

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2018 AT 4.30 P.M.

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

MEMBERS: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor R. J. Laight
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor P.J. Whittaker
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor B. Behan
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor H. Campbell
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor J. Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor B. Clayton
Worcester City Council: Councillor J. Squires
Worcester City Council: Councillor A. Feeney
Wychavon District Council: Councillor E. Stokes (Chairman)
Wychavon District Council: Councillor M. King
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor J. Hart
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor J. Smith

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 16th November 2017 (Pages 1 - 12)
4. Chairman's Announcements
5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Business Plan 2018/2021 (Pages 13 - 44)
6. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2018/2019 (Pages 45 - 72)
7. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April - December 2017 (Pages 73 - 80)

8. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Information Report - Review of WRS Service Complaints (Pages 81 - 88)
9. Activity and Performance Data Quarter 3 (Pages 89 - 118)
10. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board - 2018/2019 Proposed Meeting Dates

All meetings to commence at 4:30pm:

- Thursday 21st June 2018
 - Thursday 4th October 2018
 - Thursday 15th November 2018
 - Thursday 14th February 2019
11. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

6th February 2018

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER 2017, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight, B. Behan, H. Campbell, J. Baker (Vice-Chairman, B. Clayton, J. Squires, A. Feeney, M. King (during Minute No's part of 23/17 to 27/17), E. Stokes (Chairman), J. Smith and J. Hart

Observers: Ms. A. Davey, Worcester City Council, Mr. V. Allison, Wychavon District Council, Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Mr. M. Parker, Wyre Forest District Council.

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Wilkes, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr M. Cox, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. D. Mellors and Mrs. P. Ross

19/17 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P. Whittaker, Bromsgrove District Council.

20/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

21/17 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 5th October 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 5th October 2017 be approved as a correct record.

22/17 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2017**

The Board considered a report which detailed the financial position for the period 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council introduced the report and in doing so informed the Board that the report presented the final financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for the period 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017.

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The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council informed the Board that the detailed revenue report, at Appendix 1 to the report, showed a projected outturn savings that would be refunded to partner authorities of £14,000, it was appreciated that this was an estimation to the year-end based on current level of expenditure.

There were a number of vacant posts within the service and these, together with savings from maternity leave, long term sick etc. had resulted in a projected savings in salaries. This was offset by the costs associated with additional agency staff used to cover the vacancies, sick leave and to support the service when staff worked on additional income generation projects. Officers would ensure that the reliance on agency cover was as minimal as possible.

However, two full time employees' (FTE's) were working within the Community Environmental Heath Team to assist with the backlog of nuisance issues and to address some of the issues raised by the Food Standards Agency. One FTE was being used in Technical Services to cover the high level of sickness reported to Members at their previous meeting.

Members were further informed that if the April to September spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of the year, there would be a projected overspend of £9,000. Officers have continued to analyse the overspend and the following was the projected full year overspend to be funded from each partner, this income was in the £335,000 income projected outturn:-

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Redditch | £2,000 |
| Wychavon | £3,000 |
| Wyre Forest | £4,000 |

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council continued and further informed Members of the actual bereavement costs 1st April to 30th September 2017 to be funded by partner, as detailed below. These costs were charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charges it was not possible to project a final outturn figure. This income had also been included in the £335,000 income projected outturn:-

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Worcester City | £4,000 |
| Redditch | £2,000 |
| Bromsgrove | £2,000 |

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the income achieved by WRS during April 2017 to September 2017. £158,000 worth of income was achieved in the first half of the year against a full year budget of £284,000. This was a slight improvement on the picture from quarter 1 and the service was now predicting a slightly reduced outturn of £335,000 due to the likelihood of achieving slightly less on the Primary Authority activity.

Grant funded expenditure was shown separate to the core service costs as this was not funded by the participating Councils.

The Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, informed Members with regard to the use of agency staff that, income was used with some flexibility, in order to respond where necessary to retain services; which included the recent Food Standards Agency Audit findings with regard to food inspections and trying to reduce the level of nuisance calls to ensure that WRS delivered the required works for partner authorities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the final financial position for the period 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017, be noted; and
- (b) that partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2017/2018 with regard to Pest Control and Bereavements, by Section 151 Officers.

23/17

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGETS 2018/19 - 2020/21

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council introduced a report which detailed the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget for 2018/2019 and 2020/2021.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 to the report, which showed the 2018/2019 – 2020/2021 budget breakdown for the district partnership. The income projections were included in Appendix 2 to the report.

The report highlighted the following assumptions that had been made in relation to the projections:-

- A 2% pay award across all staff for 2018/2019 – 2020/2021. This would be subject to the ongoing National Pay Negotiations. Therefore the final position would reflect any formally agreed increases. The budget also included any employee entitled to an incremental increase. This would increase the gap in funding to £163,000 by 2020/2021.
- No inflationary increases in supplies and services, premises or transport.
- The pension back-funding deficit was paid in advance by all partner authorities.

By 2020/2021 should the additional income not be met there would be a potential increase to partner funding as follows:-

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| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Bromsgrove | £24k |
| Malvern | £21k |
| Redditch | £28k |
| Worcester City | £27k |
| Wychavon | £38k |
| Wyre Forest | £25k |
| | £163k |

In response to questions from Members concerns with regard to the three year budget, the Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, indicated to the Board that WRS may struggle to hit the income target at the end of a period but it should achieve the figure for 2018/2019. Also if it proved difficult to achieve the income target the service had some reserves to mitigate the impact on partner authorities.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council informed the Board that the £163,000 figure was the worst case scenario. Should the additional pressure of £26,000 in 2018/2019 be delivered this would leave an additional pressure of £69,000 (£95,000 less £26,000). Similarly for 2020/2021, if all of the required income was delivered and retained during 2019/2020, only around £70,000 would have to be met in the final year. Therefore, for £163,000 to be the funding gap in 2020/2021, it would mean that no additional income was brought in above the 2017/2018 figures, hence it was the worst case scenario being presented to Members.

Further discussion followed whereby Members agreed that the Treasurers would look at individual partner budgets and that pay awards would have to be factored in. With regard to income generation and appropriate opportunities and in order to get out of a standstill position; Members asked if there was anything they could do as Board Members or as Members of each partner authority, to promote the excellent service that WRS provided in order to help increase potential income.

The Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, thanked Members for their continued and valued support. He asked if Members could be mindful to identify all potential income stream opportunities, including making people aware of pre-application advice. There were currently two good leads with regard Primary Authority. He had spoken with the Head of Community, Worcester City Council, with regard to partner authorities Chief Executive's and Leaders promoting WRS outside of Worcestershire.

Members commented that it was good to see such commitment and acknowledged that officers had worked hard to generate income. Neighbouring authorities were changing which could impact on WRS.

The Head of Regulatory Services (WRS) further commented that Gloucestershire partnerships had moved into a new delivery model,

which could in twelve months' time make them a competitor. Hence the need to promote the good services offered by WRS.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the district partners gross expenditure budget of £3,378k, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- b) that the district partners income budget of £353k, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- c) that the district partners revenue budget allocations for 2018/2019 and 2020/2021, as detailed below, be approved;

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Bromsgrove | £439k |
| Malvern | £386k |
| Redditch | £529k |
| Worcester City | £507k |
| Wychavon | £701k |
| Wyre Forest | £463k |
| | £3,025k |

- d) that, the approved level of budget allocations be advised to partner Councils through discussions with S151 Officers.

24/17

STATUTORY NUISANCES - BRIEFING REPORT

The Board received a briefing report on Statutory Nuisances.

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, (WRS), informed the Board that, it was the statutory duty of every local authority to cause its area to be inspected from time to time to detect any statutory nuisance under Section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A statutory nuisance was something that affected a person's health or caused disturbance to them in their property.

It was also a requirement to take such steps as were reasonably practicable to investigate complaints about issues that could be a 'statutory nuisance' made by a person living within the local authorities' area.

WRS achieved this through the use of intelligence, by responding to service requests and officers identifying nuisances during the course of their normal duties.

Members were reminded that at the WRS Board meeting on 5th October 2017, officers had highlighted the increasing expectations of members of the general public with regard to what local authorities and services like WRS could achieve in relation to complaints of nuisance by other members of the public. This level of expectation was increasingly challenging for WRS given its capacity and other demands placed on the service.

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Page 28 in the report, detailed statutory nuisances as defined in Section 70 (1) (a-h) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Whilst these were wide ranging in many ways, there were a limited number of issues that WRS could investigate in respect of issues being a potential statutory nuisance. Pages 28 and 29 in the report provided information on what was not a statutory nuisance.

Members were further informed that the courts must be convinced that the alleged nuisance substantially interfered with a personal comfort rather than a person's land, physical possessions or the effect on such things as property values. Case law directed that the concept of nuisance was to protect public health and not to deal with irritations.

For this reason WRS officers had to consider many elements of the complaint and how it impacted on the individual's life. It was important to realise that the fact that something caused annoyance did not in itself amount to a statutory nuisance. For something to amount to an actionable statutory nuisance two conditions had to be met:-

- It must cause significant interference to the normal occupation of premises by a person of average sensitivity, and
- It must be caused by some unreasonable or unusual act or omission or behaviour.

Page 30 in the report detailed a number of factors that officers had to consider when investigating complaints.

When officers were considering the source of a nuisance they had to consider the source in isolation. A statutory nuisance was a single issue and could not be made up of a number of single sources that cumulatively added up to a nuisance.

Where a nuisance could be identified the local authority must serve notice. In theory the local authority had no discretion in this, however, WRS would often take steps to try and resolve an issue where a simple change of behaviour could facilitate this.

The legal bar for issuing an abatement notice was set high as it was the initial stage in criminalising someone's behaviour. The problem had to be assessed by an officer as the Court would deem them to be an expert witness and independent.

Where a problem was investigated and found not to be a statutory nuisance, for fairness to both parties the investigation would be terminated. There were occasions, and even the Local Government Ombudsman accepted this, that a reasonable investigation may not always gather the evidence necessary to prove a statutory nuisance. For this reason Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 gave an individual the power to take their own action by way of complaint to the Magistrates' Court.

Page 31 in the report provided information on the current model for determining statutory nuisance.

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager, WRS, highlighted that there was an increasing tendency to challenge professional opinion where notices were issued. Changes to the fines structure in the Magistrates' Court meant that there were now unlimited fines available for some nuisance offences, so some businesses would be more willing to challenge the initial notice to try to limit their risk of future prosecution.

Additional resources were regularly deployed to manage the annual spike in nuisance complaints which typically occurred through the summer months. Efficiencies had already been achieved in the provision of the service which included more cross-discipline working by officers and the move to initial self-help for non-business related complaints, compensating for a reduction in the number officers in the Community Environmental Health Team. Should the trend in increasing numbers and complexity of service requests be continued, along with the added expectation and increased challenge from recipients of notices, then additional capacity would be required to meet this demand.

Members agreed that the briefing was informative and an easy document to read and asked that officers created a version of it that they could use to inform other Members at the partner authorities.

RESOLVED that the Statutory Nuisances briefing be noted.

25/17

WORCESTERSHIRE FOOD AND DRINK ASSOCIATION - INFORMATION REPORT

The Board received an information report on the Worcestershire Food and Drink Association (WF& DA).

The Business and Relationships Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) informed the Board that in 2012 the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's (WLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to the Government, set out its ambitions for business growth and job creation in the County. In particular, the WLEP had identified the Agri-Food, Agri Tech, Horticulture and Forestry Sector as a top priority for accelerated growth.

The SEP had requested that the WLEP local and national regulators worked in partnership to address regulatory barriers to growth and to develop innovative solutions for a national Agri-Food Sector Exemplar Pilot with the potential for a national roll-out across England.

In 2013, WLEP and WRS formed a strategic partnership through its Joint Regulators and Business Charter Action Plan. The partnership was a pioneering and an established national champion of Regulatory

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Delivery's (RD), part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Better Business for All (BBfA) programme.

The report provided details on Phase 1 and 2 of the scheme and highlighted that Phase 3 would look at how to engage with the catering sector to understand their needs and requirements, in order to design a category of membership that would meet their needs, and to encourage their membership into the WF&DA.

There were clear and tangible benefits to WRS for the sustainability of WF&DA. Businesses would find they were growing in confidence in complying with regulations and would reduce unnecessary business costs and reap business growth dividends. WRS as the regulator would improve service co-ordination and efficiency, by working pro-actively with businesses and would be recognised as a key part of the business support packages available through WF&DA.

By working together, WRS and WF&DA would be able to show how the improved business-regulator relationship would enhance compliance, mutual trust and confidence and would inevitably help Worcestershire attract more business and inward investment.

The Head of Regulatory Services, WRS, stated that this was a really excellent project and a piece of work that enabled WRS to support businesses in the best way that the service could. As regulators WRS had more contact with businesses than any other officers in local authorities and WRS would continue to work with the WF&DA once it had come into being as an independent entity so that the two organisations could work together to support growth of food businesses in the County.

The Board were further informed that the work up to this point had been funded by WLEP and the Head of Regulatory Services, WRS thanked them for their ongoing support in this which meant there had been no financial implications for partners up to this point. Future funding for WF&DA would be based on membership contributions and grants secured for activities, so again it would not present a financial burden to partners.

The Chairman expressed her thanks to officers and commented that it was good to see a proactive report of this nature demonstrating the positive role of the regulatory service in supporting local businesses and the economy.

RESOLVED that the information report on the Worcestershire Food and Drink Association, be noted.

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The Board considered a report that detailed Worcestershire Regulatory Services Activity and Performance Data for Quarter 2, 2017/2018. The report focused on Quarter 2 but the data enabled a comparison with previous years.

The Head of Regulatory Services, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) introduced the report and in doing highlighted that the level of work had been dealt with really well with additional agency staff brought in to help deal with the increased workload.

The Head of Regulatory Services, WRS then drew Members' attention to some of the key points in the report, as detailed below:-

- The good weather during late May and June had created an early summer spike in nuisance issues leading to an increased workload, which continued to peak through July. The July peak exceeded the highest point in the previous two years.
- In the nuisance related area called public health a similar pattern was seen with a dip in June at the end of quarter 1, followed by a spike during July that again exceeded the high numbers in the previous two years.

Having those peaks in demand, combined with a number of complex issues that staff were dealing with from the previous year, had required additional resources. So temporary agency staff were brought in towards the end of the quarter in order to help maintain the service's performance.

- The top 25 wards for noise showed a typical distribution with the majority being across Redditch, Wyre Forest and Worcester City.
- A spike had occurred in food safety complaints during August and this, along with the volume of work with regard to nuisance, had resulted in the service only able to undertake a limited volume of routine food hygiene inspections during quarter 2. Retaining the services of temporary agency staff for the period beyond the end of quarter 2 would enable some of the team to catch up with the routine food hygiene inspection visits.
- Air quality work continued as the service looked towards working with Worcester City Council (WCC) Members, who were appointed to the Task and Finish Group to consider how WCC could improve air quality.

The team who covered Environmental Permitting had been in dialogue with OFGEM in order to obtain details of all of the sites in Worcestershire that were being supported by the Non-domestic Renewable Heating Initiative, where biomass (wood fired) boilers were installed to provide heat, with the cost of installation and fuel being subsidised by the Government. Boilers taking funding from the

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scheme had been at the centre of a number of complaints in Bromsgrove and Wychavon. The team now had a list of premises and intended to review this, with a view to targeted visits to see whether a site should be operating with a permit.

- Licensing work volumes remained high. Officers had continued to engage with external partners on a range of issues. Further visits had been undertaken with the Gambling Commission. A number of spot check exercises were completed. Officers had started working with Worcester City Council (WCC), Licensing Committee Members who had been appointed to the Task and Finish Group, to develop the Council's vision for its taxi fleet going forward.

The Licensing Team has also commenced preparations for training on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) for the taxi trade. Firm plans were in place to pilot the training in Redditch and Worcester City, followed by a wider roll out across the county. The training would be delivered in partnership with West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner's preferred training provider.

- Business satisfaction remained excellent at 97.7%, satisfaction for non-business customers was slightly up at 75.6%, but still slightly below last year's out-turn figure of 78.9%. This still reflected some of the difficult cases that the team had dealt with and were not always able to resolve.

People who found they felt better equipped to deal with their own problems in the future was slightly up on quarter 1 at 73.3%. Staff sickness for quarter 2 was up to 3.77 days per full time equivalent (FTE). Managers were seeking to address this where possible, but as highlighted in quarter 1, a number of officers had required surgery and therefore required recovery time.

- There were only three corporate complaints during quarter 1 but officers had expected to see this increase in quarters 2 and 3 due to the increased volume of work and the pressure that had created. Quarter 2 saw a further six corporate complaints which related to dog issues, delays in answering phone calls or not keeping complainants informed. Where possible steps had been taken to address some of the issues.

There were 32 compliments in quarter 1. This figure increased to 75 at the end of quarter 2, which demonstrated that staff continued to deliver good outcomes for the public.

- Income for the first six months of the year was £158,000. This was close to the target to achieve the required income for the year and equal to 5.2% of the monies paid into the service on an annual basis by partner authorities.

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The Technical Services Manager, WRS, responded to specific questions with regard to; the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide which remained consistently high in the Worcester Road and Lickey End Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's). Members were informed that with regard to the Bromsgrove AQMA's, a review was currently being undertaken, which would include looking at re-invigorating the Air Quality Management Group.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Activity and Performance Data report for Quarter 2, 2017/2018, as detailed at Appendices A and B to the report, be noted; and
- b) that Members use the contents of the Activity and Performance Data report for Quarter 2, 2017/2018, to report the relevant information to Members at each partner authority.

27/17

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman took the opportunity to inform the Board that she had attended the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Excellence Awards Ceremony, on 2nd November 2017 where, although they were not overall winners, Worcestershire Regulatory Services were highly commended as an outstanding Environmental Health Team.

She offered her commiserations to Chris Poole, Senior Technical Officer, WRS, who was nominated for but sadly did not win the Environmental Hero (Air Quality) award.

The Chairman further informed the Board that she had been invited to attend the Worcester City Christmas Food Festival on the 2nd December 2017.

The meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Board

15th February 2018

Business Plan for Worcestershire Regulatory Services 2018-2021

Recommendation

That the Board approves the updated approach outlined in the WRS business plan 2017-2020

Report

The Business Plan for WRS was developed first in 2015 following on from the strategic procurement exercise. During the leadership training undertaken by the management team, it was determined that Worcestershire Regulatory Services needed a plan to ensure both the viability of the service and its ability to operate within the budgets available from the partners. This plan became the high level document that would inform the development of the service for the foreseeable future. It was updated last year following the changes to the partnership arrangement and, given developments and experiences during the last year it has been updated again, with the new time scale taking us through to just beyond the next general election.

The Business Plan shows how WRS will:

- Seek to provide a viable service within projected partner budget allocations
- Understand what a base level of service looks like for partners.
- Support other partners to maintain service levels above this, where this is desired.
- Provide details of plans to “Grow the Business” and increase income to maintain resilience in the face of continued austerity.
- Identifies the risks and potential costs if the income generation strategy at the core of the plan begins to fail to deliver the requisite levels of income to maintain the service.

Local government finance remains difficult. There is an on-going lack of certainty about what business rates retention, seen by central government as the key source of local government income going forward, will deliver for the

partners in Worcestershire. The Municipal Journal's headline of 12th January 2017, which said "Breaking Point," highlighted the difficulties faced by the sector and little if anything has changed in the year following this to give comfort to local authorities.

Currently partners are not looking for further savings from WRS and the service has been clear that the significant efficiencies have all been delivered. Income generation will remain the key factor in the service's business strategy. It is possible that authorities may be encouraged to engage more with WRS and look more widely at contracting services to those who can offer expertise and resilience in service delivery. This will make the plan's challenging income targets more deliverable.

However, there is growing evidence that our current clients may be unwilling to engage with the service beyond their current commitments and some authorities are now focusing on the kind of income generation activities that WRS chose to follow some years ago. As we see more authorities adopting this strategy so we may see others entering the market that WRS occupies, albeit they are unlikely to be able to match WRS's scale individually. Support from partners at all levels, but particularly Director, Chief Executive and Leader level will be necessary in selling WRS in what remains a significantly more competitive environment.

The demise of Shropshire's outsourced regulatory team has meant there are fewer serious competitors for WRS's services however, the creation of Publica, a similar TECKEL company, by the former 2020 partnership, (West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils,) where the authorities have transferred their staff en-masse into the company, seems likely to emerge in the future as a potential key competitor.

By understanding our costs and with good support from the Host's Finance team, we have been able to forecast our income needs going forward even beyond this period of the plan, which takes us up to the next general election. On the assumption of cash standstill from partners, the service will need to be generating the best part of £500,000 in income by 2021 to continue to be able to offer the current service levels to partners and clients. This will be challenging and there are growing concerns that going beyond the current levels of £300-350,000 per annum may be difficult.

If this is to be achieved it will require that we continue to build on income streams like Primary Authority and doing work for other local authorities. We will need to maintain the levels of grant income that we bring in and we will need to tap into new income streams like pre-application advice, if the forecast requirements are to be anywhere near achieved. This can only be done if the service retains its



current flexibility to re-invest income in resources where necessary. We must also retain the current flexible and well qualified staff cohort and build on it where we can.

Adding functions to the WRS structure may provide one way of offering savings in overall cost by rationalising the management and deliver of these activities. The revised Business Plan identifies a number of areas where partners currently have in-house or slightly different shared arrangements where there may be some benefit in considering adding these to the WRS platform. This is something that WRS Managers will need to discuss with officer members of the Board in the coming months as it is likely that business cases would have to be produced to demonstrate the potential benefits before partners could make such decisions.

Financial Implications

Tables in the Plan outline the levels of income required to achieve the budget allocated by partners. There are also table that outline the potential liabilities for partners should it not be possible to achieve the required levels of income during the next 3-years. Calculations are based on the current contribution rates for partners.

In February last year partners agreed to cover initial shortfalls in income should they occur and, beyond this, there is a reserve of £173,000 maintained from the exit of the County Council from the partnership that members could authorise to be used to cover overspends. This should give members confidence that monies are available to protect the partners from the need to cover large overspends in the near future should they arise and, if the income generation model is unable to continue to fully cover costs, it will allow time for the WRS Management Team and the Officer members of the Board to identify potential alternatives for the partners to consider going forward.

Contact Point

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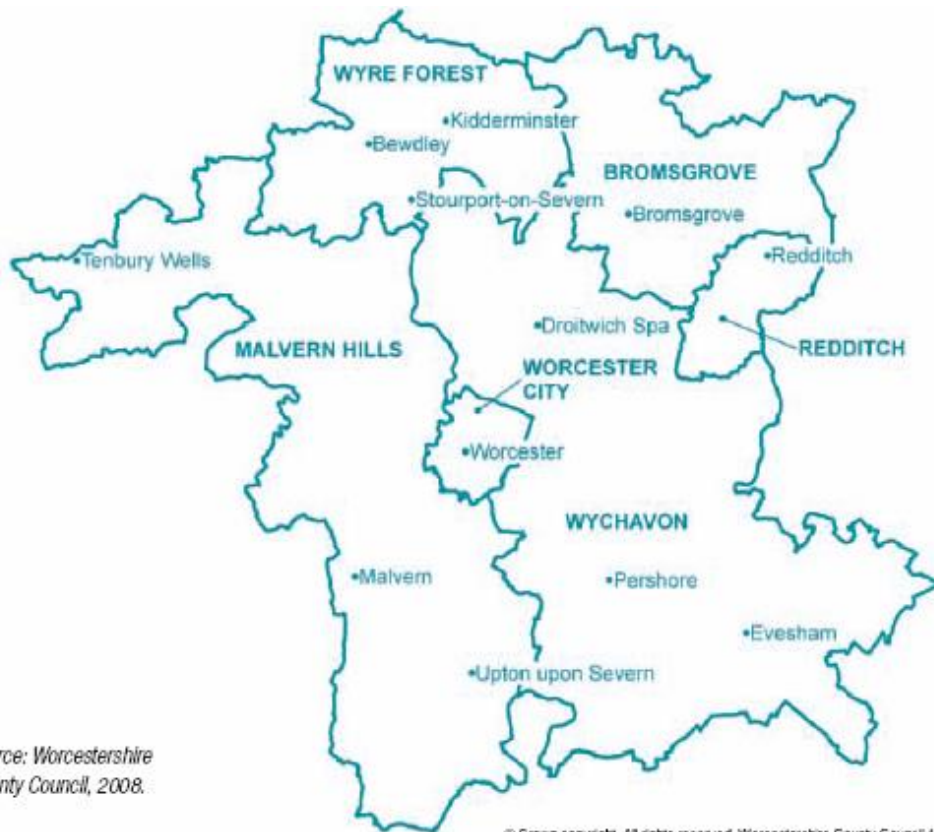
Background Documents

WRS Business Plan 2017-2020

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Business Plan for Worcestershire Regulatory Services

2018/19-2020/21



“A Local Government Solution to Local Government Challenges “

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Executive Summary

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) has a history of delivering savings whilst continuing to deliver high quality service and, since 2010 has provided a strong solution to the delivery of local authority regulatory responsibilities. It delivered above and beyond its original business case by saving over 17.5% whilst maintaining service outcomes. In 2009/10, the district councils' combined contribution was around £5M. At £3.025M by 2016/17, this had fallen by 40%, yet outcomes within Environmental Health and Licensing remain good and performance, in terms of customer satisfaction and business compliance, remain high. With the income generated by the service the actual spend in 2016/17 was below £3M, taking this saving to over 50% according to the out-run financial figures.

Currently there are no expected, additional financial savings for the 3 years of this plan from any of the partner authorities however, there remain huge financial pressures on local government. With inflation increasing and the likely breach of the 1% pay cap on local authorities, the service's reliance on its ability to generate income as a buffer against increasing costs becomes increasingly difficult. With teams stretching to deliver the requirements of the partners and existing clients, it is difficult to see where further income generating capacity can be developed without new investment either from the existing partners or new ones. Having approached all of our neighbouring authorities, there is currently very little interest from them in terms of expanding what they do with us or indeed actually considering the option of joining the partnership. This begins to undermine somewhat the basic tenets of our business plan first created in 2015. Whilst we are not currently losing business, the rate of growth of business has plateaued, although there are still opportunities with Primary Authority to increase income if we use the money brought in to fund additional capacity.

Whilst there are always small, marginal efficiency savings to be had, without a change in the way regulation is done, based around inspection, advice and investigation, further savings will be limited in the future and are unlikely to be at cashable levels. Going forward WRS will offer flexibility, in terms of its ability to respond to the wide range of changing partner needs and any changes to the operating environment, including its ability to respond to emergencies. Service levels have been tailored to individual partner budget levels, however, any further savings requirements would threaten our current income generating capacity, so it is now harder to offer some of the flexibility that individual partners may want. Opportunities remain for partners to build on the WRS foundation by adding functions into what WRS does. There are still regulatory elements of service delivered individually by partners that could find a home under WRS. Seeking to build on the economies of scale created by the formation of WRS could help in maintaining resilience for existing partners in these other areas of regulation and offer a flexible cost-effective service that a single district council could not achieve on its own in the current economic climate.

The market has concluded that Regulatory Services is not a saleable commodity on its own, and private sector service providers will now only take these services on if bundled with a range of others. Whilst WRS will continue to seek dialogue with other local authorities and support Directors, Chief Executives and Leaders in any discussions they may have with neighbours, as there appears to be a lack of willingness from other authorities to engage, it seems sensible for partners to look at developing WRS further as they continue to be challenged financially.

The shared service vehicle developed by the Worcestershire local authorities remains fit for purpose as a service delivery option for the next 3 years if the service and its constituent partners can deal with the challenges of agreeing budgets beyond 2018/19. The service has already demonstrated its flexibility and its ability to provide resilience at lower cost. Its delivery model offers an expandable platform that could encompass either the delivery of individual service elements or whole regulatory type services for partners or new local authority customers. With this in mind WRS remains the right local government solution to local government challenges in the regulatory environment.

Simon Wilkes

Head of Regulatory Services

February 2018

1. Introduction

This plan outlines how Worcestershire Regulatory Services will develop over the next 3 years to enable the service to:

- Respond to the financial pressures faced by the local government sector
- Continue to provide a core level of service that meets partner's statutory obligations and, offer the option to fund a higher level of service in all functional areas.
- Maintain sufficient expertise to provide resilience, beyond the budget envisaged by partners through income generating activities.
- Continue with high levels of performance

The plan provides partners with a clear and deliverable way to continue to tackle the issues outlined above in a logical and cost effective way. It will mean some changes to the look of the service and to what and how certain elements are delivered but partners must accept that all but marginal efficiencies are exhausted within the existing operational requirements for regulation and the delivery of further significant savings can only be based in mutually agreed changes in service levels.

WRS will aim to meet the cost levels indicated by partners by:

- Seeking further efficiencies where possible, especially in relation to using digital channels for access by customers
- Whenever possible, continuing to develop new ways of working (streamlining processes and continue to innovate, first point of contact, etc.)
- Seek income by doing work for others and obtaining grant income for defined projects.

The Strategic Partnering process demonstrated how lean the WRS organisation already was. With increasing work volumes, increasing public expectation and increasing complexity in the cases being taken on, there is no doubt that officers are feeling the pressure. They have certainly gone above and beyond the call of duty in many cases and have faced public ridicule and anger where the law has not met what some members of the public expect in the 21st century. They now operate in a very efficient manner and are as effective as they can be given the legal framework within which they work.

The levels of efficiency achieved should be a great selling point that would allow us to take on service delivery for other local authorities. However, there is currently an apparent unwillingness from other local authorities to engage in this way. Whilst the service has not lost business and continues to pick up some new business, no local authority has expressed a desire to discuss the opportunities that delivery under contract or as part of the partnership might offer since our conversations with Stratford on Avon in 2016.

Following the announcements in the autumn statement and the continued dominance of austerity, district councils may be looking for different ways of delivering services at a lower cost. WRS can certainly offer this but given we have been unable to secure a new partner or a full EH service under contract during the three year period since we started with this strategy, it would be foolish to assume that our neighbours will be queueing up to join us. Whilst this will remain a part of the strategy, discussion with partners on how WRS might act as a platform for the development of other shared regulatory services will need to form part of the strategy going forward and potentially bringing together other shared service into the WRS fold.

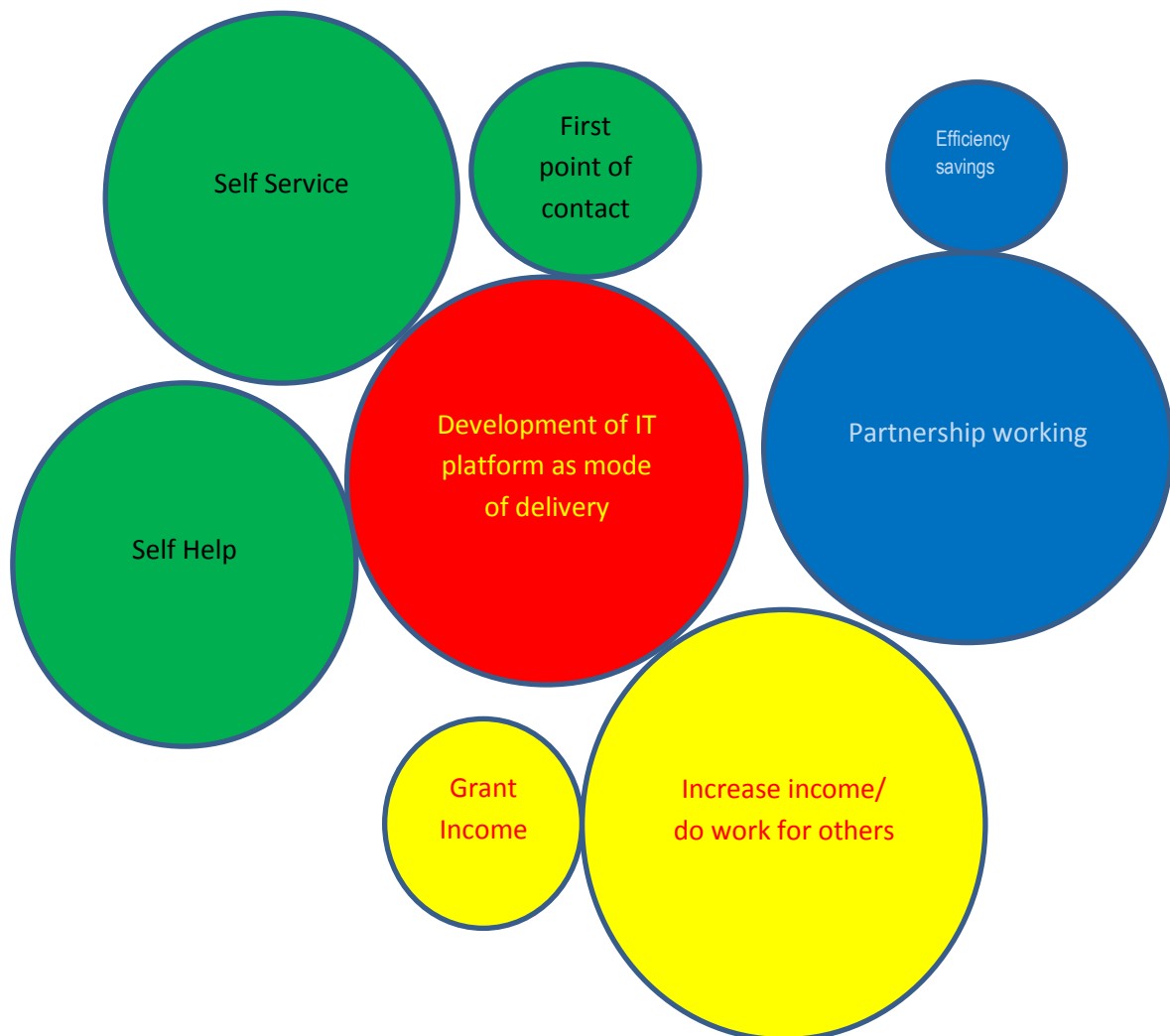
Worcestershire Regulatory Services continues to be the local government solution to local government challenges in the regulatory environment.

2. Business Planning & Savings Realisation

2.1 Picture of the plan

The Business Plan remains a high level strategic document that outlines the framework within which the service will build and develop. The diagram below has been updated so that it can continue to illustrate the directions in which the service has and will continue to develop for the foreseeable future.

Fig 1: Size of bubble reflects potential contribution and/ or ease of introduction. Colours indicate work streams. The figure has been amended with bubbles for activity that is taken as far as they can being removed.



The figure above outlines in a graphic format, the areas of work were the business will focus its efforts. These are:

- I) **Generating streams of income** (yellow bubbles, grants, and work for others, paid advice, etc.)
This has a full section to itself so we will not outline anything here. See section 3
- II) **On-going implement new ways of working** (green bubbles for self-help, first point of contact delivery, self-service) **and the continued development of a suitable digital front door linking directly to our IT platform** (red bubble)
The Duty Officer team, which acts as the first point of contact has been expanded slightly. A new message has been introduced for callers as they come into the queueing mechanism that helps to

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divert calls for things like missed bins or other environmental services issues back into the right routes. It also suggests the WRS website as an alternative for people looking to deal with issues especially nuisance matters. This has resulted in a reduction in call traffic, with much less waste, and fewer low level nuisance issues which we believe are being diverted to self-help facilities on the website. Duty officers are now able to offer a better service to callers who do come through and are better able to service our email traffic to the generic email box, giving more timely responses.

The nuisance pages of the website have been expanded to give better and clearer explanations of what a nuisance is and the steps through which a person should go to try to resolve the matter themselves before the service will intervene. It is also clear about what will not constitute a statutory nuisance as there appears to be a growing unwillingness in the public to rub along together and accept that occasionally people will do things you don't particularly like. Other areas of the website are also being updated to ensure it remains a useful self-help tool in other areas of business. We are also looking at the options for automated forms on the site which would populate the back office system. There is some additional cost to partners associated with this approach, some of which could be recovered from increases in Licensing fees. Overall, the impact would be to free up resources which can be re-focused on enforcement activity.

III) **Maintaining and creating new efficiencies through wider partnership working** (blue bubbles)

We already work with a number of partners in the region and within the County. We've had an excellent working relationship with the Worcestershire LEP and bodies like Worcestershire Business Central, which have enabled us to provide better information and support to a wider range of businesses. Hopefully 2018 will see the formal launch of the Worcestershire Food and Drink Federation which has come from work delivered by WRS and funded by the LEP which will hopefully provide a self-sustaining unit that can support the promotion of Worcestershire food businesses and products at a national level. Expanding the partnership is an area that will continue to be considered and discussed with authorities outside of Worcestershire, but the partners could also consider adding functions to the partnership, expanding it and using it to develop economies of scale in other areas of delivery particularly those related to enforcement. This may of itself deliver some efficiencies for partners. This is discussed further in Section 3.2

2.2 The Savings Picture

The current situation in relation to partner financial savings requirements is that there are no additional savings envisaged for the next three years. We appreciate that this could be subject to change particularly in light of the Autumn Statement and the current uncertain situation with local government income streams, which introduces some serious uncertainties and potential risks.

The budget picture at Appendix B also demonstrates that, even without accounting for inflationary pressures, there are other financial pressures from salary and pension related increases that will cause an increase in budgetary pressures over the three years of the business plan. As a consequence this means the gap between what partners contribute currently (based on cash standstill from 2016/17,) and what the service needs to cover its existing costs will increase. Whilst this has, until now, been covered by increased income, there is a significant risk that the lack of willingness from other local authorities to engage more fully with the service beyond short term contracts and the saturation of existing income generating capacity may mean that this pattern will end and partners will have to decide how to address this. The plan will explore some of the potential options.

3. Income Generation to meet the budget 2018-2021

3.1 Current Market for Local Authority Regulatory Services as a potential source of income generation

It is clear that the private sector will now only consider taking on regulatory functions if they are bundled with other groups of services. Should our partners consider entering this market in some way to offer services to other local authorities, WRS would be well placed to support any commercial activity that partners choose to undertake. The demise of Shropshire's Teckal company from which it purchased various services including regulatory ones should also be a salutary lesson to local authorities that the private sector is not the right option for all functions. The development of a similar venture by some of the Gloucestershire districts and West Oxfordshire district (formerly the 2020 partnership, now Publica,) will be one to watch.

The sharing of services remains a developing area for Regulatory Services delivery. Three unitary authorities in South Wales have a fully shared regulatory service. A number of London Boroughs are using the model for Trading Standards. The unitary authorities in Berkshire continue to build on the collaboration between Wokingham and West Berkshire for a range of regulatory activities. Torbay unitary has joined Devon and Somerset County Councils in their shared Trading Standards service, with Plymouth unitary likely to add its service in 2018. Buckinghamshire and Surrey County Councils Trading Standards partnership remains successful.

Those authorities not considering these options, district councils in particular, continue to require experienced staffing resource that they struggle to retain themselves, mainly focused in specialist areas such as Air Quality, Contaminated Land, Environmental Permitting and for the wider support of planning consultation. These are all areas where WRS has significant local and even national expertise. WRS is already providing cover activity for these services to a number of councils so is well placed to continue to bid for a range of opportunities should they arise, although capacity is now an issue and further work is priced based on bringing in additional temporary capacity to deliver the work.

At the time of writing, WRS is carrying out work for other districts/organisations in the following functional areas:

- Dog warden services
- Air quality
- Industrial Pollution Control
- Contaminated Land
- Planning Consultation advice
- Transcription
- Intelligence

In the short to medium term, these will continue to be the key areas of local authority work that generate income and, in the medium to longer term, bidding for district council grouped regulatory contracts will remain part of our income generation approach. The unwillingness so far of other neighbouring authorities to engage in wider discussion with us on full service delivery or partnering opportunities would suggest that we'd be foolish to rely on this delivering sufficient income to cover the entire potential shortfall looking forward. Other options will need to be considered.

3.2 Building on the WRS Platform

There also remains the option for partners to expand the functions delivered through the WRS partnership. Whilst the WRS workforce is not unique in being a product of the shared service development they have combined this with significant income generation. This has only been achieved with a cultural shift in staff attitude and the adoption of skills to provide commercial efficiently within the local government family. This experience with our traditional skills around enforcement activity could be utilised with a number of areas of current in-house operation with synergies with WRS delivered functions. Partners will undoubtedly be seeking savings opportunities going forward and the current legal agreement does allow partners to add functions to the delivery platform, as long as funding arrangements are agreed.

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This could create wider income generation activities for the service and provide partners with efficiency savings in those areas that are added.

Currently there are a small number of obvious variations in partner requirements where WRS could potentially absorb work from partners with a small increase in funding at a level that probably reflects current spending e.g. Contaminated Land in Worcester City, Caravan Site licensing in Redditch and some others.

Other functions that could be considered might relate directly to Environmental Health delivery:

- Private Sector Housing condition,
- Enviro-crime and Fly-tipping

Some aspects of the district council's regulatory role might be deliverable via the service as knowledge and skills around enforcement are the key elements and the legal administration processes necessary to support this well embedded:

- Planning enforcement

Other services currently delivered through partnerships might sit under the WRS umbrella and allow streamlining in governance and management costs:

- Building Control
- Emergency Planning
- Land Drainage

Consideration could be given to establishing an over-arching shared services committee that deals with financial reporting, with sub-committees taking reports on performance and information/ activities.

Given that a number of services are retained in-house, there are likely to be economies of scale that can be established by bringing them together and savings in management and possibly even in the front line, depending on how budget reductions have fallen at each local authority. Adding posts underneath the Management Team within WRS would also begin to reduce unit costs for the service as the cost of managers is spread over a larger workforce.

3.3 Other Public Sector Income

The service will continue to look at the potential for grant money from other public bodies to deliver related work. On-going austerity measures are likely to limit the availability of funding from other public sector bodies and, currently there are limited areas for the service to access grants. This may widen in the future, and even now includes:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- The Police & Crime Commissioner
- Community Safety Partnerships
- Local Authority Public Health
- Central Government Departments (BEIS, Food Standards Agency, etc.)

The Worcestershire LEP continues to work closely with WRS and supports activities around Better Business for All and those around strategic business sectors like Agriculture and Horticulture. We will look to build on this relationship going forward.

Health and Well-being project work continues using external income sources, supplemented by a small residue of specific grant income. This work will continue year on year as long as it is sustainable through cost recovery. The

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Healthy Eating Award programme was developed in this way, but this will also enable some efficiencies to be developed within the food hygiene sector by encouraging 4-star and 5-star businesses to maintain their hygiene standards, reducing the need for routine interventions by food officers. Hence, the right kind of health and well-being interventions can also provide benefits to related statutory areas. These opportunities need however to be sustainable, so they will need to be reviewed regularly.

3.4 Commercial income generation opportunities

The report commissioned by WRS through the County Council Research and Intelligence team showed that, whilst businesses do spend a significant amount of money with private consultants, most of this was in the area of Health and Safety at Work which is already a well-served market. It is probably worth revisiting this piece of work given the time elapsed to see if there have been any changes to business's attitude to paying for advice from local regulators. Whilst the legal advice provided to WRS made it clear that there were risks associated with charging regimes where the advisor might, at some point, have to become the enforcer with the same business, there are ways of overcoming these issues.

Business advice for District Council functions remains available free of charge unless partners decide to change this policy. The service will offer training to businesses in areas like Food Hygiene and, again, we will seek to use this as an income generation platform to off-set costs. Licensing training may also be an area for consideration, particularly outside of Worcestershire, to avoid conflict of interest allegations. The launch of pre-application advice in October 2017 is a test bed for making this approach work within the Licensing unit. . Partner planning services already charge for this but without reference to the cost that this can impose on WRS in terms of our staff attending meetings and providing advice. We will seek to address this area in consultation with planning colleagues.

The service continues to expand its Primary Authority work as a means of recovering cost but this does have some limitations, especially the fact that it can only be a full cost recovery operation. Regulatory Delivery, the arm of the Government's business department (BEIS,) is very interested in some of the options we have currently on Primary Authority work around environmental permitting. So far much of the focus for Environmental Health partnerships has been on food hygiene. However, it needs to be recognised that, up and down the Country, Primary Authority is only delivering income sufficient to support relatively small numbers of posts within services and it will never be a substitute for local authority funds.

These factors have been recognised and, whilst the service will seek to develop paid for business advice as part of its income generation strategy, even with recent widening of what business types can have a Primary Authority it has been recognised that this income stream will be limited and that the service must avoid any allegations of conflicts of interest in its dealings with businesses.

We have recently been successful in gaining a contract which utilises skills and knowledge gained from undertaking local authority work but in this case is for another public body. This is an area of income generation not explored extensively to date but we are considering other options that may be available where we have skills traditionally considered local authority work which other organisations undertake.

3.5 Income Targets

Even with a cash standstill budget, the service has to accommodate the costs of inflation, salary increases and incremental spinal point increases for officers. The level of uncertainty around the 1% pay cap for public services has resulted in the s151 officers agreeing that services should budget for increases of up to 2% for the next 3 years. Without increased funding and with very limited scope for efficiencies, the only way to cover these shortfalls is with income. The

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table below outlines the annual turnover targets that need to be achieved in order to retain the current workforce capacity. We have indicated figures on the assumption of a 1% and a 2% pay increase so members can see the likely range of income that needs to be achieved. It goes beyond 2020/21 to show the continuing need to address this issue.

| Year | Forecast Turnover Income Required with 1% | Forecast Turnover Income Required with 2% |
|-------|---|---|
| 17/18 | £284,000 | |
| 18/19 | £327,000 | £353,000 |
| 19/20 | £369,000 | £422,000 |
| 20/21 | £408,000 | £490,000 |
| 21/22 | £444,000 | £554,000 |

Proposed areas to target are identified below and include some aspects that currently are not delivered to partners in Worcestershire, demonstrating the flexibility in the existing workforce:

- Air Quality. Industrial Pollution Control and Contaminated Land work for district councils
- Managing entire services for district councils
- Dog warden services for District Councils and dog boarding for other public organisations
- Enviro-crime and fly tipping work for district councils
- Providing nuisance work support for district councils
- Training including food hygiene training
- Processing of licensing applications for others
- Charging for some advice
- Grants from central government/WLEP, etc.,
- Housing standards work for housing associations and district councils
- Specialist Environmental Health IT support with UNiform database and data extraction
- Intelligence training for local authorities and public sector organisations
- PACE tape transcription

The list above demonstrates that the focus for income generation will be delivering services for other local authorities and grant income. Private sector income from business advice, primary authority and consultancy work will be limited.

The table below identifies a potential breakdown of sources of income by year:

| Turnover by area for Income Generation/ Year | Business Advice & Primary Authority | Health & Well-being and similar activities | Service Delivery/ Consultancy for others | Pre-application advice and similar | Other miscellaneous activities including Grants | Total turnover of income |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 2018/19 | £42000 | £45000 | £226,000 | £5,000 | £36,000 | £353,000 |
| 2019/20 | £45,000 | £45,000 | £244,000 | 15,000 | £73,000 | £422,000 |
| 2020/21 | £50,000 | £45,000 | £254,000 | £15,000 | £126,000 | £490,000 |

There is significant uncertainty about the achievability of income targets beyond 2018/19.

In 2016/17, the Business and Relationship Manager, was appointed to work with other managers to help build income streams. The post has been used to develop and follow up leads for new business but it is still the case that much of the selling of services needs to be done peer to peer with professionals talking to their colleagues. Whilst the post holder

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has been very successful already, many local authorities are not as aware of their cost elements or don't have experience of the economies of scale that WRS may bring to their service elements, and so we have experienced resistance. As senior local authority officers become more aware of their financial position and the commercial options, it is hoped that they will recognise the benefit of working with WRS.

For bigger pieces of work, a risk assessment will be undertaken, in terms of potential financial yields versus the levels of investment required upfront and the on-going costs of any contract. There may be other factors such as reputation that need to be accommodated in terms of risks of failure during the contract, or customer dissatisfaction arising from poor performance. Consideration will also need to be given for the potential for partnership and the impact this would have on both the baseline income/ performance of the service and the loss of income streams should a customer become a partner.

The service needs to look for full cost recovery being the norm for all of its contracts as there needs to be an element of financial return for the existing partners, which the service will utilise to maintain resilience within the service.

The largest risk associated with income generation currently is that all officer capacity available for income generation work is full. Whilst we can take on temporary capacity to discharge contracts, this does have a significant impact on the margin when compared with selling our own capacity. Given the uncertainty around much of the available contract work, taking on permanent staff would create a risk in relation to redundancy costs which may not be tenable in the circumstances.

If the income streams plateau at around £350,000 this leaves a growing gap that needs to be filled. In order to illustrate the growing impact at worst case the table below identifies the additional contribution necessary from partners based on annual 2% salary increased from 2018/19 to the end of the Business Plan period.

| Local Authority | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Bromsgrove | £436 | £10,454 | £20,328 | £29,621 |
| Redditch | £525 | £12,593 | £24,486 | £35,680 |
| Malvern Hills | £383 | £9,194 | £17,878 | £26,051 |
| Worcester City | £503 | £12,067 | £23,464 | £34,190 |
| Wychavon | £694 | £16,676 | £32,424 | £47,246 |
| Wyre Forest | £459 | £11,016 | £21,420 | £31,212 |

This is calculated based on the percentages used in the current calculation for the level of partner contributions.

3.6 Strategies for delivering Income Targets

In order to achieve at least some of the required income identified in section 3.5 above, some barriers will need to be overcome. The table below provides the main barriers identified and potential solutions. WRS Management Team will look to work with Partner Authorities by using the solutions as an Action Plan to deliver the income required to meet our budget.

| Business Plan Reference | Income proposal | Barrier Identified | Potential Solution |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| 3.1 | WRS to deliver Regulatory Services for new Partner Authority | Worcestershire branding not appropriate for delivering non-Worcestershire services | Review of possible brand change or modification by WRS Management Team & Officer members of the Board |

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| Business Plan Reference | Income proposal | Barrier Identified | Potential Solution |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| 3.1 cont | Delivery of new individual services for non-Partner Authorities | Unwillingness to join a shared service | Promotion of WRS brand and level of service by Partner Authority Chief Executives and Lead Councillors. WRS Management Team to develop materials to support this |
| | | Hard selling/cold calling self-promotion by WRS is not welcomed by Local Authorities | Continue programme of liaison with colleagues and subtle suggestion of services where demand identified. |
| | | Logistics of service delivery restricted by geography | WRS to focus marketing on non-geographical restricted work |
| | | Saturation of capacity for technical subjects | Business case to increase budget in short term to fund fixed term post in delivery of new technical contracts |
| 3.2 | Building on WRS Platform with enforcement, management & Joint Committee set up/ experience | Reluctance of Partner Authorities to add additional services to WRS remit | Initial discussions with Officer members of the Board on whether business cases would be welcomed for specific service areas and what these might be. |
| | | Issue of difficulty in demonstrating ability to deliver services not currently within the WRS remit (to non-Partner Authorities) | Recruitment to vacancies with staff that have skills/experience in other areas (such as Housing, enviro-crime etc) Serious investment in training of existing staff in other areas to establish a saleable resource. |
| 3.3 | External funding sources and grants | Short bidding/tendering windows to deliver business case | Production of standard information and documents in preparation |
| | | Cost recovery nature | Targeted bidding where it assists in retaining valuable technical expertise rather than just for significant income stream. |
| 3.4 | Provision of paid for advice | Conflicting role of commercial consultant and regulatory enforcer | Restricting commercial operations to exclude areas of potential conflict. Develop "Chinese walls" so that there is always a separation of roles in relation to specific businesses. |
| | Primary Authority expansion | Restriction to cost recovery only | Targeted bidding where it assists in retaining valuable technical expertise rather than for significant income stream |
| | | Saturation of capacity for certain subject areas | Business case to increase budget in short term to fund fixed term post in delivery of new technical contracts |
| | Expansion of work done for organisations other than Councils | Unknown market | Business and Relationships Manager to develop skills audit with HR that may support the identification of areas that could be delivered by WRS staff |
| | | Reluctance of private sector to use people employed as regulators for contracts | Revisit other relationships to see if partners would try again. Consider placing staff with PA businesses for an extended period to help them understand what it means and make this a selling point |

4. Organisation & Performance

4.1 Introduction

The service has operated to a suite of outcome style measures which address key areas of member concern. There are no national indicators anymore, making it difficult for members to benchmark the performance of their service against others. Even CIPFA have stopped collecting statistics on regulatory functions meaning there are no national comparators for these functions at all beyond what the professional bodies collect from willing volunteers.

Benchmarking is not something that Systems Thinking organisation undertake as it fall outside of their philosophy. It is also notoriously difficult to ensure that comparisons are meaningful and that cost calculations are on a par. Having said this, in 2017/18 colleagues at Nuneaton and Bedworth asked WRS to support some benchmarking work for them as both Wyre Forest and Worcester City are in their family group. Whilst is it difficult to show the comparison was completely valid, the costs for these two partners appeared ot be lower than those incurred by other authorities in this family

The outcome measures have been supplemented with activity data to provide members with reassurance that the service is addressing relevant issues in their areas. These are a regular feature at Joint Board meetings. This has had the desired effect and settled many members' concerns. The service has also developed time recording data to calculate some of its unit costs and to help identify spend in individual partner areas against the level of financial input, as envisaged in the new partnership agreement. Whether this leads to any material change in contributions will be down to whether there are any significant discrepancies that partners feel need to be addressed.

Environmental Health and Licensing work programmes are beginning to be influenced nationally by use of the intelligence operating model. We are at the forefront of exploring how the intelligence-led approach can lead to better use of resources. Our experience of using intelligence in this way is due to it being the main driver for Trading Standards and Animal Health activity for some time. This approach will be particularly relevant to try and develop preventive activities to help reduce demand on the service.

4.2 Core Level of Service.

Previously WRS outlined a model service that would deliver the statutory minimum level of service to all partners across the County. Without wishing to reproduce the detail of these explanations, it is safe to say that the service is effectively at this level now with one or two exceptions. The table below compares the current staffing cohort against the functions identified in the previous plan for Environmental Health.

| Functional Areas | Estimated minimum required for core work | Current staff compliment allocated below Senior Practitioner level |
|--|---|---|
| Food Hygiene and Food Safety/ Infectious Diseases Health and Safety at Work Statutory nuisances and other | 18.5 staff, mix of EHO and Technical Officer grades | 19.4 FTE in Community Environmental Health Team |
| Technical Pollution | 8.0 staff, mix of EHO, Technical Officer grades and a Technical Support Officer | 8 FTE delivering this in Technical Pollution team as well as work outside the service in 5 other council areas. |
| Dog Warden Service | 3.6 Dog Wardens | 3.6FTE delivering services across the 6 partner districts plus 3 other districts outside Worcestershire. |

This level was set by identifying the minimum common level of service required and taking into account any other significant efficiency that could be delivered. The additional resource in the Community Environmental Health unit services the various externally funded work around Health and Well-being and LEP business support work. Also, whilst the results suggest that the original estimates for both Dog Warden and Technical Pollution work may have been slightly high there are significant benefits from the economies of scale we have maintained as these are our key areas for deriving income.

4.4 Licensing

The nature of Licensing is such that it is not subject to the same financial pressures as other elements of regulation i.e. most elements can only be on a cost recovery basis. However, WRS has sought to increase the efficiency of the licensing process and it will continue to do this going forward.

The review of Licensing and Support Services re-organised the two teams to better integrate them, improve efficiency and reduce costs, leaving a very lean administrative support arm linked to the licensing team, where the focus is on work being done at the right cost. Licensing administration has, where possible, been separated from the more difficult activities such as report preparation, committee work and enforcement, to ensure maximum efficiency. The decision in the Westminster case, which allows a reasonable amount of fee money to be allocated to compliance activities, means that savings will be re-invested in a better compliance regime for partners. This is an area where partners could invest any additional income raised from fee increases to help ensure that honest traders are protected from those who cut corners or breach the rules.

The more specialist support officers, covering technical roles like IT and Legal Administration, have been re-allocated from a line management perspective, to allow the Licensing and Support Services Manager more time to drive these changes and maximise the opportunities to derive income from licensing activities.

4.5 Cost

The service is already at a point where the partner's total contributions do not cover the cost of maintaining the staffing cohort within the service. This is achieved by income generation and, as has already been indicated, the figure necessary to maintain the current staffing levels is £353,000 for 2018/19 and growing. Even accepting that two or three FTE could be shaved off the staffing compliment if the 6 partners were to only want the minimum required to deliver their own work at minimum levels, this saving is far exceeded by the income generated by these posts so it is safe to say that it is income generation that is enabling the partners to operate above the minimum levels required.

4.6 Performance

The table of PIs for 2017 onwards are outlined in Appendix D. These were developed in consultation with both Management Board and members of the Joint Committee in 2015. The level of service required by each partner is set out in the revised statement of partner requirements, which is linked to the new legal agreement

5. Workforce and workforce planning

5.1 Current Workforce

A structure chart appears as Appendix A. It retains the TS functions as these are managed under contract. At 5 FTE (one of which is fixed term,) the management team in WRS is as lean as it could be given the current demands and far below the 11 envisaged in the original structure used to integrate all of the previous operational units (Head of Service, 3 Business Managers and 7 Operational Unit Managers.) Before the end of May 2018, a decision needs to be taken on whether the post of Business and Relationships Manager is retained on the establishment. Certainly the view of the Management Team is the loss of this post would create serious additional management pressures where capacity is already stretched and also further limit the service's ability to follow-up on business opportunities.

On 1st April 2017, the workforce will be approximately 66 FTE posts. There remain concerns about the age profile of the workforce as it is highly biased towards those over 40 and a significant proportion over 50. This introduces risk in terms of the potential to lose staff of significant value and the service needs to consider how to address this. With current budget constraints this is not easy. The service engaged its first apprentice in Licensing in April 2015 and re-filled this role with a new officer in 2017. Government and the professional bodies are in the process of developing a Regulatory Apprenticeship scheme, and it is our intention to look at how we can use this to grow our own new staff. With all six partners paying into the Apprenticeship levy scheme, WRS would be a useful place for partners to consider a collective approach to drawing down monies from the levy. We will ask our Host's Human Resources team to look at whether this is possible in the New Year.

In a number of areas, the service has officers with a regional and national profile who are highly regarded technical experts in their respective fields. This enables WRS to deliver high quality, high value services and to do work for others. Again, losing these key individuals could have a serious impact on the service's ability to deliver, especially in relation to income generation.

5.2 Staff Retention

Managers have identified that staff are critical for the on-going high-performance of WRS and giving the best potential for income generation. Being able to continue to offer opportunities for professional development and the ability to engage with the wider professional environment will help to retain people. Indeed the service has been successful in developing and promoting from within its own ranks.

Managers will continue to support these individuals and ensure that they and the service benefit from applying their skills and knowledge to a bigger stage. This will include, where appropriate, interaction with the private sector and the ability to use their knowledge on a consultancy basis to benefit the service. There are some obvious dangers in this approach however some of the other opportunities offered by the public sector will mitigate this risk.

5.3 Staff Development, appraisal and succession planning

It remains crucial that the service retains a reasonable training budget, both to ensure the competency of existing staff but also to ensure that we can develop staff for the future. The service has been successful in assisting staff to take steps forward in their careers, both from field officer to first line supervisor and upward into the formal management team.

It is clear that WRS staff have developed their commercial acumen and they show a willingness to go further. The steps previously taken will be built upon in order that staff can recognise commercial opportunities when they arise. The service runs Personal and Professional Development Reviews on an annual basis, with a 6-monthly update, to ensure staff are competent. The new computer and performance management systems enable managers to review the performance of their staff in more detail, allowing individual performance to be scrutinised and assessed.

6. Evolution of the Business Model & Risk

Our Fee-Earner model has stood us in good stead for over two years now. Whilst it was resource intensive to create with the support of the Host's Finance Officer, it has allowed us to model changes in our own structures and how these would impact financially, as well as allowing us to accurately calculate the cost of jobs. We have even devised cost models for the potential of additional partners joining the service to help us calculate what kind of benefits might accrue against the implications for further sharing of delivery.

Our Business Model created at the end of 2015/16 was predicated on the belief that local authorities would continue to see outsourcing as the key way of delivering cost effective services going forward during this period of austerity. Following a number of unfortunate experiences with outsourcing, it appears to have lost its gloss in many areas of local government and now income generation has become the mantra in many local authorities, finally catching up with where WRS started some 3 years ago. Many local authorities are now looking to turn themselves into sellers of services rather than looking to become canny at buying. This creates a difficulty for WRS in that people are likely to be more reticent at engaging with us to look at wider options for service delivery. It has yet to significantly impact on what we do for people. Our repeat customers keep coming back. However, it has made delivering the increasing levels of income necessary more difficult, which is why we would encourage partners to work with us to look at the options for expanding what WRS does for them. This in turn assists in developing the portfolio of services that WRS are able to offer, making us more flexible and attractive as a solution to clients. It is hoped this would then lead to greater levels of income generation not currently available to WRS.

This does not mean that we abandon the pursuit of income. We will continue to offer services more widely, work with existing clients to maintain income streams and try to develop new ones. We will continue to seek larger contracts and new partners however with the current mind-set in local government being focused on selling not buying we would be foolish to have this as the only arm to our strategy.

The new legal agreement requires that the service continue to develop its time recording protocols and approach to the point where there is the possibility of moving to a charging model based on demand addressed rather than the historic investment levels. Whilst there may be logic in this approach there are also risks as it creates a situation where some partners will almost certainly benefit financially whilst others will lose out, with the potential to impact on relationships.

It is in the nature of any partnership that a certain quid pro quo is accepted, the fact that the big issues could hit any of the partners at any time. Sharing the risks of these may be more palatable than achieving a more accurate allocation of cost based on demand, which will only deliver small changes in payment but risk more serious damage to relationships.

The existing service risk register is attached as Appendix C. Beyond those identified, the main risks faced by the service going forward will be:

- Risk to sustainability of the service if partners cannot maintain core funding during the extended period of austerity
- Achieving income targets where non-partner local authorities may be reticent about outsourced delivery in these areas and prefer to develop new partnerships with their neighbours rather than continuing to work with us
- Retaining our highest quality staff and maintaining the range of competences necessary across the very broad range of functions required
- Changes to partner specifications for service fail to meet customer increased expectations of what is possible legally or economically creating a risk for the service's reputation with both customers and back-bench elected members
- Individual partners may become unhappy with the lower levels of flexibility that the service now has in terms of offering savings and consider whether the partnership model remains their preferred option

. Appendices:

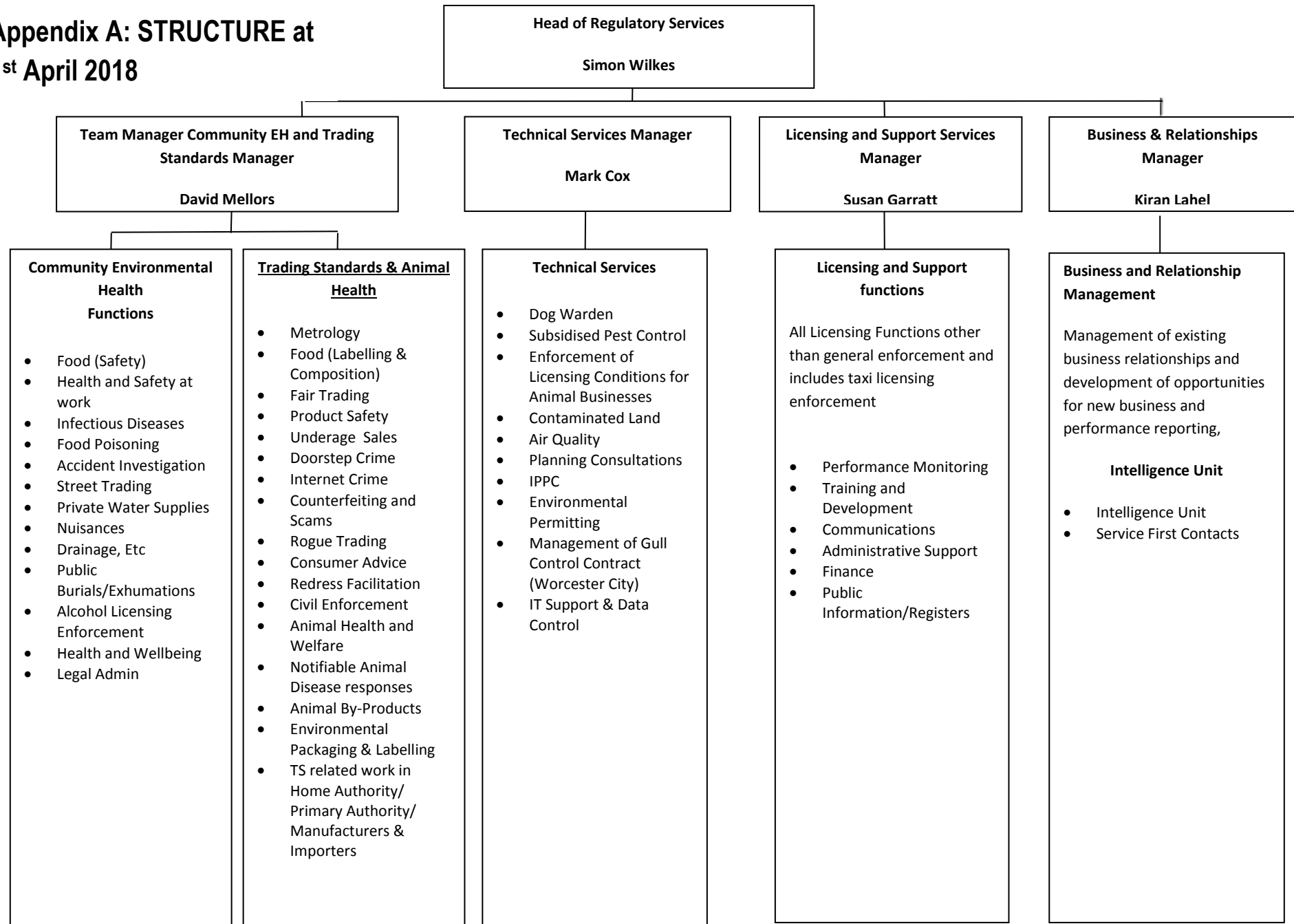
A: Current WRS structure

B: 3 year budgets

C: Risk Register

D: Performance Indicators

**Appendix A: STRUCTURE at
1st April 2018**



Appendix B: 3 Year budget

| Account description | Budget 2018 / 2019 £000's | Budget 2019 / 2020 £000's | Budget 2020 / 2021 £000's |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Employees | | | |
| Monthly salaries | 2,575 | 2,643 | 2,710 |
| Training for professional qualifications | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Medical fees (employees') | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Employers' liability insurance | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| Employees' professional subscriptions | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Sub-Total - Employees | 2,597 | 2,665 | 2,732 |
| Premises | | | |
| Rents | 52 | 52 | 52 |
| Room hire | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Trade Waste | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub-Total - Premises | 54 | 54 | 54 |
| Transport | | | |
| Vehicle repairs/maint'ce | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Diesel fuel | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Licences | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Contract hire of vehicles | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Vehicle insurances | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Van Lease | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Fares & Car Parking | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Car allowances | 82 | 82 | 82 |
| Sub-Total - Transport | 115 | 115 | 115 |

Supplies & Service

| | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| Materials | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Clothing, uniforms & laundry | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Training fees | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| General insurances | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Printing and stationery | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| Books and publications | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Postage/packaging | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| ICT | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| Telephones | 21 | 23 | 23 |
| Taxi Tests | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| CRB Checks (taxi) | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Support service recharges | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Support service recharges - ICT | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| Sub-Total - Supplies & Service | <u>373</u> | <u>375</u> | <u>375</u> |

Contractors

| | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's | 223 | 223 | 223 |
| Advertising (general) | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Grants and subscriptions | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Marketing/promotion/publicity | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Sub-Total - Contractors | <u>239</u> | <u>239</u> | <u>239</u> |

Income

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc | -327 | -327 | -327 |
| Sub-Total - Income | <u>-327</u> | <u>-327</u> | <u>-327</u> |

Savings

Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures

Sub-Total - Income

DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET

| | Budget £000's | 18 / 19 Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bromsgrove | 439 | 14.51% |
| Redditch | 529 | 17.49% |
| Wyre Forest | 463 | 15.31% |
| Wyke | 701 | 23.17% |
| Malvern | 386 | 12.76% |
| Worcs City | 507 | 16.76% |
| Total | 3,025 | |

Appendix C: 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 | Wyre Forest ICT has effective processes and business continuity plans in place. |
| Issues with the WRS database system | Impact on work planning. Self-help may not enable savings required | On-going | Low | High | Green | Initial implementation is completed. Further development of the system will be treated as business as usual, with priority going to public access and self-help/ self-service to continue the channel shift process. Service website remains key access point. Tested disaster recovery of our Uniform back up and fail over to the business continuity server successfully. |
| Effective and efficient Business Continuity arrangements in place | Disruption to service if e.g. Major Power failures or other reasons that access to Wyre Forest House is not possible. | On-going | Very Low | Medium | Green | Staff is equipped for mobile/home working. Touchdown stations available in partner council locations. Working from WFDC depot successfully tested over Christmas periods. |
| Maintain our capacity to achieve service delivery | Disruption to service e.g. Major staff sickness (e.g. flu pandemic) or Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified staff. | On-going | Low | Medium | Amber | In such event, 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. However, having taken on contracts with additional authorities the demand has increased and neighbouring authorities have lost the ability to be able to assist with technical specialisms. We are active within regional and sub-regional groups to share resources if required. Effective training and development processes are in place to ensure recruitment |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------|------------|--------|-------|---|
| | | | | | | and retention of staff. There is increased training budget pressure, reduced technical knowledge in neighbouring authorities and increased importance in maintaining heightened skills for contractual obligations and commercial edge. 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 contractors cease operations. | Disruption to service. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks | On-going | Low | High | Green | New framework contract has 6 pest control suppliers so the loss of one allows work to be moved to the others. |
| Effective and efficient contract arrangement for dog control | Disruption to service if no kennels available. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks | On-going | Low | High | Amber | Budget available to buy in use of other private sector providers in short term. Contracts tendered. The Dog Warden contracts are robust but we have one less kennel contractor but an additional three District Councils that we provide the service for. |
| Hosting support does not deliver necessary financial and HR support to ensure efficient management | Efficiency of management reduced; staffing issues remain unaddressed and performance suffers | On-going | Low | High | Amber | Some continuing issues around access to the financial system from Wyre Forest house, meaning managers are reliant on host finance officers for financial reporting. ICT team from WFDC and BDC continue to work to resolve the issue |
| One or more partners continue to be under great financial pressure and may consider alternatives to the partnership to deliver their service | Creates reputational issues for remaining partners and increases the need to manage overheads. Difficulties in delivering highly varied levels of service | On-going | Low-Medium | High | Amber | New legal agreement limits variations in contribution before partners have to move to contractual relationship. Leanness of organisation minimises overheads and focuses resource at the front line. Growth strategy should generate income to support partners in the future. Some reputational damage and perceived loss of commercial skills from the County Council withdrawing from the partnership. |
| Robust arrangements in place in relation to obtaining legal advice and monitoring legislative | Loss of cases is costly and damages reputation. | On-going | Low | Medium | Green | Continued close working with BDC legal team and other partners who don't use BDC for advocacy. Technical and legal training days for staff. Difficulty in keeping informed of Case Law developments. Membership and attendance of |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|-----|------|--------------|--|
| changes. | | | | | | Officer Technical Groups outside the County does assist. |
| Service provision complies with Government requirements | <p>Adverse comments following audits e.g. FSA</p> <p>Intervention by Government bodies i.e. FSA, whilst highly unlikely, is damaging to reputation.</p> | On-going | Low | High | Amber | <p>Limited detail of what statutory minima are.</p> <p>LGA clearly aware of impact of budget reductions on regulation and has made it clear Government cannot expect what it had previously. Fewer interventions/ audits by government. Service has developed systems that follow the principles of the requirements of bodies like FSA so can show some level of compliance. WRS principle of moving away from rigid inspection programme of Food Standards Code (as approved by WRS Joint Board) to intelligence led interventions is compliant with Food Safety Act and FSA audit in May 2017 approved approach as in line with FSA policy direction of travel. Environmental reporting of Local Air Quality Management, Pollution Prevention and Control and Private Water Supply Inspections to Defra and DWI have received positive responses with no issues of concern raised by them.</p> <p>BREXIT creates a great unknown for all regulatory services. The transitional arrangements are clear that the bill facilitating exit will incorporate all existing legislative requirements into UK law (mainly EU regulation that needs to be done as Directives are incorporated through UK statute already,) but there is no guarantee that this will remain the case for a significant period of time afterwards and the development of trading relations with other non-EU countries may see the appearance of different or novel products and practices appearing in our markets. Whilst government is currently committed to maintaining the current level of public protection, there is a risk that if BREXIT is economically damaging that this position may change requiring another adjustment of the service's approach. The service has demonstrated its flexibility in the past so should be able to respond to new demands of this kind.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|-----|------|--------------|--|
| Failure to deliver external contract work at the level expected by the business or local authority with whom we have the contract | Damage to reputation, loss of future income streams, financial impact of paying damages | On-going | Low | High | Green | Ensure contract negotiations are clear on performance criteria and clearly recorded in the final documentation. Monthly reviews against performance criteria. Select staff to ensure competence of those undertaking work outside Worcestershire. Maintain strong links with the customer's monitoring staff. Intervene early with corrective action |
|---|---|----------|-----|------|--------------|--|

Appendix D: Table of Performance Indicators

| | Measure | Reporting Frequency | Background |
|---|---|---------------------|--|
| 1 | % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction | Quarterly | Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of members of the public who use the service. |
| 2 | % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction | Quarterly | Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of businesses inspected or otherwise contacted by the service. |
| 3 | % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection | Annually | Based on the proportion of businesses meeting the key purpose from a regulatory perspective i.e. food businesses produce safe food. |
| 4 | % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year | Annually | Based on proportion of businesses scoring 1-2 star on a national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme assessment (2 stars and below is deemed to be at risk of not producing safe food.) |
| 5 | % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days. | 6-monthly | Based on the proportion of drivers licence renewals issued within 5 working days of receipt of application. |
| 6 | % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service | 6-monthly | Percentage of vehicles stopped during enforcement exercises that are required to be removed from service for remedial work before being allowed to carry on operating. |
| 7 | % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future | Quarterly | Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of members of the public and businesses who have used the service. |

| | | | |
|---------|---|-----------|---|
| 8 | Review of register of complaints and compliments | Quarterly | All are recorded Increasing compliments/ Reduced complaints |
| 9 | Staff sickness absence at public sector average or better | Quarterly | Sickness recorded using host processes. Public sector average 8.75 or better |
| 10 | % of staff who enjoy working for WRS | Annually | Taken from the staff survey. |
| 11 | % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives | 6-monthly | Indicator, linked to Crime & Disorder agenda, looking at performance of premises license holders and control on their activity. |
| 12 | Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population | 6-monthly | Place indicator, potential link to quality of life and health and well-being. |
| Page 43 | Total income | 6-monthly | New for 2016/17 Expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17) |
| | 14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population | Annually | New for 2016/17 Will be total spend divided by the total population, based on the most recent mid-year estimate available at the time of publication. NB: Calculation will offset income against revenue budget to account for external income sources |

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WRS Board

15th February 2018

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2018/19

Recommendations

- (i) That members of the Board approve the WRS service plan for 2018/19
- (ii) That members of the Board specifically note the level of work to be undertaken by the service this year in relation to their roles as local food authorities.

Report

The Board signs off on the service plan for WRS each year. The process helps to make members aware of what the service is proposing for the relevant financial year and provides a sign off that some central government bodies like to see in relation to service delivery plans e.g. the Food Standards Agency.

The plan follows very much the pattern of previous years and has an Executive Summary to pick up the main points. The service will continue to shape its work around the strategic priorities for local authority regulatory services provided more than 5 years ago now, by the BEIS Regulatory Delivery team, as these provide a framework that allows WRS to have a golden thread back to the priorities of the partners and also to link to the requirements of the various national bodies that oversee our work.

A range of high level activities are identified within the plan so that members will be aware of the general focus of activity. Below this will sit a number of team plans that will be used to drive the actual business activities.

The plan has been devised in the face of on-going financial uncertainty in local government generally. Working with businesses and other partners is a key theme for both generating income to mitigate financial risk but also to ensure that outcomes are delivered that match the priorities of partners and stakeholders.

Agenda Item 6

Delivery for other local authorities is the key income generation strategy, supported by work for the private sector and specific grant monies. Looking forward, it is likely that other authorities or groups of authorities may come into the market creating a need for WRS to remain competitive and to retain its particular expertise to sell

The structure provided at Appendix A of the plan reflects the current management arrangements.

The performance indicators suite generated for 2017/18 are retained to give continued comparability of performance across the years.

The Risk Register has been updated to reflect the fact that we have now fully developed our own IT database and the fact that both our accommodation and ICT hosting have moved to Wyre Forest DC.

More detail than in previous years is provided in relation to the Food Hygiene work of the service. This is to meet one of the recommendations of the auditors from the Food Standards Agency who visited the service in May 2017. They were keen that members have a better understanding of the demand in this service area when they authorised the plan for this and future years.

Financial Implications

The budget provided in the plan document reflects the one agreed by the Board at its November meeting.

Sustainability

NA

Contact Points

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Background Papers

Service Plan 2016/17 including Risk Register



Service Plan 2018/19

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Vision

"That Worcestershire is a healthy, safe and fair place to live, where businesses can thrive"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The plan broadly follows previous years and outlines:

- How the service will operate over the following 12 months to deliver on both national and local priorities, some of which are highlighted in the plan,
- What activities the service will carry out to achieve or address those priorities and how success will be measured.

The Service will enter 2017/18 with a total agreed budget from the district partners of £3025M. The financial contributions from partners remain static as no savings were requested this year from any of the six. The cash standstill situation does not however account for increasing costs in salaries and inflation, which will have to be met through increased income.

The 3-year business plan, which has a number of strands for continuing the Service's development, has been revised. The service will continue to review and develop opportunities for commercial activities to bring in additional income. It has become clear over the past 12 months that the opportunities for income generation are limited and whilst previously there was and still remains some general reluctance from business to pay for advice from the local regulator we have had some success from Primary Authority partnerships. The service has been more successful in obtaining income by doing work for other local authorities, specifically in relation to Environmental Health and Dog Warden provisions. The service will continue to pursue this type of work going forward with a view to obtaining longer commitments from those buying our services to give some stability and certainty to the financial situation. We will also be looking at ways of enabling senior officers and members to promote the service with their colleagues outside Worcestershire with a view to them considering further service delivery options.

In making decisions regarding service delivery, the service will continue to risk assess what it does taking into account the following criteria:

- a) Is there a positive/ negative impact on the local economy?
- b) Are vulnerable people impacted?
- c) Are health and wellbeing issues involved?

Whilst risk will remain a key criterion against which we deploy resources, the intelligence picture for particular issues is also becoming more relevant as we become more intelligence-led. By gathering data and understanding issues, rather than simply rushing out to deal with problems, we will focus resources on where they deliver the best outcomes and we will try to get better at finding longer term solutions.

Simon Wilkes
Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Jayne Pickering
Director of Finance, Bromsgrove DC

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the eighth formal annual service plan to be produced by Worcestershire Regulatory Services and follows a similar format to the previous plans with an Executive Summary and much of the detail in appendices that follow on from the commentary. The financial information covers the three year accounting period 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, however the operational detail reflects the planned activities that the service will undertake in 2018/19 only in recognition of the on-going uncertainty of local government finances in general and those of the service in particular.

2017/18 was again very busy and successful for WRS, dominated by the increase in consultancy derived income from other local authorities, public authorities or primary authority relationships. In these financially challenging times, officers have continued to deliver excellent work prioritising the inspection and enforcement of the non-compliant, which has led to a large number of legal files being prepared for prosecution this year. Details of this will be reported in the Annual Report to be produced at the end of May 2018 and reported to Board in June.

The coming year is likely to be dominated by:

- Seeking new and maintaining existing income streams to help support local delivery in the face of further potential strains on partner's ability to fund the service.
- Working hard to continue to deliver excellent service without any increase in partner contributions,
- Developing the self service model further for wider service elements such as Planning consultation screening, publication of information routinely asked as FOIs and other areas where information is in high demand.
- The further development of the WRS website to better enable customer interactions including making service requests and applying for licenses.
- Establishing practical procedures to maintain resilience and the benefits from service elements such as Legal Support and the Intel Unit that provide operational support to both WRS and Trading Standards functions,

The focus on income generation will be to target areas of greatest benefit in terms of economies of scale, the required resource intensity and income reward. The appointment of the Business and Relationship Manager in 2016 has resulted in many more opportunities being identified although these have not all come to fruition. It is important that only those opportunities meriting our focus are pursued as the scoping and drafting of tender documents are time consuming and onerous.

For existing partners, managers will continue to identify any changes that can be made to service delivery to either improve marginal efficiency or improve service. This is particularly relevant for areas of high demand such as planning referrals and areas of significant officer resource, such as long-standing complaints or enforcement action. This will require close working relationships to support and assist partner colleagues to ensure that we are all working as effectively as possible together.

Improvements to our website continue. The focus has been the development of public self-service which will continue as we look at ways to allow member of the public to make requests through the website which automatically load into our back office systems. We also continue to develop and maintaining our partners' website pages in relation to licensing, with a complete overhaul of contents now nearing completion. This huge project will be completed by the end of February 2018 and a maintenance plan put in place to continue on this good work going forward .

2. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

At the national level the external environment in which Local Government operates continues to face unprecedented financial challenges. This combined with the difficulties with trust created by the Grenfell Tower tragedy mean it is a very difficult time for local government, especially as central government is fully occupied with the BREXIT process.

WRS shares these financial challenges with partners, being part of each of the local authorities involved and, whilst previously the service was able to provide significant savings to partners; as was previously established during the Strategic Partnering exercise, there are no longer significant profit margins available or easy wins for the delivery of cost saving efficiencies left. The service will continue to look for marginal efficiencies where possible, and look to generate income to assist with the offsetting of budget shortfalls, particularly where economies of scale produce a benefit far greater than the cost of delivery.

There is also a perceptible shift in the public's willingness or otherwise to accept the views of our officers. Expectations of what the service can achieve are outgrowing the legal framework that determines what the service can or cannot do. This is creating increased pressures in terms of both officers having to explain to people why they cannot act in the manner that is requested and an increased demand on manager's time to deal with these issues at a corporate level.

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We have reported previously that businesses are unwilling to pay local regulators for the advice that they have received previously without charge. This has limited our ability to generate income from such sources. The only exception to this is under Primary Authority, where the advice given is deemed assured and there are additional potential protections for businesses if this advice is followed. We will continue to work with bodies like the Worcestershire LEP to engage with businesses where possible and the Better Business for All philosophy developed by BEIS's Regulatory Delivery arm will continue to inform our approach to the regulation of legitimate traders.

Another risk to our potential income streams is that financial pressures may finally start to drive district councils outside of Worcestershire to work more closely together as partners where, in the past, they have chosen to use our services instead. The creation of the TECKEL company Publica by two Gloucestershire & an Oxfordshire district is one such example. This 'reshuffling' in an area where we have been successful in obtaining business means we will have to work hard to demonstrate the potential for such authorities working with WRS rather than engaging with their new local organisation.

The budget for 2018/19 is agreed at £3025M. To achieve this WRS has set itself an income target to maintain the level of staffing that is required. WRS will continue to seek marginal efficiency savings for the benefit of the Partner Authorities and further income streams to maintain the workforce capacity.

Shifting demand to more cost efficient digital channels remains a major focus of efficiency proposals, with self-help in relation to service requests and licensing applications being a major area for action. Increasing the volume of helpful information on the service's website and giving public access to some of the data from our database (e.g. public registers being available on-line, effectively published directly from the database,) does

help, in particular reducing Environmental Information and Freedom of Information requests. Giving customers the ability to monitor the progress of their service requests on-line will also deliver some improvements in efficiency at the margins, although this is some way off yet.

For Planning Departments, providing the spatial constraints to identify potential air quality and contaminated land concerns and criteria to identify whether a noise or nuisance issue should be considered will assist in engaging WRS in the planning process early, minimising delays and improving the submission of supporting documentation. Additionally advice is provided such that planners know when it is appropriate to add informatives or standard conditions rather than consult WRS for the simpler sites/issues, again making the process more efficient. WRS will continue to work with the Planning Departments to become confident with this approach so that the efficiencies can be fully realised.

The benefits of the re-tendered Pest Control contracts for domestic treatment of pests for those partners who continue to offer these services will continue to be used as required in estimating the impact of potential alterations to the current level of service.

Staff have been effectively using the new IT system for some time now and this has significantly improved our ability to provide performance and activity data to members. Officers are already working flexibly, which helps to control the mileage bill and allows staff to have a better work/ life balance. Significant improvements have been made in Officer time allocated to specific work streams or client authorities which is enabling a detailed emerging picture of resource allocation. The internal audit during 2016 identified a number of challenges which Managers and Staff have addressed and were audited again in a review, December 2016. The requirements of these audits have now been signed off by the auditors. One remaining area to be addressed is licensing reconciliation and it is hoped that, if partners agree to move to on-line application processes currently in discussion, this issue could be much improved. The role out of our host authorities' digital HR system for leave and mileage requests assisted staff in reducing unnecessary journeys and enabling greater flexibility in work patterns.

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3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2011, the Government tasked what was then the Local Better Regulation Office (now Regulation Delivery, part of BEIS,) with developing Priority Regulatory Outcomes for England for local authorities to consider when undertaking their service planning processes. These are outlined below:

1. support economic growth, especially in small businesses, by ensuring a fair, responsible and competitive trading environment
2. protect the environment for future generations including tackling the threats and impacts of climate change
3. improve quality of life and wellbeing by ensuring clean and safe neighbourhoods
4. help people to live healthier lives by preventing ill health and harm and promoting public health
5. ensure a safe, healthy and sustainable food chain for the benefit of consumers and the rural economy

Whilst these are now years old and no longer used by RD, they still provide a useful framework with which WRS can link back into key partner priorities without having to list things six times. All of our partners have priorities around supporting economic growth, protecting the environment, residents and neighbourhoods and improving health and well-being in communities. As long as our work meets one or more of these aims we know we are delivering what partners want.

Work by our Intelligence Officer on creating our Strategic Assessment, the key document that helps us determine priorities has demonstrated that these 5 priorities also remain at the heart of what the data is saying we should focus on. The Strategic Assessment looks at a broad swathe of data, local, regional and national, and this is used to help identify the key issues to be tackled in a particular year. This is reflected in the detail of operational activities later in the plan.

The service will be faced with a challenging financial situation for the foreseeable future. In the past this was addressed through transforming how things are done. Moving forward, with the financial environment continuing to be difficult, for the service to continue to deliver against national and local priorities there is no question that further changes will be an inevitable consequence. We will need to prioritise what is delivered, to whom and how. To assist in this decision making, the service will continue to use 3 key criteria to consider when making decision on service provision:

- a) Are vulnerable people impacted
- b) Are there Health and Well Being issues involved
- c) Is there a positive/negative impact on economic activity

We will also continue to develop our use of intelligence to support this. There remains a risk that demand which can no longer be met by WRS is simply re-directed to partners in other ways e.g. via complaints. At this stage, with the reductions we have seen so far, the risk of district partners facing challenges relating to whether or not they are meeting their statutory obligations are low and the position remains defendable.

4. PURPOSES

Following its Systems Thinking work, WRS adopted 3 purposes to underpin service delivery and provide a common thread to run through all of its functions.

- 1. Help me resolve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else,
- 2. I want to assume everything is ok
- 3. Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same.

These purposes are expressed in terms a customer (member of the public or a business,) might use, provide a focus for staff and were agreed by the previous Joint Committee. These purposes, combined with the priority outcomes encapsulate the Service's contribution to the wider community agenda, reflecting as they do the broad themes relevant to all partners.

5. FINANCE

A summary of the budget position for 2018/19 is shown at Appendix B, along with the proposed budgets for the following two years. A more detailed breakdown will be available to the Joint Board in its regular financial reports. Income levels are difficult to estimate but we have set ourselves income targets going forward in order to maintain a greater resilience than would otherwise be possible.

6. AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

The Internal Audit Service will be provided under the current arrangement by Worcester City Council to the Host Authority. The participating authorities S151 Officers consider the Audit Plan of the Host to ensure adequate arrangements are in place.

Changes to the level of funding mean that WRS accounts no longer need to be audited separately, so they will be done within the accounts of the host Authority and the Joint Board will be provided with relevant report information to give them the necessary reassurances. The deadline for this remains the end of June.

Where broad and in-depth scrutiny of the service is requested, member Authorities will liaise about requests from their Overview and Scrutiny Committees and will use reasonable endeavours to agree joint scrutiny arrangements with a view to avoiding duplication of effort. However, WRS has developed good working relationships with several of the district partners' Overview and Scrutiny Committees and this has led to the positive re-enforcement of performance in those areas. This approach will be continued where it offers benefit to all partners by helping to give confidence to the wider memberships. Obviously the City Council's decision to move back to the committee based governance model will potentially mean further work for officers engaging with the re-constituted Environmental Health and Licensing Committee and this is already evident from the work being undertaken on the City's Vision for its Taxis and the Air Quality Task and Finish group established to look at options for improving air quality in the City.

7. ACTIVITIES & OUTCOME MEASURES

The IT system allows the service to report accurately on activities. The service has continued to work with members to demonstrate the service's performance and the service's current core performance indicators are listed as Appendix C. Over time we have seen improvement or maintenance of most of these indicators, which we hope will continue in 2017/18.

The activities outlined below are examples of what is planned by the service. We believe that activity data combined with the core performance indicators will give Members the confidence that the Service is performing well, given the current financial constraints, and contributing to the wider local agenda. The approach is very much in line with Government thinking in terms of reducing burdens on and supporting local businesses whilst tackling rogues who would ignore their responsibilities and criminals who use business as a model for generating criminal assets. It also addresses the significant demand that comes into the service as complaints/ service requests, covering a wide range of issues and concerns from residents, visitors, businesses and the other departments of partner authorities within Worcestershire.

| | OUTCOME | WHAT WE WILL DO | PURPOSE | NATIONAL PRIORITY | MEASURES |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Businesses are supported to become economically successful and compliant with the law (Pollution, H&S, Food Safety, Licensing) | Provide businesses with advice and assistance using a range of channels. Conduct risk based/ intelligence-led interventions with businesses; targeting resources towards potentially non-compliant businesses. | I want to assume everything is ok. Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same | 1, 2, 3 and 5 | % food businesses broadly compliant at first visit/ inspection % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction % of food businesses scoring 0,1,2* at 1 st April each year |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|-------------------|--|
| 2 | Reduction in nuisance and other pollution related issues | Respond to complaints and take appropriate action Provide relevant advice and information, available through a range of channels. | Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same | 2, 3 and 4 | % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population |
| 3 | Protecting the environment and the public through monitoring air quality and the use of contaminated land for development. Controlling environmental emissions leading to reduced environmental damage and better health | Conduct risk based/ intelligence-led interventions with businesses, especially permitted premises Air quality monitoring & responding to contaminated land issues Supporting the planning system | I want to assume everything is ok | 2 and 4 | % permitted businesses broadly compliant at first visit/ inspection Monitoring of the County-wide Air Quality strategy is delivered % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction |
| 4 | Licensed premises cause no significant alcohol-fuelled crime/ disorder and ASB. | Respond to complaints regarding alcohol and similar licensing related issues e.g. underage sales, breach of conditions, poor conduct of licence holders, etc. Provide businesses with advice and assistance | I want to assume everything is ok Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same | 1 and 3 | % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives |
| 5 | Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licence applications are processed in a timely manner and that all licences granted meet the fit and proper test. Vehicles in use by the Taxi trades are fit whilst in service | Safeguard and ensure that all licence applications are processed in a timely manner and those granted meet the fit and proper test. Undertake a number of enforcement interventions to test compliance | I want to assume everything is ok Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same | 1 and 3 | % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days. Vehicles requiring work or taken off the road following intervention (Number and % of the total fleet.) |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| 6 | Consumers able to make informed choices on where to eat or purchase food through published food hygiene ratings. | <p>Implement and promote a county wide food hygiene rating scheme</p> <p>Publish hygiene ratings and accrediting those which improve health and wellbeing of their workforce.</p> <p>Offer incentive to maintain star ratings through the Healthy Eating Award</p> | <p>I want to assume everything is ok</p> <p>Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same</p> | 4 and 5 | <p>% businesses meeting purpose at first assessment/ inspection</p> <p>Number of 4* and 5* business signing up for the Healthy Eating Award</p> |
| 7 | High levels of customer satisfaction | <p>Respond to complaints and take appropriate action</p> <p>Building our ability to resolve issues or re-direct callers on their first contact with us</p> <p>Maintain a register of compliments and complaints with actions taken</p> | <p>I want to assume everything is ok</p> <p>Help me to solve my problem and stop it from happening to anyone else</p> <p>Help me trade well and ensure my competitors do the same</p> | 1, 2, 3 and 5 | <p>% of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction</p> <p>% of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction</p> |
| 8 | Having engaged and satisfied staff who have the right skills, tools and support | <p>Ensure necessary training is identified and delivered</p> <p>Undertake annual staff survey.</p> <p>Undertake annual staff performance reviews with regular feedback sessions from supervisors and managers</p> | All officers must be able to undertake a range of activities that address our strategic priorities focusing on ensuring that the three purposes are met by/ for customers | 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 | <p>Staff sickness and absence at public sector national average or better</p> <p>% of staff who enjoy working for WRS</p> |
| 9 | Maintained preparedness for response to emergencies, including disease outbreaks. | <p>Maintain links with county-wide TCG.</p> <p>Take part in partner exercises to test plans, as appropriate</p> <p>Respond to disease notifications and outbreaks</p> | I want to assume everything is ok | 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 | <p>Disease response plans are maintained, reviewed and updated on a regular basis</p> <p>Business Continuity plans are maintained, reviewed and updated on a regular basis</p> |

8. FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY

One of the outcomes from the audit of the service in relation to the work done on behalf of Wyre Forest was the suggestion from Food Standards Agency colleagues that the service needed to be clearer with members on what work the service faced each year. Whilst the Agency had no significant concerns regarding what the service was doing, they felt that members should be more aware of what the service intended to deliver each year so that, when approving the business plan, members were also giving their approval to the level of commitment in relation to food law enforcement.

Because this plan is being written ahead of the end of the financial year, the service cannot be exact about the numbers of visits intended as this may vary slightly if premises inspected in Q4 of 2017/18 find themselves with a lower rating and therefore need another inspection next year. On that basis, the currently anticipated level of food work is:

Estimated number of Food Hygiene visits scheduled for 2018/19 (based on the Food Hygiene rating system.): **1261**

Estimated number of premises scheduled for alternative approaches to inspection during 2018/19: **200**

Estimated number of new registrations/ unrated premises that will require inspection during 2018/19: **700**

Estimated number of overdue premises assessed as requiring a visit during 2018/19: **443**

The overdue number will be less than this by 1st April as work is on-going on these premises. These figures should give members a reasonable picture of the volume of pro-active food hygiene related activity that should take place during 2018/19.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Performance against outcomes will be reported to the WRS Board, quarterly, six-monthly or annually, depending on the individual measure. The IT platform enables the collection and analysis of data which is both accurate and robust. The service's ability to provide activity data has continued to improve as the benefits of the IT platform have been implemented. Use of time recording to give a better understanding of how much it costs to undertake particular activities is continuing to be refined. Members will be engaged so that we can update the type and extent of performance and activity type information required by them, so that they can be reassured that the service is delivering what is required.

10. STRUCTURE

The Management Team structure implemented in October 2015 is retained with one minor change which is included in the chart outlined at Appendix A. The WRS team's functions are as follows:

- 1) The Community Environmental Health team provides Food Hygiene, Health and Safety at Work, Public Health and Nuisance functions using three teams. Two teams operate on an East: West Geographical basis, whilst the other delivers specialist Food and Health and Safety functionality county-wide. The legal support role also sits in this team as the majority of casework emanates from here.

- 2) The Technical Services team provides all environmental health support around planning matters, delivers IPPC inspection, Air Quality and Contaminated Land Regime work, manages the pest control contracts and directly delivers the Dog Wardens service. The internal IT support and system management roles also sit within this team due to the complex technical nature of the work.
- 3) The Licensing and Support Services unit delivers all WRS licensing administration and licensing enforcement, along with the wider in-house clerical/ administrative support that is required.
- 4) Business and Relationships Management: Supports the Head of Service and Team Managers in their efforts to bring in new business and maintain existing contracts, provides Line Management to our Intelligence Officer and the in-house first-contact team of Duty Officers.

The arrangement has successfully provided the necessary management cover and support, as well as promoting income generation in many areas of the service.

The Trading Standards element has been retained in the structure chart as, since October 2016, the Community EH Manager and the Head of Regulatory Services have been providing management support to the Trading Standards team. This will continue through 2018/19. The support of management across the Trading Standard functions by WRS provides additional benefits with cross team working and knowledge, especially in areas of income generation and business support, to the benefit of WRS partners and the County Council.

11. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Changes to the legal framework occur reasonably frequently so to maintain the competence of its staff and ensure that the partner's statutory duties are correctly discharged, the service must maintain a training budget for its staff. Over the period this has been massively reduced reflecting the financial realities that the service faces and the service uses various approaches to ensure the money is spent wisely. Developing staff to ensure there are opportunities to plan succession is also essential.

In recent years, there has been a focus on enabling staff to work across the Environmental Health professional areas. Few officers only remain competent for one of the professional disciplines. Officers from the Community Environmental Health team and the Technical Services team will continue to develop their skills, to provide resilience and enable support where contracts bring in additional demand.

Within Licensing, the focus has been on getting work done at the most effective cost, so administration is done at administrative rates and the more complex issues handled by qualified and competent professionals, with both being done across a number of districts so that no officer only has experience of a single local licensing regime. In pursuit of this a competency framework for Technical Officers was developed for use during 2017 and it will continue to be used with the aim of identifying training needs and developing the competency of officers more widely. Broader competencies will allow a wider range of people to deliver technical work and enable the service to tender for such contracts outside of the existing Partnership arrangements.

The size of the officer cohort in the service makes buying in trainers to deliver technical training to our teams economically viable for the service. A lot of aspects of professional practice and process are common across the enforcement professions so we can continue to offer this as an option to colleagues within Trading Standards and some of our neighbours where we have spaces available on the courses that we arrange. Last

year a series of courses were developed by the former Director of CIEH, Wales who is a barrister. This focused on legal process and case law and was excellent for both field staff and managers. It is hoped that another case law update will be provided in 2018/19.

The regional heads of Trading Standards Group (CEnTSA,) run a significant number of training courses through its regional co-ordination unit which we will use where we can and the regional Heads of Environmental Health Group (CEnEHMB,) is set to start working with the CEnTSA Co-ordination unit to offer more bespoke professional courses. WRS has been approached by CEnTSA, due to our proactive and innovative intelligence led approach to Environmental Health work, to deliver regional training on their behalf. Engagement with colleagues across the region remains essential to ensure co-ordinated responses to government and a common approach to businesses, thus ensuring the level playing field for competition.

12. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business continuity plans for the service have been developed and shared with the relevant Emergency Planning teams in the partner authorities. If the impact of the on-going financial constraints is that partners require reductions that are not currently envisaged, this will threaten our ability to maintain the full range of interventions across these functions whilst responding to large scale events. Priorities have therefore been established as part of the Business Continuity Planning process so the service is clear what will stop and what will continue in event of an emergency and how the service would respond to incidents such as the potential destruction of our office base or at least it temporarily being out of action. Additional consideration is required where reductions are suggested to ensure the impact on income generation is understood and this item is included in the current Risk Register, discussed below.

Despite Trading Standards returning to County Council control, the Community Environmental Health team and the Trading Standards and Animal Health unit will continue to work closely together to ensure that, in event of an emergency or capacity shortage, officers can support each other when necessary. Having the teams managed by the same Manager on a day to day basis, together under one roof and in one office space will continue to allow both teams to utilise pairs of hands, extra eyes and ears and boots on the ground, to tackle any incident or alteration to work demands that may require additional resource or a different workforce allocation. In event of a significant issue like an animal disease outbreak, the County Council has previously agreed that any support required from WRS staff will be paid for.

13. LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

The service has remained engaged with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership with the aim of improving our relationships with local businesses and identifying their needs with a view to contributing to the growth of the local economy. The Business Charter for Regulators, launched during 2012, clearly outlines the relationship that we are seeking to have with the business community in Worcestershire. The Worcestershire LEP has assisted us with the Worcestershire Food and Drink Project. It is an initiative to put the County on the map and be at the forefront of promoting food producers and manufacturers in Worcestershire. The LEP was also key in putting the service forward for an award (the work we have done with the Bangladeshi Catering trade in Worcestershire and our Healthy Eating Award.) We have made it clear to the LEP that, whilst partners are keen to continue with the Better Business for All approach, wider business support initiatives cannot go forward without financial support. Government still seems keen to use the LEPs to drive economic growth at a local level so we will seek to maintain engagement into 2018/19 and beyond at a suitable level to make sure that funding can be accessed if it is available.

14. OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

The service continues to need to work closely with a range of partners to deliver what is required against a number of agendas. The importance of the six local authority partners is recognised and we will continue to maintain our existing interfaces with other elements of these organisations e.g. Planning, Worcestershire Hub, Economic Development teams, etc.

With the County Council having taken back direct control of Trading Standards functions, it has been essential to retain the strong links between both groups of staff. This is facilitated by the current co-location of teams, with Trading Standards and Animal Health continuing to occupy a section at Wyre Forest House for the foreseeable future. This is particularly relevant for the two Intelligence Officer posts that are split between the two organisations.

Customer demand will have a significant impact on the nature of our interactions with partners as we move the service forward. Close partnership working with a range of professional and community groups is essential to ensure deliver of the outcomes required by partners. Key partners for engagement include:

- West Mercia Police & West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Environment Agency
- The Health and Safety Executive
- Public Health England
- Local Partnership bodies e.g. Community Safety Partnerships, Safer Communities Board, Health and Well-being Board
- Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards
- Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service
- Citizens Advice Consumer Service, local Citizens Advice Bureaux and other 3rd sector organisations
- County Council Public Health team
- Regional Regulatory Partnerships and National Bodies (CIEH, MJAC, CEnEHMB, CEnTSA, CTSI, ACTSO, NTSB,).

Existing links to these bodies will be maintained. Additionally, to ensure WRS provides an attractive product for external clients, engagement with equivalent partners in other geographical regions will be pursued, which will include the collation/interpretation and review of intelligence data in such areas.

15. CONSULTATION/ ENGAGEMENT

In relation to national consultations on legislative changes, we will address these through the relevant professional channels at local, regional and national level. We will continue to engage local members in relation to local policy issues, especially around licensing matters. For general engagement with the wider community of elected members, we will provide a number of Member Newsletters per year so that all are updated on the various activities that the service undertakes across the County. We will try to make this information specific to districts where it is relevant, to reassure members that our activities are seeking to protect everyone and support businesses across the whole of Worcestershire. It is hoped that the Activity Data reports that will continue to be provided to the WRS Board will provide elected members on the Board with sufficient information to also feedback to the wider membership in their respective authorities.

In terms of business engagement, we will continue to work with colleagues at Worcestershire LEP and Worcestershire Business Central on engaging with our business customers to improve our ability to address their needs. The approach outlined in our business charter will provide the basis for our interactions with the business community. We will continue to survey those businesses subject to interventions to identify how to improve and to help ensure businesses remain satisfied with our performance.

For members of the public, we will continue to survey customers who have used the service to look at how we dealt with their issues, not only from a satisfaction point of view, but also to see if they feel better equipped to deal with future problems. Helping people to help themselves is at the heart of model of public service engagement we are pursuing and it is essential we move people down this route and reduce the expectation that we will always do it for them. This idea is now developing further with all partners signing up to the “digital first” concept that, where possible, initial contact with partners will always be via a digital channel rather than necessarily requiring either telephony or face-to-face interactions. The new format of the WRS website has been tailored to suit the various digital devices used to access services on-line.

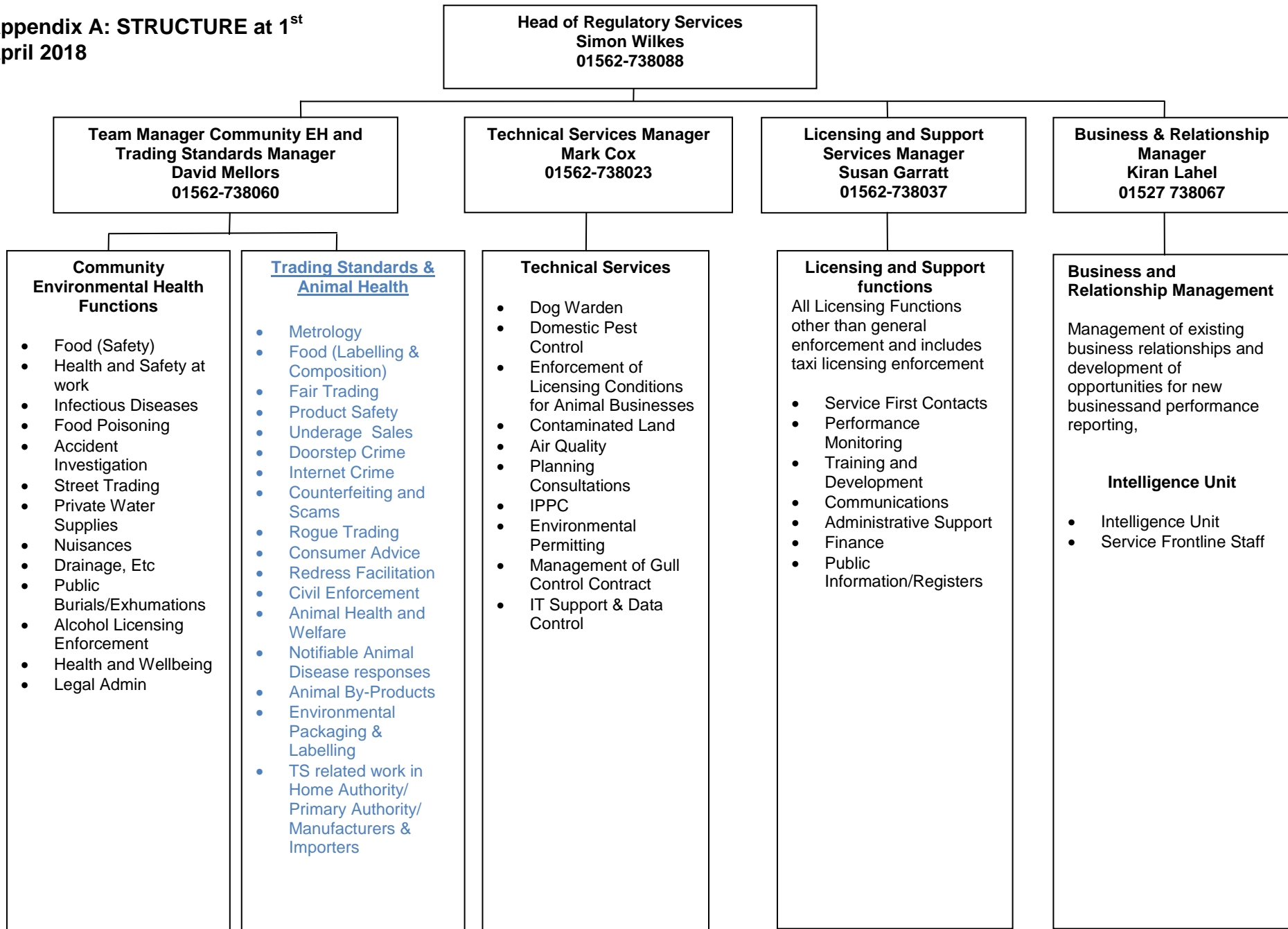
16. GOVERNANCE

At the June 2015 meeting of the previous Joint Committee, it was agreed that the majority of the terms of the original 2010 partnership agreement remained relevant to the six district partnership following the exit of the County Council in 2016), as this should be used as the basis for the continued partnership. The service continues to operate under a Joint Board in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000, although the new Board comprised of both officers and members, with members having voting rights. The current arrangements came into force on 1st April 2016.

17. RISKS

A copy of the current Risk Register is appended at Appendix D which was reviewed and updated in December 2016. The increased number of commercial contracts and obligations increase some risks, particularly where sub-contractors or skilled technical staff are involved. This recognises the wider geographical area that the service now covers and level of technical expertise that has to be maintained.

**Appendix A: STRUCTURE at 1st
April 2018**



Appendix B: 3 years of budgets

| Account description | Budget 2018 / 2019 £000's | Budget 2019 / 2020 £000's | Budget 2020 / 2021 £000's |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Employees | | | |
| Monthly salaries | 2,575 | 2,643 | 2,710 |
| Training for professional qualifications | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Medical fees (employees') | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Employers' liability insurance | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| Employees' professional subscriptions | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Sub-Total - Employees | 2,597 | 2,665 | 2,732 |
| Premises | | | |
| Rents | 52 | 52 | 52 |
| Room hire | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Trade Waste | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub-Total - Premises | 54 | 54 | 54 |
| Transport | | | |
| Vehicle repairs/maint'ce | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Diesel fuel | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Licences | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Contract hire of vehicles | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Vehicle insurances | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Van Lease | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Fares & Car Parking | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Car allowances | 82 | 82 | 82 |
| Sub-Total - Transport | 115 | 115 | 115 |
| Supplies & Service | | | |
| Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental | 19 | 19 | 19 |

| | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Materials | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Clothing, uniforms & laundry | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Training fees | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| General insurances | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Printing and stationery | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| Books and publications | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Postage/packaging | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| ICT | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| Telephones | 21 | 23 | 23 |
| Taxi Tests | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| CRB Checks (taxi) | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Support service recharges | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Support service recharges - ICT | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| Sub-Total - Supplies & Service | 373 | 375 | 375 |
| Contractors | | | |
| Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's | 223 | 223 | 223 |
| Advertising (general) | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Grants and subscriptions | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Marketing/promotion/publicity | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Sub-Total - Contractors | 239 | 239 | 239 |
| Income | | | |
| Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc | -327 | -327 | -327 |
| Sub-Total - Income | -327 | -327 | -327 |
| Savings | | | |
| Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures | -26 | -95 | -163 |
| Sub-Total - Income | -26 | -95 | -163 |
| DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET | 3,025 | 3,025 | 3,025 |

**Budget
2018 / 2019**

£000's

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Bromsgrove | 439 |
| Redditch | 529 |
| Wyre Forest | 463 |
| Wychavon | 701 |
| Malvern | 386 |
| Worcs City | 507 |
| Total | 3,025 |

Appendix C: Performance Measures Relating to Outcomes

| | Measure | Reporting Frequency | Background |
|---|---|---------------------|---|
| 1 | % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction | Quarterly | Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of members of the public who use the service. |
| 2 | % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction | Quarterly | Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of businesses inspected or otherwise contacted by the service. |
| 3 | % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection | Annually | Based on the proportion of businesses meeting the key purpose from a regulatory perspective i.e. food businesses produce safe food. |
| 4 | % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year | Annually | Based on proportion of businesses scoring 1-2 star on a national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme assessment (2 stars and below is deemed to be at risk of not producing safe food.) |
| 5 | % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days. | 6-monthly | New 2016/17 Based on the proportion of drivers licence renewals issued within 5 working days of receipt of application. Note new applicants all require DBS checks and time frames for these fall outside of WRS control, hence they are not included. |
| 6 | % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service | 6-monthly | Percentage of vehicles stopped during enforcement exercises that are required to be removed from service for remedial work before being allowed to carry on operating. |
| 7 | % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future | Quarterly | Based on questionnaires send out to a significant number of members of the public and businesses who have used the service. |
| 8 | Review of register of complaints and compliments | Quarterly | All are recorded Increasing compliments/ Reduced complaints |

| | | | |
|----|---|-----------|--|
| 9 | Staff sickness absence at public sector average or better | Quarterly | Sickness recorded using host processes. Public sector average 8.75 or better |
| 10 | % of staff who enjoy working for WRS | Annually | Taken from the staff survey. |
| 11 | % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives | 6-monthly | Indicator, linked to Crime & Disorder agenda, looking at performance of premises license holders and control on their activity. |
| 12 | Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population | 6-monthly | Place indicator, potential link to quality of life and health and well-being. |
| 13 | Total income | 6-monthly | New for 2016/17 Expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17) |
| 14 | Cost of regulatory services per head of population | Annually | New for 2016/17. Will be total spend divided by the total population, based on the most recent mid-year estimate available at the time of publication. NB: Calculation will offset income against revenue budget to account for external income sources |

Appendix D: Risk Register 2017/18

| 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 | Wyre Forest ICT has effective processes and business continuity plans in place. WFDC upgraded VMWare [scheduled for January 2017] |
| Issues with the WRS database system | Impact on work planning. Self-help may not enable savings required | On-going | Low | High | Green | Initial implementation is completed. Further development of the system will be treated as business as usual, with priority going to public access and self-help/ self-service to continue the channel shift process. Service website remains key access point. Tested disaster recovery of our Uniform back up and fail over to the business continuity server. Completed [scheduled for January 2017]. Oracle upgrade to 12c completed. EDRMS upgrade completed 24 th December 2016. |
| Effective and efficient Business Continuity arrangements in place | Disruption to service if e.g. Major Power failures or other reasons that access to Wyre Forest House is not possible. | On-going | Very Low | Medium | Green | Staff are equipped for mobile/home working. Touchdown stations available in partner council locations. Working from WFDC depot successfully tested over Christmas period. |
| Maintain our capacity to achieve service delivery | Disruption to service e.g. Major staff sickness (e.g. flu pandemic) or Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified staff. | On-going | Low | Medium | Amber | In such event, 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. However, having taken on contracts with additional authorities the demand has increased and neighbouring authorities have lost the ability to be able to assist with technical specialisms. We are active within regional and sub-regional groups to share resources if required. Effective training and development processes are in place to ensure recruitment and retention of staff. There is increased training budget pressure, reduced technical knowledge in neighbouring authorities and increased importance in maintaining heightened skills for |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------|------------|--------|-------|---|
| | | | | | | contractual obligations and commercial edge. 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 contractors cease operations. | Disruption to service. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks | On-going | Low | High | Green | New framework contract has 6 pest control suppliers so the loss of one allows work to be moved to the others. |
| Effective and efficient contract arrangement for dog control | Disruption to service if no kennels available. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks | On-going | Low | High | Amber | Budget available to buy in use of other private sector providers in short term. Contracts tendered. The Dog Warden contracts are robust but we have one less kennel contractor but an additional three District Councils that we provide the service for. |
| Hosting support does not deliver necessary financial and HR support to ensure efficient management | Efficiency of management reduced; staffing issues remain unaddressed and performance suffers | On-going | Low | High | Amber | Some continuing issues around access to the financial system from Wyre Forest house, meaning managers are reliant on host finance officers for financial reporting. ICT team from WFDC and BDC continue to work to resolve the issue |
| One or more partners continue to be under great financial pressure and may consider alternatives to the partnership to deliver their service | Creates reputational issues for remaining partners and increases the need to manage overheads. Difficulties in delivering highly varied levels of service | On-going | Low-Medium | High | Amber | New legal agreement limits variations in contribution before partners have to move to contractual relationship. Leanness of organisation minimises overheads and focuses resource at the front line. Growth strategy should generate income to support partners in the future. Some reputational damage and perceived loss of commercial skills from the County Council withdrawing from the partnership. |
| Robust arrangements in place in relation to obtaining legal advice and monitoring legislative changes. | Loss of cases is costly and damages reputation. | On-going | Low | Medium | Green | Continued close working with BDC legal team and other partners who don't use BDC for advocacy. Technical and legal training days for staff. Difficulty in keeping informed of Case Law developments. Membership and attendance of Officer Technical Groups outside the County would assist. |
| Service provision complies with Government requirements | Adverse comments following audits e.g. FSA Intervention by Government bodies i.e. FSA, whilst highly unlikely, is damaging to reputation. | On-going | Low | High | Amber | Limited detail of what statutory minima are. LGA clearly aware of impact of budget reductions on regulation and has made it clear Government cannot expect what it had previously. Fewer interventions/ audits by government. Service has developed systems that follow the principles of the requirements of bodies like FSA so can show some level of compliance. WRS principle of moving away from rigid |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|-----|------|--------------|---|
| | | | | | | inspection programme of Food Standards Code (as approved by WRS Joint Board) to intelligence led interventions is compliant with Food Safety Act albeit not as FSA would be able to sanction. Environmental reporting for Local Air Quality Management, Pollution Prevention and Control and Private Water Supply Inspections to Defra and DWI have received positive responses with no issues of concern raised. |
| Failure to deliver external contract work at the level expected by the business or local authority with whom we have the contract | Damage to reputation, loss of future income streams, financial impact of paying damages | On-going | Low | High | Green | Ensure contract negotiations are clear on performance criteria and these are clearly recorded in the final documentation. Monthly reviews against performance criteria. Select staff to ensure competence of those undertaking work outside Worcestershire. Maintain strong links with the customer's monitoring staff. Intervene early with corrective action |

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WRS Board

15th February 2018

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL – DECEMBER 2017

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board :

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – December 2017
- 1.2 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2017-18 in relation to Pest Control and Bereavements
- 1.3

| Council | 2017-18 Projected Outturn for Pest Control £000 | Apr – Dec 17 Actual for Bereavements £000 |
|----------------|--|--|
| Redditch | 2 | 2 |
| Wyre Forest | 4 | |
| Wychavon | 3 | |
| Worcs City | | 5 |
| Bromsgrove | | 2 |
| | 9 | 9 |

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 – December 2017.

Background

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

Report

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

Agenda Item 7

- Revenue Monitoring April – December 17 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown – April – December 17 – Appendix 2

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. This shows a projected outturn savings of which will be refunded to partners of £21k, it is appreciated this is an estimation to the year end based on current level of expenditure. The following assumptions have been made:-

- There are a number of vacant posts within the service and these together with savings resulting from maternity leave, long term sick etc, result in a projected savings in salaries. This is offset by the costs associated with additional agency staff being used to cover the vacancies, sick and to support the service where staff is working on additional income generation projects. Due to the continued sickness issue we will be retaining the services of several contractors to the end of the financial year to deal with food inspection backlogs and to provide additional support for air quality activities. Officers will ensure the reliance on agency cover is as minimal as possible.
- If April to Dec 17 spend on pest control continues on the same trend for the rest of year, there will be a projected overspend on this service of £9k. WRS officers have continued to analyse the overspend and the following is the projected full year overspend to be funded from each partner, this income has been included in the £336k income projected outturn.

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Redditch | £2k |
| Wychavon | £3k |
| Wyre Forest | £4k |

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – Dec 17 to be funded by partners. These costs are charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charges it is not possible to project a final outturn figure:-

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Worcs City | £5k |
| Redditch | £2k |
| Bromsgrove | £2k |

Again this income is included in the £336k income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – Dec 17. At £247k, the income achieved puts the service on target to slightly exceed the level required to meet the budget for the year. This projected over achievement of income is as a

Agenda Item 7

result of the hard work the team have undertaken to generate further revenue.

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

Financial Implications

None other than those stated in the report

Sustainability

None as a direct result of this report

Contact Points

Jayne Pickering – 01527-881400

Background Papers

Detailed financial business case

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| | Full year Budget | Budget 9 Months to Dec 17 | Expenditure to Dec 17 | Variance | Projected outturn | Projected Outturn Variance |
|---|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Direct Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Employees | | | | | | |
| Salary | 2,508 | 1,881 | 1,807 | -73 | 2,416 | -92 |
| Agency Staff | 0 | 0 | 46 | 46 | 75 | 75 |
| Employee Insurance | 40 | 40 | 40 | 0 | 40 | 0 |
| Sub-Total - Employees | 2,548 | 1,921 | 1,894 | -27 | 2,531 | -16 |
| Premises | | | | | | |
| Rent / Hire of Premise | 54 | 41 | 39 | -1 | 53 | -1 |
| Cleaning | 1 | 1 | 1 | -0 | 1 | -0 |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub-Total - Premises | 55 | 41 | 40 | -2 | 54 | -1 |
| Transport | | | | | | |
| Vehicle Hire | 13 | 9 | 4 | -5 | 4 | -8 |
| Vehicle Fuel | 8 | 6 | 2 | -4 | 4 | -4 |
| Road Fund Tax | 1 | 1 | 1 | -0 | 1 | 0 |
| Vehicle Insurance | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Vehicle Maintenance | 3 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 3 | -0 |
| Car Allowances | 87 | 65 | 58 | -8 | 80 | -7 |
| Sub-Total - Transport | 116 | 88 | 71 | -18 | 97 | -19 |
| Supplies and Services | | | | | | |
| Furniture & Equipment | 30 | 22 | 29 | 6 | 46 | 17 |
| Clothes, uniforms and laundry | 3 | 2 | 0 | -2 | 1 | -2 |
| Printing & Photocopying | 17 | 13 | 16 | 3 | 23 | 5 |
| Postage | 11 | 8 | 10 | 1 | 13 | 2 |
| ICT | 40 | 30 | 43 | 13 | 48 | 8 |
| Telephones | 23 | 17 | 12 | -6 | 15 | -8 |
| Training & Seminars | 24 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 31 | 7 |
| Insurance | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Third Party Payments | | | | | | |
| Support Service Recharges | 100 | 75 | 75 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| ICT Hosting | 44 | 33 | 33 | 0 | 44 | 0 |
| Sub-Total - Supplies & Service | 296 | 210 | 230 | 20 | 325 | 29 |

| | Full year Budget | Budget 9 Months to Dec 17 | Expenditure to Dec 17 | Variance | Projected outturn | Projected Outturn Variance | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Direct Expenditure | | | | | | | |
| Contractors | | | | | | | |
| Dog Warden | 145 | 109 | 100 | -9 | 136 | -9 | |
| Pest Control | 46 | 35 | 42 | 7 | 57 | | 11 Income of £12k received from Severn Trent for Sewer Baiting, offset in Income line |
| Taxi / Alcoh & Other Licensing | 65 | 49 | 65 | 16 | 88 | | 23 West Midland Safari Park Inspection £7k, £7k income received offset in income line |
| Other contractors/consultants | 3 | 2 | 0 | -2 | 0 | -3 | |
| Water Safety | 5 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | |
| Food Safety | 2 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 1 | -1 | |
| Environmental Protection | 12 | 9 | 27 | 18 | 31 | 19 | Bereavement / Works in Default to be charged to relevant partner |
| Grants / Subscriptions | 11 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 11 | 1 | |
| Advertising, Publicity and Promotion | 6 | 4 | 2 | -2 | 4 | -2 | |
| Sub-Total | 294 | 221 | 251 | 30 | 333 | 39 | |
| Income | | | | | | | |
| Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc | -284 | -213 | -247 | -34 | -336 | -52 | |
| Sub-Total | -284 | -213 | -247 | -34 | -336 | -52 | |
| Total | 3,025 | 2,268 | 2,238 | -30 | 3,004 | -21 | |

Percentage saving from original budget (Excl County) £5,057 in 2010-11 40.60%

| Grant Funded Spend | Spend 17-18 | Remaining Reserve Balance | Funded By | |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Health & Well Being | 15 | 29 | Primary Care Trust | Conditional |
| Worcs Works Well | 5 | 24 | Public Health Dept | Unconditional |
| LEP | 15 | 13 | Worcestershire Local Enterprise | Unconditional |
| Better Business For all | | 10 | Regulatory Delivery | Unconditional |
| County Buyout | | 173 | | Unconditional |
| Grant Income | -35 | | | |
| Total | 0 | 249 | | |

| Income from Partners | Cum to Dec 17 |
|--|-------------------------|
| Budget | 2,268,755 |
| Refund of Savings | |
| Bereavement/ Public Burials | 9,144 |
| Marlpool - Redditch | 1,250 |
| Pest Control Overspend - Wychavon / Wyre Forest & Redditch | 6,770 |
| Gladmans - Wyre Forest | 5,800 |
| The Plough - Wyre Forest | 1,700 |
| Drovers Way Sparkle Cleaning - Wychavon | 2,700 |
| | <u>2,296,119</u> |
| Grant Income | |
| Healthy Eating / LEP / WWW | 31,202 |
| Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting | 8,561 |
| | <u>39,763</u> |
| Other Income | |
| Dog Income | 49,508 |
| County - Mgmt / Admin / Legal etc | 40,309 |
| External Intelligence Support | 5,645 |
| Transcription Work | 758 |
| Tewkesbury BC / Stratford Upon Avon - Planning Support Work | 18,987 |
| South Gloucs, Gloucs City & North Warwickshire Contaminated Land W | 28,292 |
| Glous City - PPC Work | 3,447 |
| Primary Authority work | 10,872 |
| Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc | 974 |
| Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered | 14,535 |
| Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating | 5,354 |
| Licensing - Pre-App Advice | 94 |
| Licensing - Victorian Fayre | 700 |
| | <u>179,475</u> |
| Total Income | <u>2,515,357</u> |
| Total Income Excluding Budget From Partners | <u>246,602</u> |

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WRS Board:

15th February 2018

Review of WRS Service Complaints

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Recommendation | That the Board notes the report |
| Background | <p>Every quarter Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) reports on the number of compliments and complaints that are received to the Board. Since the formation of the current Board, there have always been a far higher number of compliments than complaints received, however, for all complaints the WRS Manager for that Service area reviews the complaint and provides a response to the complainant. Following a small number of high profile, from the individual partner perspective, complaints and confusion over whether it was the Partner Authority or WRS procedure that was followed, a review of the complaints procedure and the complaints themselves was requested by the Chair of the Board. This report outlines that review.</p> |
| Report | <p><u>Service Complaint Process:</u></p> <p>WRS is hosted by Bromsgrove District Council but provides services on behalf of six Worcestershire District Councils as Partner Authorities; up to seven other Local Authorities as formal contracts or informal arrangements; and at least five other organisations as formal contracts or informal arrangements. WRS can not possibly operate under 18 different complaints procedures however those used by the Local Authorities are broadly similar.</p> <p>The WRS Complaints procedure was initially developed in 2011 to compliment those of the partner authorities and provide a robust process for contractual obligations. The most recent review of the process was December 2017. It continues to provide a simple, generic, three-stage process for responding to a complaint. The three stages are outlined below but it is recognised that this approach may not be appropriate for every complaint received.</p> <p>Stage 1: Quick resolution – allowing the complainant to liaise directly with the Officer dealing with their service request and their Senior Practitioner, with the aim of resolving any misunderstanding and accommodating any specific requests if possible.</p> |

Stage 2: A Full investigation – undertaken by the Team Manager and reviewed by the Head of Service.

Stage 3: Referral to the nominated Officer of the appropriate Council for review generally into the final stage of the individual partner council so, beyond this, the complainant will have exhausted the local authority process and may raise the matter with the Local Government Ombudsman.

The complaints process is published on the WRS website:

<http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/media/2045060/1a-WRS-Complaints-Compliments-and-Suggestions.pdf>

Number of Service Complaints

The following table provides the number of service complaints received and for perspective purposes the number of compliments.

| Year | Number of service complaints received | Number of service compliments received |
|---------|--|---|
| 2015-16 | 33 | 105 |
| 2016-17 | 23 | 92 |
| 2017-18 | 27* (*Estimate based on 16 received for first 7 months) | 130* (*Estimate based on 27 received for first 7 months) |

The following review includes all 72 service complaints received across the three financial years from April 2015 to October 2017 inclusive. It was considered appropriate due to the relatively low number of complaints each year it would not provide sufficient information to review as individual years.

Please note all service complaints were resolved or processed using the complaints procedure referred to above with some resolutions put in place at that time. The following provides a strategic review to identify areas of concern.

Overview: The reason for the Service Complaints

The chart shown as Appendix 1 provides the breakdown in the service complaints by the reason for the complaint. Generic headings have been used where common threads could be used to group complaints together. Where the complaint raised numerous issues, the main or most significant reason has been used to classify that complaint. The number of complaints received for each 'reason' is shown after the category title. The review has deliberately avoided grouping complaints by team or work area unless it is relevant.

Three reasons received significant numbers of complaints (9 or 10 each) which are shown orange on the table. These are:

- The Quality of Service received by the service requester (10 complaints);
- The service requester was unhappy with the process or methodology used by WRS (10 complaints); and
- The owner of a stray dog was dissatisfied that they were not able to collect their dog at the weekend/bank holiday (9 complaints)

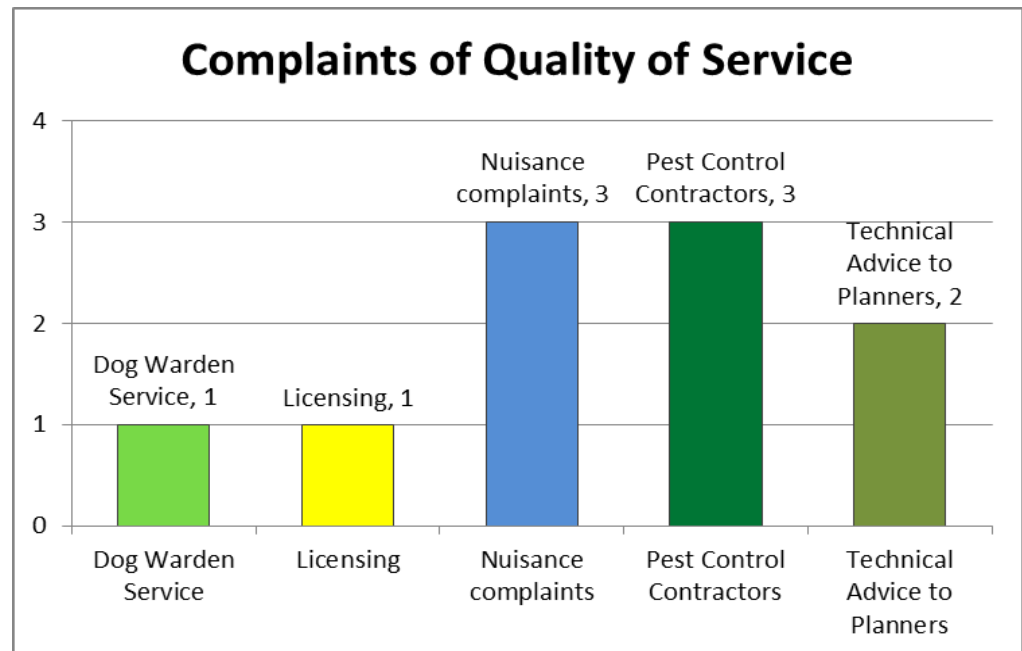
Taking the three 'reasons' with greatest numbers of complaints listed above, they were considered further.

Review 1: The Quality of Service

The following table provides a breakdown of the complaints where the quality of the service that they received was the primary concern.

You will note that with low numbers of complaints it is difficult to identify a significant issue. With only one complaint concerning the quality of service for Dog Warden Service and Licensing they were not considered any further in this review.

The **Pest Control** service is delivered by six contractors who provide subsidised treatment to residents subject to qualifying benefits or residency in four of the six Districts. The qualifying criteria are different in all four districts providing the service and where clients are not eligible for subsidised treatment, they can pay the contractor privately. It seems clear that it is this variety of different Partner Authority arrangements which led to the majority of these complaints as the contractors found it difficult to remember what rules applied where. To resolve this, WRS issued reminders to all contractors on the differences at the time of the complaints. It is worth noting all three complaints were pre 2016/17 so there has been no reoccurrence since the advice was provided, despite significant increases in the eligibility variance since then.



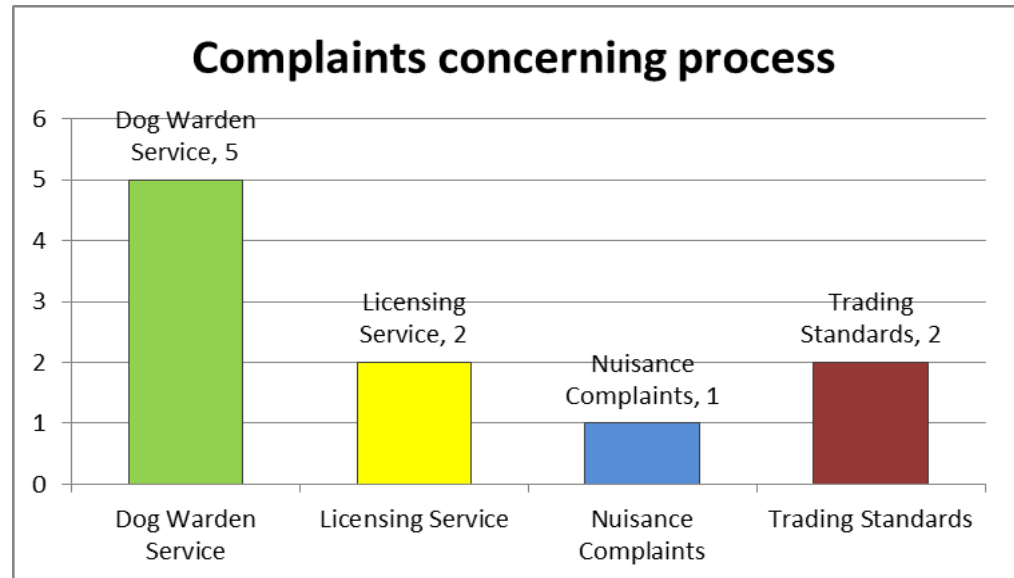
For Nuisance the most frequent issue has been complainants being unhappy that officers have not identified a statutory nuisance. Members will recall at the last Board meeting that officers presented a report outlining the complexities and difficulties associated with the legislation. As was said last time, public expectation often exceeds what is deliverable within the legal framework. One element of complaint beyond this that has been raised relates to officers not keeping complainants sufficiently informed of progress. Officers have been reminded to make arrangements for communicating with complainants and to agree a frequency of contact with them to deal with this issue.

The two complaints concerning the **Technical Advice** to Planning Officers were for different reasons. The first that they did not agree with the technical advice although in

reviewing the complaint, the advice was considered sound and the Planning Officer had no objection. The second complaint was concerning the form and clarity of the advice. To resolve these issues, informal training was provided and a clarifying replacement advice statement was issued at the time of the complaint.

Review 2: The WRS process followed

The following table provides a breakdown of the complaints where the service requester was unhappy with the process followed by WRS.



Again the subject areas with 1 or 2 complaints will not be considered further during this review. It is worth noting Trading Standards are included here as they were part of WRS during part of the review period prior to transfer back to Worcestershire County Council.

There appears to be no significant common theme in relation to the **Dog Warden Service** process complaints. Getting your dog back when it has been found straying is a highly emotional process with some service requesters expecting a comparable service to that when the Police find a lost child. There are a number of elements of the process that faced criticism so it is worth explaining the rationale of these here for the members information

For health and safety reasons stray dogs are taken to a safe location (normally the kennels or vets) to scan the dog. The risk of aggressive individuals, unsafe situations with unfamiliar dogs in other peoples' property or on the roadside is not acceptable. When a dog comes into the Dog Warden's possession we have a duty of care to both the animal and its owner to protect their property from harm. Even with the right handling equipment, the risk of a dog escaping at the roadside and being involved in a road traffic accident is not an acceptable risk.

Due to the costs in operating and providing a Dog Warden Service and the Statutory Fine levied by central Government, it is not feasible to provide a dog taxi service and return dogs to their owners free of charge if microchipped. Such a practice would also not promote good dog ownership and reduce stray dog numbers. Members should recall from our regular Activity Data Report that the rigorous approach followed by WRS over the years has created a downward pressure on numbers of strays in the County.

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| Process complained of | Rationale |
|---|--|
| Policy of not releasing stray dog back to the owner until outstanding fees are paid | Experience shows once a dog is returned to an owner the fees to cover the cost of the service and Statutory Fine are rarely paid. [Exception - where a medical need is proven a return before payment is permitted] |
| Dog Warden refusing to attend uncontained stray | Dog Wardens will attend and patrol an area to find a reported stray if available or in the area but they will not prioritise attendance or attend out of hours unless the dog is contained. In most cases because the dog wardens cover the whole of Worcestershire and north Gloucestershire by the time they have got to a location the dog has often disappeared. |
| Dogs taken to kennels to be scanned for microchip rather than dropping it home | For health and safety reasons stray dogs are taken to a safe location (normally the kennels or vets) to scan the dog. The risk of aggressive individuals, unsafe situations with unfamiliar dogs in other peoples property or on the roadside is not acceptable. Due to the costs in operating and providing a Dog Warden Service and the Statutory Fine levied by Central Government it is not feasible to provide a dog taxi service and return dogs to their owners free of charge if microchipped. Such a practice would also not promote good dog ownership and reduce stray dog numbers. |

Review 3: Inability for owners to collect their dog at the weekend

With nine complaints concerning this specific subject it is clearly an issue of annoyance to dog owners. WRS provides an out-of-hours collection service (using a contractor) to collect stray dogs but none of the partner authorities have ever had a full dog warden service out of hours.

The service package available to clients, out-of-hours is different depending on which District the dog was found straying in, which can also lead to further annoyance. Below is a comparison of the service provided by the authorities which WRS provides the Dog Warden Service for:

| Authority | Can dogs be reunited with their owners over bank holiday weekends? | Comment |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Bromsgrove District Council | Yes | |
| Cheltenham Borough Council | No | |
| Gloucester City Council | No | |
| Malvern Hills District Council | Yes | If dog found as a stray before 4.30pm on any day it may be collected out of hours, otherwise dog goes to kennel where |

Agenda Item 8

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|
| | | weekend collection not possible. |
| Redditch Borough Council | No | |
| Tewkesbury Borough Council | No | |
| Worcester City Council | No | |
| Wychavon District Council | No | |
| Wyre Forest District Council | Yes | |

The issue is dictated by the kenneling contractors. Of the three contracted kennels, two open at weekends and provide payment facilities. The third kenneling contractor, who is also the one working with WRS for the Gloucestershire authorities and some other non-stray contracts, due to capacity and location, does not provide payment facilities and is not willing to undertake the 'administrative element' of matching up dogs with owners at the weekend.

Contractually we are not tied to which kennel receives which dogs (for Partner Authorities) although there are significant capacity issues at the one used for Malvern Hills dogs and there are logistical issues with the location of the kennels used for Wyre Forest & Bromsgrove Dogs. It is worth noting one complaint raised the distance to the kennels as an issue. As the Out of Hours stray dog collection contractor is the third kenneling contractor there would be additional costs in terms of transportation if dogs were being taken to the other kennels rather than their own.

The third kenneling contractor has been willing to consider the situation and from experience has generally been open to working with WRS to improve the service in many ways. It is partly due to their willingness to take dogs from multiple geographical areas and for various different contracts that makes the process of taking payment and facilitating the return of dogs to owners out of hours complex and not viable for the company. Dissatisfied dog owners are a significant concern for this contractor as they also have other private business dependent on their company's reputation so with the current arrangement of WRS facilitating the return, dog owners do not associate them with 'the Council'.

The following practical issues remain outstanding:

- Reputational risk to third kenneling contractor in dealing with dog owners;
- Complexity of different procedures for 9 Authorities
- Complexity of different charges for 9 Authorities
- Confusion between contact numbers for out of hours contractor and kenneling contractor (both services provided by the same contractor company but one number would need to be public and the other kept for contract and collection work);
- Significance of administrative work required to verify owner, chase up conflicting information and deal with issues.
- Staffing resource issue;
- Staff safety issue;
- No electronic payment facility

Currently there is no viable option to amend the current arrangements either by working with the third kenneling contractor or using alternative kennels. The only option left would be to consider providing an out of hours (primarily weekend and bank holiday) resource to undertake the administrative role in facilitating the reunification of an owner

with their dog, calculate outstanding fees, take payment and advise of kennel location. There is no guarantee that the above solutions would resolve the complaints, as it doesn't resolve the inability to reclaim dogs in the evenings.

Review 3: Possible solutions with estimated costs

Such a role would be at scale 4 and provided as a rota between existing Duty Officer staff, as an 'on-call' standby payment or as a new post. The estimated costs in providing each are given below:

| Option | Service provision option | Estimated cost |
|--------|--|----------------|
| A | Existing Duty Officers to provide cover as Standby payment with additional payment per call. | £21,427* |
| B | New part-time post at Scale 4 employed to cover weekends and bank holidays. | £12,811 |

*based on average of 8.5 calls per weekend.

In exploring either of the above options, there would be some financial benefit with potential removal of dog warden out of hours call out payment (£500/annum) and reduced resource required on Monday mornings in dealing with the backlog of dog related activity from weekend.

However, for a small team of 4FTE covering all of the first contacts for WRS across the full range of service areas, it would be very difficult to cover within existing resources. With Option A, there would be some loss of the current 4 FTE capacity to weekend work, potentially leaving the team short of resource at the peak times for other demand, on Mondays and Tuesdays in particular. Morale and staff retention could potentially become an issue for the team who are considered a linchpin to the operation of WRS' operating model to 'resolve at first point of contact' for the majority of our work. This represents a significant risk of disrupting the wider service.

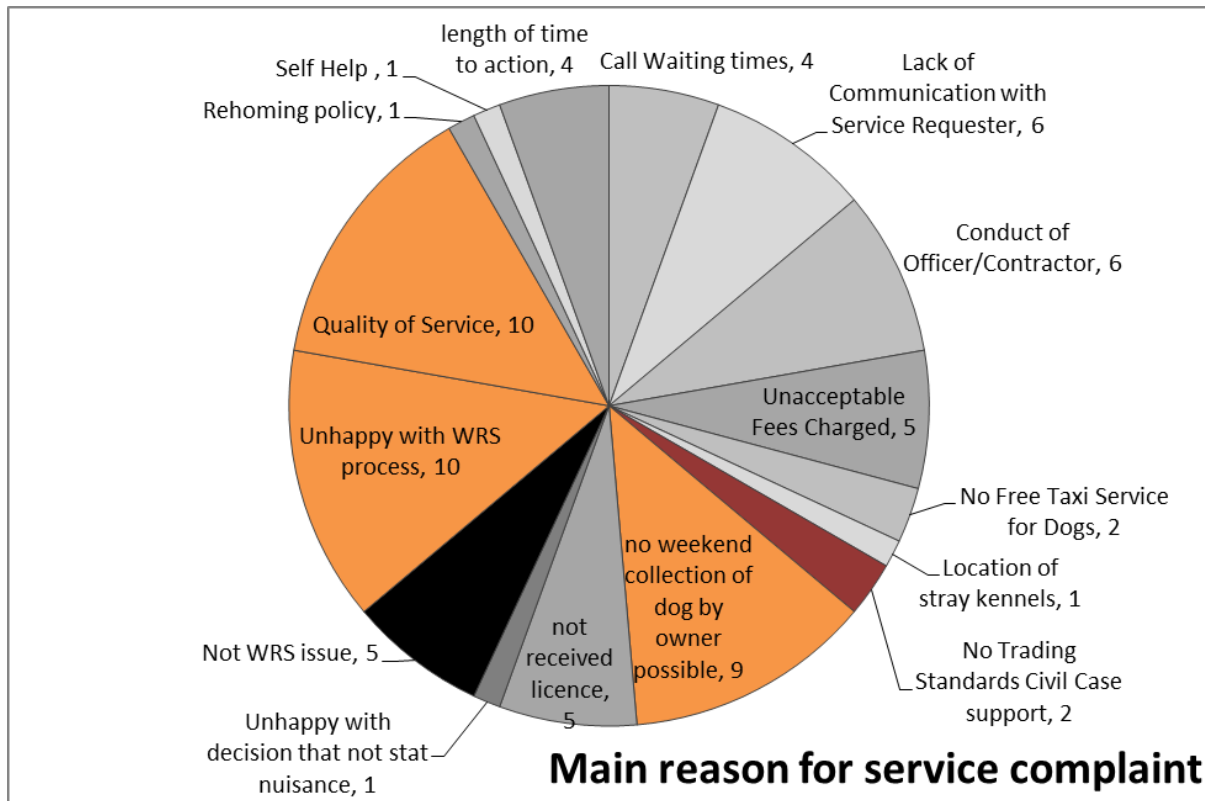
Review 3: Conclusion

Based on the last three years, the maximum level of success would be preventing 7 complaints (2 of the 9 complaints concerned inability to collect dog on Friday evening which would not be resolved by these options). Partner Authorities may consider the benefit from providing such a service does not outweigh the cost in delivery or potential service disruption.

Contact Points

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Appendix 1: Chart showing the main reason for the service complaint



WRS Board

15 February 2018

Activity and Performance Data Quarter 3

Recommendation

That the Board notes the Report and that members use the contents of the activity data in their own reporting back to fellow members of the partner authorities.

Background

This report covers the third quarter of 2017/18.

The detail of the report focuses on Q3 but the presentation of the data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

Previously, Board members have asked the service to provide data on activity levels to help reassure local members that WRS continues to tackle issues broadly across the county. This has been continued since the move to the Board on 1st April 2016.

Report

Activity Data

Licensing and environmental health nuisances continue to provide greatest demand for the service which is understandable given their high profile and direct impact on the public.

The report continues to provide a detailed outline of work done by the Community Environmental Health teams.

With one quarter left of the year the total number of food safety cases in Malvern Hills, Redditch and Wychavon has already surpassed the totals for the previous two years. Whilst this does not indicate an increase in non compliance it does reflect an increase in food safety enquiries from businesses and the general public and a review of such cases may identify opportunities to reroute customers to alternative channels.

The continuation of relatively high levels of nuisance work carried into Quarter 3, the high number of complex legal cases under investigation, the resignation of a member of staff to take up a new post and the number of staff on long-term sick leave has provided a challenge to resources in Quarter 3. We retained the services of our temporary workers to cover off the backlog of work and keep up with food visits, also addressing some of

those food businesses identified during our audit by the Food Standards Agency. This served to keep us on track to achieve what is needed during the second half of the year. This continues to be affordable due to our ongoing income generation activity and will not require additional funding from partners. Our ability to respond to this situation highlights both the limit of our own capacity but also how flexible the income generation strategy has made our ability to respond.

The change in weather in the Autumn caused nuisance complaints to return to the usual levels through October and November although a large number were carried forward from the summer months. Hence the need (as mentioned above) to bring in resource to conclude these investigations and complete the proactive work programme.

As members will see the number of planning consultations fell off slightly during Quarter 3. The Technical Services team used this as an opportunity to commence some significant Air Quality projects and to service high levels of demand from clients outside of Worcestershire.

The report continues to show the falling trend in dog control issues across Worcestershire and we explained that this has been achieved by taking action to re-home persistent strays and working with owners to achieve better control, alongside communities and individuals setting up their own ways of identifying strays and getting them back to their owners. This continues to allow us to offer dog warden services more widely and we have been very successful during this period in supplying dog related work to other organisations with our kennelling partners.

Licensing applications again spiked through October and November, though overall numbers followed the trend of previous years. Service requests and enquiries have remained higher than previous years.

As always, information on each district is provided. Members are reminded that the current year data is only to the end of Q3. Data from the previous two years is the full year data.

Performance

Third quarter performance reporting is more limited than in Q2 with only an update on a small number of the indicators.

Customer satisfaction was recorded at 77.5%% for Q3 which is very slightly below last year's out-turn of 78.9%. For business satisfaction we are slightly up on last year's out-turn (97.1%) at 97.6%. The proportion of people who feel better equipped to deal with problems for themselves in future is up on the out-turn for 2016/17 (73.8%) at 74.1%%.

Staff sickness is higher than in previous years at 6.27days per FTE. A large contributing factor to this has been a number of longer term health issues.

Numbers of complaints against the service remain low but did increase with 9 in the third quarter taking the total to 18; however they remain significantly exceeded by 37 compliments taking that total to 112.

Contact Points

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David.Mellors@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

Appendix A: Activity Report (separate document)

Appendix B: Performance indicators Table

Appendix B: Performance Indicator Table

| Indicator | Reporting period | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4/ Outrun |
|--|------------------------------------|-------|---|-------|------------|
| 1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 71.7% | 75.6% | 77.5% | |
| 2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 98.4% | 97.7% | 97.6% | |
| 3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection | Annually | NA | NA | NA | |
| 4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year | Annually | NA | NA | NA | |
| 5. % of applicants for driver licenses rejected as not fit and proper Number of applicants refused, by district, and percentage those drivers represent of the total driver numbers in the County | 6-monthly | NA | 81% NB: all other licenses in this category that fell due for renewal within the period were issued before the expiry of existing licenses | NA | |
| 6. % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be | 6-monthly | NA | Total number of vehicles countywide: 1484 Number of vehicles suspended during Q1 and Q2 21 | NA | |

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|--|------------------------------------|-------|--|--------|--|
| defective by district and the percentage this represents of the fleet county-wide | | | Bromsgrove 9 Redditch 3 Worcester City 8 Wychavon 1 Percentage 1.42% of fleet. | | |
| 7. % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future | Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative | 72.5% | 73.3% | 74.1% | |
| 8. Review of register of complaints/compliments | Quarterly | 3/32 | 9/75 | 18/112 | |
| 9. Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better | Quarterly | 1.19 | 3.77 | TBA | |
| 10. % of staff who enjoy working for WRS | Annually | NA | NA | NA | |
| 11. % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives | 6-monthly | NA | District % Bromsgrove 4.7 Malvern Hills 3.2 Redditch 7.0 Worcester City 3.7 Wychavon 2.9 Wyre Forest 5.8 Worcestershire 4.3 | NA | |
| 12. Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of | 6-monthly | NA | District Rate Bromsgrove 1.98 | NA | |

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|--|-----------|----|--|----|--|
| population | | | <p>Malvern Hills 1.62</p> <p>Redditch 2.34</p> <p>Worcester City 1.99</p> <p>Wychavon 1.75</p> <p>Wyre Forest 2.3</p> <p>Worcestershire 2.01</p> | | |
| 13. Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17) | 6-monthly | NA | 5.2% £158,000 as a proportion of £3,025,000 | NA | |
| 14. Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget) | Annually | NA | NA | NA | |

Worcestershire
Regulatory Services
Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report 2017/18

intelligence@wocrsregservices.gov.uk



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Malvern Hills District Council
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Worcester City Council
Wychavon District Council
Wyre Forest District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the third set of activity data for 2017/18. As you saw last time, the first half of the year has been very busy with very high numbers of nuisance cases. This quarter, food and public health cases remained high for a time before falling to match other areas of work following the seasonal norm of a downward trend going into the winter months. During Q3 we had additional help to deal with the back-log of routine work and pick up on some overdue visits identified during the Food Standards Agency audit. If budgets allow, we may retain this resource until the end of the financial year to ensure we achieve the targets we set ourselves. Members will see that there are still a significant number of food visits required before April.

The Dog Control graphs make good reading, showing as they do the year on year reduction in strays and dog issues. This is achieved by the partners having a robust policy approach to those who allow their dogs to stray, especially those who persistently manage to lose their dogs. We have taken this approach into the contracts we've taken on for providing dog warden services for authorities outside of Worcestershire and hopefully they too will start to see the benefits. If you've any questions about the overall figures or figures for your won district please contact either myself or the relevant Team Manager.



Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory Services

WRS Headlines

Quarter 3

Licensing Update

The Licensing Team launched a pre-application assistance service this quarter. The pre-application service aims to assist applicants when dealing with Councils and help take the headache out of submitting licensing applications. We can determine the correct level of advice required for the applicants individual needs and help applicants to understand Council's policies and make sure that they submit their application correctly, in turn helping them to reduce any unnecessary and often costly delays. Since the launch of the service a number of enquiries have been received and officers are assisting with the completion and submission of a variety of different types of application.

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 In November, seven members of the licensing team achieved the BIIAB Level 2 Award in Assessment of Licensed Premises (Social Responsibility). This qualification is a pre-requisite for assessing premises that apply to accreditation schemes such as "Best Bar None". Licensing officers have been part of the steering group supporting the launch of Best Bar None in Bromsgrove and are now in a position to carry out assessments on the premises that have applied for accreditation.

Licensing officers once again assisted at the Victorian Christmas Fayre in Worcester. Officers were on hand across the period of the Fayre and carried out checks on those selling alcohol as well as assisting with the management of pedlars that visited the city centre during the Fayre to sell their wares.

Licensing officers have also assisted in a high profile case in Redditch that reached the national media and centered on the legality of playing bingo for cash in residential homes. Officers provided advice and guidance to council staff and the residents of a residential home where bingo is played on a regular basis. Thanks to our officer's intervention, all parties now have a greater understanding of the ways that bingo can lawfully be played for small cash prizes in residential settings such as care homes and retirement complexes.

The Licensing Team were involved in a multi- agency scrap metal enforcement exercise this quarter. Officers accompanied by the Police and representatives from the Environment Agency visited scrap metal dealer sites in the south of the county to ensure compliance with the relevant sections of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. It was a high profile exercise which made the local press and Officers were also joined by Lord Faulkner of Worcester who was instrumental in the passing of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. On the whole compliance was found to be high at all three of the sites visited.

Air Quality & Contaminated Land

At Wychavon District Council's Executive Board Meeting on 22nd November the decided to revoke the Port Street, Evesham AQMA and declare a new AQMA at Worcester Road, Wychbold. Both decisions are subject to a 3 month consultation which has already commenced with key stakeholders being informed. Whilst the declaration in Wychbold is not good news, WRS are already engaging with the County Council on potential measures they could undertake to improve the situation. The news for Port Street, is good with over three years worth of results demonstrating compliance with the legal limits and that air quality has improved sufficiently not to represent a significant concern anymore in that locality.

Following adverse weather, a decision on the AQMAs in Worcester City where new areas of nitrogen dioxide exceedance were identified was delayed until January. The first meeting of the Worcester City Member led Task & Finish Group on Air Quality was similarly delayed. Significant work has been undertaken during the period to digitise the wealth of information on historic landuse and contamination. To date 85% of all the information on Wychavon's 2800 potentially contaminated land sites have been processed.

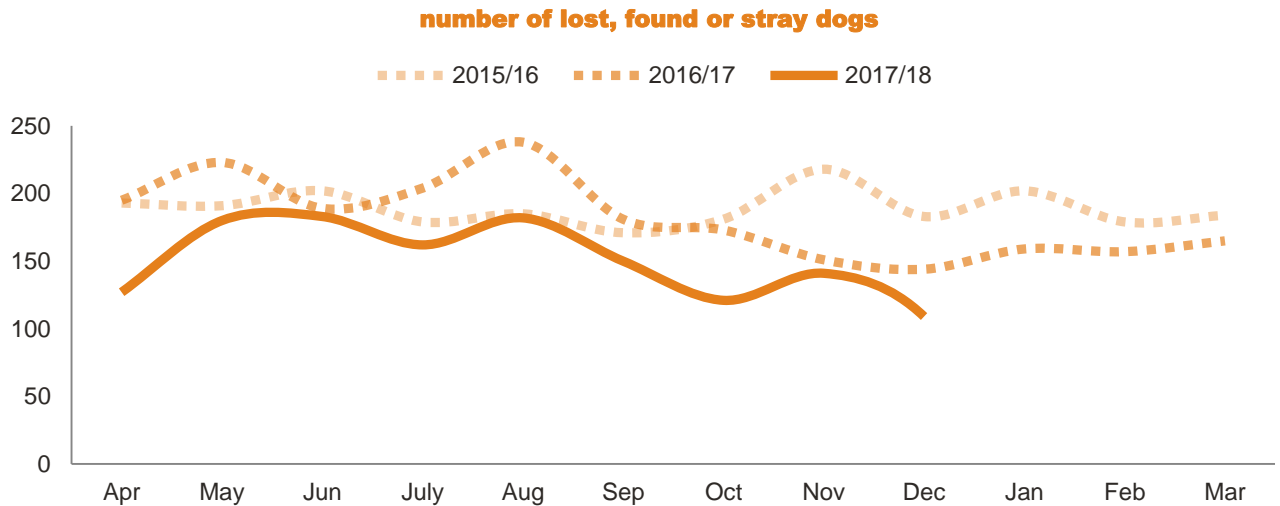
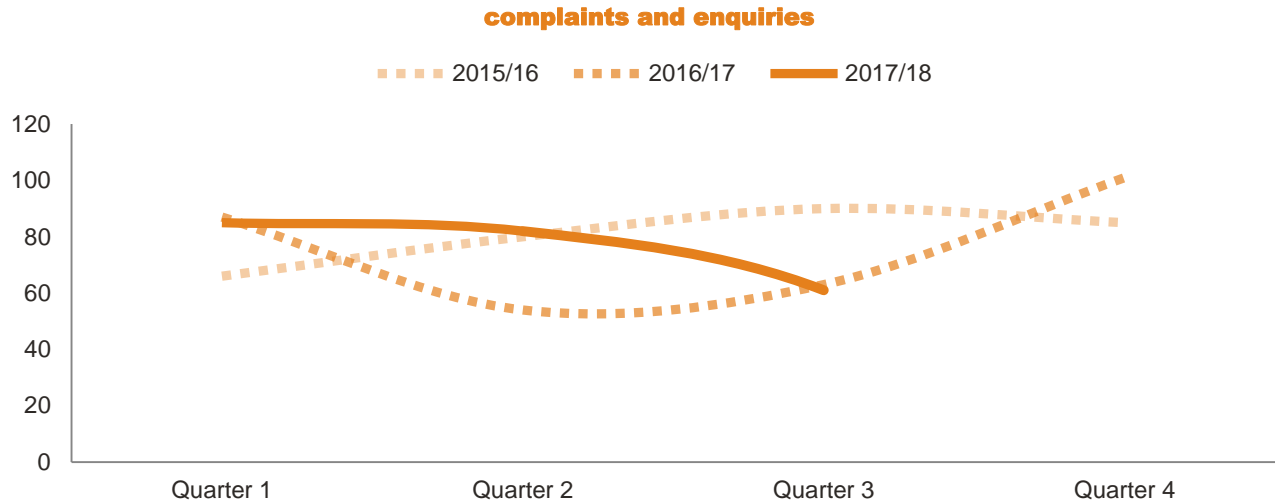
Dog Control

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

Comments

Dog control statistics include work carried out by WRS on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Brough Council.

Historically, the general trend in numbers of stray dogs reported is reducing and this would appear to continue this financial year. In order to ensure we are utilising Officer's full capacity with reduced stray numbers, we have been exploring the provision of dog services to other public organisations such as social services and housing associations. We have been asked to collect, detain, kennel and rehome dogs during this period which is reflected in the increase in service request numbers. Whilst the number of service requests has generally remained consistent over the three quarters this year work has continued behind the scenes to explore the commercial opportunities and identify potential client organisations.



Environmental Permitting

Worcestershire

Last quarter we reported on the changes to the waste processes around waste wood and timber products. WRS has taken a local authority lead in liaison with the Environment Agency over the complexities of this industrial sector in terms of regulatory compliance, definitions of waste and support for businesses. In trying to resolve our own concerns it would appear our research is being looked as a foundation for regional and potentially national Public Sector Process Guidance notes. Again, previously we advised of discussions on Primary Authority relationships with two large companies. These are progressing following liaison with BEIS on the ability to set up such arrangements in this area of Local Government regulation. In addition, during this last quarter a Federation of small businesses has also commenced similar discussions with WRS on this subject.

The routine inspections against permit conditions are on track for completion by the end of the year with generally good compliance. A new application for a part B permit for the burning of waste wood has been received and a new cement batching process is now fully permitted both for Bromsgrove District.

Malvern has seen a new application for a Small Waste Incineration Plant (SWIP) which is a 'Part A2' permit at Go Greener, Leigh Sinton. They will have two 1.3MW units to incinerate grade A,B & C waste wood. Part A2 processes are some of the larger ones we permit and regulate.

An application for an Adhesive Manufacturing activity (Part B) permit at Alpha Adhesives, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport (Wyre Forest District) has also been received.

Gloucester City

Inspections for a number of Gloucester City Council permitted premises have been completed including the Crematorium, Joseph Griggs and Keyway with their processes appropriately risk rated. Keyway have now sold their mobile crusher unit and are looking for a new one so rather than revoking their permit, they wish to maintain it and WRS are enabling this to happen. A variation will need to be completed in the near future to reflect these changes.

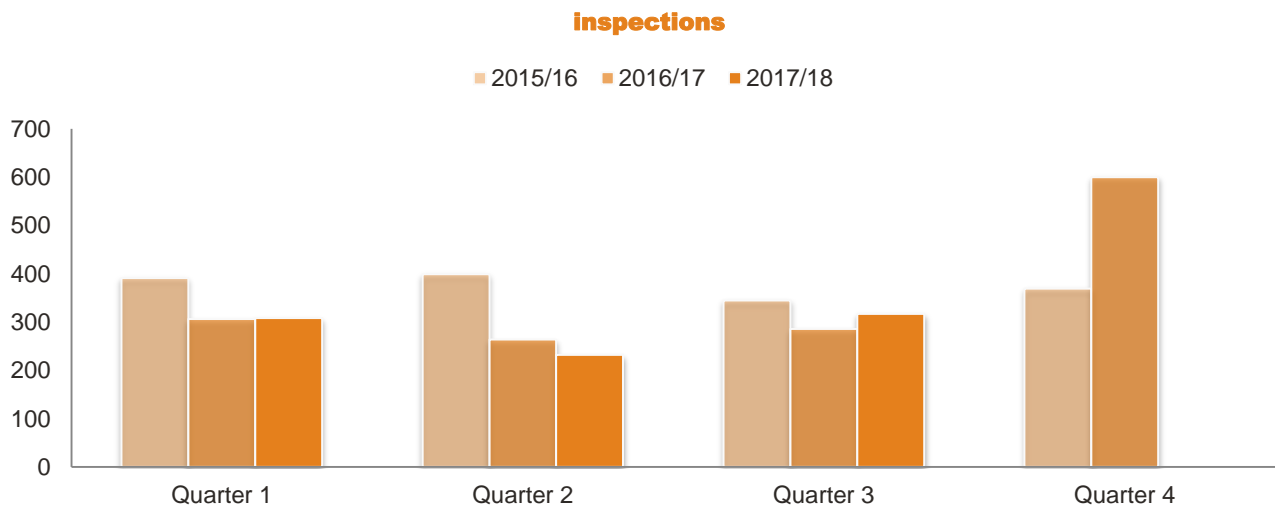
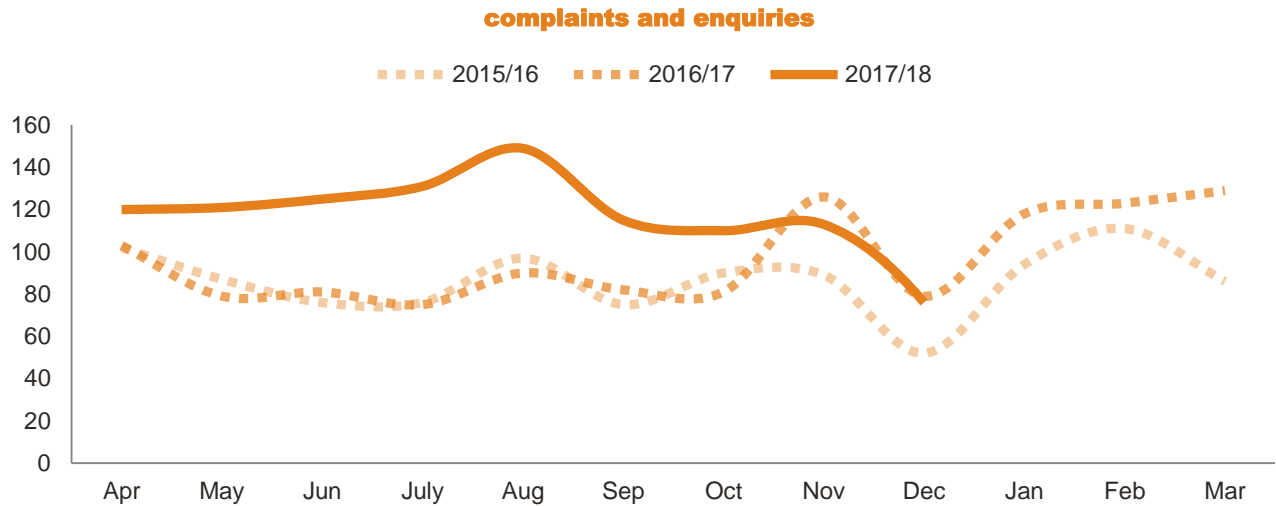
Food Safety

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

Comments

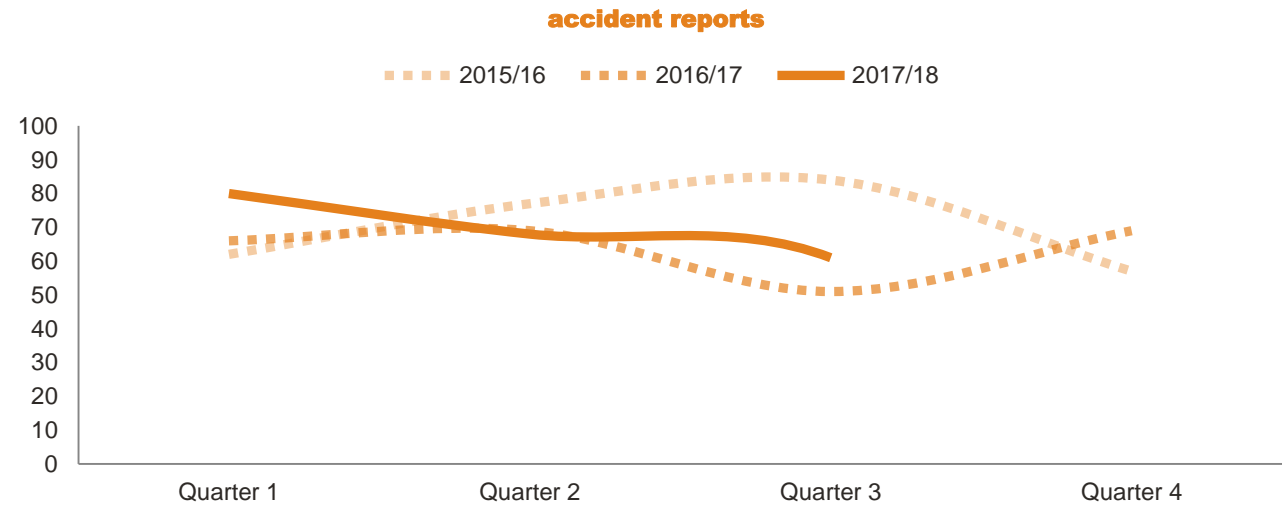
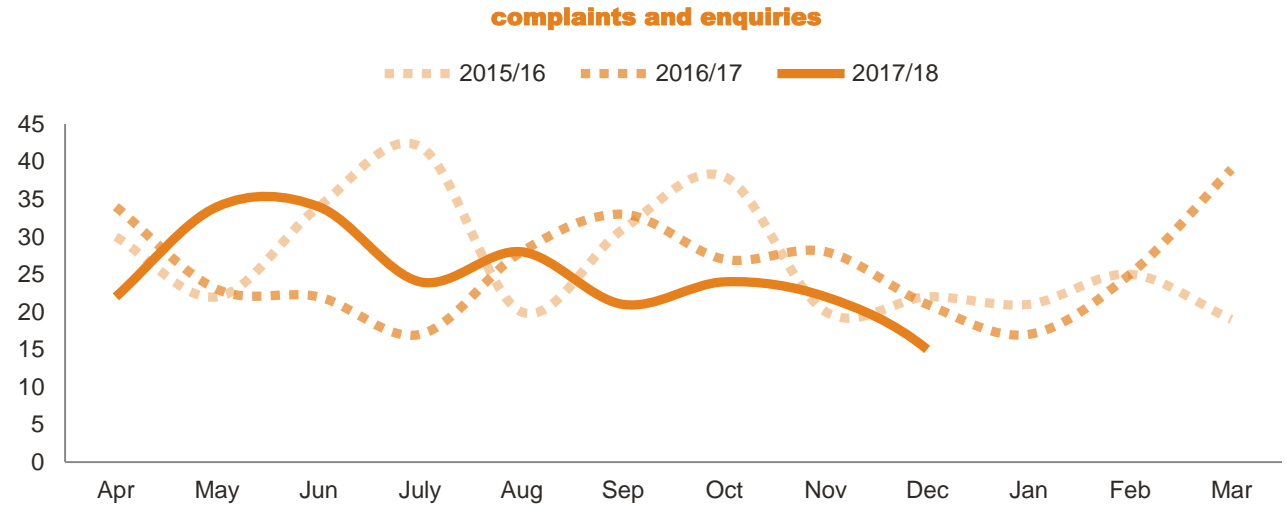
With one quarter left of the year the total number of food safety cases in Malvern Hills, Redditch and Wychavon has already surpassed the totals for the previous two years. Whilst this does not indicate an increase in non compliance it does reflect an increase in food safety enquiries from businesses and the general public and a review of such cases may identify opportunities to reroute customers to alternative channels.

We retained the services of our temporary workers for a period into quarter 3 to cover off the backlog of nuisance work and keep up with food visits, also addressing some of those food businesses identified during our audit by the Food Standards Agency. This served to keep us on track to achieve what is needed during the second half of the year.



Health and Safety

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

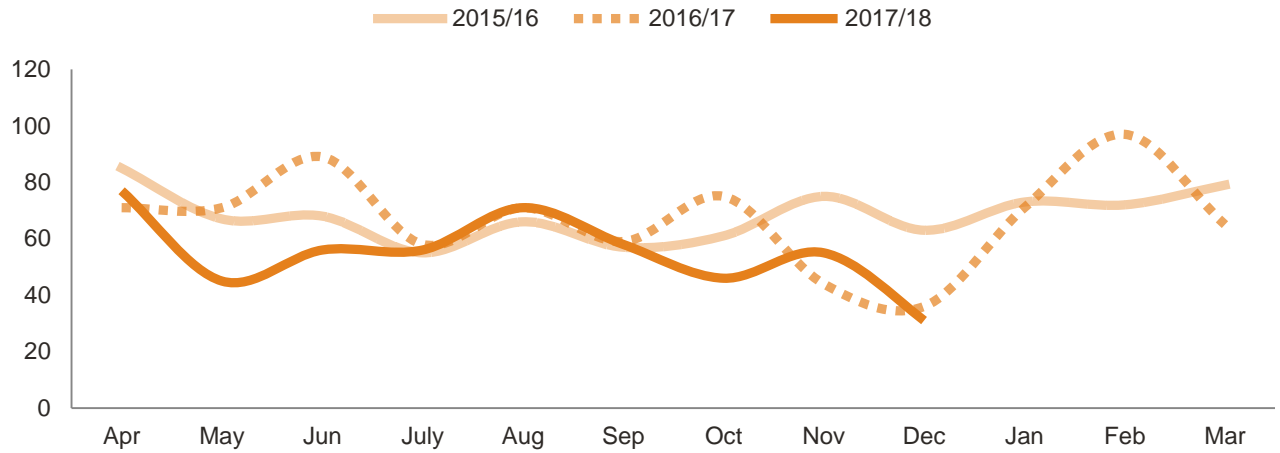


Information Requests

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

Information requests relate to the following:

- Environmental Information Requests
- Freedom of Information Requests
- Requests for information under the Data Protection Act 1998 (generally received from partner agencies)



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Comments

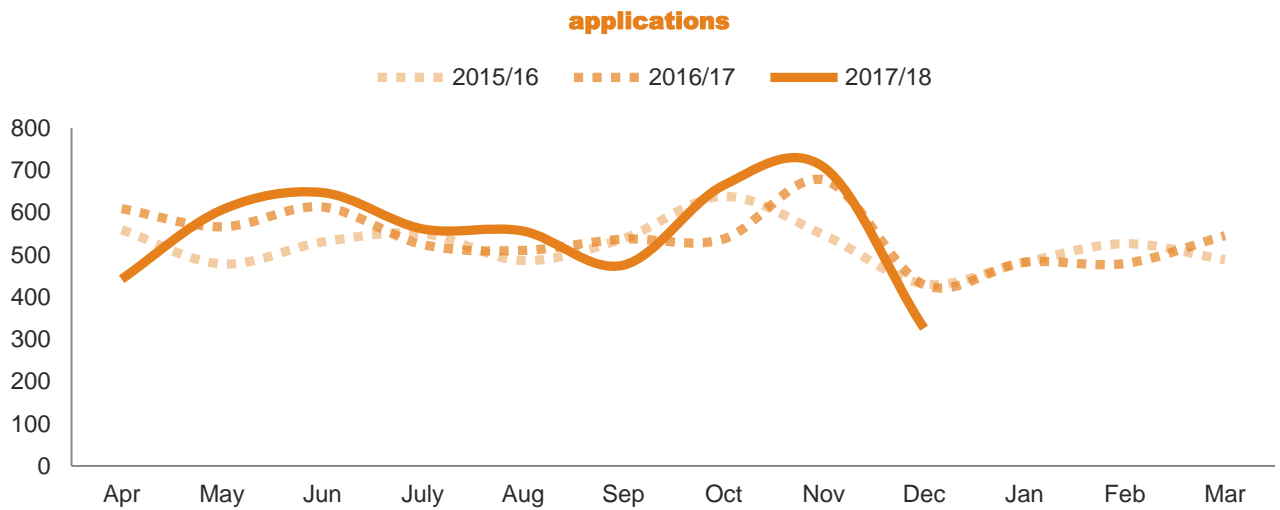
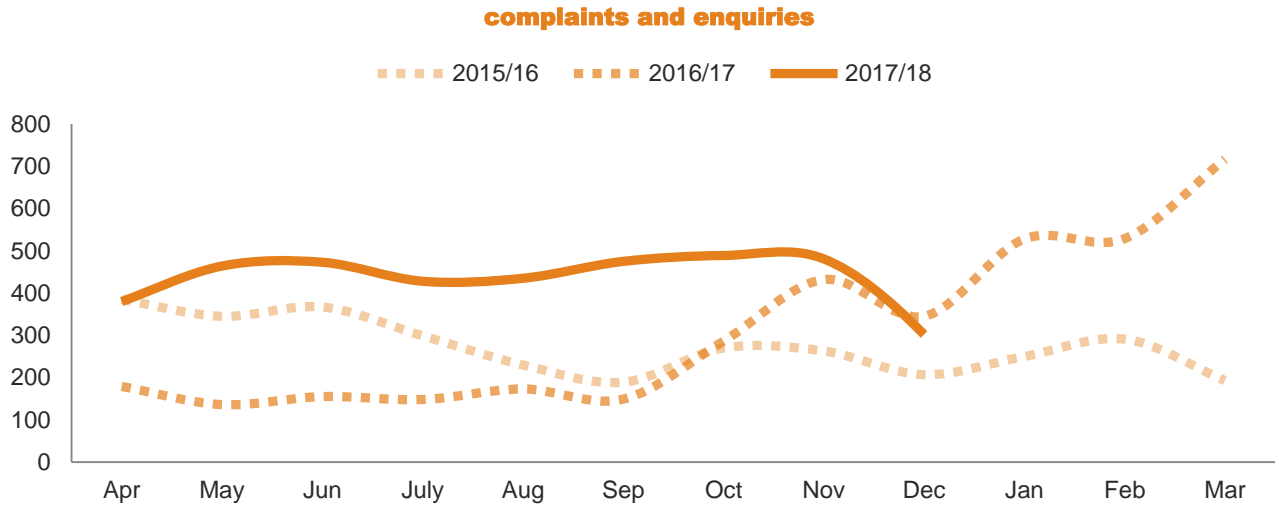
The usual winter lull in information requests is evident this year and it is anticipated the traditional increase will be experienced during the subsequent quarter. A programme of proactive publication of information has commenced based on routine FOI requests which is hoped will enable a reduction in partner authority requests but permit an increase in capacity to undertake additional commercial work in responding to requests for client organisations.

Licensing

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

Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following:

- Alcohol and entertainment
- Animals
- Caravans
- Gambling
- Scrap metal
- Sex establishments
- Skin piercing
- Street trading
- Taxis

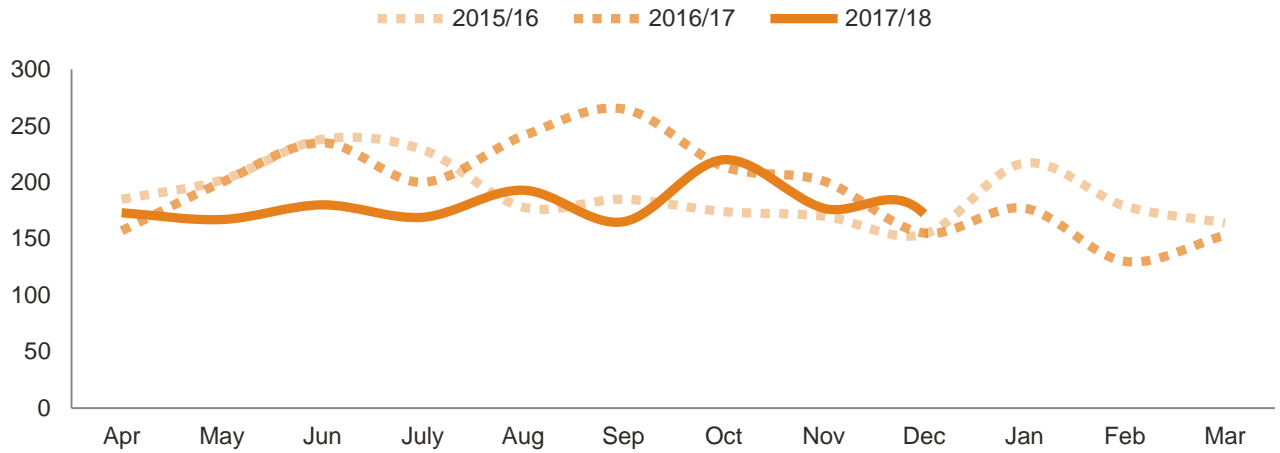


Planning

The chart (right) shows the number of planning requests received by WRS over a three year period. The majority of these requests are consultations but can also include requests to discharge conditions.

Planning requests relate to the following:

- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Environmental Permitting
- Food
- Health and Safety
- Nuisance / Noise



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Comments

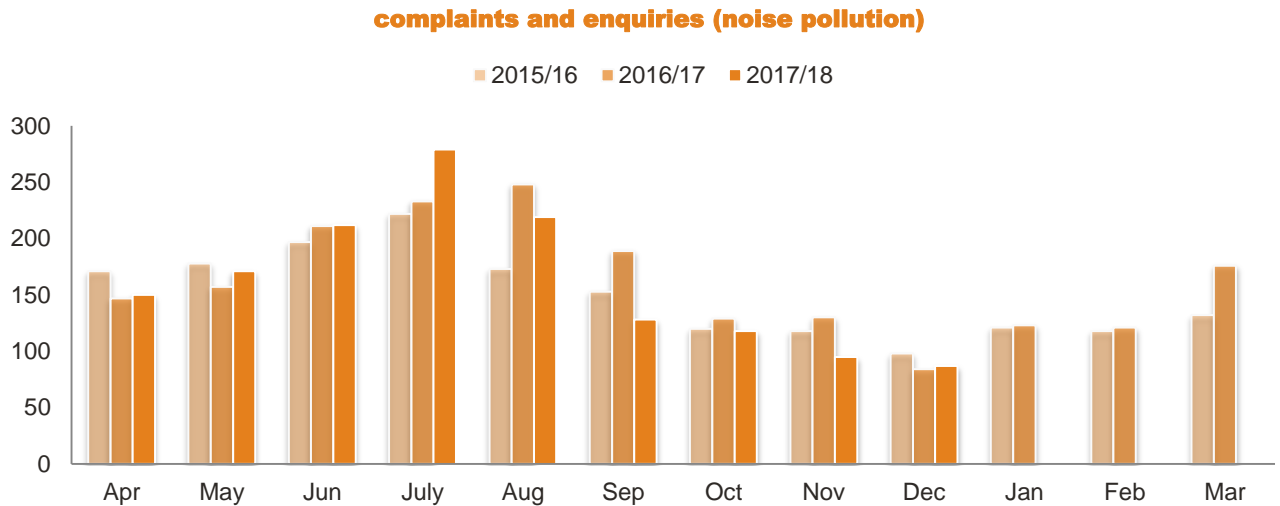
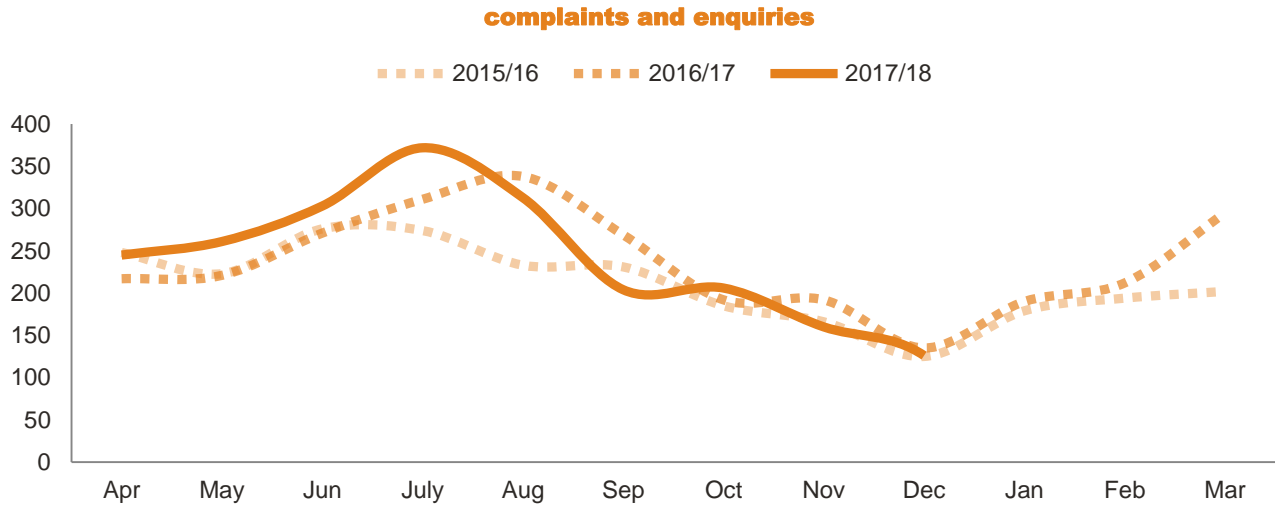
For the first two quarters of the year, the number of planning application consultations and requests to review information submitted to support discharge of conditions was stable each month rather than experiencing the usual summer high. During the last quarter however there was a significant increase during October due, in part, to a blockage in passing consultations to WRS by Gloucester City. This was as a result of their internal reorganisation and created significant demand for WRS during a short period as they rectified that problem.

Pollution

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

Comments

The change in weather during Autumn caused nuisance complaints to return to the usual levels through October and November, although a large number were carried forward from the summer months. We retained the services of our temporary workers for a period into quarter 3 to conclude these investigations and enable our team to concentrate on completing the number of complex issues under investigation.



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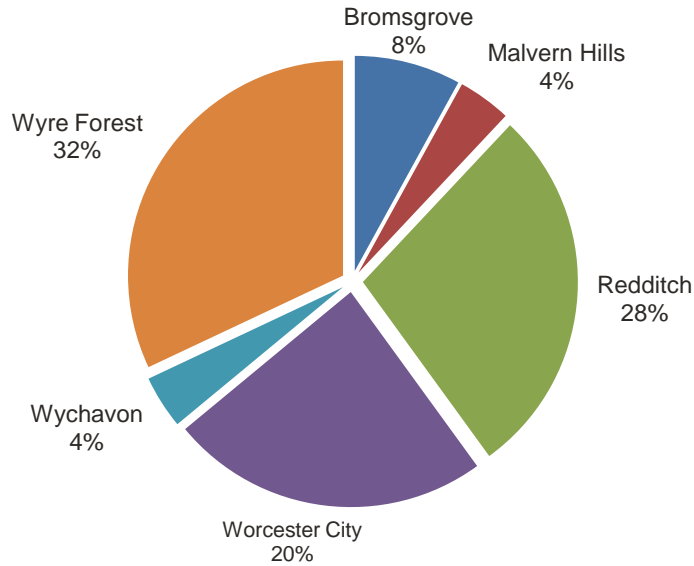
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Noise Pollution

The table (right) shows the top 25 wards within Worcestershire with the highest number of noise pollution cases. Population and incident rates are also shown and reflect the recent boundary changes in Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest. The chart (left) shows the top 25 wards by district, for example, 20% of wards highlighted in the table are located within Worcester City.

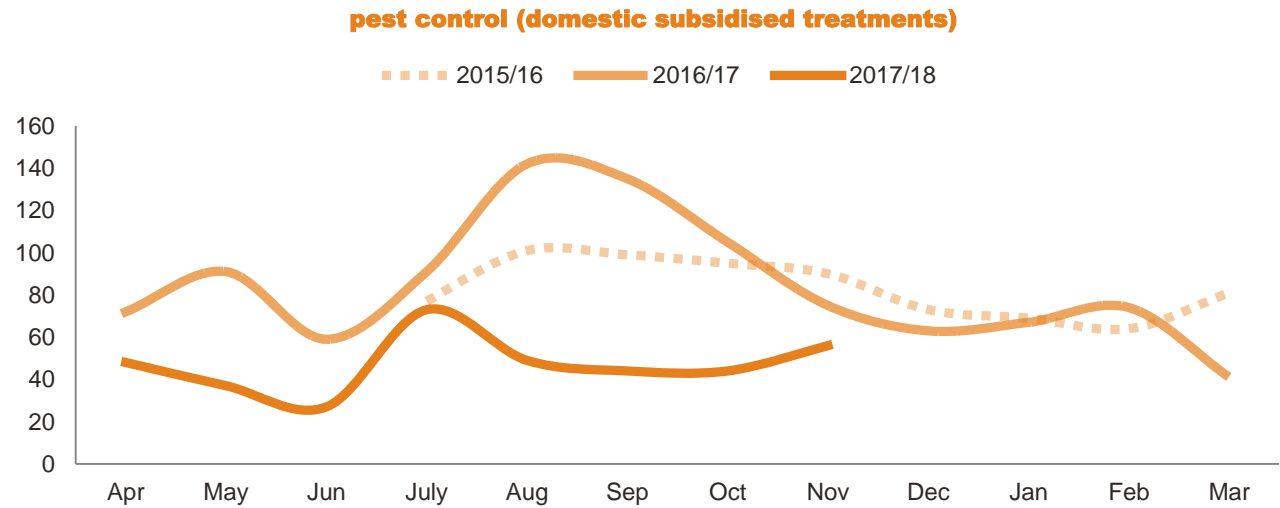
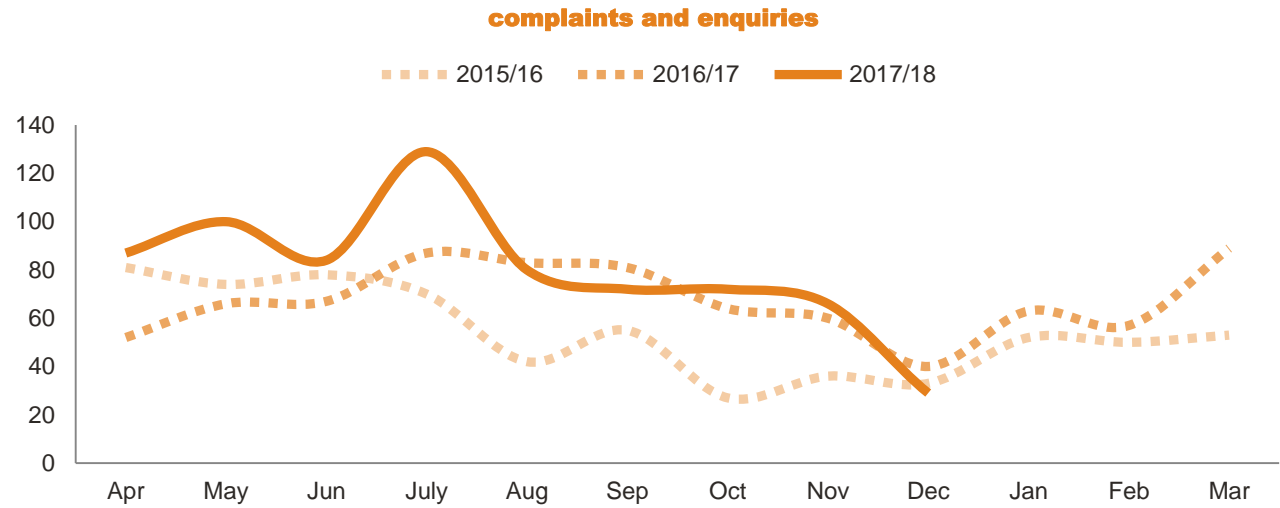
| Ward | Total | Population | Rate (%) |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------|----------|
| Cathedral | 37 | 10,835 | 0.34% |
| Blakebrook And Habberley South | 35 | 9,000 | 0.39% |
| Greenlands | 34 | 9,122 | 0.37% |
| Batchley And Brockhill | 32 | 8,553 | 0.37% |
| Bedwardine | 29 | 8,279 | 0.35% |
| Bewdley And Rock | 28 | 8,542 | 0.33% |
| Abbey | 25 | 6,197 | 0.40% |
| Mitton | 24 | 9,752 | 0.25% |
| Franche And Habberley North | 23 | 9,783 | 0.24% |
| Broadwaters | 22 | 9,108 | 0.24% |
| Arboretum | 22 | 6,195 | 0.36% |
| Central (Redditch) | 22 | 6,494 | 0.34% |
| Astwood Bank And Feckenham | 22 | 6,042 | 0.36% |
| Foley Park And Hoobrook | 21 | 9,914 | 0.21% |
| Aggborough And Spennells | 21 | 8,685 | 0.24% |
| Bengeworth | 21 | 6,793 | 0.31% |
| Warndon | 21 | 5,934 | 0.35% |
| Upton And Hanley | 21 | 4,186 | 0.50% |
| Areley Kings And Riverside | 20 | 8,261 | 0.24% |
| Nunnery | 18 | 8,087 | 0.22% |
| Winyates | 18 | 8,360 | 0.22% |
| Headless Cross And Oakenshaw | 18 | 8,538 | 0.21% |
| Saint Stephen | 16 | 5,233 | 0.31% |
| Charford | 16 | 3,707 | 0.43% |
| Sanders Park | 15 | 3,463 | 0.43% |

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Public Health

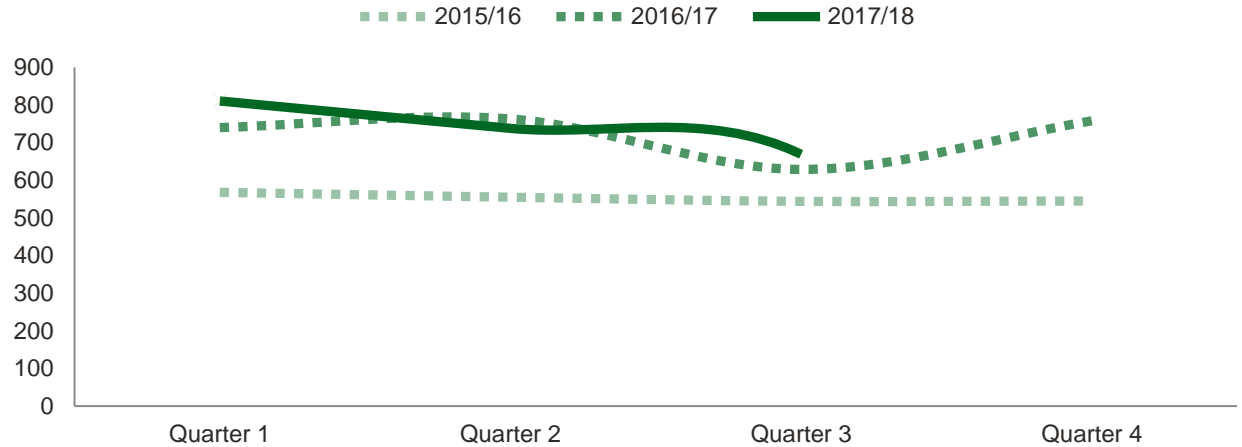
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to public health. Types of cases recorded under this category include accumulations, public burials and pest control. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of subsidised pest control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



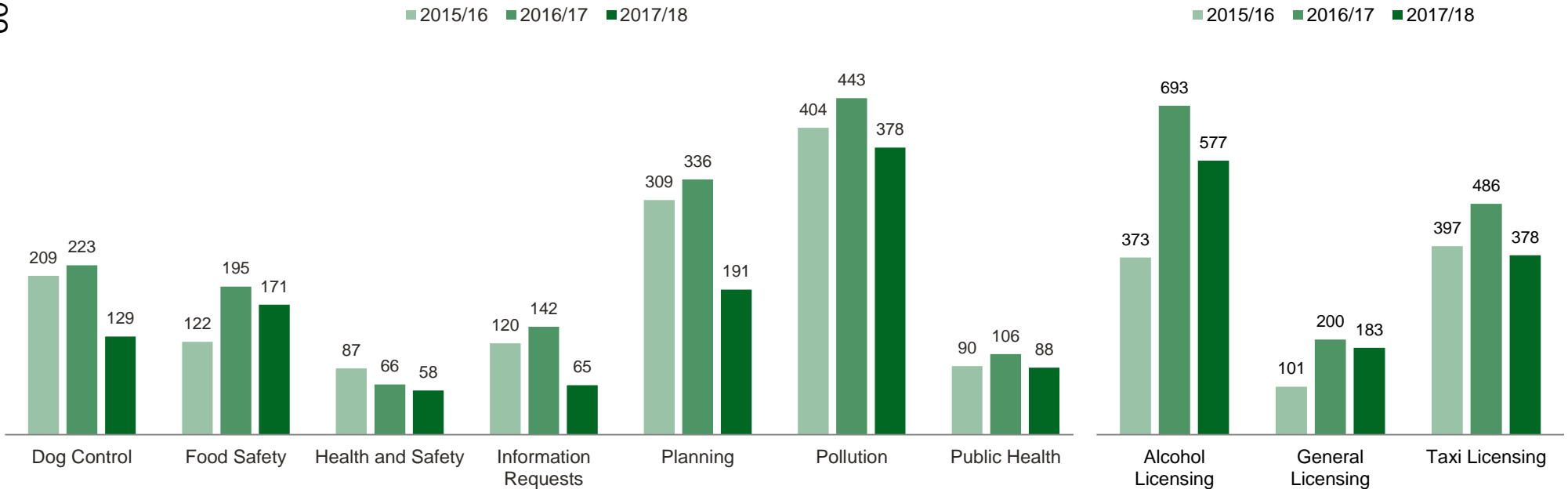


The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Bromsgrove**.

Note: The charts (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



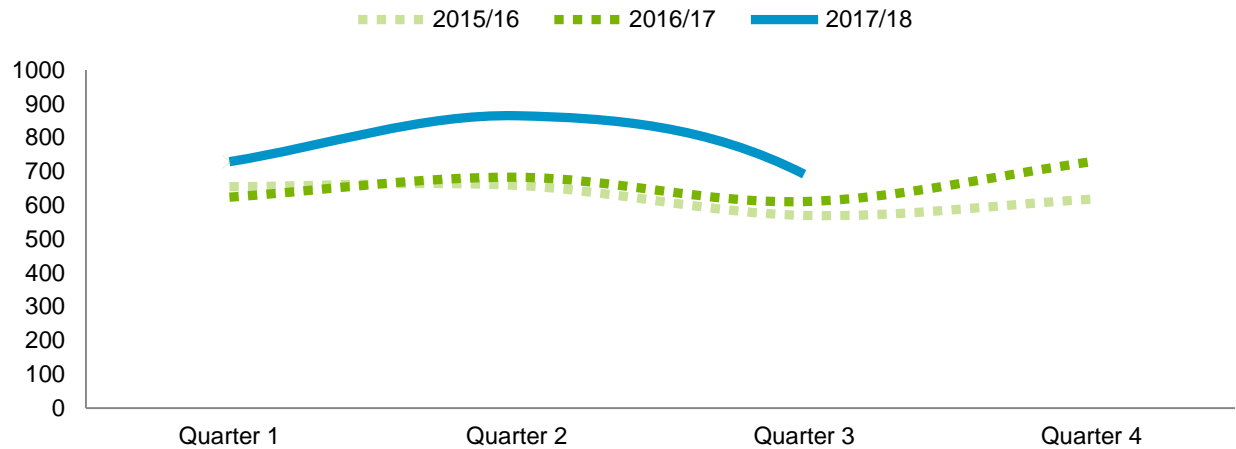
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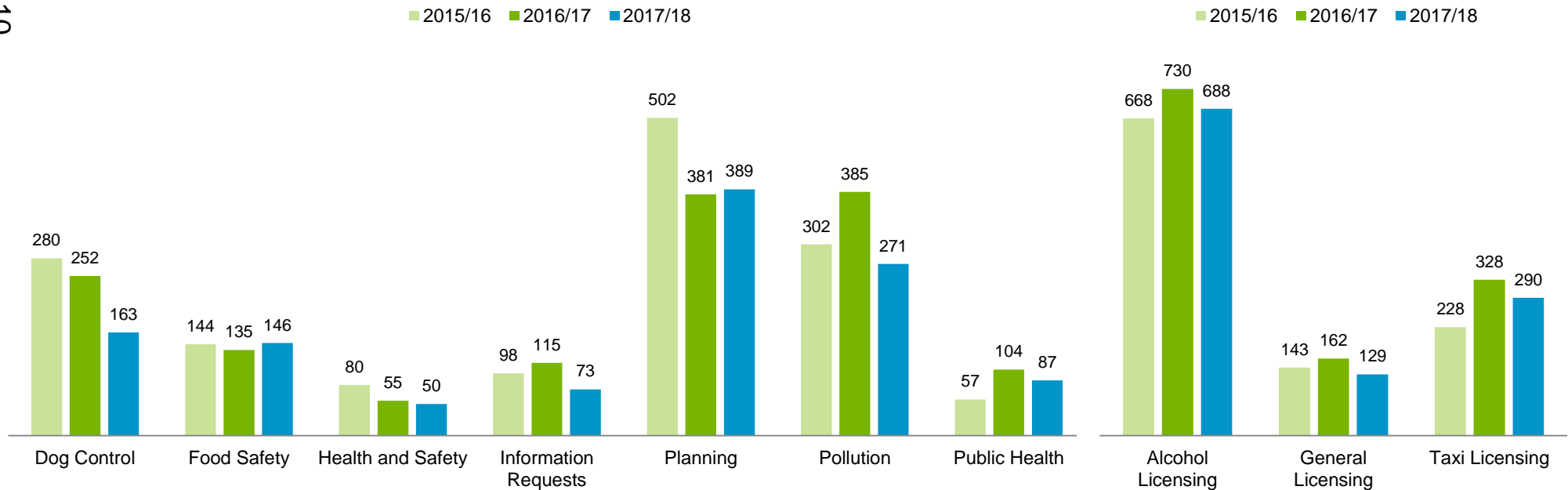
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The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Malvern Hills**.

Note: The charts (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

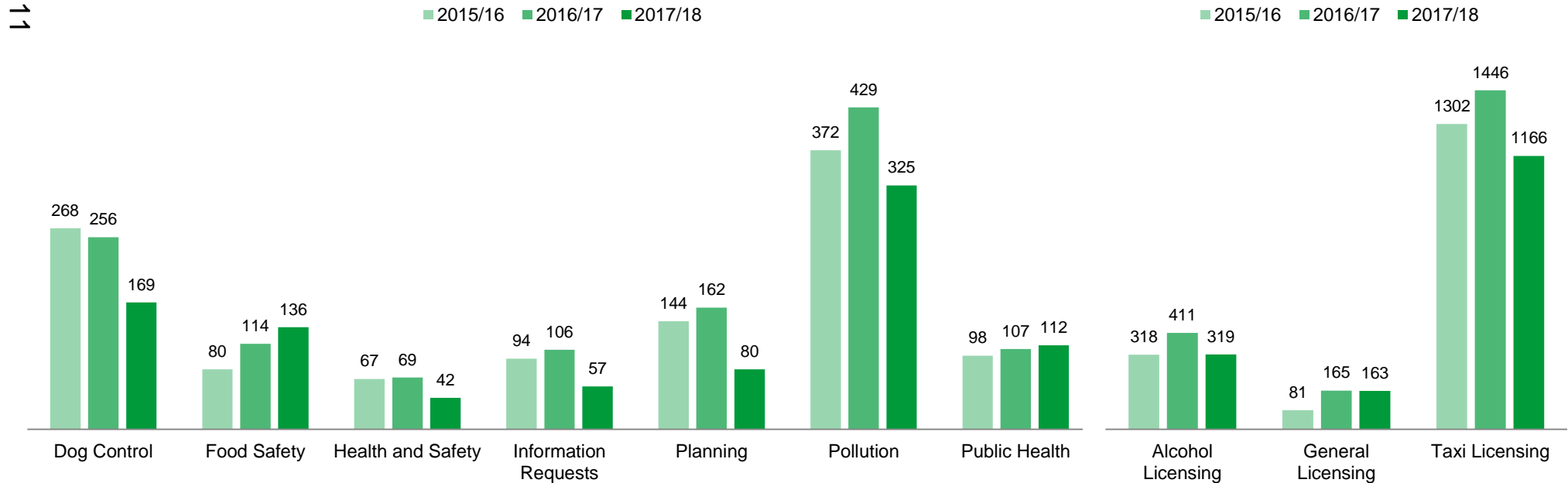
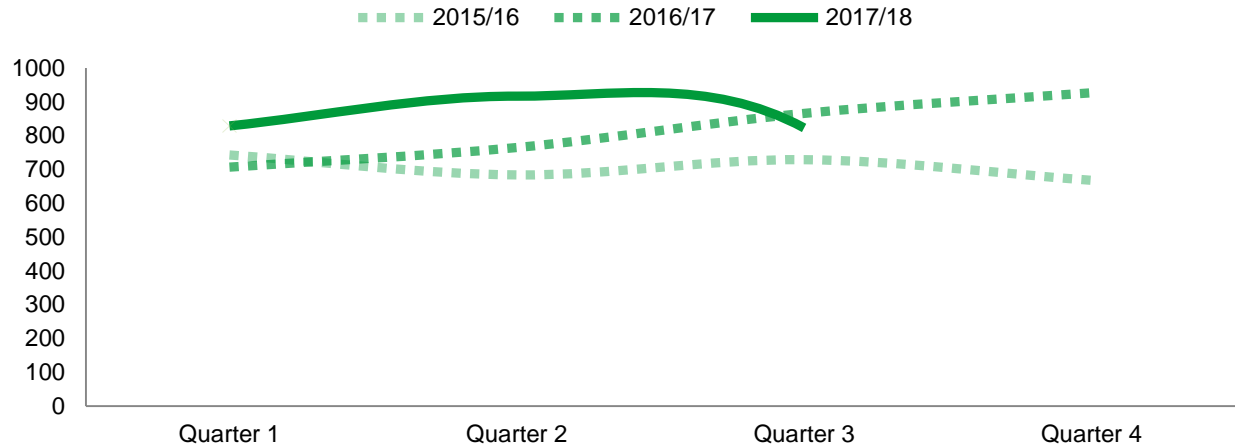


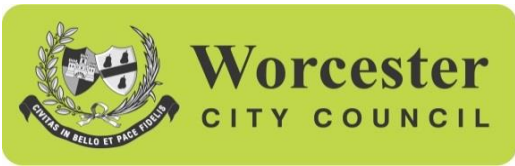
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The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Redditch**.

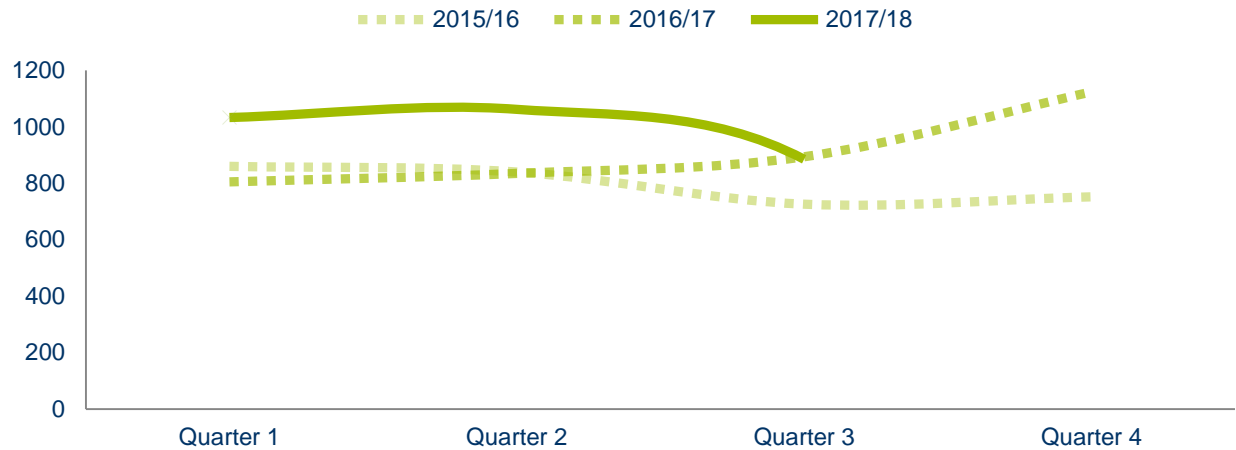
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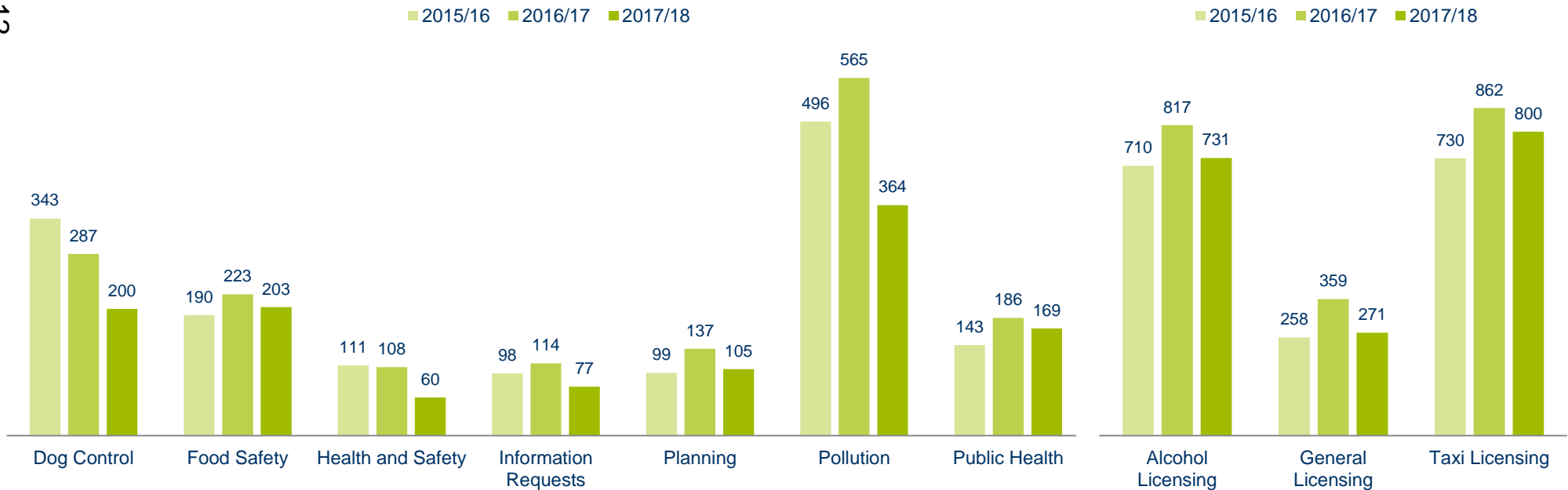


The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Worcester City**.

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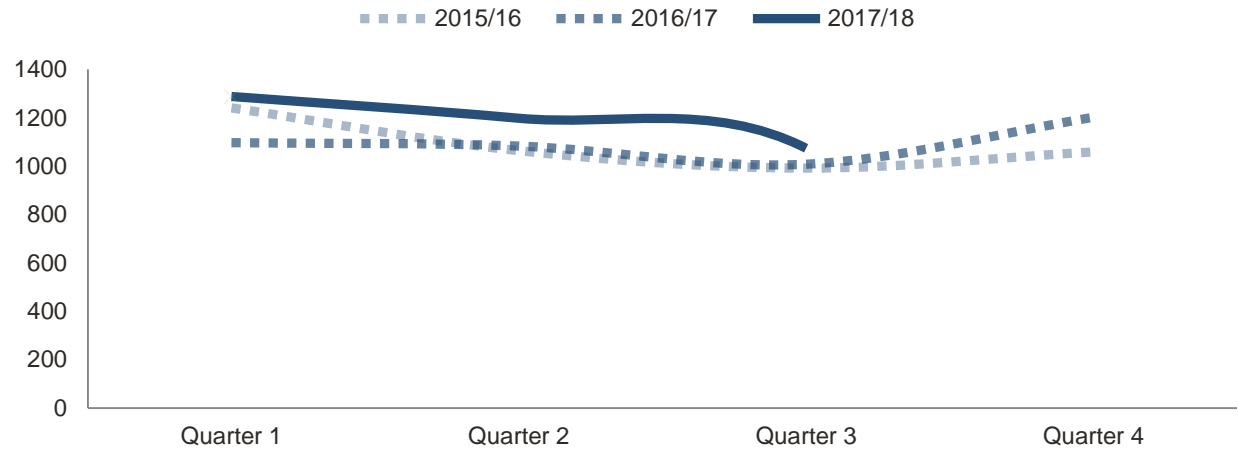


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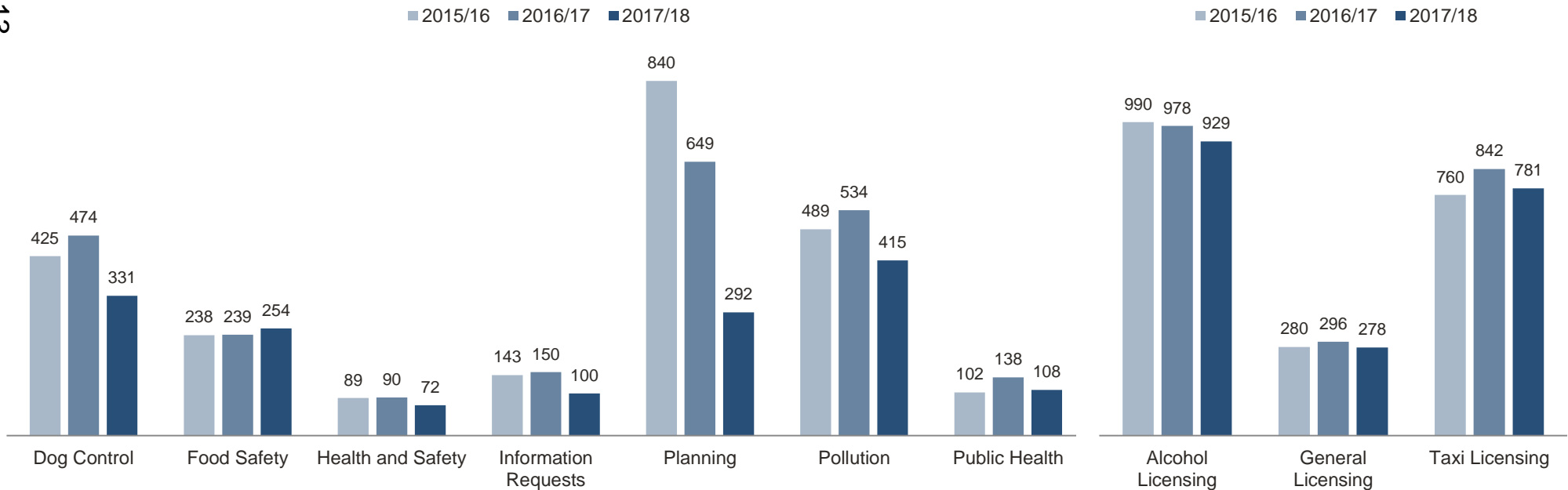


The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Wychavon**.

Note: The charts (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

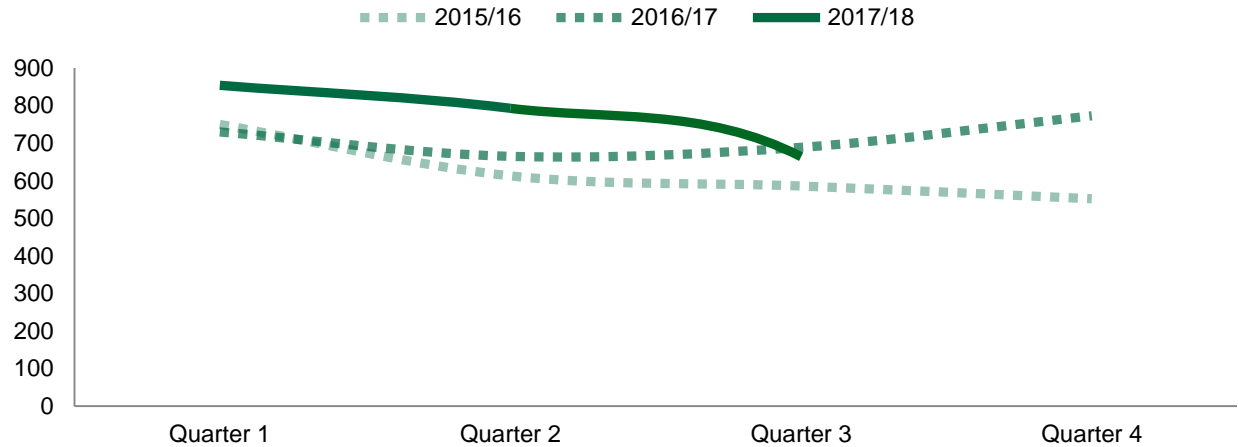


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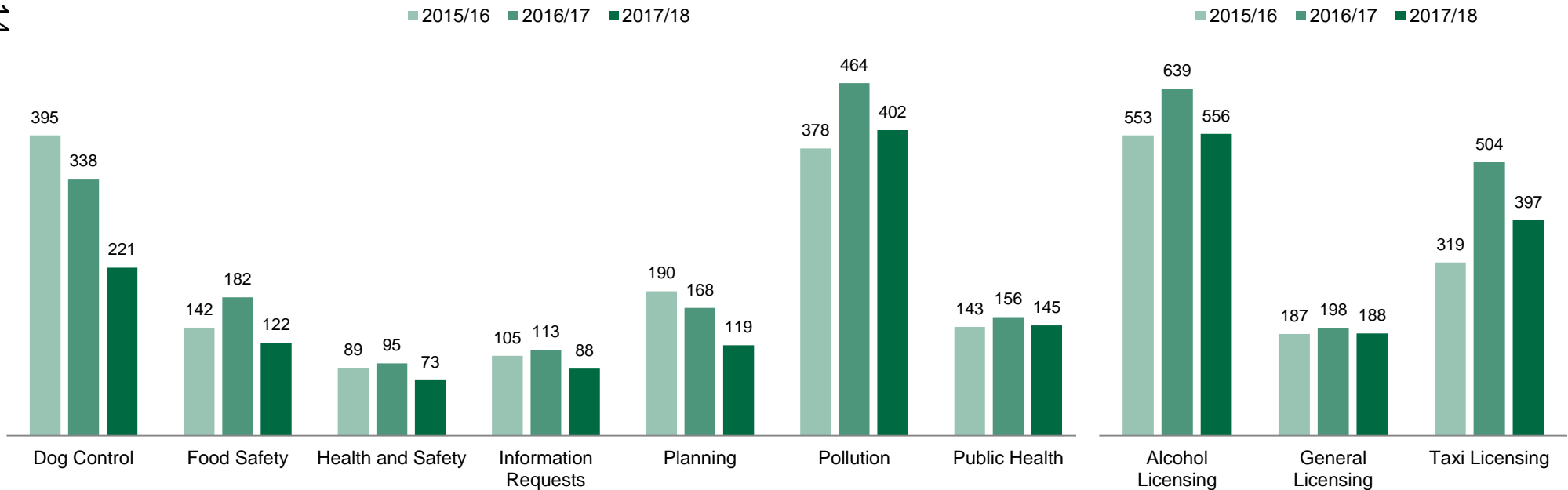


The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Wyre Forest**.

Note: The charts (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



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Cheltenham Borough Council

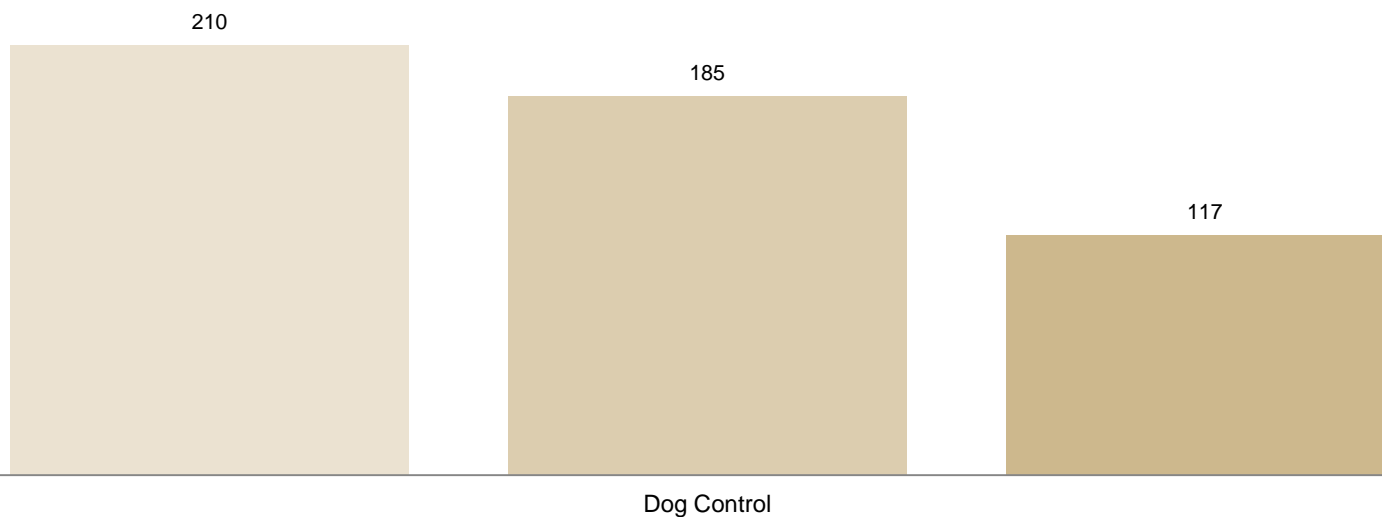


The dog control work WRS undertake for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Cheltenham Borough Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities.

The numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually as is consistent with trends in Worcestershire.

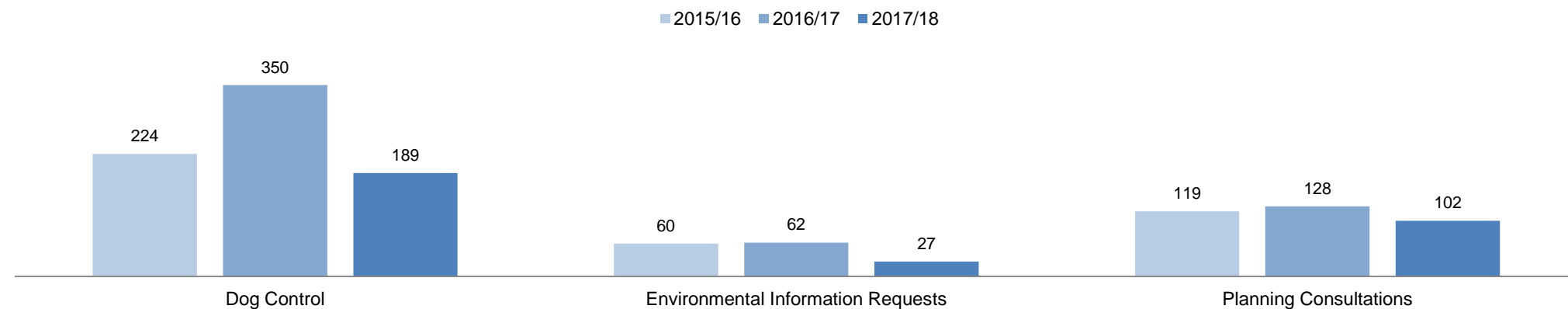
Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against the function undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

■ 2015/16 ■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18



The dog control work WRS undertake for Gloucester City Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Gloucester City Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. The number presented here shows the numbers in 2015/16 were particularly low. Gloucester City changed their procedures during that year whereas previously dogs were automatically returned to owners for free where the owner could be easily identified and found. Only where this could not be done were the dogs recorded as strays and passed to WRS (at which point are recorded by WRS). It is anticipated that this year numbers of stray dogs will be lower than last year's high and will continue to drop as the message gets about that it costs to get your dog back if you let it stray and those owners who refused to pay had their dogs rehomed. Unlike Worcestershire, for Gloucester City Environmental Information requests are lower than previous years. Whilst requests for advice on Planning Consultations (for Contaminated Land) were particularly low during Quarter 2 after an glut of work in Quarter 1, figures have recovered and WRS will have provided a consistent volume of work for Gloucester City as with previous years in planning consultations. In addition to the above we also undertake some Environmental Permitting work for Gloucester that is part of their ongoing inspection programme. During this period WRS continued to provide advice and assistance with a Metal Processing facility that presented significant noise and odour issues to local residents and Gloucester have agreed to WRS completing all other inspections due this year.

Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



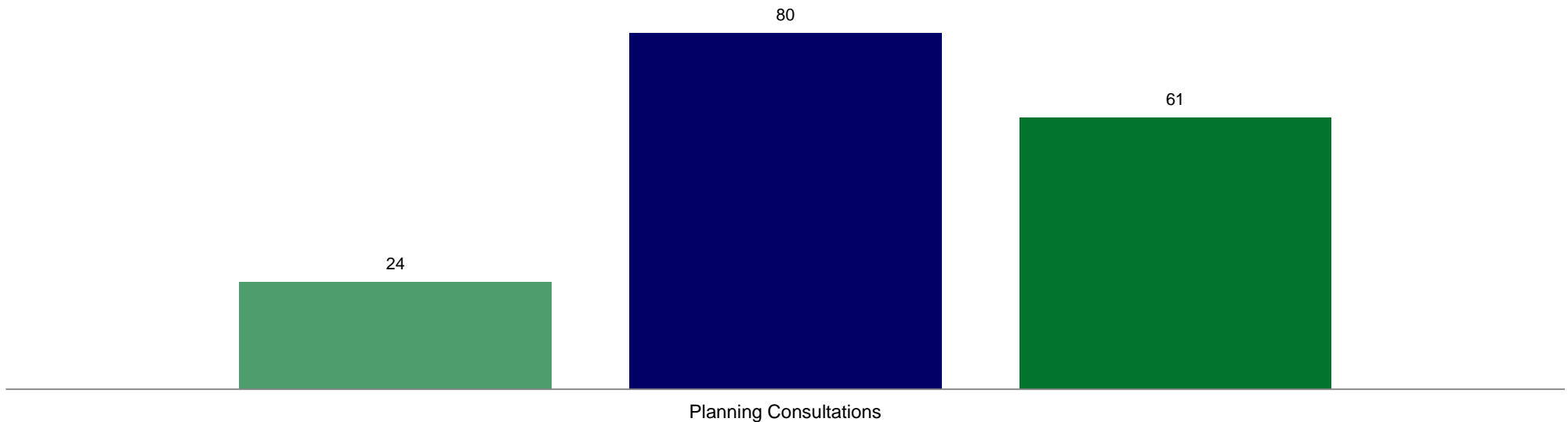
South Gloucestershire Council



South Gloucestershire being located on the outskirts of Bristol was subject to significant contaminative industries and activities historically. Pressures on brownfield development recently have presented the authority with a large volume of planning applications on significantly contaminated and complex sites. For a number of years now WRS has been asked to assist with this work focusing on the complex sites, so whilst numbers of referrals remain low (and lower than last year) they continue to be time consuming and complex. The expertise the Partner Authorities pooled with the formation of WRS has enabled us to provide a high standard of service during this period. The figures below show a consistent level of assistance that WRS has provided to South Gloucestershire Council for the last two years with a predicted final level of this financial year similar to last.

Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against the function undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

■ 2015/16 ■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18



The dog control work WRS undertake for Tewkesbury Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As predicted, the number of dogs collected or reported as strays are significantly lower than previous years. This follows the national trend in dogs being reported to Dog Wardens as discussed previously. The number of planning applications that WRS are requested to provide nuisance or air quality advice on continue to be high. If the current numbers referred to WRS continue at this rate, it will be far higher than last year at 369 applications.

Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year,

