involved a number of discussions with the planner and contact with the applicant to ensure any issues were adequately addressed. We also received a number of consultations and enquiries relating to the proposed new town development near Norton Parkway. We were also contacted for advice by a homeowner at Norton who had some investigation works carried out within her garden due to an environmental search raising possible issues associated with former tanks being present.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Work has continued to support individuals and families under the Homes for Ukraine scheme across the Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council areas. In January, all members of the Homes for Ukraine team attended a three-day Domestic Abuse training course. This proved to be highly valuable, as the team has since supported a guest who experienced domestic abuse in her workplace. Our Ukrainian Support Worker reflected on the impact of the training, noting:

Page 103 "I applied this new knowledge when supporting a guest who became a victim of sexual harassment at work. Over the past two weeks, I spent several hours assisting her, explaining how sexual harassment is addressed in the UK and how this differs from Ukraine. I also sourced a Ukrainian-speaking therapist for her, as language barriers meant that recommended charities were not suitable."

On 24 February, four years had passed since the start of the Russia-Ukraine War. As the conflict continues, there remains a strong need for hosts to support new arrivals to the UK. In response, the team met with the Communications Team to develop ideas to promote the Homes for Ukraine scheme to potential hosts. One initiative, suggested by Support Workers, was to engage with the National Farmers' Union, recognising that farmers may require seasonal workers during the spring period.

In February, the team secured a number of free educational workbooks from Opora. These resources are designed for children up to the age of 10 to support learning about life in the UK, as well as for teenagers to support mental health and wellbeing. The workbooks include a range of activities and are distributed as gifts during visits to families with children. A Support Worker also attended an open event at Heart of Worcestershire College alongside a young guest, supporting her application process. This was a particularly sensitive case, as the guest's mother initially felt that further education was not available to her and encouraged her to seek low-skilled employment. The Support Worker took the initiative to accompany the guest, enabling her to explore the college environment and understand the long-term benefits of education.

Enviromental Crime and Planning Enforcement

In environmental crime, five enforcement interventions have been undertaken, where warning letters were sent to two individuals after their waste was found on country lanes in the district. For both cases the householders were able to provide information that provided new leads to progress the investigations in identifying the perpetrator. A further three advisory letters have been sent to members of the public who left their waste at the side of their bin receptacles. These actions act as education and warnings that further enforcement action could ensue.

In planning enforcement, compliance has been achieved at a long-standing untidy land case in Hollywood which has now been cleared. A section 215 Town and Country Planning Act notice has also been served on an eyesore property in Barnt Green. It is important to note, that the focus of the work undertaken is to always attempt to resolve planning enforcement matters through compliance often by negotiation.

Dog Control

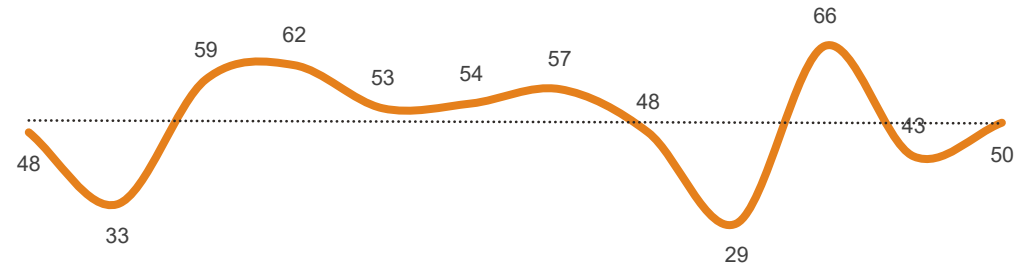
The data on this page shows the number of dog control cases (complaints, enquiries, and reports of lost or stray dogs) handled by the service over a three-year period. Complaints reported to WRS include reports of dangerous dogs, reports of dog fouling, and reports of dogs persistently straying. Complaints 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 dog control cases received during the year was an increase of 5% compared to last year and an increase of 13% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 90% of cases were reports of lost or stray dogs with most cases categorised as "contained strays" (meaning dogs were found and held by members of the public). Around 18% of dogs assessed had welfare concerns and, as outlined in previous reports, there has been a concerning increase in these types of cases over the past few years. Approximately 42% of dogs were successfully reunited with their owners, however, this figure varies significantly between local authorities and the average across Worcestershire is approximately 50%.

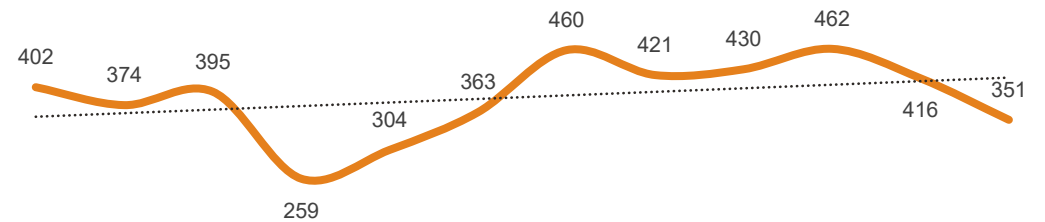
In general terms, the service receives a low number of dog control complaints and enquiries each quarter. Based on the 84 complaints received during the year, however, 67 related to dog fouling and/or dogs that were persistently straying from residential properties.

Complaints and Enquiries



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Reports of Lost or Stray Dogs



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Food Safety

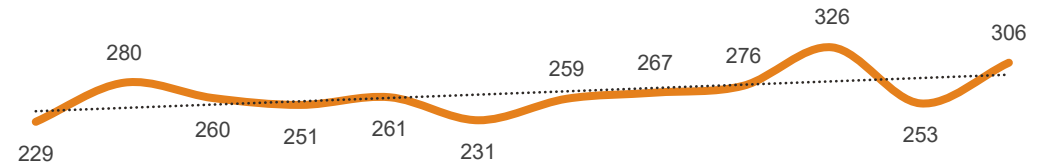
The data on this page outlines the number of food safety cases (complaints, enquiries, and notifications) handled by the service over a three year period. The data also outlines the number of food safety interventions undertaken at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Complaints reported to WRS relate to food products and premises, however, complaints regarding the composition and labelling of food (including allergen labelling) are primarily investigated by Worcestershire Trading Standards Service. 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 food safety cases received during the year was an increase of 18% compared to last year and 2023/24. The service tends to receive a greater number of enquiries (including requests for business advice) than complaints. Based on the 522 complaints received during the year, however, 73% related to issues with food products (such as poor quality food or food containing a foreign object) whilst 27% related to poor hygiene standards or practices at food businesses.

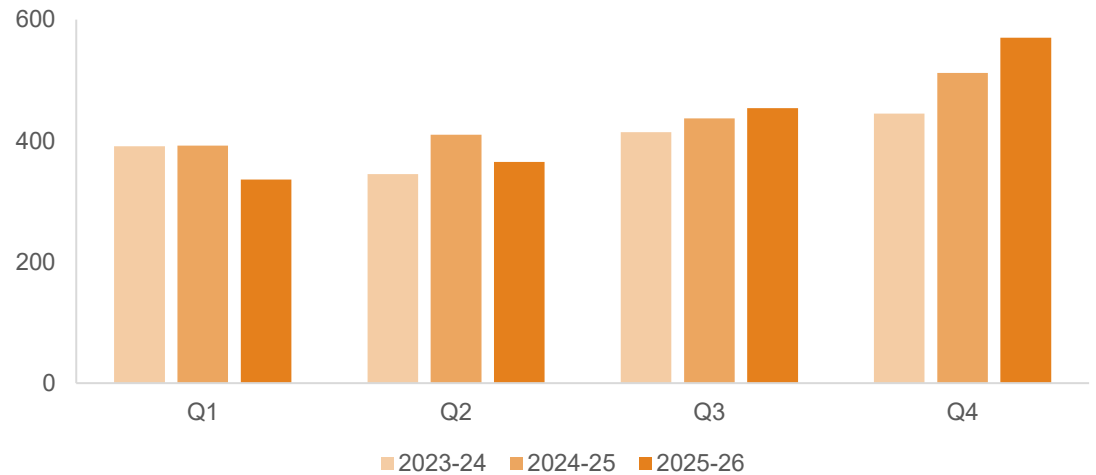
Based on the 1,727 interventions undertaken during the year, 5% resulted in businesses being rated as "non-compliant" (issued a rating of 0, 1, or 2). In parallel with previous reports, a higher proportion of non-compliant ratings continued to be issued to the hospitality sector (such as takeaways and restaurants) or small retailers. To find out more about food hygiene ratings, please visit <https://ratings.food.gov.uk>.

Complaints and Enquiries



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

FHRS Interventions



Health & Safety

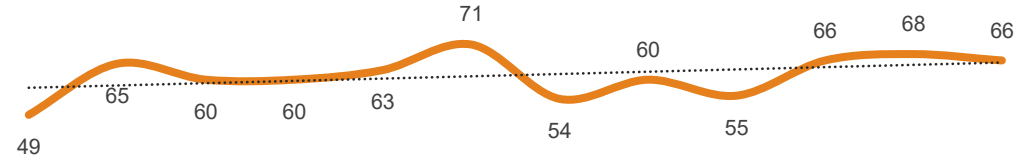
The data on this page outlines the number of health and safety cases (complaints, enquiries, and reports of accidents in the workplace) handled by the service over a three-year period. Investigations are only undertaken by WRS where they relate to premises such as retail outlets, offices, leisure services, 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 health and safety cases received during the year was an increase of 5% compared to last year and an increase of 2% compared to 2024/25. Approximately 44% of cases were 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. In parallel with previous reports, most accidents occurred due to slips, trips, and falls (whether on the same level or from height). Sadly, the service has investigated three fatalities that were reported during the year.

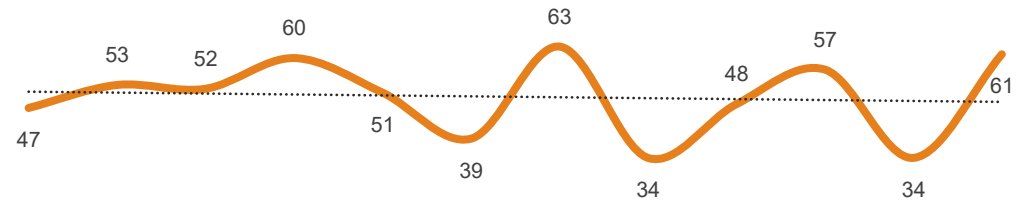
Page 108

Complaints and Enquiries



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Accident Reports

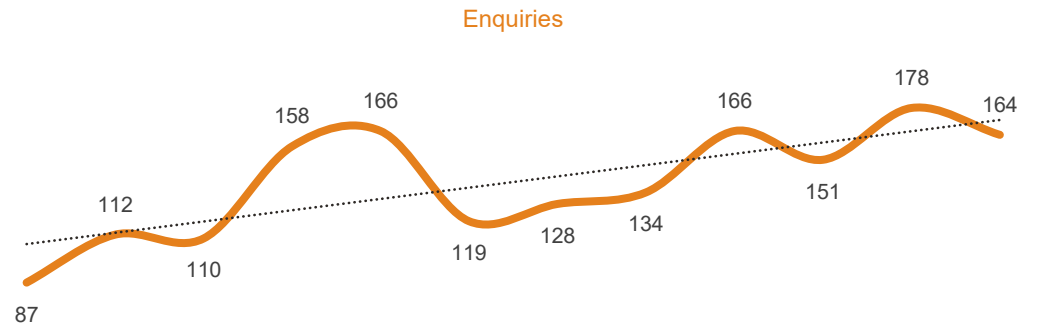


Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Agenda Item 8

Information Requests

The data on this page outlines the number of information requests handled by the service over a three-year period. Requests for information are generally received from the public, or private sector companies, and are made under the Environmental Information Regulations, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Data Protection Act (including Subject Access Requests). The service also handles requests for information from other local authorities, or law enforcement agencies, for the prevention and detection of crime and/or the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Licensing

The data on this page outlines the number of licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications, and registrations) handled by the service over a three-year period. Complaints reported to WRS can relate to licenced and unlicensed activity, 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

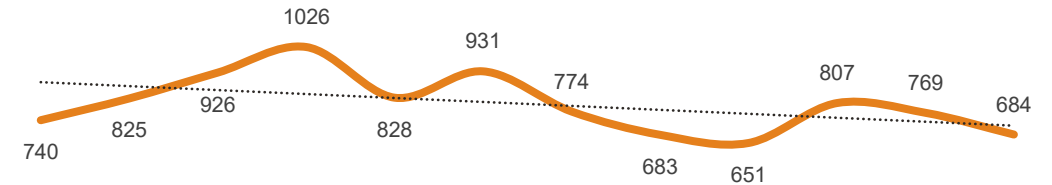
Page 190
Comments

The number of licensing cases received during the year was a reduction of 4% compared to last year and a reduction of 8% compared to 2023/24.

Approximately 68% of cases were applications or registrations and, in parallel with previous reports, the most common types of applications submitted to the service relate to temporary events (23%), private hire vehicles (18%) and hackney carriage vehicles (11%).

In general terms, the service receives a higher number of enquiries (queries about regulations, by-laws, and licence conditions etc.) than complaints. Based on the 1076 complaints received this year, however, approximately 43% related to taxi licensing (such as reports of poor driver behaviour, unauthorised parking, or poor driving standards) whilst 28% related to alcohol licensing (reports of business failing to comply with the licensing objectives). A further 11% of complaints related to animal licensing with most cases relating to the unlicensed breeding and/or sale of dogs.

Complaints and Enquiries



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Applications and Registrations



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Planning

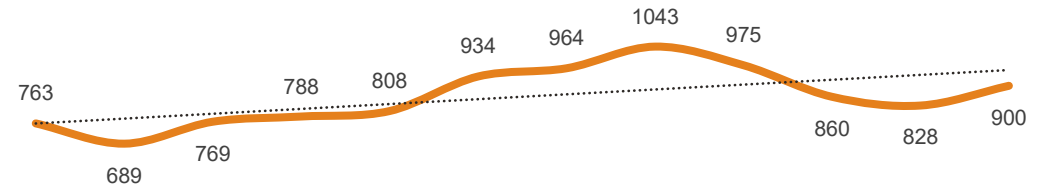
The data on this page outlines the number of planning enquiries handled by the service over a three-year period. Planning enquiries processed by WRS are either consultations or requests to discharge planning conditions, however, enquiries only relate to the following areas:

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

Comments

The number of planning enquiries received during the year was a reduction of 5% compared to last year but an increase of 18% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 94% of enquiries were consultations for air quality, contaminated land, or nuisances; whilst approximately 1 in 5 enquiries were processed (on a contractual basis) on behalf of other local authorities.

Planning Enquiries



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Planning Enforcement & Environmental Crime

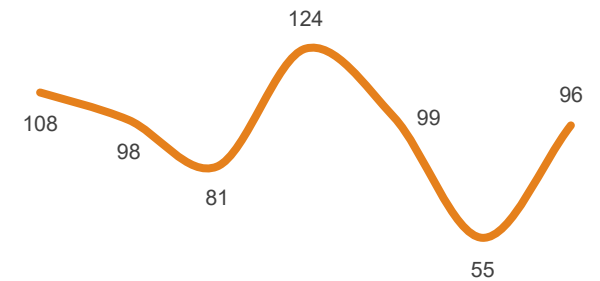
The data on this page outlines the number of planning enforcement and environmental crime cases (complaints and incidents) handled by the service over a three-year period. Complaints reported to WRS include reports of fly-tipping, littering, and planning breaches at residential or commercial premises. These 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 as the service has only been delivering these functions since June 2024. Based on the 1114 cases recorded during the year to date, however, 69% have related to fly-tipping incidents whilst 32% have been complaints about suspected breaches of planning legislation at residential or commercial properties.

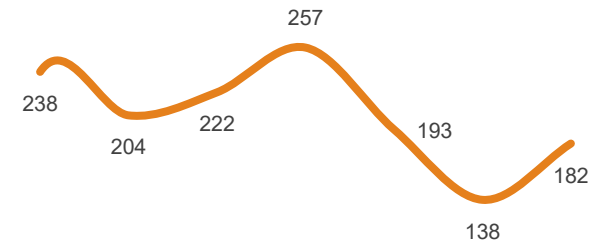
From an environmental crime perspective, it should be noted that the number of cases outlined on this page is the number of cases that have been (or are in the process of being) investigated by the service. During the year, approximately 2,225 fly-tipping incidents were reported to Bromsgrove District Council whilst 1,842 incidents were reported to Redditch Borough Council. Where an incident is not investigated, this is commonly because there is no possible means for the service to identify a suspect and/or because insufficient information was supplied via the reporting form.

Planning Enforcement



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Environmental Crime



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

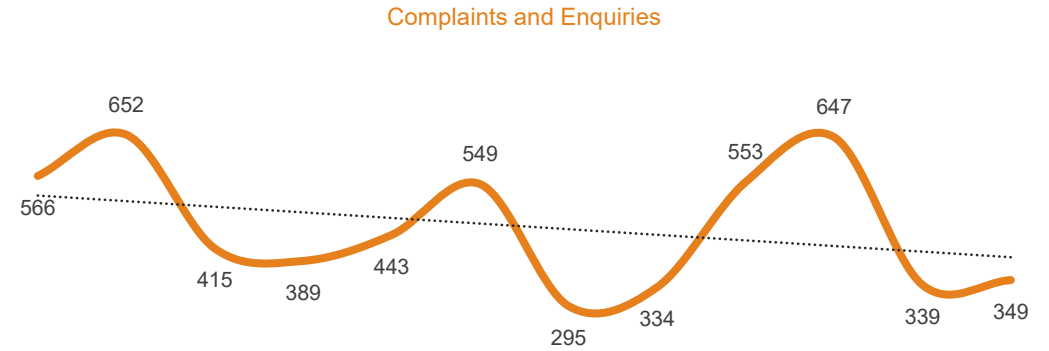
Pollution

The data on this page outlines the number of pollution cases (complaints and enquiries) handled by the service over a three-year period.

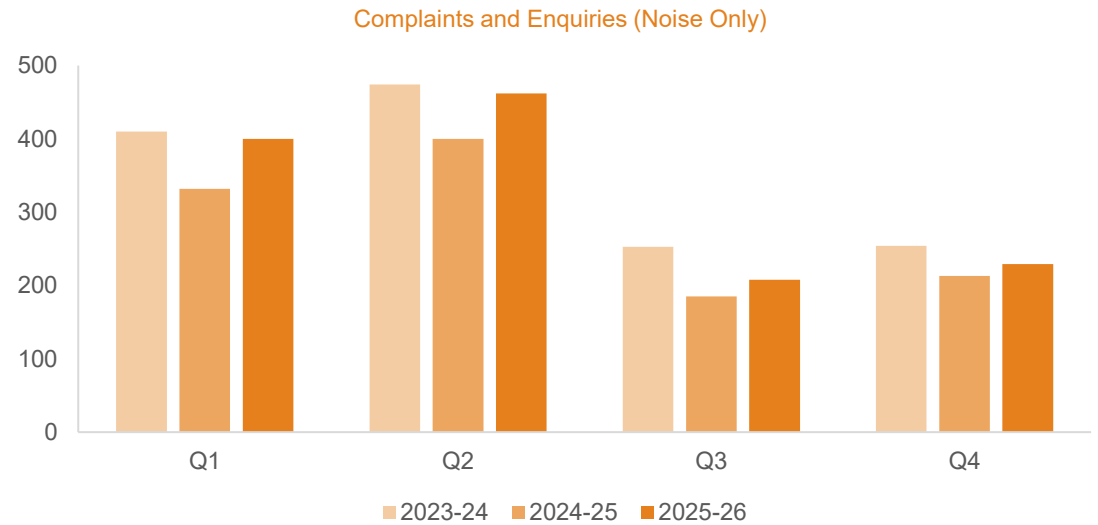
Complaints reported to WRS include reports of nuisances (noise, light, odour, smoke) resulting from domestic, commercial, or agricultural activity and notifications of contamination incidents.

Comments

The number of pollution cases received during the year was an increase of 16% compared to last year but a reduction of 7% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 91% of cases were reports of nuisances with 42% of cases relating to noise from residential properties (such as noise from barking dogs or audi-visual equipment). In parallel with previous reports, other prominent nuisances included noise from night-time economy businesses, noise from other hospitality businesses, smoke from the burning of domestic or commercial waste, and noise or dust from construction sites.



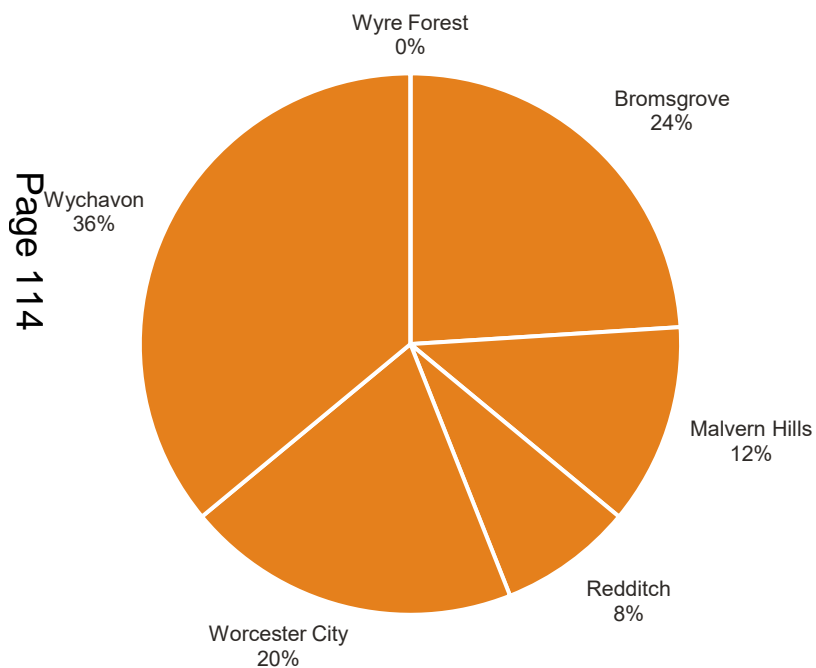
Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				
2024-25				
2025-26				



Noise

The data on this page outlines the wards in Worcestershire which have the highest rates of noise pollution cases. It also shows the districts where 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 2026. Where a ward is highlighted, it was also one of the top 10 wards featured in the 2024/25 Activity Report.



Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Bredon	11	2,645	4.16
Cathedral	48	11,760	4.08
South Bredon Hill	9	2,427	3.71
Barnt Green And Hopwood	10	2,951	3.39
Alvechurch Village	9	2,960	3.04
Warndon	17	5,661	3.00
Upton And Hanley	12	4,268	2.81
Catshill South	9	3,241	2.78
Charford	10	3,677	2.72
Baldwin	6	2,216	2.71
Aston Fields	9	3,513	2.56
Little Hampton	15	5,899	2.54
Dodderhill	7	2,809	2.49
Broadway And Wickhamford	12	4,885	2.46
Saint Peters Parish	13	5,310	2.45
Morton	6	2,495	2.40
Elmley Castle And Somerville	6	2,524	2.38
Saint John	20	8,736	2.29
Rainbow Hill	12	5,418	2.21
Drakes Broughton	6	2,711	2.21
Hartlebury	7	3,214	2.18
Batchley And Brockhill	19	8,930	2.13
Droitwich West	11	5,217	2.11
Abbey	14	6,719	2.08
Catshill North	6	2,912	2.06

Public Health

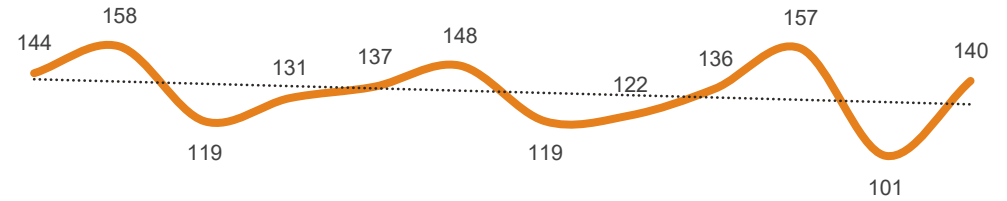
The data on this page outlines the number of public health cases (complaints and enquiries) handled by the service over a three-year period. The data also shows the number of domestic subsidised treatments carried out by contractors. Complaints reported to WRS include reports of accumulations and reports of pests due to the activities of local residents or businesses. Pest control treatments are offered by five of the districts, however, Wyre Forest District Council does not offer a subsidised pest control service.

Comments

The number of public health cases received during the year was broadly comparable to last year but a reduction of 3% compared to 2023/24. Approximately 50% of cases related to pest control and were enquiries about domestic treatments, enquiries about sewer baiting, or complaints about pest activity caused by the actions of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 27% of cases were reports of accumulations at residential properties, however, such complaints often reference the presence of rodents or other pests.

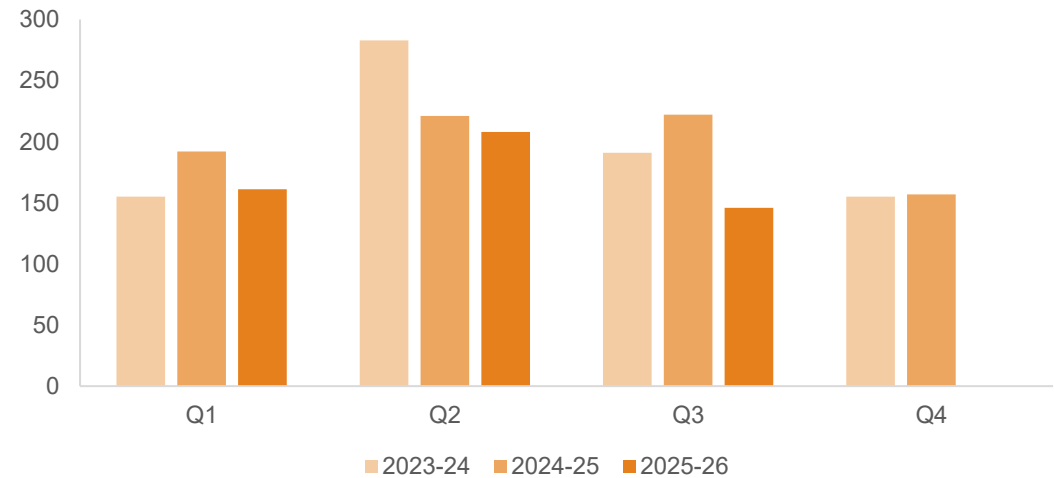
Based on the 515 domestic treatments undertaken by pest control contractors during the year to date, approximately 55% were due to problems with rats whilst 24% were due to issues with wasps or hornets. Around two thirds of treatments have taken place at properties in the Redditch or Wychavon districts.

Complaints and Enquiries



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

Domestic Subsidised Treatments

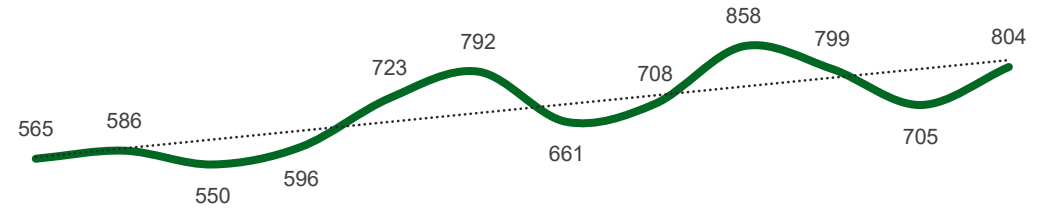


Bromsgrove

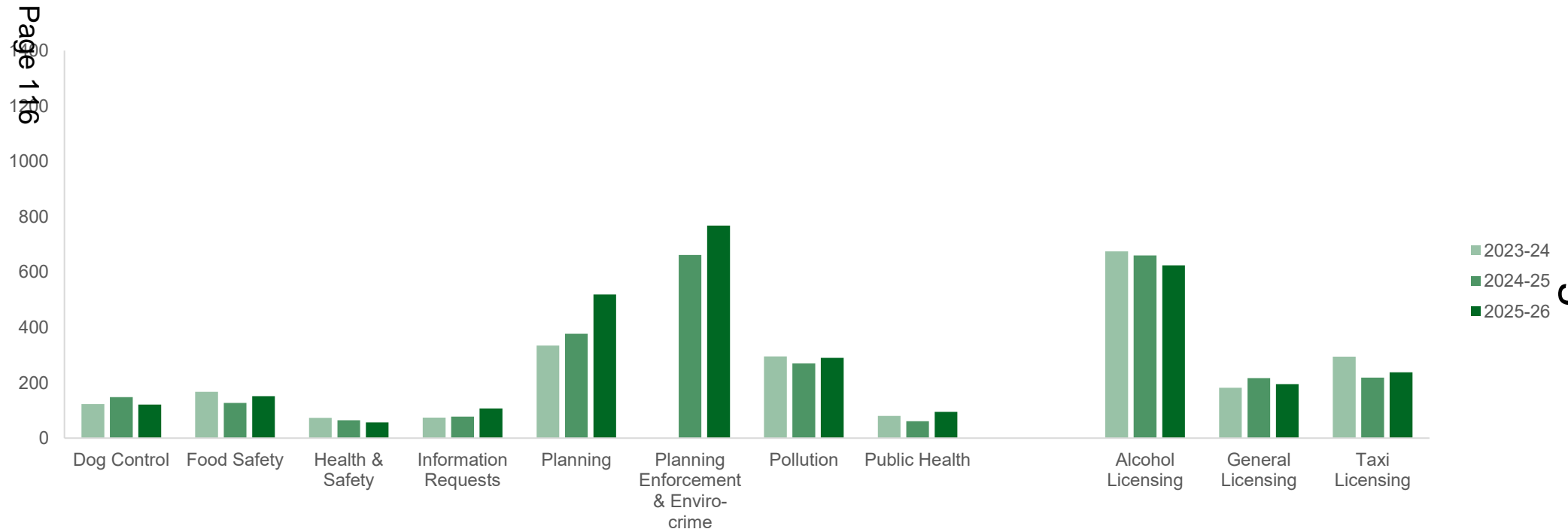
The data on this page outlines the number of complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications handled by WRS over a three-year period where the subject and/or enquirer were located in the Bromsgrove district. The data also shows a breakdown of these cases by the primary functions delivered by the service.

Note: The recent increase in cases can be attributed to the additional functions (enviro-crime and planning enforcement) now being delivered. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2026. In addition, the Y axis on the chart below has been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

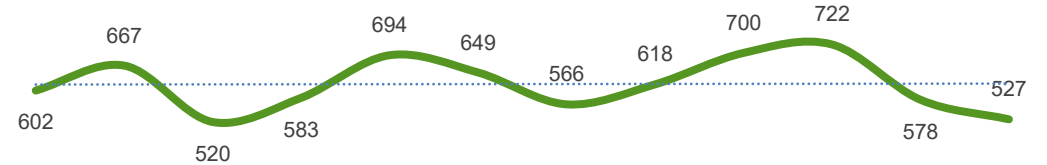


Malvern Hills

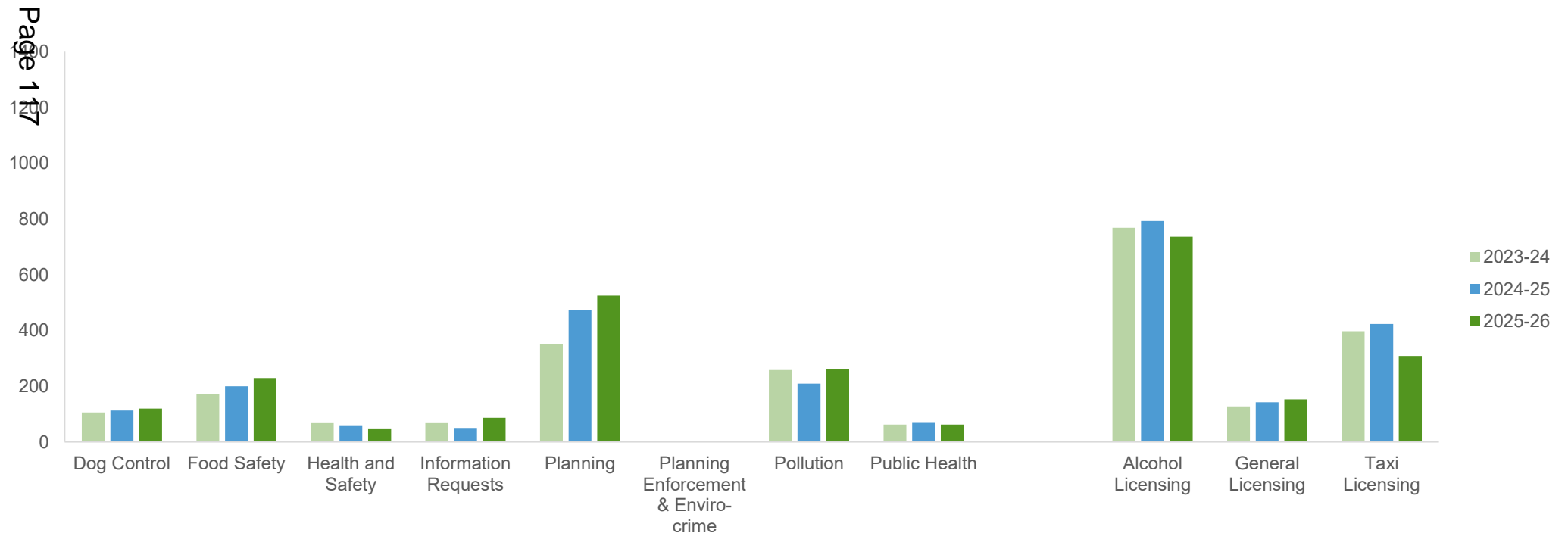
The data on this page outlines the number of complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications handled by WRS over a three-year period where the subject and/or enquirer were located in the Malvern Hills district. The data also shows a breakdown of these cases by the primary functions delivered by the service.

Note: The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2026. In addition, the Y axis on the chart below has been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

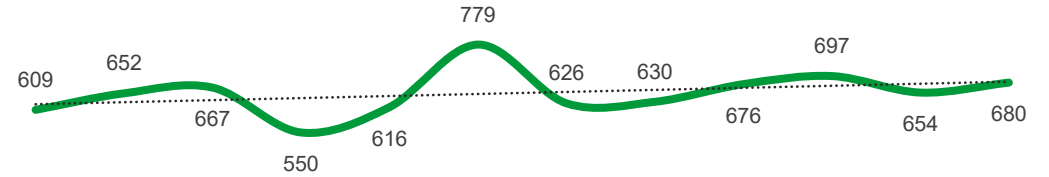


Redditch

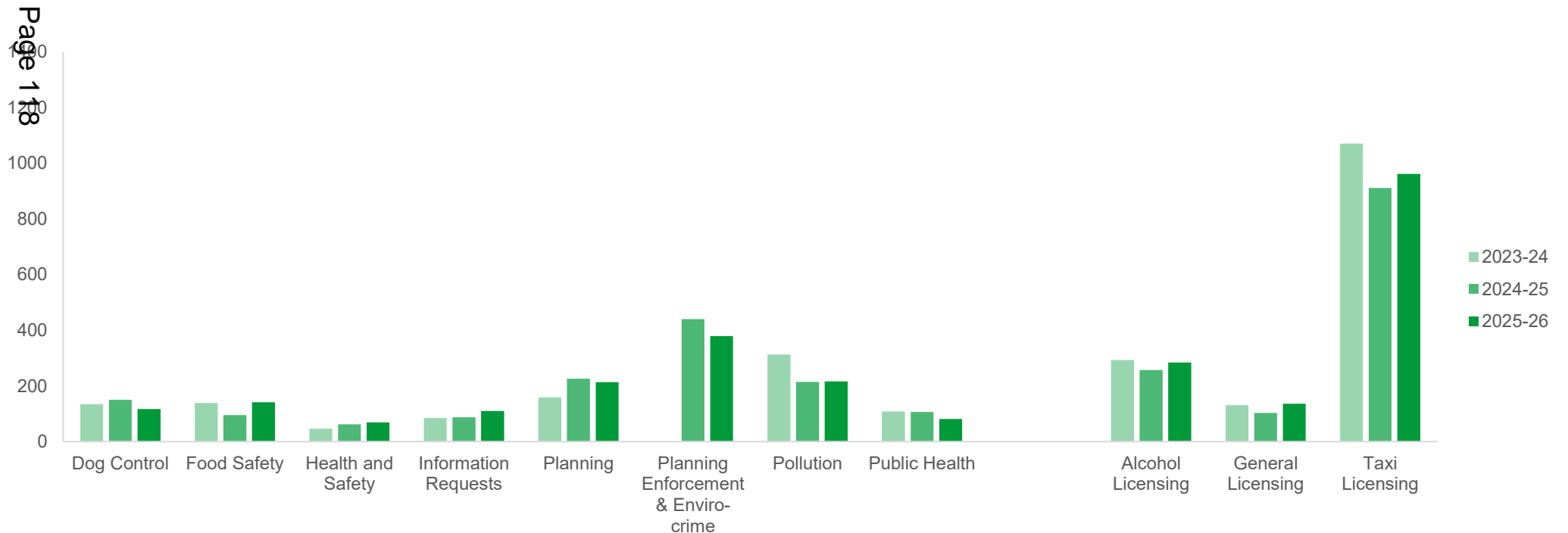
The data on this page outlines the number of complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications handled by WRS over a three-year period where the subject and/or enquirer were located in the Redditch district. The data also shows a breakdown of these cases by the primary functions delivered by the service.

Note: The recent increase in cases can be attributed to the additional functions (enviro-crime and planning enforcement) now being delivered. The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2026. In addition, the Y axis on the chart below has been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

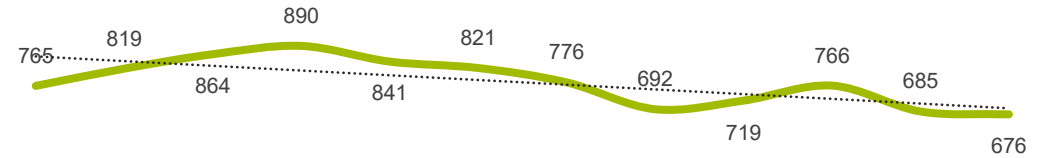


Worcester City

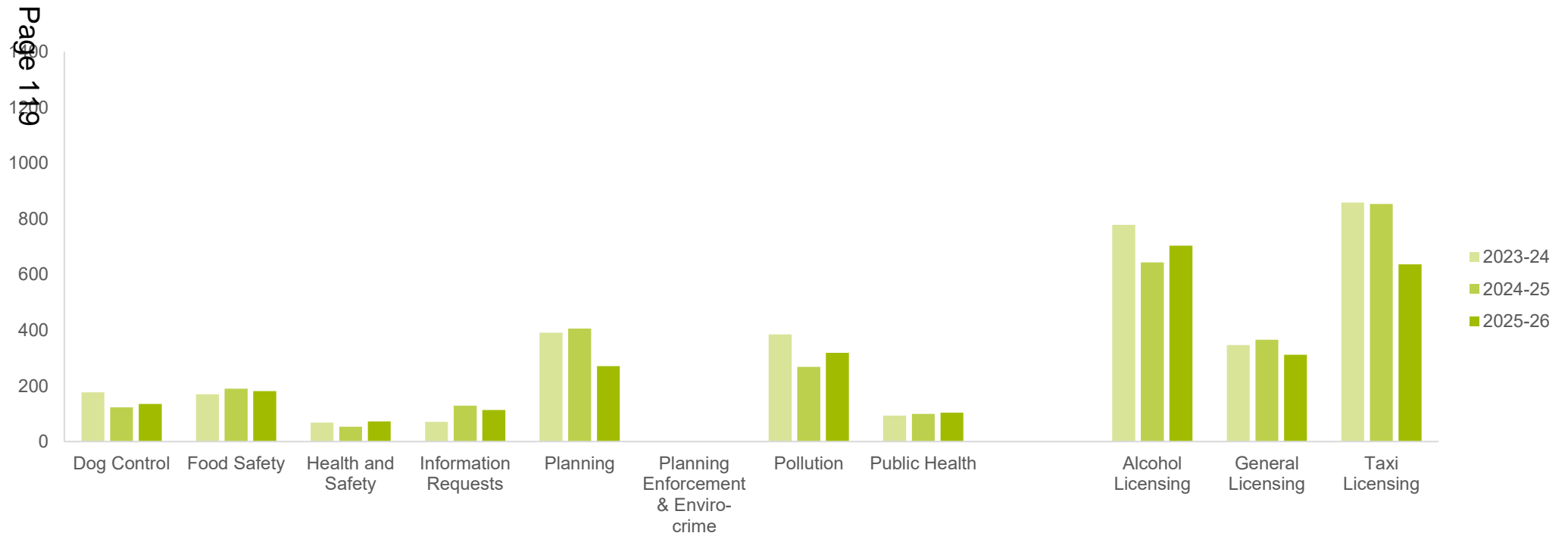
The data on this page outlines the number of complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications handled by WRS over a three-year period where the subject and/or enquirer were located in the Worcester City district. The data also shows a breakdown of these cases by the primary functions delivered by the service.

Note: The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2026. In addition, the Y axis on the chart below has been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notifications



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

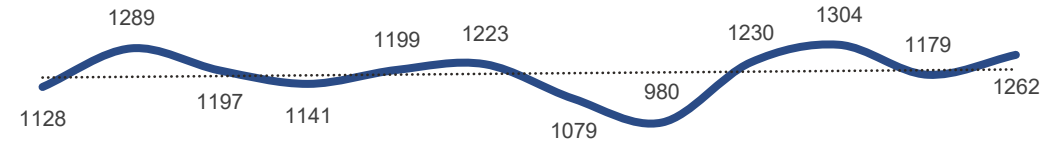


Wychavon

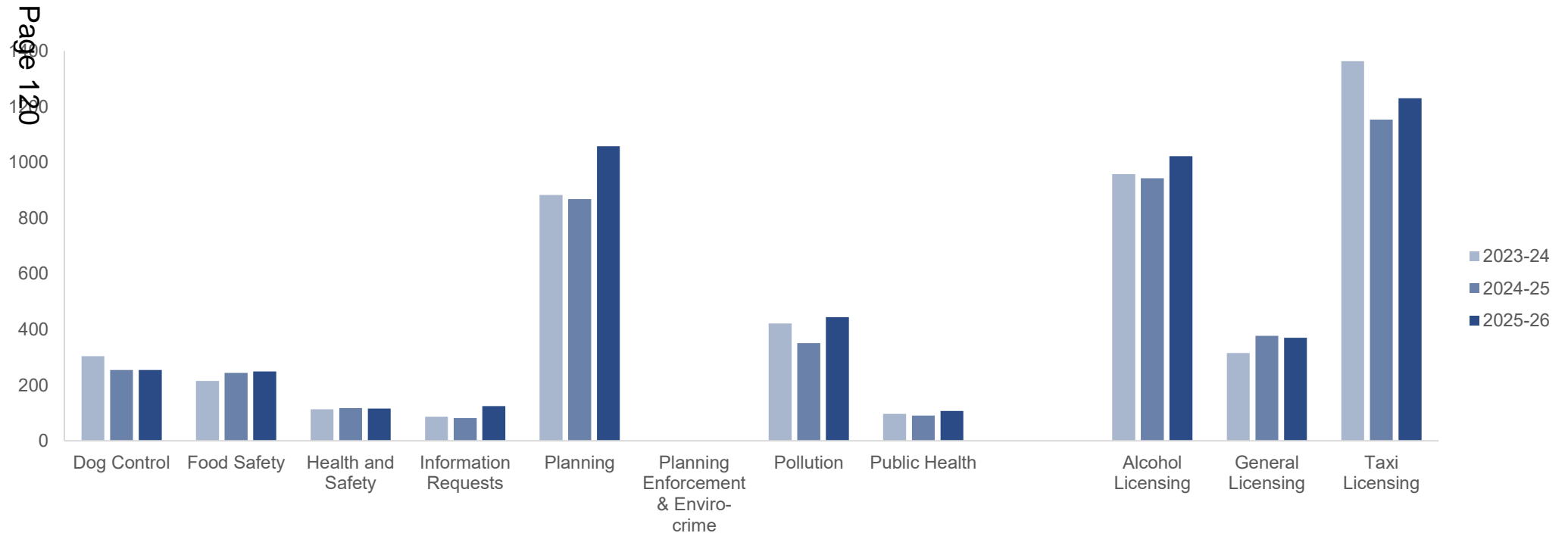
The data on this page outlines the number of complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications handled by WRS over a three-year period where the subject and/or enquirer were located in the Wychavon district. The data also shows a breakdown of these cases by the primary functions delivered by the service.

Note: The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2026. In addition, the Y axis on the chart below has been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notificaitons



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			

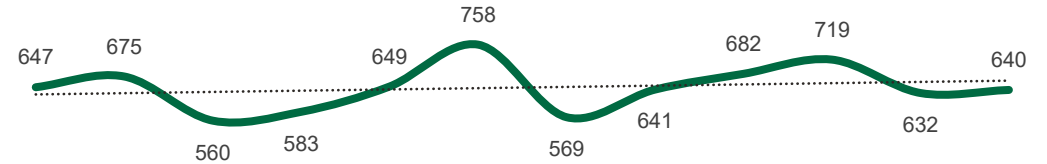


Wyre Forest

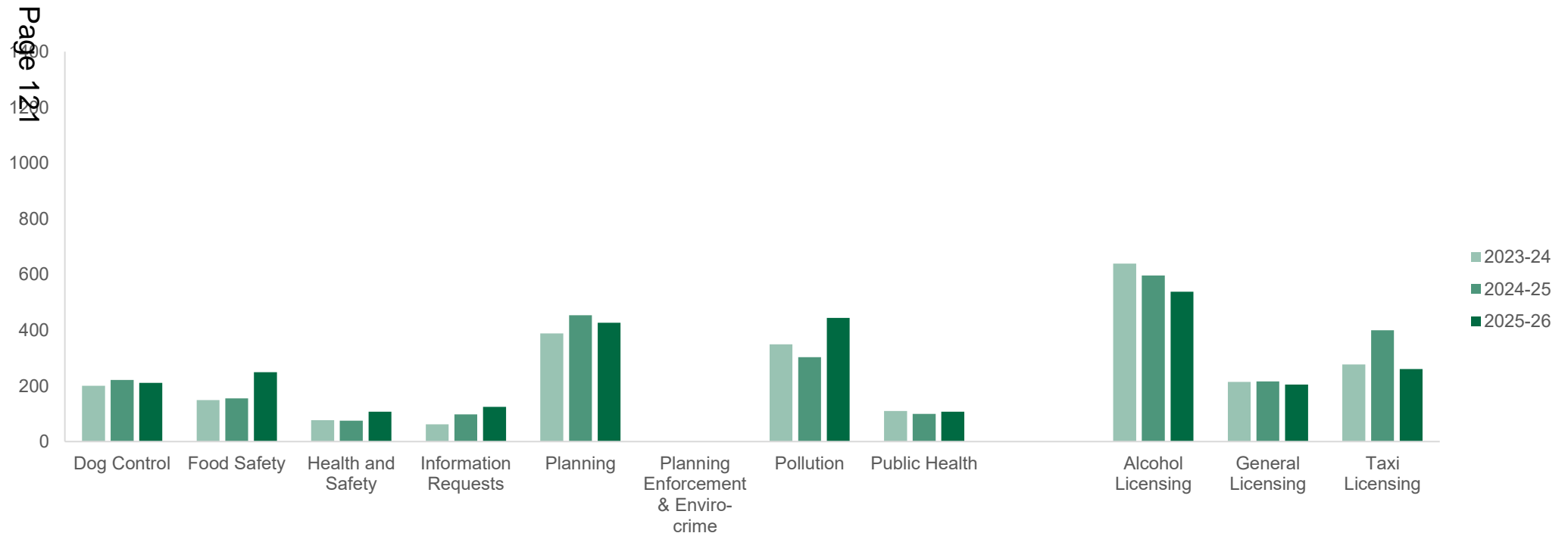
The data on this page outlines the number of complaints, enquiries, applications, and notifications handled by WRS over a three-year period where the subject and/or enquirer were located in the Wyre Forest district. The data also shows a breakdown of these cases by the primary functions delivered by the service.

Note: The figures for the current year are cumulative and will continue to increase until the end of year report is published in April 2026. In addition, the Y axis on the chart below has been standardised so the level of demand received against each function can be broadly compared to other districts.

Complaints, Enquiries, Applications, and Notificaitons



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				2024-25				2025-26			



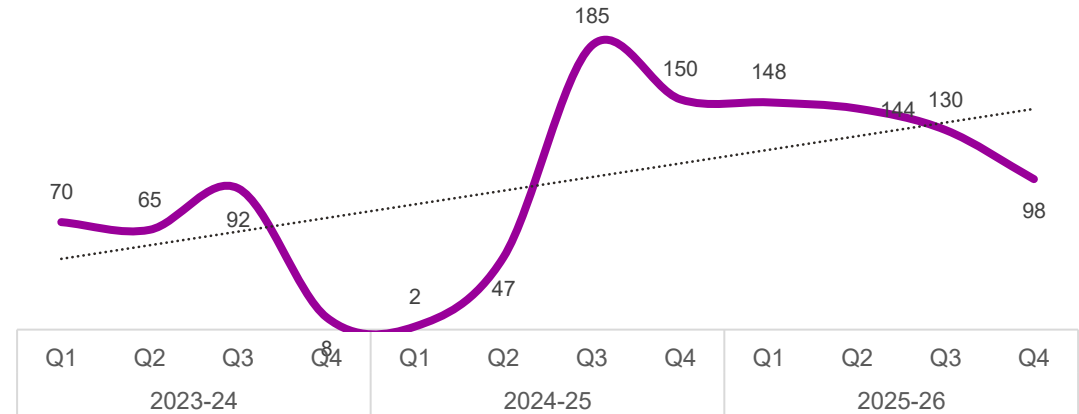
Birmingham City

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 2024, 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. Our experience since the new contract is that 50% of the XL Bully dogs we receive as strays are from Birmingham City Council area. Of the other dogs seized as strays, a significant proportion are larger bull or status breeds.

Notificaitons

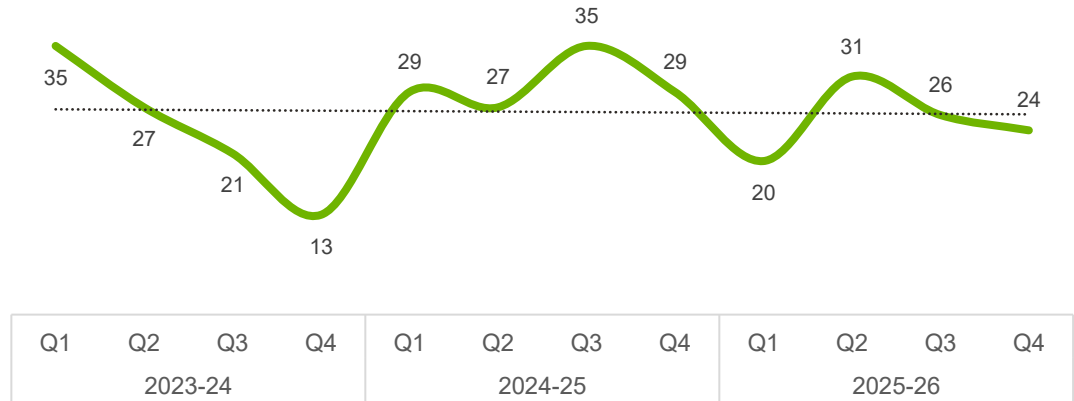


Cheltenham

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.

Notifications



Gloucester City

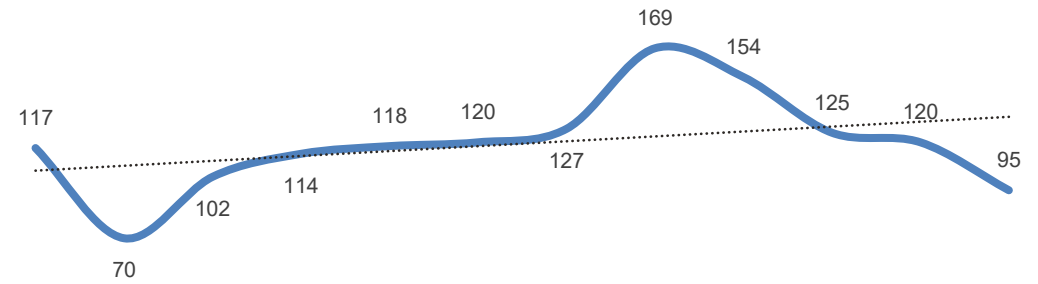
The data on this page outlines the number of dog control cases (reports of lost or stray dogs), environmental information requests, and planning enquiries handled by the service on behalf of Gloucester City Council.

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.

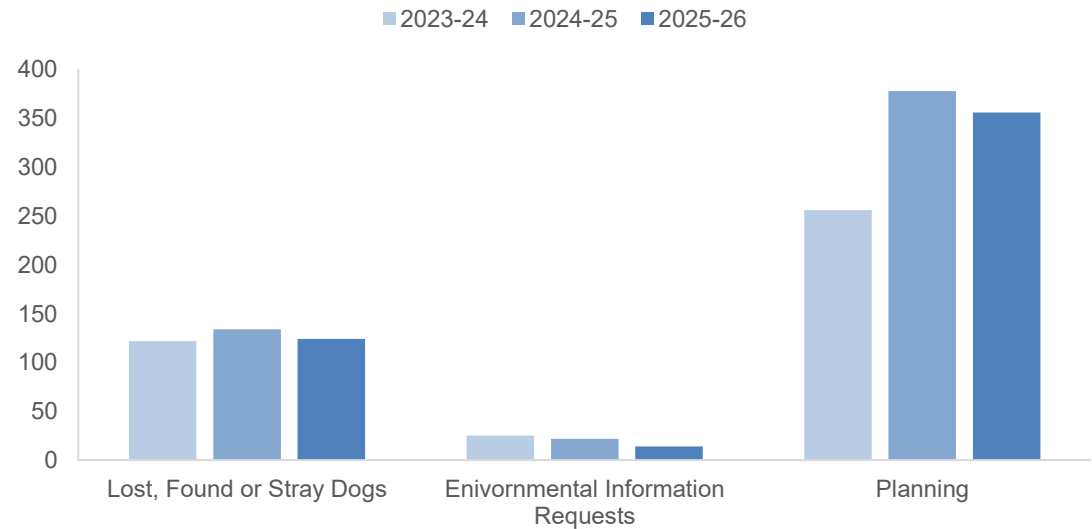
In addition to dog control activity, the service continues to deal with environmental information requests and planning enquiries.

Page 124

Enquiries and Notifications



Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2023-24				
2024-25				
2025-26				



Agenda Item 8

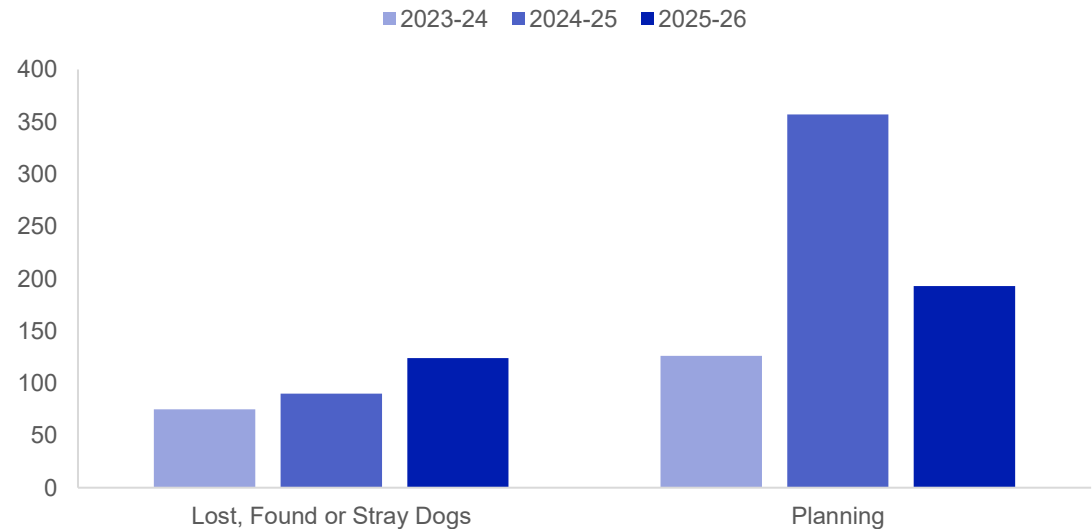
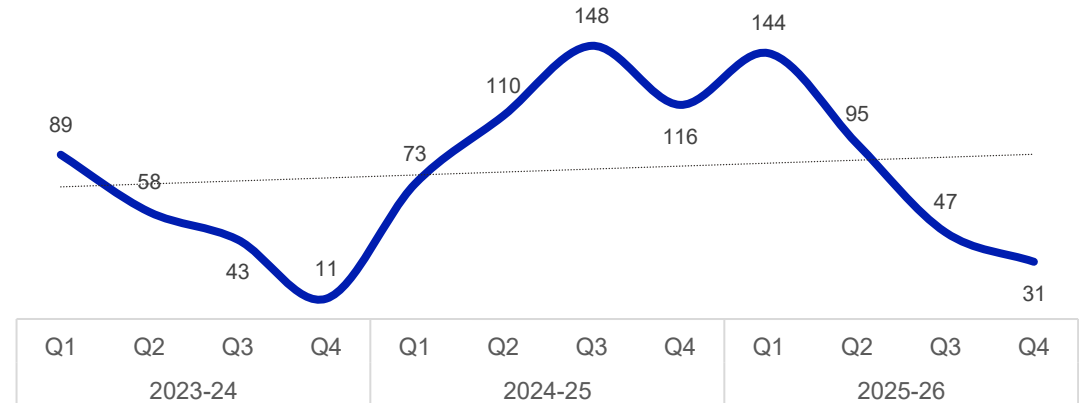
Tewkesbury

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.

Enquiries and Notifications



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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

WRS Joint Board

Date: 25th June 2026

Compliments, Complaints and Comments process

Recommendation | **That the Joint Board notes the Report**

Report

When WRS came into being in 2010, it was recognised that it would need its own approach to dealing with issues with service delivery. It also needed a means to directly receive positive feedback and other comments from the public. The approach to be taken was agreed by the Joint Committee at the time and has continued unchanged.

Originally the document described a 3-stage process for managing complaints as follows:

- Stage 1: informal involving the officer and their Line Manager
- Stage 2: Where stage 1 fails to deliver resolution, investigation and/ or review by the relevant Team Manager/ Head of WRS
- Stage 3: Where stage-2 does not achieve resolution, the complaint is fed into the final stage of the complaint process for the relevant partner authority.

This is how the system has worked until recently.

Earlier this year, the Local Government Ombudsman Service indicated that it wanted to see all local authority formal complaint processes being only 2-stages. To align with this and to also be more in line with partner processes, the first stage of the WRS process has been renamed, so we now have an informal stage, and formal stages 1 and 2. This is the change that members are asked to note.

Contact

David Mellors
Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager
Tel: 01562-738060
Email: david.mellors@worcsregservices.gov.uk

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COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

What is Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)

Our Service was first created on 1st June 2010 to deliver local authority Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions for the seven councils in Worcestershire but, in 2016, Worcestershire County Council left the partnership leaving service with the key Environmental Health and Licensing functions on of:

- Bromsgrove District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Worcester City Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

The Service reports to a Joint Committee of these six authorities comprising two elected members from each council. It is not a separate legal entity and is best viewed as an extension of the six partner councils. The service continues to manage the County Council's Trading Standards service through contractual arrangements and delivers functions for other local authorities beyond the county borders.

Let us know what you think

We want to hear from you if you've got a comment to make, whether it's good or bad about any of our services. We also want to hear your suggestions about how we can improve Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS). By asking for your feedback, we can make changes if we can, to make your contact with WRS as positive as it can be.

How can you get in touch?

Email wrsenquiries@worsregservices.gov.uk
Phone 01905-822799 for the WRS duty team
Write to Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way,
Kidderminster, Worcestershire. DY11 7WF
In person The majority of issues can initially be dealt with by telephone. If there is a need
following this, officers will be happy to make an appointment to see you.
Please note: **for ALL TRADING STANDARDS matters, the Citizens Advice Consumer
Service should be your first contact point on their dedicated number of
03454-040506**

Do you want to make a suggestion?

We welcome your feedback and encourage your comments or suggestions about our services. It may be that your suggestion helps to change the way a service is delivered.

Have we got it right?

If you think we've done something well, we'd love to hear from you. We want to receive your feedback and use it to help us make improvements to our services. We will pass on all compliments to the service or member of staff concerned.

Do you feel we have got it wrong?

We want to hear from you if you think we have:

- Done something wrong or badly
- Not done something we should have
- Treated you unfairly or unprofessionally
- Been too slow to act

What do we ask of you?

If you want to make a complaint or pay us a compliment, please give us as much detail as possible about the service including dates, times and names of the people you dealt with if known.

If making a complaint, please also let us know what you would like us to do to put things right. Please include your name, address and contact details as we cannot deal with any anonymous complaints.

If you are making a complaint for someone else, you will need their permission first. In these cases, the response will be made to the customer and not to the representative unless permission from the customer has been obtained

Personal data will be kept anonymous in producing and sharing information about complaints with other services and partners unless they are matters that need to be addressed by another service within the partners councils or an external body, or there are criminal or safeguarding exceptions

In line with the policies of our partners, complaints will only be accepted if they are reported within 12 months of the incident occurring.

What can you expect from us?

Informal Resolution

We will try to resolve things quickly and informally where possible. Please make your complaint to the person dealing with the query or, if you are not happy to do this, through one of the routes outlined above. Many issues can be resolved with an explanation, action or apology. If you aren't satisfied, you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to the service's formal process.

Formal Stage One – full investigation

We will acknowledge formal stage one complaints within 5 working days.

Your complaint will be dealt with by one of our Team Managers reviewed by the Director of Regulatory Services, who will ensure the matter is fully investigated.

You will get a full reply within ten working days or an explanation of progress to date if there are reasons why we are unable to complete the investigation within that time. If you are not happy with the result of the investigation, you can ask for your complaint to be progressed to the final stage.

Stage Two – Formal Review

If the complaint is escalated to this stage, it will be referred to the nominated officer of the most appropriate council (Wychavon, Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Malvern Hills, Bromsgrove, or Redditch,) depending on the nature of your complaint and where you live.

WRS will advise you of who is dealing with this matter has been referred to and send you their contact details. The relevant council will review the full details of your complaint, and you will get a full response explaining the outcome within ten working days.

Every effort is made to keep within the above timescales but in the event of more complex enquiries, this might not be possible. If more time is needed before replying, you will be informed.

What isn't a complaint or covered by this procedure?

This procedure is designed to receive compliments about WRS services you have received, or to make a complaint about services you have received, or activities undertaken by WRS. However, we are not able to deal with all issues under this process.

WRS is not directly responsible for matters of policy that have been set by individual councils, for example, licensing policy. Complaints regarding such matters i.e. detailed elements of policy, will be referred directly to that council for them to process. We will tell you if this is the case and provide you with details as to who the complaint has been referred to along with their contact details.

Complaints regarding the conduct of councillors should be referred to the relevant council's Monitoring Officer, who will investigate allegations of misconduct. Further information can be found on the relevant council's website.

Complaints about other people, for example regarding noise nuisance or products you've purchased will be dealt with as requests for service. Where a complaint alleges criminal conduct that falls outside of the remit of the service, this will be referred to a more appropriate body i.e. Police, HMRC.

Employment issues will be dealt with in accordance with our Host Authority's Personnel Handbook. Complaints concerning members of staff alleging misconduct will be dealt with, where appropriate through our disciplinary procedure, the outcome of which will remain confidential.

Where a complaint is regarding the conduct of one of our many partner organisations, we will forward any complaints regarding our partners or their services to the appropriate manager.

The law provides for a number of separate appeal or other statutory procedures for some actions that the local authority may take, for example:

- Statutory notice decisions,
- Decisions of licensing committees,

This list is not exhaustive and if your complaint falls under one of these separate legal routes, you will be given advice how to make your appeal.

Requests for information, either under Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Regulation requests, are dealt with under separate processes.

Anonymous Complaints – We will treat all feedback confidentially unless there are criminal or safeguarding exceptions. If complaints are received anonymously, we cannot investigate them under this procedure.

Dealing with unreasonably persistent complainants

Unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants are those complainants who, because of the nature or frequency of their contacts with WRS, hinder the organisation's consideration of their, or other people's complaints. These are only a small minority of people.

If these vexatious or unreasonably persistent complaints affect our ability to do our work or provide a service to others, we will refer this matter to the appropriate individual council who will deal with this under their own policies for dealing with vexatious complaints.

Still not satisfied following a complaint?

If you have followed this procedure but still think you've not been treated fairly, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman. This service is not run by us and is free of charge. The Ombudsman is there to deal with the way in which a decision is made, not with the merits of our decision.

You should be aware that the Ombudsman will not deal with complaints until they have exhausted the complaints process within the local authority.

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960

February 2025