

## JOINT COMMITTEE

Date 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011

### WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES PERFORMANCE INFORMATION APRIL TO JUNE 2011

<b>Recommendation</b>	That the Worcestershire Shared Services, Joint Committee note the performance for April to June 2011
<b>Contribution to Priorities/ Recommendations</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Introduction/Summary Background</b>	This report contains the performance data for WRS for the period April-June 2011. This is in the format agreed by Management Committee and Joint Committee in May 2011.
<b>Report</b>	Performance Information April To June 2011
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no financial implications.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Not applicable.
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<b>Background Papers</b>	None

## PERFORMANCE DATA

The table below contains the key data requested by Joint Committee.

Measure	Reporting Period	Performance
1. Business Satisfaction	Quarterly	<p><b>100%</b> of businesses either strongly agreed or agreed that the contact with WRS had been helpful.</p> <p>(based on standard questionnaire sent to businesses with whom WRS has had contact that quarter).</p>
2. Client Satisfaction	Quarterly	<p><b>86%</b> customers either strongly agreed or agreed that the contact with WRS had been helpful.</p> <p>(based on standard questionnaire sent to customers with whom WRS has had contact that quarter).</p>
3. Improved Consumer Confidence	Quarterly	<p><b>86%</b> customers either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt better equipped to deal with consumer problems in future.</p> <p>(based on standard questionnaire that contains a specific question about whether consumer feel better informed and able to deal with their own problems after their contact with).</p>
4. No. of Business Broadly Compliant (of those inspected during the period)	Quarterly	<p>At this stage all 7 councils can only access this data for food – no other subject areas.</p> <p><b>Bromsgrove 96%</b></p> <p><b>Malvern Hills 92%</b></p> <p><b>Redditch 93%</b></p> <p><b>Worcester 95%</b></p> <p><b>Wychavon 97.5%</b></p> <p><b>Wyre Forest 92.5%</b></p> <p>We can ensure that if Management Board and Joint Committee feel this is a key measure that it is available for all areas for any new IT system that is procured for WRS.</p>
5. No. of Improving Food Premises	Annually	This will be reported at end of year as the change cannot be measured over a 3month cycle.
6. Percentage of Premises Selling Alcohol to Children	Quarterly	There were no test purchasing exercises undertaken this quarter.
7. No. of Noise Complaints Received per 1000 Population	Quarterly	<b>Bromsgrove: Total 33; per 1000 population = 0.35</b>

		<p><b>Malvern Hills: Total 49: per 1000 population = 0.65</b></p> <p><b>Redditch: Total 59: per 1000 population = 0.75</b></p> <p><b>Worcester: Total 76: per 1000 population = 0.80</b></p> <p><b>Wychavon:: Total 71; per 1000 population = 0.61</b></p> <p><b>Wyre Forest: Total 79: per 1000 population = 0.81</b></p>
8. Cost of WRS Services per Head of Population	Quarterly	<b>£10.82<sup>1</sup></b>
9. Service Improvement Targets		To be determined after the first phase of systems thinking is completed.

It should be noted that for the indicators based on customer and business satisfaction, that the samples sizes were very low this quarter. This is because of IT problems which meant that we could not access the environmental health systems to send out the questionnaires. Sample numbers will improve for the July – September quarter and as from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 all new work is being put onto the existing Flare system so we will be able to send questionnaires directly to all customers and businesses with whom we have had contact.

## UPDATE ON BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Work in April - June comprised a team carrying out a lot of data analysis and agreeing which priority services areas to experiment on. This took a team of 20 people out of “normal” service provision which has affected performance in some areas. Remaining staff concentrated on priority areas of complaints, programmed inspections and commenced a number of key projects detailed within the Service Plan.

New processes are being tested by a pilot team covering the Bromsgrove area covering most areas of work. Initial work covered food inspection and noise complaints and the redesigned approach is now being used for all core work (except licensing, contaminated land and animal welfare). The intention is to focus on ‘value’ work that is important to the customer. The idea is to experiment and see what works within a small area, then if it does not work or can be improved, it can be easily changed.

For pro-active work, we review each business in its entirety to decide on the appropriate intervention. The officer then makes a judgement, in discussion with business, on the appropriate time for their next review. If problems are found we keep working with the business until it ‘meets purpose’ (e.g. for a food business that it is selling safe food). We met with the Food Standards Agency as this approach does move away from the strict criteria laid down in their statutory codes. They were comfortable with what we are doing.

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<sup>1</sup>This is based on the service plan/budget for 2011/2012 and ONS mid year population data of 557000. It was originally planned to report the costs of environmental health and trading standards separately but due to the increased integration of staff working across different functions and areas it is now not possible to do this.

For reactive work, we have a “Duty Officer” who picks up service requests arising from Bromsgrove Hub and deal with as many as they can at the first point of contact. Early indications are that this is quite low (under 20%) and most work is being telephoned through to an officer who is already out in the Bromsgrove area working.

## **OTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Project Work**

We are completing projects into gas safety in catering establishments and E. coli on Petting Farms. Further information on the outcomes of these will be available next quarter. The initial work on gas safety showed that there were more problems than anticipated so we have put extra resources into this area.

The Health and Well-being team launched the WRS/PCT Convenience Store project in 10 stores across the County and held an associated community engagement event at each in order to promote the 5 a day message and make it easier for low income communities to access fresh fruit and vegetables on their doorstep. The project will run for 8 weeks before carrying out an evaluation exercise.

A protocol was established with the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority for joint working on fire safety in takeaways and restaurants where means of escape is through the kitchen

Sampling projects are ongoing in relation to:

- meat content in meat products
- phthalates in children's toys
- animal shaped items for toy safety
- formaldehyde in melamine tableware
- cosmetics targeted at children (including face paints)
- sampling to support the “truckers' tucker” public health project.

### **Food Hygiene Rating Schemes “Scores on the Doors”**

WRS succeeded in getting funding to assist in the preparation to move from the 'scores on the doors' schemes currently operated across some Districts in Worcestershire, with the view to joining the Food Standards Agencies (FSA) National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme by July 2012. The benefit will be the national coverage and marketing given by the FSA's scheme to ensure greater informed choice when eating out. At the time of the launch, hygiene ratings will be published and searchable as “Worcestershire”.

### **Business Advice**

A project is being undertaken in the July-September quarter to ensure local importers and internet sellers are complying with legal requirements.

Work is ongoing to review and improve our “trader register”.

We have advised local businesses to help them launch new products, these included slimming product and energy giving flapjacks.

We agreed with a local business a voluntary withdrawal of nail clippers shaped like toy cars as they were in breach of toy safety regulations.

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Three companies have expressed an interest in developing formal “primary authority” agreements with WRS. This would mean WRS would give nationally assured advice to the companies and these could be fee paying services.

A routine inspection check of a company packing goods helped them identify potential savings to the company of £33000 per year by reducing their current over filling of packs.

## **Licensing**

The licensing team has provided training on licensing matters to Members at Wyre Forest, Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Bromsgrove and Worcester City and Members at Redditch will have a similar session in October. The training covered the main areas of taxi legislation, Licensing Act 2003 (Alcohol) and general licensing including animal health. The sessions were very interactive with examples been given and were accompanied by a comprehensive reference booklet which Members can use in the future. A particular feature of the training was around committee procedures and decision making and we are grateful to our legal colleagues for their assistance. Feedback has been very positive and the training has been provided free of charge enabling some of the Districts to make real savings.

## **Temporary Event Notices**

A Temporary Event Notice is required for the sale of alcohol and for music at temporary events for less than 499 people and each one can last for up to 96 hours. These have become an issue due to a proliferation of “mini festivals” which have played amplified music late into the night. Local people and Members question why such events have been allowed to go ahead and are surprised when the legal position is explained. A TEN is a notification that an event will take place, it is not asking or requiring permission for the event. The only way the event can be halted is if the police have concerns over crime and disorder. WRS will of course look to other legislation to deal with problems such as noise but it has taken a lot of explaining to Local Members and residents and we still get urgent requests to stop such events taking place

## **Contaminated Land – Marlpool Drive**

WRS recently had confirmation from DEFRA that a grant of £59k had been confirmed to deal with additional site investigations at Marlpool Drive, Redditch where there is an issue of the migration of methane gas from a closed refuse disposal facility. 19 properties have been confirmed by WRS as being built on “contaminated land” within the legal definition of this status. The grant was confirmed following acceptance by the Environment Agency and DEFRA that 16 properties on Marlpool Drive, Redditch were at “significant possibility of significant harm”, arising as a result of the migrating methane.

## **Three Counties Show**

WRS Animal Welfare specialists were out in force at the Three Counties Show in Malvern between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June. Animal movements and welfare at the show have been checked since the Three Counties Show reopened following the nationwide foot and mouth epidemic in June 2003. The dog wardens were in attendance to help monitor animal licensing requirements and also to deal with issues of dogs left in cars during the hot weather conditions. Our attendance was very well received with a letter of thanks sent into the Service from the Three Counties Showground shortly after the show.

## **Wildfowl Trust – Honeybourne**

As a result of problems found in previous inspections and an increase in complaints from the public, we visited the Wildfowl Trust at Honeybourne near Evesham. The visits resulted in the immediate Service of Improvement and Prohibition Notices due to health and safety risks and hazards to members of the public visiting the site and a verbal caution to the proprietors

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regarding animal welfare issues including the stock piling of a large quantity of poultry carcasses. The large scale and very visible rat infestation on land at the premises resulted in a follow up notice issued under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949. Two subsequent joint visits with a company dealing with pest control were necessary to bring the rat infestation under control, remove harbourage and clean up large quantities of spilled animal feed. The investigation is ongoing and a decision will be taken shortly as to what further follow-up and/or legal action is appropriate.

## **Rogue Traders**

Officers from this Service carried out a joint operation with local police officers in the Malvern area following complaints about unfair trading practices and potential rogue traders. As a result a joint team was dispatched around Malvern with the purpose of carrying out intervention and disruption tactics against any traders involved in criminal activity and to offer support and guidance to legitimate local traders.

Officers intercepted and spoke to 24 individuals who were involved in home maintenance work and waste collections including scrap metal. A number of legitimate traders were spoken to and advised of the support offered by WRS, 6 legitimate traders were interested in joining the Worcestershire Trader Register.

Officers issued a Formal Infringement Notice to a trader who was potentially misleading customers by claiming to hold a waste carriers licence when he did not. Information about this trader was also disseminated to the Environment Agency and relevant local authorities.

Scrap metal collectors were also advised and warned in relation to noise nuisances created during collections.

Officers also responded to a call-out from a local vulnerable resident who was having problems with builders on site. WRS attended with the police and discovered they had told the consumer he needed £2500 of unnecessary work done, and had not provided proper cancellation rights etc. WRS officers issued notices to the builders about breaches of consumer protection laws and the traders were escorted from the premises, having been advised by the police that if they visited that household again that it would be deemed to be harassment and it would become a police matter.

It has been agreed with Malvern police officers that this operation will be repeated in the future where intelligence shows issues with rogue traders and criminal activity in that area.

## **The Environmental Impact of Green Energy**

We have recently been offering expert advice to the County Council Environment and Planning Department on the potential impact of a proposed anaerobic digestion plant which recovers energy from agricultural green waste and converts it to valuable electricity energy.

The proposed installation in the Evesham area would deliver a substantial economic boost to the farming community. However this 'green' gain has to be balanced against the environmental impact upon other local residents living nearby. WRS is currently discussing its concerns with the developer in relation to noise and odour with a view of negotiating a proposal which will protect the local environmental amenity of the surrounding area. In addition to this officers will also be accompanying Elected Members on a site visit to be held at a similar installation in early September and will advise them on the technical merits and suitability of the application.

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