

**WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS AND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES**

**MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY 28TH JUNE 2012 AT 4.00 P.M.

THE COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE,  
BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor C. B. Taylor  
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor M. A. Bullivant  
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor Mrs. B. Behan  
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor D. Hughes  
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor M. Braley  
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor P. Mould  
Worcester City Council: Councillor Mrs. L. Hodgson  
Worcester City Council: Councillor J. Riaz  
Worcestershire County Council: Councillor A. N. Blagg  
Worcestershire County Council: Councillor D. Thain  
Wychavon District Council: Councillor Mrs. E. Stokes  
Wychavon District Council: Councillor K. Jennings  
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor P. Harrison  
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor M. Hart

**AGENDA**

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of Vice-Chairman
3. To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
4. Declarations of Interest
5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 23rd February 2012 (Pages 1 - 8)
6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget Monitoring April 2011 - March 2012 (Pages 9 - 22)

7. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Annual Report 2011 / 2012 (Pages 23 - 54)
8. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

The Council House  
Burcot Lane  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B60 1AA

20th June 2012

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES

#### MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY 2012 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. L. Hodgson (Chairman), M. Braley (Vice-Chairman), M. A. Bullivant, C. B. Taylor (during Minute No's 30/11 to 38/11), Mrs. B. Behan, P. Cummings (substituting for P. Grove), P. Mould, A. N. Blagg, Mrs. E. Stokes, K. Jennings (during Minute No's 30/11 to 38/11), P. Harrison (substituting for J. Baker) and M. Hart

Observers: Mr. V. Allison, Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council and Mr. I. Pumfrey Head of Customer and Environmental Services, Malvern Hills District Council

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Jordan, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. M. Kay, Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr. M. Thomas and Mrs. P. Ross

The Chairman welcomed officers to the meeting.

#### 27/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Grove, Malvern Hills District Council, F. Lankester, Worcester City Council, D. Thain, Worcestershire County Council and J. Baker, Wyre Forest District Council.

#### 28/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

#### 29/11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 24th November 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

#### 30/11 WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2012 / 2013

The Committee considered a report that outlined the way in which the Worcestershire Regulatory Service (WRS) activities linked to National Priorities relevant to regulatory services. These National Policies would be mapped across the partners' local priorities.

Members were asked to note that under the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership, Service Level Agreement, WRS had to produce a 3 year Service Plan for agreement and adoption by all of the Member Authorities. The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services highlighted that the operating environment was undergoing rapid change and the outputs of the transformation programme had not been fully implemented as yet, therefore a 3 year plan at this stage of the process would be premature.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that the Service Plan had been lined up with national priorities as set by the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) 5 Priority Outcomes as detailed at page 3 of the report.

Members were informed that following the initial application of Systems Thinking approach to transform the service so that it was more customer focused, and after consultation with customers, WRS had established 3 purposes that would be used to underpin the way in which the Services would be developed and delivered in the future:

- Help me resolve my problem
- I want to assume everything is ok
- Help me trade well

Member's attention was drawn to page 5 of the report which detailed the Outcomes, Activities and Measures that would replace the performance indicators that Members had been used to.

Members were asked to focus on page 12 of the report which detailed training and development of multi-functional teams. The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services informed the Committee that the training and development budget was an extremely critical budget. The training of multi-functional teams would allow the service to have competent staff capable of undertaking a wider range of duties and confident to undertake a more diverse role as the service progressed in order to provide a more cost effective service.

The Committee was asked to note Appendix 2 of the report which detailed the Operating Environment and the Government initiatives and policy changes likely to impact in the short to medium term.

Appendix 3 of the report detailed the outcome measures which had been as a result of consultation with Committee Members and the Management Board. The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services informed the Committee that the service would continue to engage with Members and the Management Board throughout the year to clarify the level of detail Members wished to receive in respect of future outcome measures and reporting frequency.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services responded to Members' questions with regard to performance reporting and baseline data. The Committee was informed that performance against outcome measures would

be reported to the Management Board and the Committee either quarterly or annually depending on the measure. Members were asked to note that due to the lack of a single IT system the collection and analysis of measures data would be difficult therefore meaningful robust data would be unavailable for at least 12 months.

Following further discussion with regard to outcomes measures and performance the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services informed the Committee that if requested he could provide preliminary figures and some information in response to individual Member enquiries so that Members had something more tangible to take to their respective authority.

Mr. M. Kay, Business Manager (Acting role), Worcestershire Regulatory Services responded to Councillor M. Braley with regard to an update on the Licensing Act – Deregulation of Regulated Entertainment, which could mean that events of up to 5000 people would not require any form of licence unless they were selling Alcohol. Mr. M. Kay informed Members that the consultation period was now closed and that WRS had responded. Members would be informed of any consultations that were taking place and any future updates via the WRS Licensing Updates newsletter.

**RESOLVED** that the Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Service Plan 2012 / 2013 be approved.

31/11 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ICT PROJECT UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Martin Thomas who had been appointed ICT Project Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services in December 2011.

Mr. M. Thomas presented the report and in doing so informed the Committee that his first task had been to develop a detailed Project Plan as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report. This was quickly followed by commencement of the procurement process in line with EU Procurement rules as agreed by the Management Board. 40 expressions of interest had been received from suppliers who wished to take part in the procurement process with more expected by the closing date. Mr. M. Thomas informed the Committee of the evaluation process / criteria which would lead to a shortlist of potential suppliers to take forward to the next stage. The next stage, invitation to tender, would start on 10th April 2012. Shortlisted suppliers would be invited to a suppliers' day where the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) and the WRS Team would describe the vision of WRS, where they were going, how transformation would be key to the solution of going forward and the technicalities of linking to existing solutions within each of the partner authorities. By the 25th May 2012 all of the Invitations To Tender (ITT) would have been received with an evaluation of all of the ITT's to take place against set criteria. The set criteria would include site visits to existing supplier clients and suppliers would be invited to present their final solutions to WRS. The results would then be presented to the Management Board and Joint Committee during July 2011 for approval. Once the contract had been finalised implementation would start on 3rd September 2012.

Mr. M. Thomas and the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services responded to Members questions with regard to Bromsgrove District Council's procurement process and EU procurement rules.

Members were asked to note the complexity of the process of trying to link into seven different authorities systems and then into each individual member authorities systems located within that. Transformation had enabled a fundamental redesign of the Service, moving the strategic focus of the organisation to the customer and giving clarity of purpose. The decision was taken early on to do the business transformation first. Transformation had enabled a fundamental redesign of the Service, moving the strategic focus of the organisation to the customer and giving clarity of purpose. WRS had now reached a point in the transformation process where it could be determined what sort of flexible ICT system was required for the redesigned service in preference to an 'off the shelf' system.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

32/11 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES FINANCIAL MONITORING  
APRIL - DECEMBER 2011/2012**

The Committee considered a report which provided details of the financial position of the service for April to December 2011 for both revenue and capital expenditure.

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee of the underspend due to savings arising from two Grade B posts remaining vacant and an overspend of £39,000 in relation to accommodation charges from member authorities prior to Worcestershire Regulatory Services move to Wyatt House. There was a predicted overspend on Transport namely car allowances of approximately £20,000 due to a disturbance allowance being paid to staff moving to Wyatt House for a period of 12 months ending June 2012. Members were asked to note on the capital side an actual spend of £95,000 against an anticipated budget of £1.1 million due to delays in the ICT system.

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council responded to Members' questions with regard to training, training and seminars and subscriptions.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

33/11 **AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2010 - 2011**

A copy of the Audit Commission Annual Audit Letter for 2010/2011 was considered.

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and highlighted that Worcestershire Shared Service had been implemented in June 2010 and therefore the

accounts represented a 10 month period. An unqualified opinion had been issued by the Audit Commission for this period and this opinion had been presented in detail to the Joint Committee in September 2011.

The Annual Audit Letter as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report summarised findings from the 2010/2011 Audit. The following 2 elements were considered:

- Audit of financial statements
- Assessment of Value for Money arrangements

Members were advised that the Audit Commission had made a number of recommendations in the Audit Letter. These had been considered by officers and discussed with the Audit Commission and it had been agreed that processes were now in place to address the issues raised. These were:

- Accounts should be allocated to more than one officer
- A clear plan should be agreed by the Commission
- Reporting of certain items need to be more defined between participating Councils
- Working papers to be improved

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council provided Members with detailed information on the figures shown on page 3 of the Audit Commission, Annual Audit Letter Audit 2010 / 2011, Key Messages, Audit opinion and financial statements.

The Committee was informed that the accounts for 2011 / 2012 would be audited to reflect the regulatory services body being classed as a Smaller Relevant Body. This would result in a simple Annual Return being prepared and therefore an anticipated reduction in fee.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations included in the Audit Commission, Annual Audit Letter 2010 / 2011 be noted.

34/11 **HUMAN RESOURCES & FINANCIAL POLICES AND PROCEDURES**

The Committee was asked to consider a report which detailed the arrangements for ensuring that Human Resources (HR) and financial issues in relation to Worcestershire Regulatory Services were managed in line with robust policies and procedures.

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that following the establishment of the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership for Regulatory Services it had been agreed that Bromsgrove District Council would act as the Host Authority for employment matters. It was essential that the wording of adopted policies correctly reflected the relationship between the Joint Committee and Bromsgrove District Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the adoption of the Human Resources policies and procedures of Bromsgrove District Council be approved, subject to revisions that are required to reflect the partnership arrangements;
- b) that authority be delegated to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Management Board to agree the wording revisions to individual HR policies; and
- c) that the adoption of the Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations of Bromsgrove District Council be approved, subject to revisions in relation to the references to the shared service management hierarchy and committee approval arrangements.

35/11 **NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIP AWARD - ANIMAL HEALTH OFFICER**

The Committee was asked to note a report which detailed the work of what was formerly Worcestershire County Council's Animal Health Team. The team played a key role in preventing notifiable animal diseases such as foot and mouth from having the devastating impact they could have on Worcestershire's rural economy.

Mr. S. Wilkes, Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services introduced the report and in doing so highlighted the Nuffield Scholarship award which recognised the level of excellence achieved by this team and its individual staff members, particularly Joanne Nash.

The award was one of only 20 awarded in the United Kingdom (UK) and required Joanne to apply her skills and professional knowledge outside of the UK to a range of animal health issues.

The Chairman requested that officers pass on the Committee's congratulations to Joanne on her success and that Members looked forward to hearing the results of her study meetings and visits held in the UK and abroad.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

36/11 **DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, INNOVATION & SKILLS ON TRANSFORMING REGULATORY OUTCOMES**

The Committee considered a report which highlighted the Government's views on the 'Better Regulation' agenda which had potential for direct impact particularly on the operation of some of the Trading Standards elements of service delivery.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the revised recommendation.

Mr. S. Wilkes, Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee that the Government had published its responses to the Transforming Regulatory Outcomes consultation that took place earlier in the year. The Government's response stated that there was evidence of good practice of regulators and



business working together on compliance but there were too many areas where the enforcement of regulation was heavy-handed, inefficient, overly prescriptive and culturally risk-averse.

Members' attention was drawn to the Key Elements of the Government Response and Worcestershire Regulatory Services examples of good practice as detailed in the report.

The Government wished to reinforce the use of the Regulators Compliance Code and in its review of regulators it intended to check on how far they had applied the Code. Regulators would be asked to give more prominence to the Code in publications and websites.

**RESOLVED** that the principles identified in the report be adopted and included in future Service Plans.

37/11 **INSPECTION BY THE INTERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE (IOCCO)**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the positive outcome of a recent inspection by the Interception of Communications Commissioners Office (IOCCO).

Mr S. Wilkes, Business Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services introduced the report and in doing so informed Members that where a local authority used surveillance or obtained what is referred to as communications data, processes under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and its associated Regulation must be observed. Authorities were audited by two bodies, the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner for directed surveillance and the IOCCO. IOCCO's inspection which took place during December was effectively an inspection of the host authority, Bromsgrove District Council.

Applications and notices were reviewed by the inspector. He was very impressed with the process that Worcestershire Regulatory had adopted although there were a number of areas for officers to improve their practice as detailed in the report. In light of the good standard of compliance the inspector observed he would not be returning for his next review for approximately 18 months.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted

38/11 **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE**

(The Chairman agreed that this matter be raised as an urgent item at the meeting as a decision on this matter could not wait until the next meeting of the Committee).

The Chairman reported that Members had been made aware during the previous item (Minute No. 31/11 refers), on Worcestershire Regulatory Services ICT Project update, of the specific deadline dates to be met under Bromsgrove District Council's and the EU procurement process for the

preferred ICT supplier. Following on from this process a report to the Joint Committee would not be made available until July 2012. Members were therefore asked to consider if the Joint Committee, Annual Meeting of Thursday 28th June 2012 could be rescheduled to Wednesday 11th July 2012 in order for the Committee to receive the ICT preferred supplier report.

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Meeting of the Joint Committee be held on Wednesday 11th July 2012 at 4:00pm at Bromsgrove District Council.

The meeting closed at 5.15 p.m.

Chairman

**Joint Committee**  
**28th June 2012**

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING**

**APRIL 2011 - MARCH 2012**

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Joint Committee:

- 1.1 note the financial position for the period April 2011 – March 2012
- 1.2 approve a reserve of £35,000 to fund a leadership leadership development programme for senior managers
- 1.3 approve the refund of the remaining balance of the 2010/11 reserve of £301k together with the underspend of £267k from 2011/12 to the participating Councils, to be allocated on the % basis as detailed in the Business Case 2010/11. The total of £568k will be repaid in 2012/13 and equates to:

<b>Council</b>	<b>% Share</b>	<b>Refund of savings £</b>
Bromsgrove	11.05%	62,801
Malvern Hills	9.58%	54,447
Redditch	11.31%	64,279
City of Worcester	11.11%	63,142
Wychavon	16.55%	94,059
Wyre Forest	10.82%	61,494
Worcestershire	29.58%	168,114
		<b>568,336</b>

1.4 Approve the Annual Return to include the Accounting Statements for the Joint Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

1.5 Note the Internal Audit Manager assurance statement for the financial year 2011/12 at Appendix 3

## **Contribution to Priorities**

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

## **Introduction/Summary**

This report presents the financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services for the period April 2011 – March 2012.

For the financial year 2011/12 the body (Worcestershire Regulatory Services Joint Committee) has been classified as a small relevant body by the Audit Commission as the income is less than £6.5m. As a result of this classification the requirement of the formal accounting statements is limited to the return as detailed in Appendix 2.

The report requests Members consider the savings that have accrued during the year and the proposal to return the balance retained from 2010/11 together with the savings realised from 2011/12.

## **Background**

The approved budget for 2011/12 is £6.008m. This is a reduction on the revised 2010/11 budget of £6.252m.

During the financial year a monthly financial report has been presented to the Management Board with a quarterly report considered by the Joint Committee.

The costs associated with the service include revenue and capital (transformational costs) .A detailed Revenue Monitoring Statement for the period April – March 2011/12 is attached at Appendix 1.

The Annual Return, including the accounting statements, is a prescribed form which has to be completed and approved by the Joint Committee. This replaces the previous format of the Statement of Accounts that was presented to Members in relation to 2010/11.

The accounts for 2011/12 will be audited by Clement Keys ( External Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission) in August 2012.

## **Report**

### Revenue Monitoring

The final position of savings in relation to revenue costs is £267k. This underspend is mainly due to :

- Vacancies as a result of the recruitment to new posts (£185k). There were 2 posts at a senior level not filled during the year. One of these posts has since been filled but the second management post is to be released for savings.

- Reduced spend on general supplies mainly due to the hold on spend during the transition period to Wyatt House and efficiencies realised from the move to a single site to include publications / ICT / Training (£112k)
- Additional income generated from charges for additional works and grant received (£49k)

The savings were partially offset by the interim charges made by Councils in relation to office accommodation utilised by Regulatory Services staff whilst awaiting the move to Wyatt House (£107k).

A proposal has been agreed at the Management Board to set aside in reserve £35k to fund an enhanced development programme for the managers who will be taking the service forward to show demonstrable improvements in leadership, business acumen and management performance.

Due to the level of the underspend together with the financial cuts that the participating Councils are faced with in the future, officers propose that the Joint Committee approve the refund of the 2011/12 savings of £267k back to the participating Councils in 2012/13.

In addition it is proposed that the remaining reserve from 2010/11 currently held by Regulatory Services of £301k is also refunded to the participating Councils.

The proposed total amount to be refunded is £568k. This has been agreed by the Regulatory Services Management Board and the Worcestershire Treasurers group.

It is proposed that the £568k is refunded in 2012/13 to the Councils based on the agreed % share as detailed in the Legal Agreement.

The total refund to each participating Council would be:

<b>Council</b>	<b>% Share</b>	<b>Refund of Savings £</b>
Bromsgrove	11.05%	62,801
Malvern Hills	9.58%	54,447
Redditch	11.31%	64,279
Worcester City	11.11%	63,142
Wychavon	16.55%	94,059
Wyre Forest	10.82%	61,494
Worcestershire	29.58%	168,114
		<b>568,336</b>

As members are aware the costs associated with severance that may result from future restructures were identified in the Business Case. The budget which remains with the participating Councils is £534k and this will be drawn down when required to ensure structures are in place to deliver future savings.

#### Transformation Project Outturn 2011/12

Transformational project spend was lower than anticipated due to the focus on ensuring the system to be utilised meets the service needs following transformation. The procurement is currently underway with tenders being submitted and assessments of the proposed system being undertaken by the teams.

The costs of the project for 2011/12 was £119k. This mainly related to project management and hardware /desktop refresh within the service.

This cost has been fully met from grant funding received by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Agency with no requirement for funding from the Councils.

#### **Financial Implications**

None other than those stated in the report

#### **Sustainability**

None as a direct result of this report

#### **Contact Points**

Jayne Pickering – 01527-881400

#### **Background Papers**

Detailed financial business case

	Summary - Full year Budget	Summary - Expenditure to Mar 12	Summary - Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b>Direct Expenditure</b>				
Employees				
Salary	4,233	3,994	-239	Underspend is due to salary savings arising from two Grade B posts remaining vacant
Agency Staff	3	52	49	
Recruitment	0	7	7	
Subscription	5	2	-3	
Training	2	2	0	
Employee Insurance	19	20	1	
<b>Sub-Total - Employees</b>	<b>4,262</b>	<b>4,077</b>	<b>-185</b>	
<b>Premises</b>				
Rent	0	107	107	Accommodation Charges paid to partners to 30/06/11 - prior to move to Wyatt House
Room Hire	6	0	-6	
Business Rates	36	36	-0	
Cleaning	8	8	0	
Repairs & Maintenance	1	9	8	
Service Charges	15	7	-8	
Secure Storage	17	17	0	
Utilities	18	7	-11	
Water & Sewerage Services	2	1	-1	
<b>Sub-Total - Premises</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>89</b>	
<b>Transport</b>				
Vehicle Hire	8	1	-7	
Vehicle Fuel	8	7	-1	
Tyres	0	0	0	
Road Fund Tax	1	1	-0	
Vehicle Insurance	3	3	0	
Vehicle Maintenance	10	3	-7	
Car Lease	7	7	0	
Car Allowances	208	211	3	
Public Transport	0	1	1	
<b>Sub-Total - Transport</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>-10</b>	
<b>Supplies and Services</b>				
Furniture & Equipment	81	89	8	This underspend is because furniture and equipment was brought into the service from the Partner Councils
Test Purchases	20	1	-19	
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	8	4	-4	
Printing & Photocopying	40	30	-10	
CRB Checks (taxi)	10	25	15	
Publications	47	14	-33	
Postage	9	11	2	
ICT	101	79	-22	
Legal Costs	23	0	-23	
Telephones	52	41	-10	
Training & Seminars	78	61	-17	
Car Parking & Subsistence	7	1	-6	
Insurance	20	34	14	
Miscellaneous Expenses	2	1	-1	
Third Party Payments				
Support Service Recharges	250	250	0	
Customer Services Hub	50	50	0	
Audit	20	16	-4	It as been agreed that the Audit Fee for 11/12 will be £5,000, the difference reflects the previous year final account.
<b>Sub-Total - Supplies &amp; Service</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>-112</b>	

	Summary - Full year Budget	Summary - Expenditure to Mar 12	Summary - Variance
Direct Expenditure	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Contractors</b>			
Dog Warden	187	191	4
Pest Control	40	37	-3
Analytical Services - Trading Standards	145	164	19
Land Drainage	20	9	-11
Licensing	8	27	19
Other contractors/consultants	59	0	-59
Water Safety	11	9	-2
Food Safety	7	7	0
Environmental Protection	58	87	30
Taxi Tests	32	31	-0
Grants / Subscriptions	3	14	11
Advertisng	10	3	-7
Publicity & Promotions	5	1	-4
CRB Checks	0	0	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Car Lease Contributions / Training Courses	-3	-49	-46
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-46</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,008</b>	<b>5,741</b>	<b>-267</b>



# Small Bodies in England

## Annual return for the year ended 31 March 2012

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Small relevant bodies in England with an annual turnover of £6.5 million or less must complete an annual return summarising their annual activities at the end of each financial year.

The annual return on pages 2 to 5 is made up of four sections:

- Sections 1 and 2 are completed by the person nominated by the body.
- Section 3 is completed by the external auditor.
- Section 4 is completed by the body's internal audit provider.

Each body must approve this annual return no later than 30 June 2012.

### Completing your annual return

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return.

Complete all sections highlighted in red. Do **not** leave any red box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional external audit work and may incur additional costs.

Send the annual return, together with your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2012, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements and any additional information requested, to your appointed external auditor by the due date.

Your auditor will identify and ask for any additional documents needed for audit. Therefore, unless requested, do **not** send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Audited and certified annual returns will be returned to the body for publication or public display of sections 1, 2 and 3. You must publish or display the audited annual return by 30 September 2012.

It should not be necessary for you to contact the external auditor or the Audit Commission directly for guidance.

More guidance on completing this annual return is available in the Practitioners' Guides for either local councils or internal drainage boards. These publications may be downloaded from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) or Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) websites ([www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or [www.slcc.co.uk](http://www.slcc.co.uk)) or from the members area of the Association of Drainage Authorities website ([www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)).

## Section 1 – Accounting statements for:

Enter name of reporting body here:

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2011 £	31 March 2012 £	
1 Balances brought forward	0	805015	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the body's financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2 (+) Income from local taxation and/or levy	0	0	Total amount of local tax and/or levy received or receivable in the year including funding from a sponsoring body.
3 (+) Total other receipts	6607603	5433099	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less income from taxation and/or levy (line 2). Include any grants received here.
4 (-) Staff costs	4358735	5432015	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all body employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.
5 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the body's borrowings (if any).
6 (-) All other payments	1443253	1929306	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7 (=) Balances carried forward	805015	(1123207)	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)
8 Total cash and short term investments	871269	1155149	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – to agree with bank reconciliation.
9 Total fixed assets and long term assets	49311	115398	The recorded book value at 31 March of all fixed assets owned by the body and any other long term assets e.g. loans to third parties and any long-term investments.
10 Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2012 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of the body and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

*J. R. P.*

Date 20/06/2012

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by the body on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by Chair of meeting approving these accounting statements:

Date

## Section 2 – Annual governance statement

We acknowledge as the members of **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES** our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2012, that:

	Agreed –		'Yes' means that the body:
	Yes	No*	
1 We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.
2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption <b>and</b> reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3 We taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the body to conduct its business or on its finances.	✓		has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.
4 We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the body's accounts.
5 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the body <b>and</b> took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.
6 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the body's accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of the body.
7 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8 We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the body and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.

This annual governance statement is approved by the body and recorded as minute reference

dated

Signed by:

Chair

dated

Signed by:

Clerk

dated

**\*Note:** Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how the body will address the weaknesses identified.

## Section 3 – External auditor’s certificate and opinion

### Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2012 of:

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES

### Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

The body is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The body prepares an annual return in accordance with proper practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2012; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to our audit responsibilities.

our responsibility is to conduct an audit in accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission and, on the basis of our review of the annual return and supporting information, to report whether any matters that come to our attention give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

### External auditor’s report

(Except for the matters reported below)\* on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (\*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the body:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

External auditor’s signature

External auditor’s name

Date

**Note:** The auditor signing this page has been appointed by the Audit Commission and is reporting to you that they have carried out and completed all the work that is required of them by law. For further information please refer to the Audit Commission’s publication entitled *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Small Bodies*.

## Section 4 – Annual internal audit report to

### WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES

The body's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2012.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the body's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the body.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose from one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.	✓		
B The body's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D The annual taxation or levy or funding requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓*		
G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with body approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by the body (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

\* As petty cash is of low value this was deemed as low risk and therefore not audited as part of the 2011/12 Internal Audit Renew

Print name of person who carried out the internal audit:

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:  Date:

**\*Note:** If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**\*\*Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## Guidance notes on completing the 2012 annual return

- 1 Proper practices for preparing this annual return are found in the *Practitioners' Guides*\*. These publications are updated from time to time and contain everything you should need to prepare successfully for your financial year-end and the subsequent audit. Both NALC and SLCC have helplines if you want to talk through any problem you may encounter.
- 2 Make sure that your annual return is complete (i.e. no empty red boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making any amendments to the completed return. But, if this is unavoidable, make sure the amendments are drawn to the attention of and approved by the body, properly initialled and an explanation is provided to the auditor. Annual returns containing unapproved or unexplained amendments will be returned unaudited and may incur additional costs.
- 3 Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a member or the Chair, to review your annual return for completeness before sending it to the auditor.
- 4 Do not send the auditor any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. However, you must advise the auditor of any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair.
- 5 Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation which you send to your auditor with the annual return covers **all** your bank accounts. If your body holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The auditor must be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the Statement of Accounts. **You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8.** More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guides*\*.
- 6 **Explain fully** significant variances in the accounting statements on page 2. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The auditor wants to know that **you** understand the reasons for all variances. Include a complete analysis to support your explanation. There are a number of examples provided in the *Practitioners' Guides*\* to assist you.
- 7 If the auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which the auditor will make a charge.
- 8 Make sure that your accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2011) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2012).
- 9 **Do not complete section 3.** The external auditor will complete it at the conclusion of their audit.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Done?
All sections	All red boxes have been completed?	
	All information requested by the external auditor has been sent with this annual return? Please refer to your notice of audit.	
Section 1	Approval by the body confirmed by signature of Chair of meeting approving the accounting statements?	
	An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?	
	Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2012 agreed to Box 8?	
Section 2	An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?	
	For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation is provided?	
Section 4	All red boxes completed by internal audit and explanations provided?	

**\*Note:** *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in England – A Practitioners' Guides*, is available from NALC and SLCC representatives or *Governance and Accountability for Internal Drainage Boards in England – A Practitioners' Guides*, is available from the ADA at The Association of Drainage Authorities, 12 Cranes Drive, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8AL or from the NALC, SLCC or ADA websites - see page 1 for addresses.

**Acting Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager's Opinion  
on the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control at Bromsgrove  
District Council (the Council) for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

**1. Audit Opinion**

- 1.1 The internal audit of Bromsgrove District Council's systems and operations during 2011/12 was conducted in accordance with the Internal Audit Annual plan which was approved by the Audit Board on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The revised plan was considered by the s151 Officer and was compiled to reflect the requirements of the remainder of the year.
- 1.2 The Internal Audit function was set up as a shared service in 2010/11 and hosted by Worcester City, for 5 district councils. The shared service operates in accordance with the Institute of Internal Auditors Standards and the CIPFA Code of Practice 2006 and objectively reviews on a continuous basis the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council's objectives and contributes to the proper, economic and effective use of resources.
- 1.3 The Internal Audit Plan for 2011/2012 was risk based (assessing audit and assurance factors, materiality risk, impact of failure, system risk, resource risk fraud risk, and external risk) using a predefined scoring system. It included:
- a number of core systems which were designed to suitably assist the external auditor to reach their 'opinion' other corporate systems for example governance and
  - a number of operational systems, for example waste collection and s106's, were looked at to maintain and improve its control systems and risk management processes or reinforce its oversight of such systems.
- 1.4 A revised plan was necessary as planned targets were not met due to the impact on the service of long term sickness. The revised plan was considered by the s151 Officer and was compiled to reflect the requirements of the remainder of the year and ensuring that the 'high' and 'medium' priority audits were delivered.
- 1.5 Based on the audits performed in accordance with the approved revised plan, the Acting Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager has concluded that the internal control arrangements during 2011/12 effectively managed the principal risks identified in the audit plan and can be reasonably relied upon to ensure that the Council's corporate objectives have been met.

- 1.6 In relation to the thirteen reviews that have been undertaken, ten audits have been completed and three are to be finalised. A further audit where Internal Audit has been able to take assurance from has been in respect of ICT and the work performed by the Audit Commission. In addition to the audit work undertaken during the year a lengthy investigation was also undertaken. Little work has been undertaken on risk during 2011/12 due to the Risk Management Steering Group being postponed or cancelled on a number of occasions.
- 1.7 As part of the process of assessing the Council's control environment, senior officers within the Council are required to complete an annual "Internal Control Assurance Statement" to confirm that the controls in the areas for which they are responsible are operating effectively. No areas of significant risk have been identified. Any concerns raised by managers will be assessed and addressed by the Authorities Corporate Management Team.
- 1.8 All of the completed audits have been allocated an audit assurance of either moderate or above meaning that there is generally a sound system of internal control in place, no significant control issues have been encountered and no material losses have been identified during a time of significant transformation and change.

**Andy Bromage**

**Acting Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager**

May 2012





## JOINT COMMITTEE

**Date: 28th June 2012**

### **WRS Annual Report 2011/12**

<b>Recommendation</b>	That members note the report
<b>Contribution to Priorities/ Recommendations</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Introduction/Summary Background</b>	<p>Under the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement, Worcestershire Regulatory Services is required to submit to the Joint Committee an annual report that covers the performance of the shared service and provides a summary of the finances. The report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31 March 2012.</p>
<b>Report</b>	<p>Under Clause 12 of Part 1 of the Shared Services Partnership Agreement the Joint Committee is required to receive a report at its annual meeting which will be held no later than 30 June 2011. The report covers the period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. In accordance with the legal agreement, the annual report is co-signed by the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and the Lead Financial Officer for the Host.</p> <p>The report covers the performance of the Service for that period, it also gives a summary of the financial position, the key achievements and covers issues relating to Human Resources and discusses the Service's approach to Business Transformation. There are also sections on Risk Management and Equality and Diversity.</p> <p>It should be noted that some performance information is included, however, it is not the full range of data that it is anticipated will be provided once the single IT platform is in place.</p>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	The financial implications are contained within the annual report.

**Sustainability**

Not Applicable

**Contact Points**

Steve Jordan, Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services  
Tel: 01527-881466,  
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**Background Papers**

Worcestershire Shared Service Partnership Legal Agreement.

Worcestershire  
**Regulatory Services**

*Supporting and protecting you*

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2011/12**

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

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## Introduction

This Annual Report has been produced for the Joint Committee in accordance with clause 12 of Part 1 of the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement. The report covers the progress of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 and reports operational activity by the relevant service elements for the financial year. The report summarises the key performance data for the service and a summary of the financial position.

This year has been very much one of settling in for the new service and a number of significant milestones have been achieved. Between March 2011 and the end of June 2011 the service moved into its new home at Wyatt House and staff have been adopting flexible and mobile working patterns so that we continue to provide county-wide coverage for all activities with a local presence being maintained at touchdown points for licensing surgeries. IT and telephony were problematic for longer than had been anticipated, which made good customer service difficult to support. Happily the majority of these issues were resolved during the year. The last big piece of the jigsaw puzzle will be the implementation of the new single back office IT system, which should be completed, in early 2013.

The application of the 'Systems Thinking' approach to service redesign has been an ongoing theme during the year and this will continue as this approach to change is based on the concept of continuous improvement. Our focus will however remain on contributing to the Health and Well Being agenda and working with businesses to improve the local economy. The customer focus that is at the heart of Systems Thinking will be essential to meet our service delivery aspirations. This matches the Governments demands for improved public services and particularly, in relation to regulation, reducing the burdens on business. We will continue to find ways of hearing our various customer's voices and respond accordingly.

Finance never seems far from everyone's minds currently. As you will see from the financial information we have exceeded the savings indicated in the original business case (20.5% against 17.5%). We do however understand that, with the challenging financial situation likely to continue, partners may consider whether the service can make further savings without seriously compromising the quality or breadth of service delivery. It is likely that any further cuts in the budget will also result in service cuts. Officers will work over the coming year to look at what a range of potential cost reductions could mean for service delivery especially in the light of various inflationary pressures on our existing budget, which is fixed for next year. The service will however continue to explore opportunities to generate income, including increasing the scope of WRS to take on other partners. Any proposals will be backed up by a full business case and reported to the Management Board and Joint Committee for discussion.

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Steve Jorden  
Head of Regulatory Services

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Jayne Pickering  
Lead Financial Officer

## Performance

Performance has again been difficult to measure clearly due to the on-going difficulties with IT. We are still trying to operate 7 back offices for Environmental Health and Trading Standards work, and a number of additional ones for Licensing. Generally performance has remained good during this period despite the significant change programme being undertaken by the service and the reduction in resources. The vast majority of higher risk businesses have been subject to inspection or some other form of suitable intervention and the key priorities of each partner council have been fulfilled. Business and consumer satisfaction have remained at high levels inspite of the many issues we've had with communication during the year.

Measure	Figure	Commentary
1. Business satisfaction	9.29/10	63/81 respondents answered this question (232 questionnaires sent,) which asks them to rate their experience out of 10, but the score reflects historically very good feedback from the business community. The lowest score was 6/10. For next year we have reverted to asking if they are satisfied as a number of respondents reported they were uncomfortable rating us in this way.
2. Client Satisfaction	8.14/10	139 of 171 respondents answered this question, which asks the customer to rate their experience out of 10. Here the response scores were much more variable than with businesses as, in a significant number of situations, we cannot resolve problems for people, whereas in most cases with businesses we can help or signpost to a source of assistance. Having said that, only 20/139 respondents rated their experience at less than 5/10. For next year we have reverted to asking if they are satisfied as a number of respondents reported they were uncomfortable rating us in this way.
3. Improved Customer Confidence	97% business 68% consumer	37/81 businesses that responded answered this question (232 questionnaires sent,) and of those 36 agreed or strongly agreed that they felt better equipped to deal with problems in the future, as a result of our interaction with them. 94/171 consumers that responded answered this question (499 questionnaires sent,) and of those 93 agreed or strongly agreed that they felt better equipped to deal with problems in the future.
4. Proportion of business broadly compliant (of those inspected during the period)	93.4%  100%	EH Food Safety function. (District figures will be available once LAEMS return is confirmed by FSA.)  TS High Risk rated premises
5. Proportion. of improving food premises Relates to Scores on the Doors or Food Hygiene Rating Scheme ratings for food safety in inspected businesses.	31.5%	Stayed same 49.%, decreased score 19.5% These figures are averaged across the County. Individual district figures will not be available to some partners due to database problems.

6. Percentage of premises selling alcohol to children	0%	Only one problematic premise was identified in this financial year and it passed the test purchase exercise to target it. Local policing teams have not reported significant issues with direct sales of alcohol to minors by shops, although we know underage drinking remains an issue in a number of areas in the County.
7. No. noise complaints received per 1000 population	4.29	This is based on a county population of 555,000 and is a slight estimate as we only have good data on a single system from August last year. We have extrapolated based on this year's April/ May figures and estimated the June July figures based on August.. This is on a par with historical figures from the Detailed Business Case but below the national average (5572/million <CIEH Data 2010/11 Noise Survey>)
8. cost of environmental health functions per head of population	£6.00	This covers all former District Council functions including Food Safety, Health and Safety at Work, Pollution Control, Dog Warden, Pest Control but <b>EXCLUDES</b> Licensing.
9. cost of trading standards functions per head of population	£2.46	This includes all former County Council functions including Weights and Measures, Food and Agricultural Standards, Product Safety, Fair Trading, Animal Health, Petroleum and Explosives Licensing.

## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

There is limited space to showcase the work of our teams, but these are some of the highlights of a very busy year.

### Community Protection

A huge amount of officer time from the Community Protection team has been taken up dealing with the odour issue in Stoulton. Officers have spent hundreds of hours initially dealing with complainants and trying to work with the business concerned to resolve the problem and then, latterly, gathering evidence to support the service of a notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and following this, to demonstrate an on-going nuisance issue. Officers have been in the areas several days every week monitoring the odours and recording the problem. The business has now appealed the notice and matter is in the legal process.

A CD counterfeiter from Birmingham was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, reduced to 4 and suspended for 2 years for supplying counterfeit DVDs and CDs at a car boot sale in Bromsgrove. The defendant had a similar previous conviction for a case brought by Birmingham City Council. Three other requirements were placed on him during suspended sentence:

- He would be under the supervision of the Probation Service for the period,
- He would enrol in the "thinking skills" programme run by the Probation Service,
- He would be subjected to a tagged curfew, with a Sunday ban for 3 months, which meant he could not go out between the hours of 6am to 6pm on Sunday, as most car boot sales take place on a Sunday.

The sentencing of a team of illegal wheel clampers was another highlight of the year. The case was taken by West Mercia Police after it had been developed initially by trading standards staff before they became part of the WRS Community Protection team. These officers continued to support the case through to its completion, when it received regional press coverage.

Noise nuisance has been an on-going issue through the year, accounting for slightly more than 50% of nuisance related issues. The majority of these relate to noise from people, music and barking dogs. Generally officers will try to mediate initially but will serve notice where necessary and can seize noisy stereo equipment where residents do not take heed. This latter power has been used on 4 occasions during the year to remove people's equipment all of which were publicised to get the message across that we will act to give residents respite from unreasonable behaviour. 69 notices were issued for abatement purposes during the year, of which 38 related to noise nuisance.

Officers have worked closely with West Mercia Police on targeting scrap metal dealers, especially those who travel around in vehicles blowing horns or bugles to drum up trade. Officers have worked with the Police, VOSA and other local authority officers on stop check exercises where vehicles and paperwork are examined for compliance with the requirements of all of the agencies involved. A number of vehicles have been taken off the road during these exercises and advice has been provided to a significant number of traders on both fair trading issues and the use of the bugles that seem to infuriate local residents but whose noise is too transitory to be classed as a nuisance for WRS to deal with. All of the intelligence from these exercises has been fed into the regional Trading Standards intelligence system so colleagues across the region and nationally will know about these individuals if they stray out of the area.

### **Business Compliance**

Officers from Business Compliance have investigated multiple consumer complaints against a company based in Redditch providing solar panels under the auspices of the Government's solar energy feed in tariff scheme intended to encourage energy from renewable resources. At least 500 complaints were registered with Consumer Direct and transferred to our database. A review of the complaints identified two persistent breaches of consumer legislation, being failure to carry out installations in reasonable period of time of 90 days; and failure to return of deposits of £500 where the consumer's property did not meet installation requirements

The trader was visited in order to raise these issues with them and to clarify the correct wording of legally required cancellation notices. The Regulator's Compliance Code requires that we seek informal means to resolve a situation before we take the formal route. Over the following months, complaint numbers continued to rise so action was taken. The Enterprise Act 2002 can be used where a trader persistently breaches consumer's rights at civil law, thus affecting the combined interests of consumers to their detriment. In November 2011 the Director and Company Secretary both signed an undertaking under the Act to desist from these trading practices. However in December 2011 the company ceased trading and was put into liquidation, with hundreds of consumers unlikely to receive their £500 refund.

Prior to this, the Director and Company Secretary started a new business in November 2011, again providing installation of solar panels but this time charging £199 per household. This Service had already started to receive complaints against the new company regarding installations not being carried out in a reasonable period of time and retention of deposits. Officers from WRS attended the creditors meeting convened by the liquidators for the previous company, which was also attended by 20 consumers and the directors of ESG. A second consultation letter was served on the Directors at this time. This was to ensure that they are aware of their legal obligations and to allow us to consider action against the individuals if complaints continue to be received.



Other Enterprise actions are being considered against a separate Worcestershire based trader because the volume of complaints received indicates continued breaches of civil law resulting in a clear pattern of detriment to consumers across Great Britain.

Colleagues have been carrying out further developments to the WRS Trader Register. This is a database of verified Home Improvement traders based in Worcestershire that is available to Worcestershire consumers to help them identify legitimate traders who they can trust to carry out work. A review of the existing entries has been completed, including a review of any documentation used by traders to ensure consumers are legally protected. New businesses are being added to the database, allowing legitimate traders a suitable vehicle for promotion of their business and consumers more choice. All relevant information will be accessible to interested parties when the WRS website goes live, later this year. FAQs providing clarification for consumers and traders will also be added to the website.

The team have also been participating in regional and national projects. Colleagues have participated in the OFT probe into mobility products market. The results of this are awaited. A regional review of legal metrology (weights and measures) provision across the West Midlands region has been led by Mark Strain. The final report is being compiled and its conclusions may have an impact on the future provision of this function by WRS. A response has also been submitted to BIS (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) on the proposed revocation of UK based product safety legislation. This was written and collated by WRS on behalf of the CEnTSA (Central England Trading Standards Authorities) regional product safety group.

Officers have also assisted companies with product recalls and withdrawals involving:

- 1500 free standing mobile gas heaters brought into the UK through a Dutch company where Carbon Monoxide levels were found to be excessive. The company achieved a return rate of 66% with the cost to the company being upwards of £70000
- proactive withdrawal of 6000 halogen heaters where quality issues have been identified, with the cost to the company being £40000 - £80000

Businesses have also been supported through training of staff on consumer legislation. This has resulted in reduced number of calls to the Service for business advice and a reduction in the number of complaints against the trader registered with CD and CAB advice agencies. WRS has entered into a formal Primary Authority agreement with Redditch based Halfords. This is the successful conclusion of our previous good working relationship with the national retailer. Initial discussions with other Worcestershire traders on the adoption of this principle are on-going.

During September - November 2011 Officers organised a 'blitz' of visits during a given two week period to food premises due inspection in one LA area (starting in Wychavon, finishing in Redditch. This helped to meet our commitments in the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice but also allowed former district council staff to develop their knowledge of the wider county. Levels of general compliance on food safety remain good as the figures given above show.

On the Health and Safety front one potentially fatal accident was investigated that is of note. A young girl had a freak accident on pendulum type zip wire. After she had run down the wire and come to a halt, she released the safety rope, unclipping it's karabiner, which then caught onto her helmet as she was being lowered, causing strangulation. She was left suspended by the straps of her helmet for several minutes, losing consciousness. Her feet had to be supported by a zip wire operative, in an attempt to relieve the downward pressure of her body weight, until help arrived via a vehicle. Staff were able to use the vehicle to climb up and cut her helmet straps from the safety rope karabiner, freeing her. Resuscitation was given to revive her. This could easily have been a fatality

should a vehicle not been available or a longer rescue involved. Although considered an extremely rare event, the consequences could have been severe. Risk assessments were reviewed and expert advice sought on improvements to the system. Alternative attachment arrangements for safety lines were introduced to eliminate the risk of open karabiners clipping to helmets or their straps and improved emergency rescue procedures were put in place which were more rapid and reliable.

A partnership was formed between WRS and the local fire authority to assist in identifying food premises where there was living accommodation over the premises where the only means of escape was through the kitchen. The Fire Authority provided a leaflet to give to businesses as a reminder of the risks. At least ten premises have been reported back to the Fire Authority as falling within this category and several prohibition orders have been served as an outcome. Officers have also participated in a major campaign to improve gas safety in food premises. A project has focussed on ethnic-minority run premises where there was national evidence of safety issues. Initially some 250 businesses were mailed with advice and a request for a gas safety certificate. Where there was no response or the certificate was unsatisfactory visits were made with support from the GasSafe Regional Operations Manager. This campaign has taken considerably more time than expected as serious safety problems came to light in many premises. GasSafe also identified other issues including forged certificates and a number of registered engineers working outside their approved level of competency, leading to several being struck off the register. Officers also made checks at non-ethnic minority run premises during routine visits where similar problems were identified.

WRS professionals worked together to carry out checks on sales of illicit alcohol across Worcestershire. Intelligence indicated this to be a significant problem across the West Midlands but the source remained unknown. To the untrained eye the bottles appeared authentic however they contained contaminants such as Propan-2-ol and methanol that are hazardous to health. Bottles found on sale in small independent retailers and corner shops were seized and removed from sale, however, officers were also concerned that pubs and clubs may have been targeted.

Officers also led on infectious disease investigations notified to us by the Health Protection Agency and via public complaints. In addition to dealing with routine notifications of diseases which are linked to food. 1029 formal notifications were received during the year of which 774 were campylobacter which are contacted by letter. The remaining 255 require officer investigation. We were also involved in a number of outbreak investigations. Two involved giving support to other local authorities (Tewkesbury and Sandwell), one was in Worcester, one in Wychavon, one in Wyre Forest and one in Malvern. One incident is (still under investigation and may lead to legal action. In most cases the source of the infection has been identified as norovirus. No complaints of illness arising from individual visits to food premises were validated.

In the area of health and well-being, the team successfully completed three major projects and participated in a fourth, over the year; all commissioned by Worcestershire NHS Public Health.

In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, NHS Worcestershire Public Health, Wellness Works and the Sports Partnership, the WRS Health and Wellbeing Team developed '**Worcestershire Works Well**'; an accreditation scheme designed to help local businesses improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce. Based on sound evidence that a healthier workforce leads to increased productivity, reduced sickness absence and motivated staff, employers are supported via a self explanatory toolkit to proactively explore and improve workplace standards. The scheme recognises three levels of achievement via certification and it is intended to reward and publicise successful businesses at an annual awards ceremony held by the Chamber of Commerce. Work continues by all partners to promote the scheme throughout Worcestershire to encourage increased participation.

The **Trucker's Tucker** project was developed and piloted by the Health and Wellbeing team with eleven caterers across Worcestershire, both mobiles and fixed premises that principally serve lorry drivers. This group of customers are at an increased risk of obesity and associated conditions such as coronary heart disease and diabetes due to their socioeconomic group combined with the sedentary nature of the work. Research has shown that the life expectancy of manual workers is several years' less than their managerial and professional colleagues. In an attempt to address this inequality, the team worked with the caterers to implement simple but effective changes to their cooking methods, portion size and choice of ingredients to increase the range of healthier options provided and influence the positioning of unhealthier foods. It was encouraging that all business made improvements and none reported a loss of profit. The findings from this project were captured in to a toolkit which is now being used across the West Midlands region through CEnTSA, and it has commanded a lot of interest with wider public health colleagues. We were invited to promote the tool kit at a number of events across the West Midlands.

During the last quarter of 2012 WRS fulfilled a commission from NHS Worcestershire Public Health to undertake a project on **Older People's Nutrition in Wychavon** aiming to address malnutrition. The scope of the project was to develop a training tool and delivery programme aimed at tackling the issue, focusing on the work of carers and care agencies to promote the importance of good nutrition and food hygiene for older people, within their own homes. This work was set against a background research report by the British Dietetic Association in November 2011 entitled 'Mind the Hunger Gap' which states that more than 3 million people in the UK are at risk of malnutrition with the vast majority, about 93% living in the community setting, 5% in residential care and 2% in hospital. It reports that one million older people in the United Kingdom eat less than one meal a day. Progressive under-nutrition leads to poor health, rising hospital admissions and a massive financial burden on the NHS.

Malnutrition is treatable and could result in significant cost savings as well as improved quality of care, but current knowledge of how to prevent malnutrition and provide adequate nutritional support amongst carers and many health and social care professionals is poor. Some of this treatment is relatively simple – providing access to nutritious meals for those vulnerable people for whom even one meal a day is proving difficult. The NICE guidance (CG32) has established standardised patterns of care for treatment of malnutrition. The problem remains that it often goes undetected. The Team successfully developed a training tool for Worcestershire NHS Public Health with the intention of evaluating its scope for further delivery.

The Team also undertook a project with convenience stores aiming to make the healthy choice an easy choice by increasing the availability of fruit and vegetables in areas of highest need. This was achieved by improving the range, merchandising, quality and communication of Change4life materials in local independent stores. Community engagement events linked to each of the shops were arranged to maximise public awareness of the increased availability. Nine premises participated from across the County and were asked to compare sales data both before and after the store improvements. Five stores saw an increase in sales of fruit and vegetables both during the initiative and at a point three months later. One store saw an increase in the sale of bananas by three times and another found the introduction of ethnic fruit and vegetables proved popular with customers.

Building on the success of the previous 'scores on the doors' scheme operated by each of the Worcestershire District Councils, WRS agreed to migrate to the new national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme developed and run by the Food Standards Agency. This required a major data migration exercise from the 6 District food safety databases to permit a summary of hygiene reports to be published to the FHRS website and produce certificates for businesses to display on their

premises. The main aim of the scheme is to influence customer choice when choosing where to eat out and additionally it has proven invaluable in improving hygiene standards in participating businesses. The scheme in Worcestershire was launched by Lord Rooker at the Three Counties Show on the 15<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Central Operations**

Following previous reports on Air Quality for Wyre Forest that identified the potential breach of National Air Quality Objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide in Stourport-upon-Severn the Team undertook a Detailed Assessment in compliance with the Regulations. The findings of the assessment are being finalised.

In Bromsgrove, the Team has worked closely with the Planning Department to resolve some of the many issues of concern surrounding the Management of activities at Marlbrook tip, Lickey. This high profile site is subject to a lot of scrutiny however, to date WRS has been able to demonstrate that Environmental Monitoring issues have been in compliance with Planning requirements and continues to work with the landowner with the aim of maintaining this. An Air Quality Management Area was declared in Worcester Road, Bromsgrove last summer due to breaches of the National Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide and in line with the Regulations, a Further Assessment was undertaken and a report produced identifying the issues of particular concern. The Further Assessment document is currently out for consultation. The findings of the report will be used to develop actions that are required to produce an improvement to air quality in the area. These will be published in the proposed County Action Plan late 2012.

In Redditch, a contaminated land investigation was commenced in Smallwood, Mayfields and Lodge Park areas of Redditch following a successful DEFRA funding application. It was a labour intensive project planned in close liaison with the Health Protection Agency, to cover an area of around 600 houses with soil samples taken from 130 properties and site specific advice provided to all. The on-site work of the project has been completed with a good rapport between officers and local residents, and without any negative press. A contaminated land investigation was concluded at a second site in Redditch which demonstrated that at 16 properties there was a Significant Possibility of Significant Harm, which required them to be determined as Contaminated Land. Support was provided to RBC to determine the properties and in August following a successful funding bid made to DEFRA, work commenced to remediate the properties. That work has also been successfully concluded and residents will be advised imminently of the conclusion to this work and that their properties no longer meet the definition of 'Contaminated Land'. In Worcester City, consultation has been undertaken on a possible City-wide Air Quality Management Area and the findings will be reported to Licensing Committee for a decision

### **Licensing**

Our first two appeals to magistrates in relation to licenses were successfully defended by partner legal teams. In the first, a Sub-Committee revoked a man's Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licence. The person concerned was not considered to be 'fit and proper' as he had made inappropriate sexual advances to a female passenger. On appeal, the Court upheld the Council's decision to revoke the licence. In the second, a Sub-Committee refused to grant a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licence to a man who had previously held a licence 7 years ago. This was revoked due to a conviction for 'grievous bodily harm' for which the applicant had served a 4 year prison sentence. On his release, he then reapplied for his license and was refused. Again, on appeal to the Magistrates the Council's decision to refuse was upheld.

Across the County seven joint taxi enforcement exercises have been carried out at the road side by Officers, VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services Agency) and the Police during the last twelve months, spread over four of the six Local Authorities with two more planned in the near future. 164 vehicles in total were

subject to more detailed examinations at the respective garages. Out of those 164 vehicles, 5 were issued with immediate prohibition notices and were suspended by Licensing Officers and 29 were issued with delayed prohibition notices. A further 3 vehicles were suspended by Licensing Officers for non mechanical faults (meter not working and no road tax). It is estimated that 90% of the faults found could easily have been avoided by the licensed driver carrying out regular routine maintenance of their vehicles on a daily or weekly basis; for example, light bulbs, tyres and 'cv gaitors'. Licensing Officers are continuing to work towards common policies throughout the County whilst still allowing for localisms; the latest are Supplemental Guidance to the Relevance of Convictions (taxi licensing) which is now county wide, Street Trading Policy which has been agreed in four out of the six Councils and the Statement of Gambling Principles which is due to be consulted on during the Summer.

### **Support Services**

This is the first year where we've had a significant number of legal cases going into Court. The Legal Administration Officer is a role previously not available to district council solicitors and this in-house resource has been able to support district solicitors with a number of cases, processing summonses and other paperwork, dealing with legal disclosure and attending to Court to assist the solicitor with the case.

### **Performance Management**

Strong management performance is vital to the success of this service, ensuring that customers are satisfied and partners are reassured by the delivery of the service on their behalf. Whilst everyone must accept responsibility for managing performance, the WRS leadership team is committed to driving performance forward so that a high standard of service delivery can be maintained.

Fortnightly leadership team meetings are used to review data on the system and to detail issues that raise concern. Managers focus is looking to make the system efficient so officers can give of their best, including the removal of any barriers. Managers and Senior Practitioners continue to deal with individual performance issues but the focus of the Team Managers is through Systems Thinking to remove waste from the system. The Leadership Team also provides a forum to raise any concerns over general performance issues so that early interventions can be put in place as necessary. Officers have had their first PDR sessions with their Senior Practitioners and Managers to identify training needs and talk about how they can contribute more widely to service delivery. As part of this process we utilised the Local Better Regulation Office (now Better Regulation Delivery Office) RDNA toolkit, which is aimed at supporting regulatory officers in identifying and maintaining their competence across all areas of regulatory work. It is based on a model originally developed by the Health and Safety Executive as a self assessment tool to support officers and managers in assessing competence and identifying training needs.

It continues to be our intention to measure performance in terms of outcomes rather than the traditional numbers of inspections etc, as agreed by the Joint Committee at their meeting in December 2011. Last year, the Joint Committee accepted that the service's ability to report meaningfully on some elements of performance would be severely limited due to the IT situation. This will continue to apply during 2012/13 until the full implementation of the single IT platform at the end of this year. Once this is in place, reporting against these new measures will be carried out on a quarterly basis although some will be reported annually due to their nature. Reports will go to the Joint Committee and Management Board, with data broken down into individual Councils areas where this is relevant.

There are a wide range of bodies to which the service must report data (e.g. Food Standards Agency, DEFRA, HSE, BIS, etc) All statutory reports will be submitted to ensure that WRS continues to meet its partner's statutory obligations, however, where practicable, only one return for WRS will be provided which

will save both time and money. The majority of bodies are happy with this approach and a number are reviewing the returns we are asked to make so that the volume of data can be reduced, lessening the burden. We have and will continue to challenge these reporting bodies on the nature of the data that they are demanding and to question the necessity for the level of detail being requested, again to drive down costs and to reduce burdens on the service. We met with the Food Standards Agency during 2011/12 and they were very supportive of the changes we were looking at, and they were willing to be flexible about certain types of data that we currently provide.

### **Key Achievements for the WRS project in 2011/12**

These include:

- Move to single site whilst maintaining a local presence for licensing customers
- Independent review of ICT and beginning the tendering process for procurement of a back office IT system
- Started the implementation of new ways of working including flexible and mobile
- Starting the transformation programme which will be further driven by the “systems thinking” approach
- Working with partners to progress the harmonisation of policies, fees and charges for Licensing, whilst recognising the local context where appropriate
- Introduction the concept of cross training to ensure an improved service to the public and cost savings for the service

### **Financial Management**

#### **2011/12**

Monthly financial monitoring reports have been presented to the Management Board and to each Joint Committee meeting. In addition, a robust ordering and authorisation process is in place to ensure the transparency and accuracy of costing. Good management of costs and the management of vacancies led to another significant underspend of £300,000 against the revenue budget. This position is subject to final Audit as part of the statutory arrangements for the Joint Committee. The overall saving achieved against the original budgets from partners is in excess of 20%.

This has allowed partners to receive a financial bonus as the saving has been returned to partners in the proportions they contribute albeit this came with a commitment to honour any further redundancy costs that the services incurs as it continues to streamline its operations, at least to the level agreed in the business case. Appendix 4 details the final financial statement for the service. In summary the position was as follows:

**Table 5 –Budget Outturn for 2011/12**

	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Employees	4262	4077	-185
Premises	103	192	89
Transport	245	234	-10
Supplies & Services	818	670	-147
Contractors	584	581	-4
Income	-3	-49	-46
Total	6008	5706	-302

**Budget for 2012/13**

Appendix 5 details the budget allocation for 2012/13. The contribution from each partner is based on the same revised % share outlined at the end of Appendix 4. The budget for 2012/13 was delivered by significantly reducing the funding for various activities (services and equipment) and by eliminating virtually all of the vacant posts within the service. This means that there is very little scope for reduction within the revenue budget other than salaries of front line staff. We envisage that the completion of transformation will allow us to develop some further small efficiencies which will allow us to release staff using the VCR (voluntary compulsory redundancy) process and there is proposed a further reduction in the management team which will be offset by further developing the remaining management team members.

Under the original business case this year was supposed to be when the final base budget was achieved, with the service having delivered its savings, and this has been more than achieved. However, we are now aware that there is a strong possibility that we will be required to examine the practicality of delivering further savings on behalf of partners and what this will mean for service delivery especially in light of the inflationary pressures on a fixed budget. The potential

level required to be examined will not be clear before September 2012 but we will be reviewing elements of service delivery during this financial year and, where it is possible and appropriate, we will look to use the VCR process to find staff savings and quantify any impact on service delivery.

## **Human Resources Issues**

The key HR issue during 2011/12 related to the payment of allowances. The introduction of the host's control process for allocating essential car user allowance came into force resulting in a number of people losing or gaining this allowance. The move to Wyatt House also resulted in the need to pay a disturbance allowance to compensate staff for the additional costs they have incurred for the move to Wyatt House. This allowance will run out 12 months from the date that a member of staff officially transferred to the new building.

A small number of staff left the service last year. Sacrificing these vacancies for savings has left a complement of just over 121 FTE staff, although further departures early in 2012/13 mean we are now below 120 FTE. This will be further reduced over the next year or two as we see the fruits resulting from our leadership training program developing and also the full implementation of the new work flows delivering further limited efficiencies.

At a time of radical change we have to focus on keeping up morale and helping staff through the process. We have seen higher than normal rates of sickness absence during this period, mainly down to a couple of long term absences and several very unfortunate accidents not linked to work activity. Managers and Senior Practitioners will be working hard to improve this over the coming 12 months using the host's policies and processes to help staff understand the impact that short term absence can have. We will continue to focus on maintaining a healthy workforce which is essential in a lean organisation.

The Interim structure appears as Appendix A.

This structure was developed to make the most of the opportunity to recognise the synergies between the two professions (Trading Standards and Environmental Health) for the benefit of the customer. More needs to be done to ensure staff are both competent and confident to carry out the duties required of them, so we are at the beginning of this road. This year has seen the first tentative steps in this direction where we have seen former Trading Standards staff making a major contribution to the investigative process at Stoulton, where the nuisance issue is a traditional Environmental Health function. Former County Animal Health officers and District Dog Wardens are collecting and put our Air Quality Monitoring Tubes (NOx tubes) whilst out on duty so no special journeys have to be made to do this, and one of the Animal Health Officers is being trained to do planning liaison work on contaminated land to cover for a colleague's maternity leave in the short term and give better resilience in the longer term. He is also undertaking training on Air Quality along with other officers whose previous background was in Contaminated Land, so all are working to broaden their skill set. Broad integration of the two professions is a fundamental principle of our transformation work, however, full integration is not appropriate in all cases due to the nature of some of the functions we undertake on behalf of our County and District partners.

The systems thinking work which has been undertaken which is described further later in this report has provided us with a better understanding of the level of expertise required by our staff. For example we now know that the majority of nuisance type cases we receive (domestic noise, bonfires etc) do not require high level technical knowledge, the key skills needed to resolve the majority of cases are around problem solving, negotiation, facilitation and communication. This in



itself will inform our training needs as we move forward and we are already beginning to see non-Environmental Health staff taking on these cases which should in time provide us with greater resilience at times of peak demand.

Issues relating to the health and safety of staff and equalities and diversity issues were all fully considered as part of this process and WRS follows the host authority's human resources policies and processes.

### **Accommodation**

The movement into Wyatt House was completed by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 resulting in a net reduction in accommodation costs for the service. However, significant issues with connecting the telephone system to the Redditch/ Bromsgrove network and difficulties with IT links to various partner authorities resulted in communication problems with our customers and other stakeholders. This has had an impact on our reputation that we are working to correct. The new telephone system was in place for November 2011 and many of the links back to partner systems are now stable and functioning, although there are significant intermittent issues that staff find a little frustrating.

The use of flexible and mobile working is generally now the norm, with staff frequently using home as their start and finish point for work in the field. Officers will come into Wyatt House two or three days per week to liaise with managers and colleagues or for meetings, and on the other days they work flexibly. The touch down points retained in each of the councils (excluding the City as Wyatt House is there,) have provided an excellent venue for licensing surgeries and these have been welcomed by the taxi trade in particular. This move has also enabled staff to strike a better work/life balance which is essential for good morale. Further progress on this important aspect of service delivery will be made once we have a single IT system in place.

### **Business Transformation**

Our approach to business transformation continues to directly link with that envisaged by the business case in that through the use of 'Systems Thinking' we will continue to transform service delivery around the needs of the customer.

This approach involves all staff, including managers;

- Talking to customers about 'what matters to them,'
- Establishing what the service is here to do from the customer's perspective,
- Looking at how well the service delivers what the customer wants
- Questioning how we currently deliver the service, identifying both value and waste
- Identifying and challenging what limits our ability to change our services (known as System Conditions)
- Redesigning the service to better meet customer needs,
- Trialling the new way of working and making amendments where things don't work or go wrong,
- Delivering the transformed service focusing on outcomes that customers want.

The Leadership Team and Senior Practitioners have all received training in Systems Thinking and have been learning what it means to take a systems thinking perspective to running Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

This approach is a profoundly different way of working which questions what we do and why we do it in the current way. It focuses on how to analyse and design work, and then how to make the change to a better performing organisation. It emphasises seeing and designing an organisation as a system from a customer's perspective rather than as a traditional top-down hierarchy that is focused on its own functions.

The new system will be designed to focus on work which is of value to the customer. Through this approach we expect to achieve significant transformational results in a matter of months.

The work of our Check Team operating from Bromsgrove gave the opportunity to test some of the ideas of Systems thinking in a small part of the county. This experiment ran until October when it started to become clear that the team were struggling with the intensity of the process and those covering the rest of the county were struggling to hold their own at a time of high demand. It had also become clear that the experiment needed to broaden out to a bigger area, so it was decided that we would have our staff return back to their original teams to "roll-in" what had been learned and to continue to progress the process.

The "reactive" workflow developed originally for nuisance work, is now becoming the normal approach we use and we are now going through the process of examining all other areas of reactive follow to see if they meet the same principles and can be delivered following the same flow. The "pro-active flow" took much longer to establish because of the team's perception that there would be significant barriers and the fact that the model is less helpful when looking at this type of activity. However, the flow is now being rolled in for all Food Hygiene inspection based interventions and it is now being reviewed in relation to health and safety at work. A wide range of other flows are now going through the Check-Plan-Do cycle of improvement.

The biggest change has been the introduction of a new experiment encompassing our new Duty Officer system which evolved as a pivotal role in the development of our ways of working. The key principle behind this new method of working is to help our customers resolve their problem as quickly as possible and where we can at the first point of contact. We are working in partnership with the Worcestershire Hub at Perrywood who, since February, have sent us 3 to 4 hub staff on a rolling monthly basis to join us at Wyatt House to join our new "Duty Officer" team along with one existing WRS member of staff. By the end of the pilot up to 16 members of the Hub team will have been trained to undertake the role of "duty officer". Whilst with us they learn what we do, how we do it and who we are - using the principles of our new way of working and, when they return to Perrywood, they continue to deal with all WRS demand they receive in exactly the same way. They are empowered to do what they can to help the customer using a wide variety of approaches with the aim that only the more complex work ends up with the professionally qualified staff.

We expect the pilot /experiment to be complete by the end of the summer by which time we will have a better understanding whether it is helping us to achieve our purposes and deliver what the customer wants. First indications are that it is doing just that, in the first 3 months they have been able to resolve up to 20% of cases at first point of contact. In addition it has made it much easier for customers' and partners to contact us.

The new transformation plan identified all of the major flows within the service that need to be reviewed, and the Leadership team is working to complete this by September 2012, ahead of the commencement of IT implementation. This will take us beyond the 75% of initial transformation work being completed, and allow

the process to inform the IT implementation. We have delivered on the financial benefits outlined in the business case, but there are some minor on-going risks to completion based on potential delays to the implementation of the IT system but these should be minor as 6 months should be sufficient time for this to take place.

### **Risk Management**

WRS recognises that the development of policy, delivery of service priorities and the management of its services for seven partners attracts 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
- Focus on the delivery of its service to its customers

The Service aims to ensure that Risk Management becomes a natural component of its management process and that when and where appropriate; risks are avoided, reduced, transferred or retained. As part of these arrangements, a WRS risk register is being developed that can be integrated with partners own risk registers. This register will be maintained and reviewed periodically to assess current risks and identify forthcoming priorities. The current risk register appears as Appendix B.

### **Equality and Diversity**

WRS is committed to equality of opportunity and respect for diversity. The service links in with the hosts adopted Equality Standard for Local Government as a framework to help embed equality and diversity into everyday aspects of its work.

### **Next Steps**

- Improved service delivery arrangements, better focused on businesses and consumers
- A service designed to add value to the customer, meeting local authority needs whilst avoiding unnecessary waste
- A cultural shift in the workforce that uses Systems Thinking to continuously seek to add value for the customer whilst avoiding waste
- Embedding new flexible working patterns
- Developing an efficient and cost effective infrastructure to support service delivery (including ICT)
- Continued building of relationships with host authority support functions
- Delivery of financial and non financial benefits
- Enhancement of customer service through various bodies including the Worcestershire Hub
- Exploration of increasing WRS scope by taking on other partners/ functions

### **Key Milestones for 2012/13**

- Deliver implementation of the new IT solution so old systems can be switched off,

- Continue cross training to improve flexibility of the workforce,
- Complete initial transformation review to eliminate obvious waste and complete initial streamlining of workforce,
- Identify how future budgetary restrictions might impact on service delivery going forward.



## Appendix 2 – Draft WRS Risk Register

Risk Description	Consequences	When is this likely to happen	Current Position			Control measures
			Likelihood	Impact	Matrix RAG Status	
Loss of Data through IT failures	Disruption to Service Provision. Inability to produce records and data.	On-going	Low	High	Green	Bromsgrove ICT have effective processes and business continuity plans in place.
Delays in procuring new single WRS IT System	Impact on work planning.  Additional time taken in cross referencing data sets and reporting from 7 different systems.	Sept 2012 onwards	Low	High	Amber	Procurement plan in progress and following revised timetable. Sufficient work on Systems Thinking has been completed to inform needs. Will have to ensure all major flows reviewed to inform actual development of the system.
Effective and efficient Business Continuity arrangements in place	Disruption to service if e.g. Major Power failures or other reasons that access to Wyatt House is not possible.	On-going	Very Low	Medium	Green	Staff are equipped for mobile/home working.  Touchdown stations available in partner council locations.
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	Green	Service priorities to be managed and partners informed of any changes to service.  Consultants are available to provide short term cover and this has worked well where we have used them to cover peak demand periods.  We are active within regional and sub regional groups to share resources if required. Effective training and development processes in place to ensure recruitment and retention of staff.  Regular inventory and maintenance of equipment. In future budget for replace may be an issue but would be a relatively small amount for partners to share.
Pest and Dog Control contractors cease operations.	Disruption to service. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Green	New framework contract has 4 suppliers so the loss of one allows work to be moved to the other 3.

Effective and efficient contract arrangement for dog control	<p>Disruption to service if no kennels available.</p> <p>Negative media coverage.</p> <p>Increased public health risks</p>	On-going	Low	High	<b>Amber</b>	<p>Budget available to use temporary staff or buy in use of other private sector providers in short term.</p> <p>New contracts are in place and Warden Service now fully in-house.</p>
Robust arrangements in place in relation to obtaining legal advice and monitoring legislative changes.	<p>Negative media coverage through loss of major case.</p> <p>Loss of confidence in the service.</p> <p>Financial loss</p>	On-going	Low	Medium	<b>Green</b>	<p>Use of competent staff to undertake investigations.</p> <p>Proper scheme of delegation to ensure authority to take decisions is clear and monitor for legislative changes.</p> <p>Clear enforcement policy in place &amp; ensure compliance with legal procedures.</p> <p>Effective liaison with partner councils legal services departments.</p>
Robust arrangements in place to respond to an environmental incident/disaster	<p>Negative media coverage if major infectious disease incident or animal disease outbreak not handled well.</p> <p>Impact on other service areas.</p> <p>Well-being of staff.</p>	On-going	Low	High	<b>Amber</b>	<p>Processes for response to incidents clear.</p> <p>Effective liaison with government departments and agencies.</p> <p>Managers to deploy staff to support other teams.</p> <p>Mutual aid arrangements with neighbours in place for Animal disease outbreaks</p>
Failure to maintain effective budgetary control	<p>Financial loss</p> <p>Inability to pay staff/contractors</p> <p>Reputational damage</p>	On-going	Low	High	<b>Green</b>	<p>Effective delegation of financial decisions.</p> <p>Devolution of cost centres to managers.</p> <p>Monthly reporting within WRS.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting to management board and Joint Committee</p>
Criticism or intervention by Government if they are unhappy with service provision. Achieve stable levels of contribution from partner authorities	<p>Reputational damage.</p> <p>Level of support from constituent authorities for Regulatory Services will vary due to variations in income</p>	On-going	Very low	low	<b>Green</b>	<p>Compliance with Bromsgrove's financial procedures. Keep key government stakeholders apprised of WRS plans and business transformation and address any concerns at an early stage.</p>
		On-going	Low	High	<b>Amber</b>	<p>Ok if partners conform with legal agreement on budgetary cost</p>

Host provides high quality support services to ensure effective service provision	Cost of hosting may increase and level of support required may not be met resulting in the service performance being affected.	On-going	High	Medium	<b>Red</b>	Ensure Management Board informed of significant failings Maintain ongoing liaison with host authority
Minimise any perceived or real democratic deficit	Failure in host support Members and citizens may perceive that the joint service is not as good as the previous one.	On-going	Low	Medium	<b>Green</b>	Host authority to deal with issues in a timely fashion Ensure good communications back to the constituent authorities Ensure all publicity pushes the joint nature of services Maintaining some kind of "localism" in the operational delivery
Effective communication with internal partners	Some elements of the new service have key links back to services within the authorities e.g. Planning. These cannot be lost otherwise processes will not work properly	On-going	Low	Low	<b>Green</b>	Ongoing liaison with relevant parts in partner councils (eg Planning)
Development where possible of harmonised approach to service delivery by partners	Different conditions in different areas, Business customers operating in more than one area face different requirements from the same service. One system should create standard fees	On-going				Gradually move towards a more standardised approach within the demands of individual local authorities
Business transformation to deliver required cost savings	Service delivery problems and the need to cut front-line services	On-going	Medium	High	<b>Red</b>	Have clear scripting for Customer Service staff so that they know the different provisions in each district There is clear timetable for change process and managers/ Senior Practitioners trained in the process and use of Systems Thinking tools. Communicate progress regularly to staff Report regularly to Management Board



### Appendix 3

#### Performance Reporting Template 2012/13

Measure	Reported	Comments/queries
1. Business satisfaction	quarterly	To be based on standard questionnaire sent to businesses with which WRS has had contact that quarter.
2. Client Satisfaction	quarterly	To be based on standard questionnaire sent to customers with whom WRS has had contact that quarter.
3. Improved Consumer Confidence	quarterly	To be 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 WRS
4. No. of business broadly compliant (of those inspected during the period)	quarterly	At this stage all 7 council can only access this data for food – not other subject areas. 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.
5. No. of improving food premises	annually	
6. Percentage of premises selling alcohol to children	quarterly	This will be reported at the end of each quarter where there has been a test purchasing exercise, as these do not happen every quarter.
7. No. noise complaints received per 1000 population	quarterly	
8. cost of environmental health function per head of population	quarterly	This will be based on the service plan/budget for 2011/2012.
9. cost of trading standards function per head of population	Quarterly	This will be based on the service plan/budget for 2011/2012.
10. service improvement targets		To be determined after the first phase of systems thinking is completed.

This will also be a list of short paragraphs with outcomes of key projects, legal cases etc that are of interest to the board/committee. This will include information on the assessments for contaminated land sites.

Appendix 4: Detailed overrun for Regulatory Services 2011/12

	Summary - Budget 12 Mths Mar 12 £'000	Summary - Expenditure to Mar 12 £'000	Summary - Variance £'000	
<b>Direct Expenditure</b>				
<b>Employees</b>				
Salary	4,233	3,994	-239	Underspend is due to salary savings arising from two Grade B posts remaining vacant
Agency Staff	3	52	49	
Recruitment	0	7	7	
Subscription	5	2	-3	
Training	2	2	0	
Employee Insurance	19	20	1	
<b>Sub-Total - Employees</b>	<b>4,262</b>	<b>4,077</b>	<b>-185</b>	
<b>Premises</b>				
Rent	0	107	107	Accommodation Charges paid to partners to 30/06/11 - prior to move to Wyatt House
Room Hire	6	0	-6	
Business Rates	36	36	-0	
Cleaning	8	8	0	
Repairs & Maintenance	1	9	8	
Service Charges	15	7	-8	
Secure Storage	17	17	0	
Utilities	18	7	-11	

Water & Sewerage Services	2	1	-1
<b>Sub-Total - Premises</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Transport</b>			
Vehicle Hire	8	1	-7
Vehicle Fuel	8	7	-1
Tyres	0	0	0
Road Fund Tax	1	1	-0
Vehicle Insurance	3	3	0
Vehicle Maintenance	10	3	-7
Car Lease	7	7	0
Car Allowances	208	211	3
Public Transport	0	1	1
<b>Sub-Total - Transport</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>-10</b>
<b>Supplies and Services</b>			
Furniture & Equipment	81	89	8
Test Purchases	20	1	-19
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	8	4	-4
Printing & Photocopying	40	30	-10
CRB Checks (taxi)	10	25	15
Publications	47	14	-33
Postage	9	11	2
ICT	101	79	-22
Legal Costs	23	0	-23
Telephones	52	41	-10

Training & Seminars	78	26	-52	
Car Parking & Subsistence	7	1	-6	
Insurance	20	34	14	
Miscellaneous Expenses	2	1	-1	
<b>Third Party Payments</b>				
Support Service Recharges	250	250	0	
Customer Services Hub	50	50	0	
Audit	20	16	-4	The Audit Fee for 11/12 will be £5,000, the difference reflects the previous year final account.
<b>Sub-Total - Supplies &amp; Service</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>-147</b>	
<b>Contractors</b>				
Dog Warden	187	191	4	
Pest Control	40	37	-3	
Analytical Services - Trading Standards	145	164	19	
Land Drainage	20	9	-11	
Licensing	8	27	19	
Other contractors/consultants	59	0	-59	
Water Safety	11	9	-2	
Food Safety	7	7	0	
Environmental Protection	58	87	30	
Taxi Tests	32	31	-0	
Grants / Subscriptions	3	14	11	
Advertising	10	3	-7	
Publicity & Promotions	5	1	-4	

CRB Checks	0	0	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Car Lease Contributions / Training Courses	-3	-49	-46
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-46</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,008</b>	<b>5,706</b>	<b>-302</b>

**Percentage saving from original budget £7,181 in 2010-11** **20.54%**

**Partner percentage split as per original business case**

As stated in Joint Committee Minutes 25.11.10:-. One off costs for change (including costs of staff termination) as included in the 10/11 business case would not form part of any future budget considerations and that these would be paid in line with the cost sharing allocations as stated in the legal agreement (schedule 4 pt 2)

**Notes:-**

2010/11 Underspend	301	
Reserve Training	-35	
2011/12 Underspend	302	
	<b>568</b>	To pay to partners

Share	Partner
11.05%	Bromsgrove DC
9.58%	Malvern Hills DC
11.31%	Redditch BC
11.11%	City of Worcester
16.55%	Wychavon DC
10.82%	Wyre Forest DC
29.58%	Worcestershire CC
<b>100.00%</b>	

Appendix 5:

**WRS BUDGET 2012/2013 - 2014/2015**

<b>Account description</b>	<b>Budget 2012/2013 £'000</b>	<b>Budget 2013/2014 £'000</b>	<b>Budget 2014/2015 £'000</b>
<b>Employees</b>			
Monthly salaries	4,123	4,123	4,123
Agency workers	3	3	3
Training for professional qualifications	2	2	2
Medical fees (employees')	1	1	1
Employers' liability insurance	19	19	19
Employees' professional subscriptions	2	2	2
<b>Sub-Total - Employees</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>4,150</b>
<b>Premises</b>			
Internal repair/maint.	4	4	4
Rents	102	102	102
Utilities	20	20	20
Business Rates	35	35	35
Room hire	23	23	23
Trade Waste	1	1	1
Cleaning and domestic supplies	9	9	9
<b>Sub-Total - Premises</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Transport</b>			

Vehicle repairs/maint'ce	8	8	8
Diesel fuel	7	7	7
Licences	1	1	1
Contract hire of vehicles	5	5	5
Vehicle insurances	3	3	3
Car Lease	7	7	7
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5
Car allowances	178	178	178
<b>Sub-Total - Transport</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>214</b>

**Supplies & Service**

Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	35	35	35
Materials/test purchases/vending	23	23	23
Clothing and uniforms	4	4	4
Laundry	1	1	1
Training fees	60	60	60
General insurances	20	20	20
Printing and stationery	27	27	27
Books and publications	10	10	10
Postage/packaging	12	12	12
ICT	69	69	69
Telephones	42	42	42
Taxi Tests	34	34	34
CRB Checks (taxi)	20	20	20
Legal fees	7	7	7
Support service recharges	250	250	250
Customer service posts	50	50	50

Audit	10	10	10
<b>Sub-Total - Supplies &amp; Service</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>674</b>
<b>Contractors</b>			
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	369	369	369
Advertising (general)	10	10	10
Grants and subscriptions	16	16	16
Marketing/promotion/publicity	2	2	2
<b>Sub-Total - Contractors</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>397</b>
<b>Income</b>			
INCOME miscellaneous fees	-3	-3	-3
<b>Sub-Total - Income</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>BUDGET TOTAL</b>	<b><u>5,626</u></b>	<b><u>5,626</u></b>	<b><u>5,626</u></b>
Bromsgrove	602		
Malvern Hills	534		
Redditch	604		
Worcester City	623		
Wychavon	948		
Wyre Forest	620		
Worcester County	1,694		
	<b><u>5,626</u></b>		